Family and feminine empowerment: income, domestic work and freedom of movement in Chontal women from Nacajuca, Tabasco, Mexico.

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Abstract: Empowerment is defined as the increase in the capacity of women to broaden their options of life and make their own decisions. It can be seen from three different approaches: personal, close relations and collective. Several studies have pointed out the unequal advance of them and the higher difficulty of transforming the dimension of the close relations. This paper analyzes three aspects of such dimension: the possibility of managing a personal income; the capacity of negotiation of the domestic workload and the freedom of movement out of home to perform extra-domestic work. In order to achieve this goal, in-depth interviews were performed on 27 indigenous women who are part of the Regional Fund of Chontal Women from Tabasco (Fondo Regional de Mujeres Chontales de Tabasco) (FRMCh). A typology of the families was made to analyze these three aspects that are according to the composition and the cycle of life of each family. The results demonstrated women’s capacity of to negotiate changes in the management of income and changes in the freedom of movement, although they did not provided data with regard to the re-distribution of the domestic workload. The conclusions are an elaboration on these findings from the perspective of the results obtained in similar studies.

Keywords: empowerment, family, indigenous women

Resumen: El empoderamiento se define como el aumento en la capacidad de las mujeres para ampliar sus opciones de vida y tomar sus propias decisiones. Puede ser visto en tres dimensiones: personal, relaciones cercanas y colectiva. Varios estudios han señalado el desigual avance en éstas y la mayor dificultad de transformar la dimensión de las relaciones cercanas. Este artículo analiza tres aspectos de dicha dimensión: la posibilidad de manejar ingresos propios; la capacidad de negociación de la carga de trabajo doméstico; la libertad de movimiento fuera de casa para realizar actividades extradomésticas. Para lograr este objetivo, se efectuaron entrevistas a profundidad con 27 mujeres indígenas que conforman el Fondo Regional de Mujeres Chontales de Tabasco (FRMCh). Se construyó una tipología de familias para analizar estos tres aspectos de acuerdo con la composición y ciclo de vida de cada familia. Los resultados evidenciaron la capacidad de las mujeres para negociar cambios en el manejo de ingresos y en la libertad de movimiento, pero no en la redistribución del trabajo doméstico. En las conclusiones se reflexiona sobre estos hallazgos a partir de los resultados obtenidos en trabajos similares.

Palabras clave: empoderamiento, familia, mujeres indígenas.

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Introduction

The idea underlying women’s empowerment as a way to promote their development and that of their communities derives from the theoretical trend called Gender in Development (GID) which has existed at least for two decades. GID analyzes the relations of subordination that women experience from men in specific cultural and historical situations. This trend includes the strategic needs of women in the agenda of development; supporting a change in their position of inequality. It argues that the differences of power between men and women are socially constructed and interact with other forms of inequality (class, ethnical group, race, age, sexual preference). In order to create a change, one shall evaluate how gender is related and interconnected with these conditions to configure specific situations (Moser, 1991). GID takes into account economic, political, cultural and personal aspects so that it increases the use and control of the resources by women. It also considers their participation, leadership and management capability in processes of change. In short, it aims at reverting the role of subordination of women both in the private and in the public spheres and advance towards equitable development (Troncoso and Tinoco, 2001).

GID stresses the qualitative dimensions, maybe not the measurable ones of development: autonomy, participative democracy, constitution of women as social subjects who appropriate their own process of change. From the recognition of the triple role of women (in the productive, reproductive and communitarian spheres), GID aims at the bottom-up mobilization in order to put an end to masculine domination; understood as a set of social practices that legitimize and reproduce the subordination of women to men. Such practices are supported by an arbitrary generic division of labor, in which women are assigned the reproductive labor that is not socially estimated; thus limiting their participation in other spheres of labor and power (Bourdieu, 2000). Empowerment is significant to revert this domination, given the fact that it refers to the increase in the capacity of women to define their options of life and make their own decisions (Kabeer, 1999). Empowerment is a strategy of essential change that favors the achievement of alternative visions of women and what is more, for these visions to become a reality within the process of change (León, 1997).
Empowerment as a strategy for change acquired significance in the Fourth World Conference on Women that took place in Beijing in 1995. The Platform for Action derives from this conference and it consists of 12 spheres of concern: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflicts, women and economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and media, women and environment, and girls. Beijing Platform of Action, signed by different governments (among them Mexico) is a programmatic framework created to empower women, and it has become a common reference to achieve its real development in the XXI century (UNDP, 2005).

From the time in which Beijing conference took place, policies of gender equity have been created with the objective of creating institutional support that contributes to achieve it. In the case of Mexico, productive, processing and trade activities have been promoted in groups of women with scarce resources under the assumption that their business contribute to create employment and provide the livelihood of complete families. From this perspective, the microcredit is understood not only as a way to fight poverty, but also one that promotes the empowerment of women (Druschel et al., 2001). According to Mayoux (1997), the capacity of women to contribute to familial income affects in a positive way their social recognition and empowerment.

Women’s empowerment is not an easy task. The term implies power, understood as control over material, intellectual and ideological goods. In order to achieve it, it is necessary to challenge the masculine domination, to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality (family, race, class, religion, educational and institutional processes, health systems and practices, laws and civil codes, political processes, models of development and government institutions) and to increase the access that poor women have to information and material resources which are necessary for subsistence (Batiwala, 1997).

The objective of this paper is to analyze the role of one of the institutions mentioned by Batliwala (the family) in the assistance or inhibiting of the empowerment process of indigenous women who are part of the
Regional Fund of Chontal Women (FRMCh) of the state of Tabasco and which supports the productive activities of indigenous women who have scarce resources. As of today, it is still little what we know about the changes occurring in the conditions of power and autonomy of Mexican women, and on the effects of these changes in the familial dynamic (Casique, 2003). Our analysis aims at providing elements for the rural development from the gender perspective. Rural development cannot occur without women, and the family is essential to assist or inhibit their initiatives and processes of change. We focus on their empowerment process and the autonomy they have to make decisions and perform their activities.

