

TOBATI:
TRADITION AND CHANGE IN A PARAGUAYAN TOWN

BY

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During the many years I worked with the Peace Corps and with private business in Paraguay, I made many close friends, met many people, and made contact with many institutions in both the governmental and private sectors. When I returned to Paraguay to embark on the present study, I was grateful that those people were there to greet me and help me in so many ways. I often prevailed upon the kindness and patience of old friends and acquaintances, as much for camaraderie as for assistance in my work. Due to the help of many individuals, I bypassed much of the red tape and bureaucratic "channels" (truly the bane of researchers in Latin American countries) that otherwise would have made life so much more difficult and less pleasurable.

I was especially happy to see old friends and colleagues among the Paraguayan staff of the Peace Corps as well as the directors and

staff of MONITOR S.A. with whom I worked for four years. At the Peace Corps office, my close friends Ing. Antonio Dacak and (*compoblano*) Pedro Souza never failed to meet me with ice cold *tereré* and stimulating conversation. Both men are *campesinos* in fact and in heart and never failed to offer insights into what it is that makes things tick in rural Paraguay. John McClosky, assistant director of the Peace Corps's training center in Areguá, was also a source of not only penetrating observations, but material support as well. At MONITOR, Dr. Alfredo Ratti and Arminda Ramírez remained close friends who were likely to declare any event occasion for an asado, or Paraguayan barbeque, and rally the staff of the organization for a morale booster at propitious times.

I was once again welcomed at the Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos (CPES), a private research institution for social research that fills an enormous gap in Paraguayan studies because of the paucity of government support for sociological studies in the universities. The directors of the institution, Drs. Domingo Rivarola and Graziella Corvalán, both eminent figures in Paraguayan studies, generously provided office space, archival access, and practical assistance even as they struggled for scarce resources themselves.

There has been a dramatic increase in research, scholarship, and writing among a dynamic group of younger individuals in Paraguay. I noticed, above all, that Paraguayan intellectuals tend to differ from their North American colleagues in that they are very much more committed to praxis, in connecting scholarship with actual experience. These are people who are often difficult to locate in their offices because they are more likely to be far from the

comforts of the city in order to glean essential data at its source--directly from the people. This kind of research may be much more critical for Paraguayans who lack access to the marvelous resources in basic data and comparative material available in other parts of the world, but it is clear that these people are dedicated to the proposition that knowledge is best learned from direct experience rather than digested whole from anonymous sources.

Among these people, I especially benefitted from the companionship, generosity, and criticism of Dr. Ramón Fogel, director of a new research and action organization called the Centro de Estudios Rurales Interdisciplinarios. Other interested scholars in the country who were generous with their time included Miguel Chase-Sardi, Daniel Campos, and Oleg Vysokolán, as well as Digno Brítez in the social action section of the Comité de Iglesias.

There is a close group of Paraguay aficionados and expatriates in this country often referred to as the "Paraguayan Mafia" and there is a small but thriving contingent of that Mafia who transported the tereré custom to Gainesville. Without those friends it would have been a much lonelier place for a Paraguayanist, so I would like to thank Jody and Cathy Stallings (who introduced me to Gainesville), Peter Cronkleton, and Jon Dain and Karen Kainer, who all provided an opportunity for me to talk freely about my favorite subject. Other friends of the "Mafia" in Washington, D.C., who provided valuable help during the course of this project included Frank O'Hara (former Director of the Peace Corps in Paraguay), Kate Raftery, Mark Hathaway, and Paul Davis.

I was certainly no less fortunate in the support and guidance I enjoyed at the University of Florida. The individuals on my graduate committee, chaired by Dr. Maxine Margolis, have always been a source not only of knowledge, but of inspiration. Dr. Margolis has been exceedingly patient throughout the ordeal of writing this dissertation, and without her consistent encouragement, it might never have been completed. Many thanks are due to Drs. Marianne Schmink, Helen Safa, Michael Moseley, Marvin Harris, and Murdo MacLeod for many years of support, guidance, instruction, and criticism. All of these people have convinced me of the value of anthropology as a discipline, and the history of social change in Latin America as a subject. Also, I was exceedingly fortunate to have known Dr. Charles Wagley during his lifetime. It was thanks mainly to his personal encouragement and support that I embarked upon this project, and I join his many students and colleagues in my very fond memories of this great scholar and gentleman.

