

# **Households and Micro-enterprises**

**Micro-enterprises in Mexico are based primarily on household labor**

**Both peasant households and the urban informal sector revolve around this production**

## Mexican Households: What is our image of the Mexican household?

**Macho male versus reality of many households: moving away from the image of domination & la abnegada**



# Questions:

- i. What is the appropriate analytical optic with respect to the household?**
- j. What are the actual conditions under which households work and live?**





# **Mexican Working Class Households include production as well as consumption relations**

## **i. Household as site of Production**

**rural production activities**

**food processing**

**urban informal sector activities**



## **Household as site of Reproduction**

**‘everyday’: eating, washing**

**‘generational’: children’s instruction**

**‘biological’: giving birth**

## **iii. Household as site of Consumption**

**Consuming purchased goods**

- . Households often split finances and labor along gender lines**
  - i. Conjugal contract defines rights and obligations**
  - ii. multigenerational households define different relations**
  - iii. Existing understandings/contracts constantly (re)negotiated, contested**



what is the relation of income inequality to other issues in mexico?  
How has the changing structure of the economy, from a state-managed (dirigiste) to an open market structure, altered the lived experience of Mexicans

In terms of income inequality

In terms of access to social services and benefits

In terms of economic opportunity?

# **1. matriarchy versus patriarchy:**

- **Lomnitz: Mexican shantytowns and matriarchy/matrilineal society in Mexico City**
  - i. Household typified by matriarch who manages household finances for a number of children**
  - ii. Pooling of incomes supports the household**
  - iii. Pooling of labor, particularly reproductive labor, helps households survive: a type of services pooling**





## ➤ Chiñas: Matrifocal households

### Isthmus Zapotecs:

- i. The role of mother is 'structurally, culturally, and affectively central,' and 'such centrality is viewed as legitimate' (Tanner)
- ii. The relationship between the sexes is relatively egalitarian
- iii. both women and men have important economic and ritual roles
- iv. girls are socialized to become assertive, active, and decisive wives and mothers

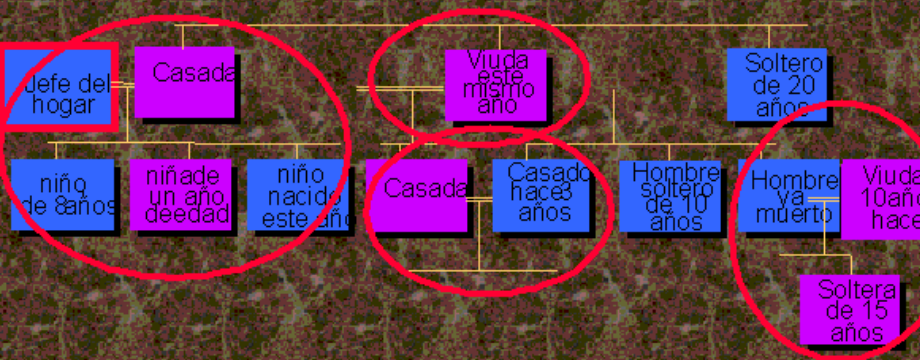


# Rural household Nahua indian

## 4-5 families in single household

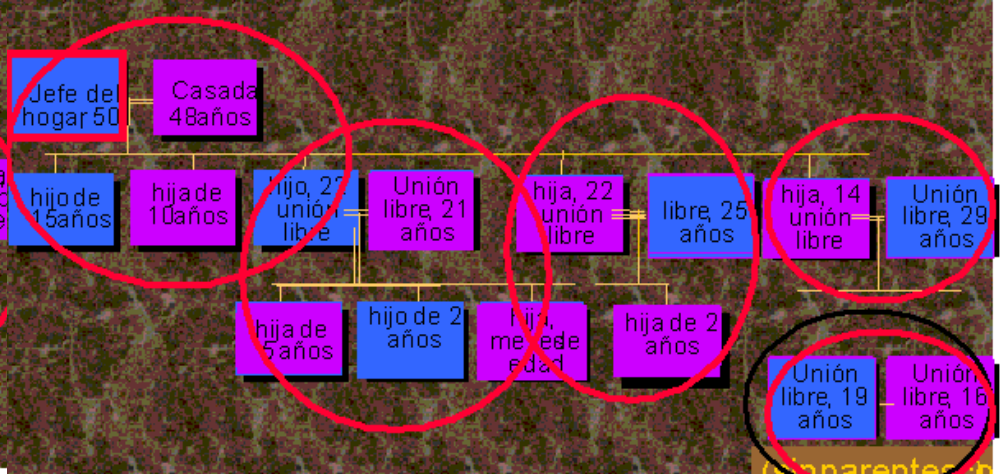
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1540, ejemplo de vida familiar:  
Hogar campestre nahua  
(4 uniones conyugales)