**Conceptual proposal**

*Empowerment in the dimension of the close relations*

Empowerment is a set of processes that increase the control that women have over their own life to increase their self-confidence, internal strength and capacity of organization (Batliwala, 1997; Kabeer, 1999). A significant part of this set of processes is the autonomy that women have to make decisions about their life and, furthermore, to contribute to define the range of options that they have at their reach. This becomes a process in the life of women and it allows them to become aware of the effect that the relations of power have in their existence, providing them with the strength that is necessary to modify them. The autonomy of women can be seen in specific aspects of their daily life: demand and use of contraceptive methods, schooling of their children, their personal health and that of other members of the family, etc (Cacicque, 2003). Women have been historically consigned to the private space. In that private space, they perform activities that are scarcely recognized by society. In order for women to acquire autonomy, it is necessary that they become individuals separated from their maternal and domestic role; Tarrés (2003) calls this an “individuation process”. As long as women are not able to individualize, to take a distance from the social order that subordinates them, they will continue being dependent, that is, they will lack autonomy.

Empowerment has been analyzed from three perspectives: personal (sense of being, trust and individual capacity), close relations (ability to negotiate decisions at the interior of the partnership and the domestic group)
and collective (coordinated work to achieve higher impact in the formal and informal institutions). There are factors that promote and inhibit the process of empowerment. As its name states, the former facilitate empowerment and are a product of the actions of the organization that works with groups of women; whereas the later make it difficult and come from the context where such groups are located (Rowlands, 1997).

Unlike Rowlands, Hidalgo (2002) does not consider that all the driving factors can be a product of the activities of the organization. Support from family, especially that from the partner or husband, is a driving factor in the dimension of the close relations which does not depend on the organization. On the other hand, not all the inhibiting factors come from the context where women are to be found, given the fact that they can also be a result of a negative action of the organization, for instance the decision making process which record low levels of participation or dependence on certain individuals or institutions.

One of the pending topics in the literature on these aspects is the different advance of women in the three dimensions. Rowlands (1997) considers that women who engage in their organization and acquire new skills do not necessarily manage to modify their close relations. That is, empowerment in this sphere is not the inevitable result of the empowerment in the personal and collective dimension. Close relations are the most difficult to change, despite the increasing acknowledgement that feminine empowerment must be complemented with changes in the attitudes and behaviors of men if one wants it to be sustainable (Sweetman, 1997; White, 1997; Zapata et al., 2002).

Three issues stand out in the close relations as a sphere of empowerment: the possibility of women of managing their own income or even saving; their responsibility on domestic work; and their freedom of movement out of the household to perform extra-domestic activities. These three aspects constitute the analysis axis of our material, so that we now provide a brief description of the information reported in other studies.

By and large, women use the money they receive from their partners to satisfy the familial needs in terms of consumption and they feel with little right to use it with other purposes (Benería and Roldán, 1987). Based on this, Agarwal (1999) considers that the access of women to salaried work
allows them to have their own funds, increasing their power of negotiation at the interior of the family and their capacity of survival out of it. Women’s “received contribution” is a factor that determines their power of negotiation at home, contributing to their empowerment (Kabeer, 1998). For instance, rural women from Bangladesh that take part in a program that provides microcredits tend to report an increase in the use of contraceptives; this is due to a higher economic security and freedom of movement (Shuler et al., 1997). In Mexico, the income that women receive from Oportunidades aid program from the government or from their own productive activities provide them more autonomy, capacity of decision, trust and self-confidence (Meza et al., 2002; Vázquez et al., 2002).

Women’s productive activities tend to be accompanied by a double labor shift for them, so it is important to analyze their capacity of negotiation with regard to their domestic non-paid responsibilities. A study performed on rural women from the all the country in which savings and credit banks take part, Zapata et al. (2003) identified lack of control on personal time and the exclusive feminine responsibility on domestic labor as important factors that inhibit their empowerment.

Women’s physical mobility shall also be negotiated, given the fact that in some contexts, women have to “ask” for permission every time they leave the household; either for short or for long periods of time. The limits of the feminine physical mobility derive from the patriarchal vision in which women are considered a property, which has to be under surveillance so that they do not to risk masculine honor. Neighbors, friends and relatives tend to speak badly about a woman who spends long periods out of the household; her place, they consider, is at home and being out of it casts doubt on the authority of her partner. Frequently does the partner forbid the woman to leave the household fearing a supposed feminine infidelity or simply because he does not want to be subject of “comments” by the aforementioned members of the social group. When men forbid women to leave the household, they exercise control on their physical mobility. Their suspicion affects the performance of the latter in projects and, therefore, it inhibits the possibility of being empowered (Zaldaña, 1999). In this case, to “ask” for permission or having restrictions on mobility would be an inhibiting factor of the empowerment.
The indigenous family

In our understanding, a family is a sphere in which people from different gender and generation live together. At its bosom, ties of solidarity are built, relations of power and authority are interwoven, resources are obtained and distributed to meet the basic needs of its members and obligations, responsibilities and rights are defined according to cultural norms and age, gender and position with regard to the blood relationship of its members (Salles and Tuirán, 1998).

Women’s familial responsibilities determine and limit their participation in labor market; that is why family constitutes a space for the reproduction of gender inequalities (Ariza and De Oliveira, 2005). Women and men who form a family do not necessarily have common interests, so power relations and conflicts (open or concealed) are part of the daily family life (Stromquist, 1998).

Indigenous families in the countryside have the characteristic of simultaneously forming units of production and reproduction, that is, they produce the products they consume and use: food, clothes, tools and house utensils. Women were traditionally in charge of the survival labor: house and clothes cleaning, preparation of food, care of the children and domestic animals, production of clothes and other articles of daily use. The integration of women into labor market circuits has implied a quite recent experience in the strategies of survival in the indigenous families. Women have taken on activities that involve the creation of income (production of craftwork, breeding of animals for the market, migration, among others), which have forced a reconstruction of the relations of cooperation and power at the interior of the household (Bonfil and Del Pont, 1999). It is these changes and the resulting or not-resulting feminine empowerment what we will analyze here.

Methodology

An analysis was performed in cooperation with women who are part of FRMCh, which is an association of different organizations whose main objectives are the administration of resources for the financing of profitable and renewable productive projects, the performance of training events for their members; the improvement of the levels of social
wellbeing and the strengthening of the organization of women in their corresponding communities. The fund was created in November 2002, and the civil association was constituted by December 2003. It started with 14 organizations, and it has now 73; they run 104 projects, with 691 members. All the groups that belong to this fund consist of women. FRMCh has grown to become one of the best programs of the Chontal region of Tabasco. This has been so because it supports productive activities of groups of women who have the capacity to create financial profits. FRMCh receives its resources from Program of Indigenous Regional Funds (Programa de Fondos Regionales Indígenas, PFRI), a federal instrument directed to meet the financing needs of indigenous organizations so that they carry out productive activities. PFRI depends on the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, CDI), which recognizes the importance of women in the development of the country and supports their activities through the following courses of action: productive projects with technical, financial and commercial viability; integral formation of women through training and entrepreneurial development; strengthening of the organization of women; and coordination with different public and private programs (CDI, 2006). PFRI’s regulations state that at least 10% of the groups which are supported must consist of women. FRMCh was chosen because it is the only fund in Tabasco solely consisting of women.

CDI’s policy is part of the initiatives created from the Beijing Platform of Action that was previously described. In 2005, UN declared the International Year of Microcredit, under the assumption that it has helped to reduce poverty for many people from the Third World. The idea underlying microcredit is that it represents an efficient strategy to overcome poverty. Likewise, it is believed that it benefits women, providing them with economic autonomy and the opportunity to develop their potential. The amount of resources to which each Regional Indigenous Fund can have access depends on the approved projects, but it cannot surpass a million Mexican pesos per fund. From the total amount of resources allocated, each will have to assign a minimal 30% to support women’s projects. The amount of resources for each approved project will be determined by the General Assembly of each fund, based on kind of activity, economic feasibility, technical specifications, schedule and local or regional impact (CDI, 2006).
In order to collect the information, 27 in-depth interviews were performed with members of the groups supported by the fund and five with their husbands in the summer of 2006. A script with the topics to be researched was prepared to carry on the interviews. They were developed from other works on inhibitors and promoters of empowerment (Hidalgo, 2002; Zapata et al., 2003). In this case, the following were considered: distribution of domestic labor, responsibility in the care of children, support/opposition from the partner on the participation of the member in the group, administration of income, possibilities of saving money, administration of time, alcoholism and gender violence.

The framework of the research was of a qualitative nature. This approach aims at recognizing the meaning that specific phenomena have for the social agents immersed in them. In this case, the phenomenon of our interest was the role of the family to promote or inhibit feminine empowerment. Through the observation and the analysis of the collected testimonials, we figured out the meaning they have for women, and the role of their familial relations in empowerment. In this regard, the selection criterion of the interviewees was not representativeness, but the meaning of their experiences. This kind of study attempts to “construct data” and in this case we wanted to find out the promoters or inhibitors of empowerment in the members based on their own perspectives. The opinions of the 27 women are not to be taken as representative of all the members of the fund, but they shall, instead, help to understand the personal contents of empowerment that takes place when they take part in productive projects.

All 27 women belong to seven groups operating in Nacajuca, the Tabasco municipality with the largest Chontal population, where almost a fifth (18.26%) of the population of all groups supported by the state. All women speak Spanish, and the interviews were performed in said language. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for the codification and analysis using ATLAS Ti. 4.2, this enabled their categorization and establishing a relation among them. The names of the informers were changed to guarantee confidentiality.

Table 1 contains information about the kind of activity of the groups, the number of members in each, as well as the degree of marginalization by town in comparison to others in the municipality and the state. The degree
of marginalization of all the communities is high with the exception of one. The zone already experiences a significant environmental deterioration and one shall also consider that corn sowing is still a common practice, but self-sufficiency in terms of food in the households has already decreased. The region was also known by its fishing capability; however, the amount and abundance of aquatic species has decreased. Job posts are limited: some people are employed in activities related to oil extraction, however at the lower levels of the industry (bricklayers and temporary personnel). Some also work as security guards, drivers or itinerant sellers. Those with a higher schooling level are employed as professionals in public offices or in private companies. On their side, women are in charge of all domestic work, care of children and land production (animals and plants). In order to create an income, some of them do craftwork in ceramics, palm and rush. This activity is promoted through the fund that gave a reason for this paper (Uribe, 2003).

The groups: composition and operation

“Mujeres Unidas del Pastal” (*United women of Pastal*) consists of four members, nevertheless in the beginning (2006) they were eight. Each of them received two pigs in order to raise piglets, which are sold for 300 pesos each. A veterinarian trained them in technical aspects such as cutting the tail and the kind of food that must be provided according to the age. Women fed them three times a day and washed the pigpens in the afternoon. Their profits depend on the number of piglets that each saw had and on how many they can sell. On their side, “La Esperanza” (*The Hope*) was founded in 2004 with eight members, but its number decreased to four as well. They bought three-month old piglets for fattening, and six months later they traded them directly or killed them to sell them as meat, cracklings and fat. They obtained higher profits than the previous groups (500 pesos per piglet), that was probably due to the added value of the product. It is a group that has renewed its loan two times, so it is considered one of the most successful. In both cases pigs are reared in the backyard.

The group called “Silvestre” (*Wilderness*) started in 2004 with eight members, but it has also been reduced to three. The administration of cattle is absolutely different to that from the piglets, given the fact that
the animals are to be found in the lots under the care of the family of the women, especially their husbands. Women perform together the purchasing of food and medicine.

The group “La Voz de los Chontales” (The Voice of the Chontal People) makes craftwork (curtains, bags, fans, tortilla holders, bedrolls, baskets and other recipients) out of palm and rush. It was founded in 2002 with seven members, and they are four now. They all stock up raw materials and finished products, but the secretary is the only person allowed to commercialize and purchase materials such as threads and dyers given the fact that the president is sick. They work on a daily basis from early in the morning up to midday, because the material they use to make the craftwork hardens and breaks with warm weather. Also, Valeria’s Craftwork Workshop (Taller de Artesanías Valeria) created in 2005, is totally dedicated to the elaboration of bags made out of palm and other natural fibers. At first, there were eight members, and nowadays there are four. They work when the Institute for the Promotion of Tabasco’s Craftwork (Instituto para el Fomento de las Artesanías de Tabasco) makes an order, and it provides the products to the network of shops from the government of the state (museums, expos, bus stations and the airport). Each bag takes eight hours to be made and these are distributed in two days.