1990

1990, 4 siglos y medio después  
Ejemplo campestre de Morelos  
(5 uniones conyugales)

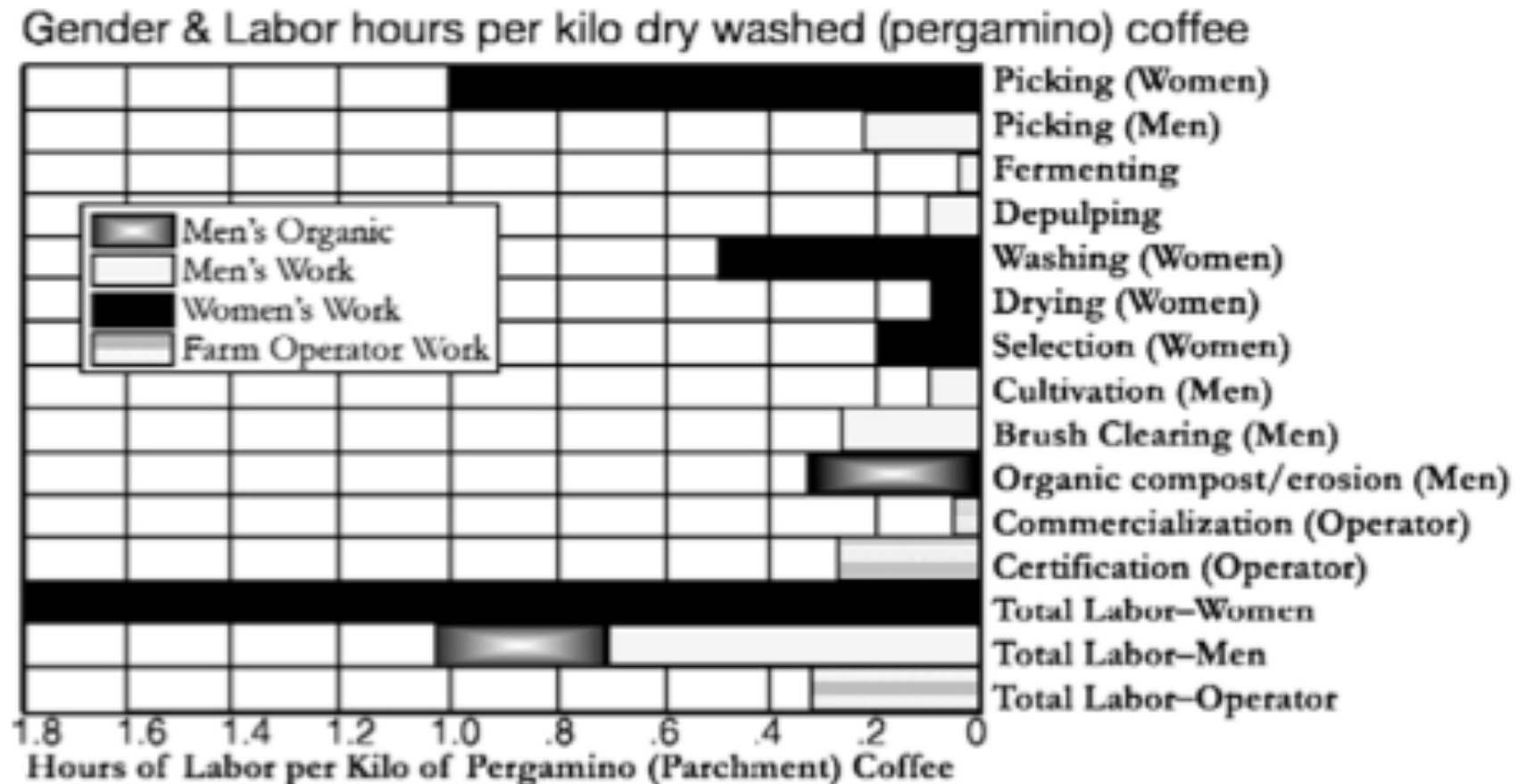


## Gender and work: examples from Tad's research in rural zones

1. Labor distribution in a village co-op:  
women's work, men's work
2. Effect of organic coffee production on  
gender and property rights: gender and  
coffee: cases from Mesoamerica (w/Lyon)

# What is the difference between men's and women's agricultural work?

*S. Lyon et al./Geoforum 41 (2010) 93–103*



**Fig. 1.** Labor use in fairtrade–organic coffee by gender and operator status.



# Women

Spatiality of Movement:  
How does household  
labor affect a person's  
spatiality?