Elaborating craftwork allow indigenous women to have an income without neglecting their labor posts and obliged fields of attention (household and children). This way, they define in a personal way the amounts and paces of production. However, the final price of the craftwork rarely includes the skills and time invested on their creation, and frequently they omit the cost of raw materials. In spite of this, the manufacturing of craftwork constitutes one of the main sources of income for indigenous women, which has also brought higher economic independence, the development of leaderships and transgress attitudes that challenge the structures of power in their communities (Bonfil and del Pont, 1999).

The group “Las Flores” (The flowers) is one of the smallest. It nowadays consists of three members; in its beginnings (2004) it had six. Each fortnight one of them travels to the city of Villahermosa to purchase the raw material to supply the stationary store and notions store they own. The stationary store is located in the premises that are property of the president of the group. The schedule they cover is from 8 to 17 hours. Finally, the group
“Mujeres de Lucha” (*Fighting Women*) was created in 2002 with six members; it nowadays consists of three. They are also in charge of the business according to a schedule, each member works two days in a row. When the community was visited, it was observed that the shop was almost empty. Profits have decreased in accordance to the decrease in the number of clients; this is due to the creation of new shops in the community.

An obvious question in this case is why all these groups have decrease to a half in number. The answer has to do with the lack of training in organizational, technical and financial aspects of administration; this in turn brings about economic losses in the members.

For instance, “Mujeres unidas…” had a to face the death of two pigs while they were at labor. This occurred before they had obtained any profits. In the case of the group called “Las Flores” a printer that uses an excessive amount of ink and that does not provide them any profit caused them trouble; they later had to face some problems with a photocopier whose fixing caused them loses. “Mujeres en lucha” did not have an adequate dynamics of work; each member was in charge of the shop every week but, according to their sayings, both goods and money were stolen so they had but few articles to sell. This situation delayed payments and some women decided to leave in view of this. Women with a blood relationship or with any other kind of kinship are the ones who tend to remain in the group, so we suppose that they have more possibilities of establishing ways of working and agreements that are accepted by the members.

Once one considers the reduced number of members for each group, it is frequent that all of them obtain a position (president, secretary, treasurer and, sometimes, member). The president is in charge of administering the credit, organizing the payments and representing the members in the council (with the exception of “La Voz de los Chontales”, due to illness); but all women have a role to perform in the meetings and they usually take place once a month. They also have to take on the responsibilities derived from them (purchasing of food, medicines, materials, etc). According to a technician from CDI, the groups receive between ten thousand and four thousand pesos every time a presidential period finishes, and they can receive similar amounts for up to three times, having in mind that the project shall be sustainable after these.
Typology of the families

The families develop in different life cycles that are part of a temporal dimension having as a basis expected events: 1) birth and development of children; 2) education and nurture of them; 3) marriage and/or first employment of the children; 4) the moment when they leave the household to form their own families. Once we read the material collected on the field, we elaborated a typology of families based on the proposal by Arriagada (2004). The key element to belong to one of the three kinds of families that are part of the typology is if there are children and their ages, so the expenses of the familial unit are determined. The resulting classification was the following: 1) families in process of formation (newly married couples and without children); 2) families in expansion (children between 0 and 15 years of age); and 3) consolidated families (with children that are older than 15 years, either living in the same household or without it with their own families).

Table 2 shows the number of families that belong to each category and some additional elements that contribute to characterize them. It is adequate to clarify that the ages of the women of group 1 and 2 are very close, but the main difference between them is that the first group does not have children, whereas the second has them (three in average, most of which live in the same household). There is a significant difference in the age of the women and in the number of born children and those siblings that still live in the household between groups 2 and 3. It is significant that the younger the women, the higher their schooling level.

Families in formation

There are four women in this category. They are 25 years old on average and their schooling level is the highest of all the three categories: first year of high school. There are some who have a technical training or finished high school.

The profits they obtain from their participation in the projects are partly assigned to “household expenses” and help to “for the day”, but they do not save any money:
I haven’t saved anything. It is not enough; firstly we have to pay attention to the payments and yes, one obtains some money for house expenses. That is why we are now about to introduce this two new [pigs], so that we can sell them by December and maybe some money will come (Alma, 28. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

No, I don’t save anything because we don’t earn much. It is just enough to pay the daily expenses (Felicidad, 22. San Isidro, May 2006).

I don’t have any savings, I mean, we do not save because it is not enough now, but I would like to do so. (Maira, 26. Pastal, May 2006).

Husbands work outside the community so that they are absent most of the day and even the week; hence their participation is null in domestic work, or it occurs when “they are at home”:

My husband works outside, that is the way it is at his job, since he is out he does not help me. The whole work is done by the members of the group either here or at home, and he does not tell me not to do it (Maira, 26. Pastal, May 2006).

My husband… he works in Villahermosa and helps me when he is at home (Alma, 28. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

When young, newly married women who don’t have any children, whose husbands are not physically at home during the day report strict restrictions on their freedom of movement. It is important to highlight the role that gossiping plays when controlling women’s activities. The following testimonial demonstrates that gossiping influences the masculine attitude, husbands “distrust”:

At the beginning it was difficult for married women, because their husbands said that they only wasted their time and women who were not part of the group spoke badly about the others, no one knows if this was caused by enviousness, so that their husbands started to distrust them and wondering what they have to do in Villahermosa (Lucía, 27. San Isidro, May 2006).

In her study on the Nahua community from Puebla, Fagetti (2001) retells similar processes. The author points out that the bar, a place only visited by men, is “the space for gossiping, defamation and intrigues, where friendships are woven and enemies are made, where some take advantage and revenge old debts”. In it, “the favorite topic, that which frequently arises in the meetings where there are beers and liquor, is the supposed wife’s betrayal, the most burning topic for a man” (Fagetti, 2001: 297). This
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does not mean that only men spread gossips. In fact, they can come from any member of the family, people of the same group, neighbors or people from the town (Zapata et al., 2003). The problem lies in the fact that when people gossip about women they tend to discredit them,¹ and men cannot overlook the “rumors”, because the masculine honor depends on the good behavior of the women within their families (Ayala, 2006). The following testimonial demonstrates a significant aspect of the gossiping in Nacajuca: it occurs more “if it’s women”, that is, gossiping has specific gender contents:

Yes, there are gossiping as in any place and more if it is women who work, but the important thing is to take into account that these people speak for the sake of it (Alma, 28. Guaytalpa, mayo 2006).

Ninive lives in his husband’s community, but the activities of her project take place in his community of origin. She travels every day to work because his husband does not like “seeing little pieces of garbage” in his house and she has to go back in the afternoon, “before he arrives”:

In my case, my husband does not support me. He works in another municipality and he spends there all day and in the afternoon he wants me to serve him. He sometimes gets angry with me; that is why I come to my grandmother’s and I work here, because if I don’t he gets upset. I estimate his arrival time and clean everything because he gets angry if he sees any little piece of garbage (Nínive, 25. San Isidro, May 2006).

Ninive has absolute responsibility for domestic labor. If she “is delayed” in doing it she cannot go to her grandmothers; she does craftwork at home, but “before her husband arrives”:

If I tell my husband that I have to do something related to the group he gets angry and tells me “are you leaving?” He does not like it very much, but I go to my grandma’s by bike and I work there. Only if I’m late I do it here, but before he arrives (Nínive, 25. San Isidro, May 2006).

Nínive defends her right to leave the household, she argues that she only leaves to see her grandparents, “he knows that that is the only place I go to”: My husband gets upset. I don’t know if he mistrusts but when I leave I only go to my grandparent’s hose. He knows that that is the only place I go to, but he doesn’t like me leaving the house frequently (Nínive, 25. San Isidro, May 2006).

¹ For example, gossiping on women that sell in African markets represent them as sexually lax and prone to spend their money eating and drinking with unknown men (Pietila, 1999).
The other women are not in such a critical situation, but they also have to develop strategies in order to remain at home or to leave in company of another member of the family. Alma’s advantageous position is that she had taken part in the group before she got married; in spite of this, she has to “notify” her husband when she has organized a meeting at home and when she has to leave. In Felicidad’s case, she is “almost always” accompanied by her husband:

I don’t ask for permission, my husband knows my job. He knew I did it before we got married and the meetings are always here, in my house. When I have to leave I notify him so that he does not worry about me (Alma, 28. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

I don’t frequently leave the house because of the group activities. No, everything is that way in the community. I only come here to notify about the meetings, but when I leave it has to be with him [her husband] (Felicidad, 22. San Isidro, May 2006).

Families in expansion

Nine women are part of this group. On average, they finished primary school and have three children, generally in schooling age. The profits they obtain from their projects are mostly invested in needs related to subsistence; such as food, clothes, cleaning products and school materials:

We need coffee, salt, lime, soap, sugar, corn, everything. This is so in order to clean the house [we have to] buy a mop, to buy the food, any given reason, because we buy everything here. We only receive water and that is because the river is close (Basilia, 32. Tecoluta, May 2006).

My children, they are at school. I take the money for their clothes, shoes, backpacks or for whatever necessary, for the food whatever necessary in the house. You know that at home one needs from salt to lime (Benita, 24. Pastal, May 2006).

You know how many things teachers ask at school, before the course is over they provide a list and one has to get everything so that children have what they need and progress. If we didn’t have the chance to go to school, we shall at least make a sacrifice for them to do so (Iris, 22. Pastal, May 2006).
Out of the nine members, less than a half (four) saves money. This is the case of Catalina and Martina who save for “emergencies” or illnesses of their children or to invest on their business:

I saved a bit there, but I don’t know how much. I saved a bit. It can help us in case of an emergency of the children or any illness. You know those things come without warning and it is good to have savings (Catalina, 32. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

To tell the truth, yes, here we have a savings bank. For example if we don’t have money we take it from it. I save from the money I earn. I participate and so does my daughter, but we save her money. We don’t touch it. From the earnings we obtain we invest on the stationery shop (Martina, 30. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

Other studies (Hidalgo, 2002; Zapata et al., 2003) have reported that rarely do women spend money on themselves. The ambiguous response that Cecilia provided us when asked about this is an example. “If there remains any money in our family” (this a plural statement and we don’t know the people that is included in it) “she buys something for her”, but, she adds, “and for my children”. We quote:

If there remains any money, I buy something for me and my children, but I wouldn’t call it savings. It is barely enough, but I do buy something for me (Cecilia, 29. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

Beatriz sets herself at the end of the priorities: she buys something for her “after she has paid the debts”, “if some money remains for us” (once more in plural). From the products she buys in Villahermosa, only the perfume would be considered sumptuary:

You see, we don’t earn much, but when we have some money left after having paid the debts, and if I lack of something I buy clothes, a perfume, shoes. You know that we have to go to the meetings of the fund in Villahermosa, one buys the things one lacks. We don’t have to expect the husband to provide us with the money, and if there is any it is for the house. This way I receive some help for my needs (Beatriz, 26. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

In spite of this, the testimonial demonstrates the value Beatriz assigns to “not expecting the husband” to provide her with money to “buy the things one lacks”. She has the power to make the decision on what she needs. Not only does her income contribute to have more “for the house”, but also for her to buy her own “things”.

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The age of the children imposes a specific dynamic in this kind of families, given the fact that they need to be cared for and they cannot be left alone at home. Consuelo argues the following:

I sometimes bring the youngest with me to the meetings, but you know we are told not to bring children in. But who should I leave him with if the other children go to school. I don’t know if you noticed that I arrived late to the meeting yesterday, but I don’t have anyone to help me. I have to finish all the work before they and my husband come back and eat (Consuelo, 28. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

Women perform most of the domestic work. The collaboration of the husbands, if any, takes place in caring for the children. This confirms what García and De Oliveria (2007) said, pointing out that, when Mexican men share the domestic work, they generally take part in the care of children and in works considered masculine, which require less hours of daily work, for example, doing reparations to the house or fetching wood. The following testimonial coincides with this perspective:

More than anything [my husband helps me] to take care of the children; for example feeding them because this labor is something for us women, but sometimes he does help to wash the clothes and feed the pigs (Minerva, 35. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

Ausencia’s husband “helps” when he “really has time”:

I help her. I take care of the children at home. Sometimes when I have time I help her. With the pigs I don’t, I almost don’t help her because I don’t like those animals (Camilo, 35, Ausencia’s husband. Pastal, May 2006).