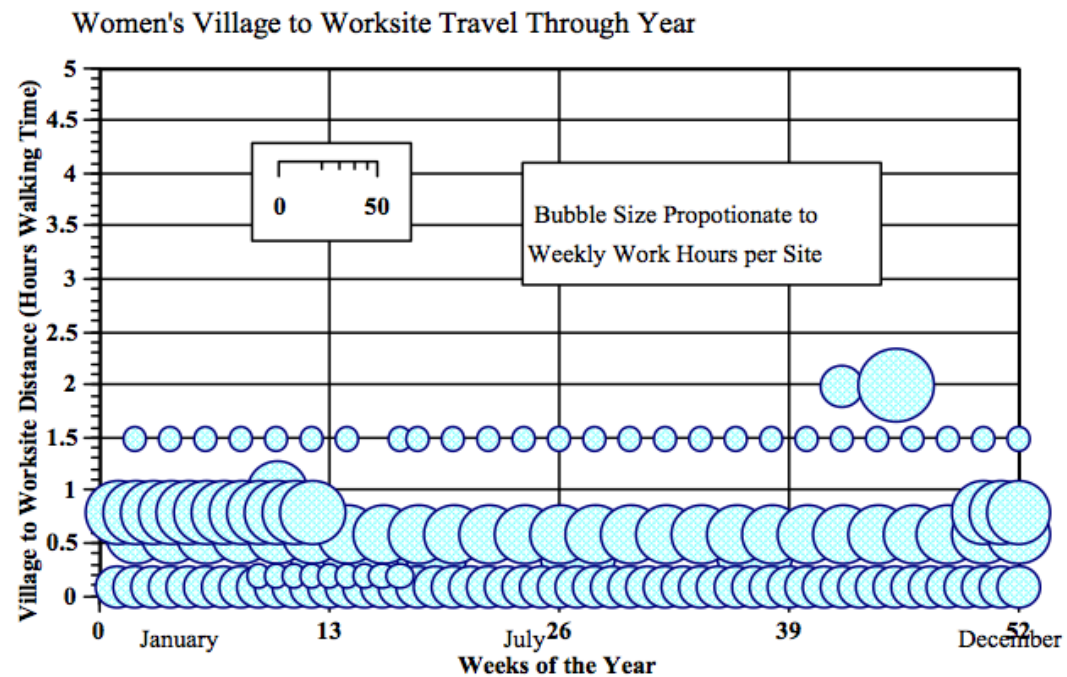


Chart 2 Spatiality of Women's Household Labor Tasks through Calendar Year

# Men's Village to Worksite Travel Through Year

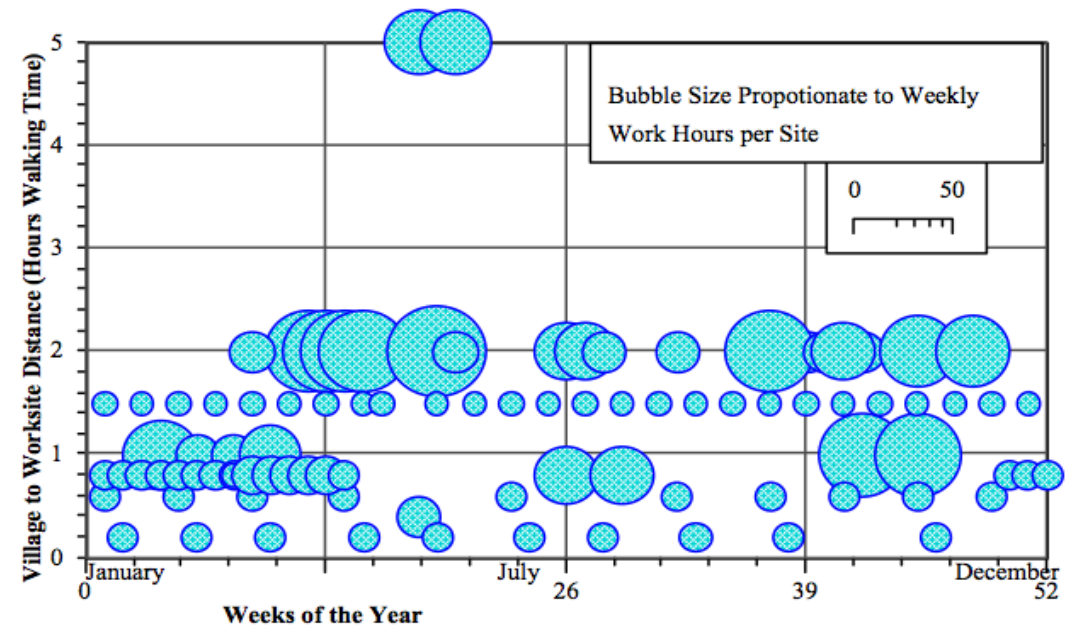


Chart 1 Spatiality of Men's Household Labor Tasks through Calendar Year

# Men

How does access affect differences between men's and women's income?

	Hours of Labor per Kilo of Coffee	1991 Coffee Market Exchange Price in 1991 pesos	1991 Wage Hour US\$	1993 Coffee Market Exchange Price in 93 pesos	1993 Wage Hour (US\$)
Base Labor in Production	2.0				
<b>COYOTE Market</b>		1 kilo: 2 Loaves Bread	<b>\$0.27</b>	1 kilo: 2 Loaves Bread	<b>\$0.27</b>
Additional Labor	0.5	2 Kilos: Swath of Cloth	n.d. on cloth prices	2 Kilos: Swath of Cloth	N/A.
Transport Labor	0.0	2.50	\$0.33	1700	\$0.23
Total Labor	2.5	3 Kilos: Comal	\$0.44	3 Kilos: Comal	N/A.
<b>CEPCO Market</b>		3200	<b>\$0.51</b>	1500	<b>\$0.24</b>
Additional Labor	0.0				
Transport Labor	0.1				
Total Labor	2.1				

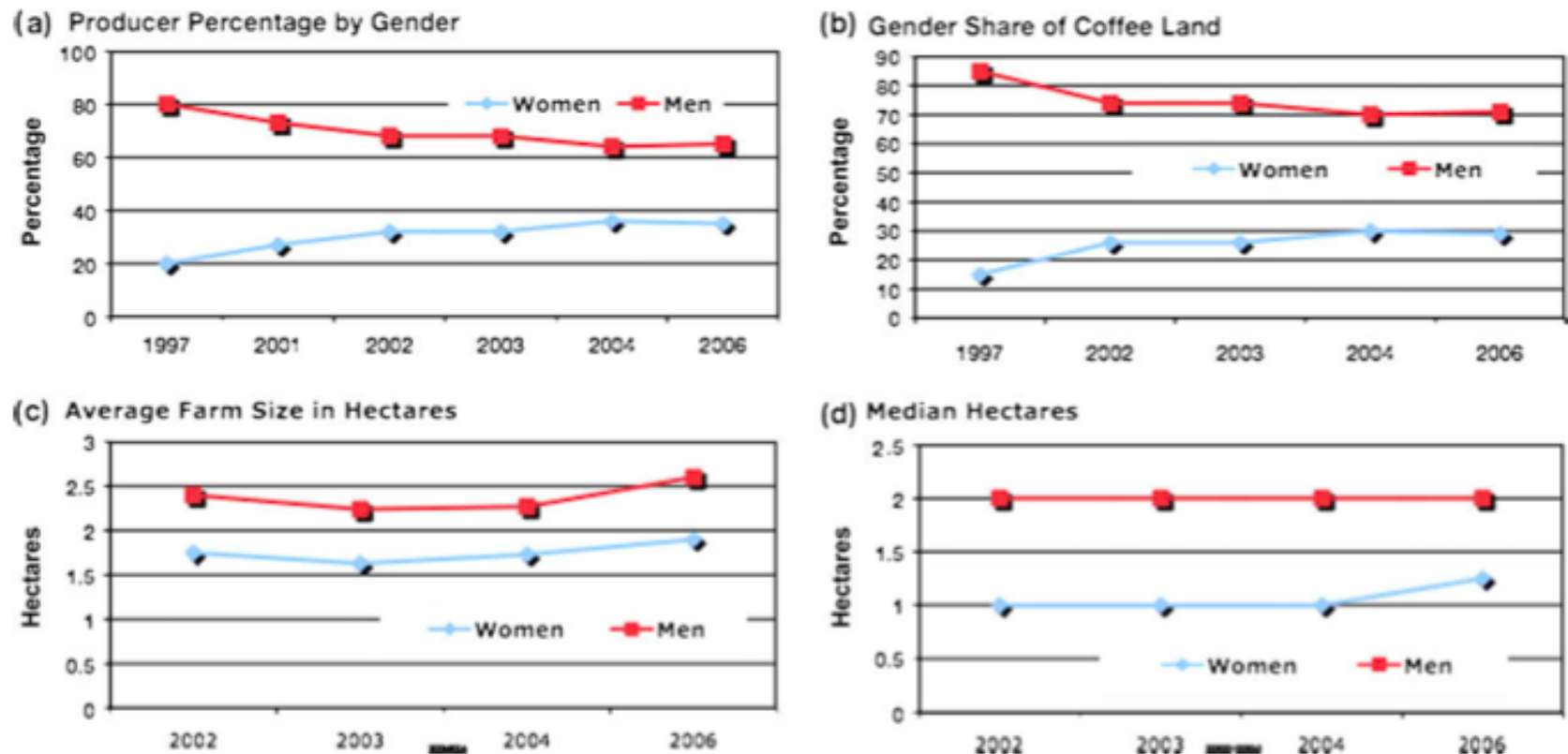
N/A. = items no longer sold in Santa Cruz by traveling merchants in 1993

*Table 3 Return to Coffee Production; Men's Co-op Market and Women's Coyote Market*

# Contemporary dynamics: Women's control of land improves relative to Men's under conditions of certified organic coffee production (and migration)

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*S. Lyon et al./Geoforum 41 (2010) 93–103*



**Fig. 2.** Changes in gender participation in a Oaxacan fairtrade-organic coffee union. First Pane: Gender participation by percentage of registered producers. Second Pane: Gender share of coffee land by registered producers. Third Pane: Average coffee farm size by gender. Fourth Pane: Median hectares of coffee land by gender.

- **Miraftab: urban informal factories with women's labor power: mothers want their daughters to work with women bosses to avoid sexual harassment**





- **Chant: tourist/industrial towns commonly have very high levels of women-led households**  
**3 cities studied: Puerto Vallarta, Leon, Querétaro**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **Murry/White: Oaxaca city: extensive 'reproductive' networks support women's labor outside the home**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- i. **Question: how do households support the income-earning activities of poor women?**

- **Micro-enterprise capital + social capital = successful development**
- i. Key point: micro-loan strategies are successful only where they tap into underlying social structures**
  - ii. Start-up capital: micro-loans popular with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IRDB),**
  - iii. Question: how and under what circumstances are micro-lending strategies successful?**

- i. Recent research has focused upon the role played by social capital. Social capital is a way of thinking about the strength of underlying social networks and mutual support structures within society**
  - a. What is, and what is not social capital?**
  - b. How can it be measured?**
  - c. What, in the Rulfo story might constitute social capital?**