Cecilia’s testimonial is especially interesting. Her husband has “a higher level of education”, so that he realizes that her work in the group implies “responsibility”. But her husband only works in the care of the children and “sometimes” he sells in the stationary store. He performs work that is socially recognized as masculine, such as as building the premises. That is, his higher level of education does not necessarily make him more prone to gender equity. We quote:

My husband studied and so did I; so we have a higher level of education and he knows that being in group is a responsibility, and he does help me here at home and takes care of the children. He also helps me sometimes with the stationary store; he even helped us to build the premises (Cecilia, 29. Olcuatitan, May 2006).
In fact, the adult women of the family (mother-in-laws, sisters-in-law) are the ones who collaborate in a more steady way. The testimonials suggest so:

My mother-in-law helps me, and when my husband is here, he takes care of the child... I leave the animals in charge of my mother-in-law (Iris, 22. Pastal, May 2006).

My daughter does help me sometimes, and my mother-in-law or my sister-in-law help me in the care of the youngest (Catalina, 32. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

Benita “tells them what to do”, and when her husband is not at home “because he works outside” then her mother-in-law “helps” her:

I do any kind of job and my husband knows that if I have to leave it is because of the commitment I have with the group, I don’t ask any permission to him, I let him know that I am leaving and that is all. I tell them what to do, and when he is not at home because he works outside, my mother-in-law helps me (Benita, 24. Pastal, May 2006).

As one can see in Benita’s testimonial, women of this kind of families have higher freedom of movement than those from the previous group. Both she and the three women quoted in the following part do not ask for permission to leave. Iris’ case is outstanding, because she had to do so in the past:

He has to give me permission to do the job because I had a commitment. I explain him what I will be doing and who I am going with, so that he allows me to leave (Minerva, 35. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

No, regarding the permission I don’t have any problem. My husband takes care of the little girl. He helps me, he remains at home because the rest go to school. He has to feed them while I go to do the job (Beatriz, 26. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

Yes, in the past I had to ask for permission, but now I just tell him the day in which I have to leave with the group and he tells me to go, to do so, and he takes care of the child and watches for the pigs. He helps me and that is better because he knows I do this as a job and that it is one more source of help for us. Yes, helps me to take part in the group (Iris, 22. Pastal, May 2006).

Women justify their absences from the household arguing that what they do is “work”, they are not “behaving badly”, that is, their activities, although out of home, do not set at risk their respect. That notion seems to be shared by their husbands, who “trust in them”.
My husband trusts me, no one would believe I am behaving badly, but maybe some people still think of things that do not exist, what we do is to work (Martina, 30. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

No, there is not any problem. In fact I work and I have to leave. I work, well, help the accountant of CDI in Villahermosa. I help him there and my husband trusts me because he knows I go there to work (Cecilia, 29. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

He allows me to go. He trusts me, he tells me “if you want, you can go” (Benita, 24. Pastal, May 2006).

In the following testimonial not only does the opinion of the husband counts, but also that of the daughters, whose respect shall also be protected by the mother:

Everything is ok and in order… he and my daughters know that if I leave is because of my job and my husband trusts me (Catalina, 32. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

The discourse of the respectable woman who only leaves the household to work also helps to face the “critics” from the extended family:

You know that there will always be criticisms from the family, but that is the way it is in little towns. People want to know everything one does, but the only thing we do is working and we receive some help from that and make progress (Catalina, 32. Guaytalpa, May 2006).

Unlike Nínive’s husband, the partners of these women don’t “get upset” because of their extra-domestic activities. One does not have to organize the meetings at home or leave in company of someone. But women’s discourse shows us the invisible, but well-known limits of their freedom of movement: they leave home, but in order to work. Some, such as Minerva, have to explain “what they will be doing” and “who with”. Some others do not negotiate the permission in a formal way; however, the opinion of their husbands is more important than theirs: “He allows me to go out… he tells me, if you want, you can go”, argues Benita. Even with this, women demonstrate a higher power of negotiation in comparison with the freedom of movement of the previous group.

What causes these differences? The answer lies in the testimonials themselves. Firstly, women take on a responsibility when they belong to a
group, and this responsibility is not only with the group but with the whole community. As it was mentioned above, women are criticized because they take part in extra-domestic activities, and they probably want to demonstrate their capacity to work and to make the criticisms disappear. The second reason for the “permission” not to be an important topic within the couple is of a more practical nature: working in the group “is one more help source”, as Iris states, in the familial expenses. We must bear in mind that she uses the profits in the education of her children. It seems then, that this group of men is more realist regarding the significance of feminine income in the maintenance of the household; in Benita’s case, it was her husband who decided that she had to take part in the group (she would have preferred another one):

In my case, my husband was the one who suggested us forming the group and he supported us when we were doing the administrative work for the fund, but I would have liked to take part in a sewing group, but I do any kind of job (Benita, 24. Pastal, May 2006).

In any case, despite the fact that women do not formally ask for “permission”, the discourse implying that they only leave the household to do work indicates that the possibility of doing it only to be relaxed or to have some time for themselves is out of their possibilities. Their duties (in this case, economic and social prestige) are more important. They are women who have redefined their gender roles, but they continue considering themselves, above all, mothers whose domestic responsibilities do not change.

**Consolidated families**

Consolidated families are the most numerous in the study: 14 out of the 27 interviewed members belong to this category. They are 51 years old on average and have a much lower education level in comparison with the rest: third grade of primary school. They have 4.4 children on average, but only 2.6 of them live at home. Their partners have also very low education levels, most of them work in agriculture. The income produced by the women is used for the basic familial expenses:
You see as my husband is a farmer, what one earns is to be spent, because one has to spend on the children who are at school and also on the means of support of our house if my husband does not have a job. He works as a farmer, but you know there is nobody to pay him there and we take from it for the expenses of our house (Sabrina, 50. FRMI, June 2006).

At least a third (four out of 14) has the possibility to save, due to the fact that “there is much to be spent on” and they “do not earn much”:

If one has got money, one buys things. There is no chance to save, we need many things, but I would like to have some money saved, just in case (Crecencia, 55. Tecoluta, May 2006).

There is neither individual nor group saving, but it would be good if we had enough to invest in other projects and have more sources of help (Mariana, 40. Pastal, May 2006).

We don’t have any money left to save. There was a woman who said that we were craftswomen and that we ought to have some savings, but we don’t have enough for that. Maybe if there was enough material or if we had where to sell it or if there was a profit we would be able to. It is not that way now and that is why we do not have neither individual nor group savings, because the other partners told us not to save because we do not have enough profits (Aide, 66. San Isidro, May 2006).

When they save any money, they use it also in the familiar expenses: “to support my children”:

I do save. I benefited from that, it is also used to support my children, because sometimes they are also asked for cooperations at school. Sometimes they need something and I take from my saved money, that is why I like working with that (Angela, 37. FRMI, June 2006).

Unlike women from the previous group, where mothers- and sisters-in-law helped with the domestic load, in this case, it is the daughters and daughters-in-law who do it. The following testimonial shows the qualitative difference between the work of the daughters (who “help in everything”) and that of the husband who “also helps sometimes”:

My daughters help in everything, my husband also helps sometimes, he supports me (Carolina, 42. FRMI, June 2006).
The testimonial from Aide’s husband is particularly interesting because his concept of “help” lies in allowing her wife to “become better” by taking part in work related to the project, but he does not necessarily share the domestic work with her. There is not much clarity in that regard, except from saying that “everyone in the family helps her” and that he especially helps her “with anything that needs to be done”:

I do help her. Of course, if she wants something I do it, even if I get tired because my mother is already old. Everyone in the family helps her. It’s good we all help each other! Because that way the work is easier. I do it to help her. I see that there are husbands who don’t help their wives to become better and they prevent it. I help her with the housework. I help here with anything that needs to be done (Catalino, 65. Aide’s husband. San Isidro, May 2006).

The expression “even if I get tired” sheds light on the moment in which Aide’s husband stops “helping” her: when he starts to feel tired. Since domestic work is not considered as a masculine responsibility, her husband can stop doing it when he gets tired. Aide, on the contrary, has to do it even if she is tired. In another testimonial on her domestic labor, her husband is at the end of the list of “people who help”. In fact, it is a list according to the gender of the members of the family, because the first of them are women (regardless of their age) and then men:

My daughter-in-law, my granddaughters, my son and my husband, they all help me here in the house. Either with the house chores or by bringing water and in the care… the material that we use for the work because it is has to be handled with care (Aide, 66. San Isidro, May 2006).

Needless to say that the expression “they all help me here in the house” indicates that Aide continues considering herself as the only person in charge of the domestic labor. Other people “help” her, but she does not receive the collaboration in the sense that, since they live under the same roof, the responsibilities for the social reproduction shall also be shared. Gudelia’s testimonial describes the stress implied in assuming new responsibilities without having equilibrium in the load of work at home:

As I sometimes have too much to do, I sometimes feel bad. That is something I had never felt, yes, the truth is that before taking part in the group I had never felt stressed or something. It is maybe due to the activities, because I have one more concern… It wasn’t that way in the past, because I was at
home, I waited for my husband to bring everything, now it’s me who has to look for the things and make an effort and not to leave this place because I have taken on a compromise (Gudelia, 60. San Simón, May 2006).

As in the previous group, the possibility of leaving without “bothering” their partners and without asking for permission exists, but one finds in their discourse also the image of the respectable woman who is attending “something related to the group”, “or something else”:

In my case, my husband trusts me. When I go out my husband stays at home, he knows I am attending something related to the group or something else. Trust is important because there are husbands who don’t want their wives to go out and if we don’t, you see, we are abandoned and far from everything (Florencia, 45. Olcuatitan, May 2006).

He provided me support, yes, he supports me. Just as the other members, their husbands support them, because they know it is something related to the group. I just let him know when I have a meeting and he arrives early to remain here at home while the meeting takes place (Pilar, 40. San Simón, May 2006).

No, there is nothing about that [arguing about her absence from the household] because we get on well and he supports me in the work and when I go out alone, it is a meeting (Nancy, 47. Tecoluta, May 2006).

Men’s discourse also emphasizes the fact that women go to work and therefore they can leave:

My wife, I tell her to go. She takes the bus, that’s how she leaves. I know she does things related to her work in the group. If I as a husband and as family don’t support her, who is going to do it? I do trust her. I know she is working (Catalino, 65, Aide’s husband. San Isidro, May 2006).

Only Aide provides an idea of the possibilities on the meaning of going out. We shall bear in mind that Catalino, her husband, is in favor of her “becoming better”, so that when she was younger he encouraged her to take part in events out of Tabasco because that way she can “get to know people”

I don’t go out very frequently now because I am sick, but in the past he didn’t tell me not to go. He supports me. I have even been to Mexico and to Morelos to attend a meeting of midwives and yes, he also says that I can get to know people (Aide, 66. San Isidro, May 2006).
María de los Ángeles Pérez Villar and Verónica Vázquez García. *Family and feminine empowerment: income, domestic work and freedom of movement in Chontal women from Nacajuca, Tabasco, Mexico.*

We shall clarify that Aide’s higher freedom of movement does not necessarily indicates empowerment, but it can be more a result of the social milieu in which all these women are. There is, in an indigenous society, a hierarchy that provides older women certain power to delegate work to other women who are younger (daughters, daughters-in-law). Older women, also, do not represent discomfort for the masculine honor, because they are not considered sexually attractive; their possibilities of leaving the household without causing gossiping and feeling of suspicion decrease. They have several children and even grandsons, and that creates even prestige in familiar and communitarian events. Maybe that is the reason why the group of women with consolidated families was the most numerous in our sample.

**Conclusions**

Empowerment implies a change in women, this change results in their personal benefit and that of their communities. It means the acquisition of power to undertake projects in cooperation with other people. Empowerment in women is an essential part of rural development, this is so based on the fact that processes of change start in the grassroots, in the needs of the population. In the process of organization to meet their needs, women acquire capabilities, knowledge, power of administration and decision.

The objective of this research was to analyze the role of the family in promoting or inhibiting the process of empowerment in Chontal women from Nacajuca, Tabasco. The emphasis on the family derived from a revision of the literature, which points out the different degree of advance of women in the three dimensions of empowerment (personal, close relations and collective), being the close relations the most difficult to transform.

Several studies locate the creation of income as one of the elements that indicate empowerment. In this paper, we analyzed it in relation with other two: feminine responsibility on domestic tasks and freedom of movement of women. Provided that family dynamics depend on the cycle of life of the family, we prepared a typology to discuss the results.

The first group of the typology consisted of four women without children. There exists a generic traditional division of labor in these families. In it, men are the main providers and women are in charge of domestic
work. The income they create through their participation in the projects supported by the fund contribute to the family expenses, but it does not allow them to save. Women have scarce power of negotiation to defend their right to create income; in this respect Ninive’s case is outstanding. The description is of couples without children, recently united, where women’s freedom of movement is severely restricted.

The second group consisted of nine women. About half of them (four) have capacity to save. In two of them, it was also possible to perceive advances in their freedom of movement, essentially due to two reasons: their participation in the groups, women have taken on commitments with the whole community and their husbands have realized that their income contributes with the family expenditure. However, feminine exclusivity in domestic work was the area where fewer changes were seen. It is other adult women (mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law) and not their partners the ones who perform the tasks that remain as pending when the members go out to perform their work.

Finally, the third group included 14 women. Among them there is less capacity to save due to the fact that their husbands work in the agricultural sector. As in the previous group, some men consider it positive that their wives partake of the projects, but that does not necessarily imply that their domestic workload is shared: women are still considered the only responsible for such work. Due to family composition, daughters and daughters-in-law (not anymore mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law) are the ones that do the pending activities. As in the case of the previous group, there are also advances in freedom of movement in the sense that their absences do not cause discomfort to their partners, this is so as long as they occur in the framework of the activities related to the group.

From all the women who were interviewed, two provided signs of new gender identities, that is, the demonstrated their capacity to negotiate changes in their close relations: Beatriz and Aide. The former is the only person in the sample who provided specific examples of products that she bought for her. She demonstrated that she has a power to decide on her income and expressed satisfaction for having them. Our results coincide with those provided by Chablé et al. (2007), which mention that poverty frequently functions as a straitjacket that gives few possibilities of maneuver
to women; most of their income is used to cover the basic needs of the family. That is the case of the majority of women in this research project and when they have other options to spend, such as Beatriz, the women’s position in the household and the conception that they have on themselves improves noticeably.

On her side, Aide spoke of the personal benefits derived from her freedom of movement: the possibility of getting to know new people. Her testimonial clearly demonstrates that she and Catalino (her partner) see it as a positive fact, highlighting again, the significant role that men play in promoting the empowerment process of their partners. However, Aide belongs to the category of consolidated families, where women who are older gain more freedom of movement, a reason to take her testimonial with certain caution.

The rest of the women justified their absences from their households only in terms of the commitments with the group. However, their discourse with regard to their absences already constitutes a negotiation tool, because by means of it, they redefine the traditional gender roles. They are not mothers who remain in the household in charge of the children, they are now women who go out of the household to create an income. That is, their responsibilities are expanded, they are expanded to other spheres, which necessarily confront them with other realities that, at the same time, make them reconsider—again and in a continuous way—their gender roles. That is why women insist on taking part in their projects, despite they might create small incomes. That is why when they are asked about the benefits derived from their participation they all mention the new knowledge acquired, be it technical, related to the organizational process and the administration of the resources or simply life experiences. In other words, leaving the household is an open and unknown field that women explore feeling their way and with caution, but it is also one which they hardly want to abandon. In this part we coincide again with Chable et al. (2007) when they point out that any project that favors the acceptance of feminine salaried work or one that promotes the creation of markets for their products will improve the position of women at the interior of the family, that is, it will contribute to their empowerment.
Out of the three areas that we studied (income, domestic labor and freedom of movement), the only which did not record any change was the second. These results coincide with those from other studies, especially with the results of Vázquez et al. (2002), who identified the difficulty to achieve advances in the redistribution of domestic work among women and their partners as one of the most significant obstacles for empowerment. In our study, women also demonstrated the impossibility to negotiate the domestic load of work, and it is other women (mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, daughters, daughters-in-law) who cover the vacuum that they leave. Gudelia’s testimonial reflects a topic that is rarely considered in empowerment studies: the stress caused by taking on new responsibilities without achieving changes in other areas. Women of the rural areas have a heavy workload and they frequently live in poverty conditions. It is a pending task to attentively estimate the impact of new responsibilities in their lives, considering that they are already difficult.

Why is it so complicated to negotiate domestic work? Under which circumstance could one achieve more advances in this area? An essential part of the answer is to be found in the study of masculinities, given the fact that the resistance of men to loss privileges is a significant inhibiting factor for empowerment. It is clear that they provide benefits from the changes reported in the other two areas that we studied here (income and freedom of movement) and that their adaptation to the new reality of women who work outside the household is not as problematic. Feminine income benefits the whole family; allowing women to go out to produce it (NB: only to create them) is not a great offence. In contrast, it is a great one to assume in an equal way domestic work, because that implies to reconsider the whole daily life and the definition of the masculine role inside the household. Men need to undergo a process of identity change to reach the point where they take the same level of responsibility women take in the workload of social reproduction. It is still a pending task to analyze the elements that further research can provide to this process of change.
Appendix

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewed members</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Name of the group</th>
<th>Kind of business</th>
<th>Degree of marginalization</th>
<th>Degree of marginalization (2005)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>State Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>San Isidro</td>
<td>La Voz de los Chontales</td>
<td>Manufacturing of craftwork</td>
<td>M E D M E D</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Pastal</td>
<td>Mujeres Unidas del Pastal</td>
<td>Swine rearing</td>
<td>I I U U M</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Olcuatitan</td>
<td>Las Flores</td>
<td>Stationary and lace shop</td>
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<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Taller Artesanías &quot;Valeria&quot;</td>
<td>Manufacturing of craftwork</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mujeres de Lucha</td>
<td>Community shop</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>San Simón</td>
<td>Silvestre</td>
<td>Bovine rearing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Esperanza</td>
<td>Swine rearing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Consejo</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td></td>
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Source: Created based on data from field work, March-May 2006; CTREIG (2008).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of family</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
<th>Average age of the women</th>
<th>Average schooling (in years)</th>
<th>Average of sons and daughters</th>
<th>Average of sons and daughters living in the household</th>
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<td>Families in formation</td>
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<td>Families in expansion</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Consolidated families</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>Total/average general</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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Source: Created based on data from field work, March-May 2006
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