I am no less indebted to all my fellow basement-dwellers, *compañeros* and colleagues in the Anthropology department. Only one's friends and fellows can truly understand and appreciate the high points and low points of a graduate career and dissertation experience. Also, as sources of knowledge and insights they are as valuable as any resource the University has to offer. The list of people who have helped me with their friendship and sympathy during these years is too lengthy to mention each of them by name, but I trust they know who they are and will accept my thanks.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude, however, to Bryan Byrne, a fellow anthropology student who had the dubious luck of living

next door to me in Gainesville as I was completing this dissertation. Bryan was exceedingly generous with his time and expertise, especially in terms of data processing. He was endlessly patient with my requests for technical assistance, and also served as a forthright and capable critic of the written work. He and Nathalie Lebón were a constant source of encouragement, but their nearby presence also offered a convenient place of escape when escape was clearly indicated.

Upon returning from Paraguay I was fortunate to find work in the Map and Image Library of the University of Florida, surely a congenial place for an anthropologist! Dr. Helen Jane Armstrong, the Map Librarian, and Mil Willis, Archivist, were both extremely helpful in adjusting their own busy schedules to my needs, as well as in acquiring Paraguayan materials for the collection. I would also like to acknowledge the help of Richard Scholz, a student employee in the Map Library, who created the maps for this dissertation. I also received help from the department for Spain, Portugal, and Latin America (SPLAT) of Watson Library, at the University of Kansas. Shelley Miller, the Director of the collection, was always helpful in making the extensive collection of Paraguayan materials at Kansas available to me.

Finally, I express my deepest thanks to the great people of the town of Tobatí, Paraguay, who welcomed me into their town and into their lives. I admire them and thank them as much for their patience as well as for their helpful friendliness during the nearly eighteen months I was their neighbor. Once again, there are so many people who I remember, and who were so generous with their time,

that it would be impossible to name them all. I was welcomed into a group of close friends who drank *tereré* or cold beers at the *copetín* of Luis and Mirta Morales de Ramos. The little bar was located directly on the main street and near the church, where we could catch the best view or else get the freshest gossip of everything that happened in town. It was also the best place for heated debates on social issues with my friend Luis Baltazar (Nene) Macchi, for we could get an idea of public consensus from an audience of very vocal participants.

Ñata Rivarola, Armando Rivarola, and their four wonderful children made me feel like part of their family. Each person in that very engaging family gave me a completely different and candid view of the ups and downs of everyday life in Tobatí. I would often leave their house only to stop by and chat with José and Angélica Zaracho de Finestra, who were especially sensitive to the civic conscience of the town. José's mother and aunt were close friends of the Services's over forty years ago, and they loved to tell me about the Tobatí of earlier times.

In a country where everyone seems to know everyone else, I was not surprised that a very close friend in Asunción had a *compadre* in Tobatí. Thus, I met Silvestre (Nene) Ortega, a very thoughtful and wise man who was a wonderful source of information about local government, politics, and business affairs. During my many conversations with Nene over the ubiquitous *tereré*, he never said an unkind or critical word about anyone, but simply explained how it was that things worked and got done in the town.

Finally, three especially generous and friendly people were invaluable sources of information. The justice of the peace, Prof. José Zaracho, and the young and socially conscious village priest, Pa'i Simón Rolón opened the considerable archival sources under their particular care, and welcomed me into their work places. I am especially grateful, however, to César Ortega, the *profesor* of physical education at the *Colegio*, who worked closely with me in completing so many interviews and gathering data. To all of these people, and many more, I owe thanks, and I can only hope that this final work does nothing to betray their trust and friendship.

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Tobatí, a village in rural Paraguay, was the subject of a community study by anthropologists Elman and Helen Service in 1948. The results of that study were published by the University of Chicago Press in 1954 as *Tobatí Paraguayan Town*. In their monograph, the Services characterized the town as "typical" of rural Paraguayan communities based on a peasant-type economy and conservative social traditions. They also offered proof that, contrary to popular belief, the ethnic character of rural Paraguayans was not "Indian"; rather, it was an adaptation of lower-class peninsular Spanish culture.

The present work is a longitudinal study showing the most significant ways that the town of Tobatí has changed in the forty

years since the first anthropologists were there. Employing a cultural materialist paradigm, the study examines changes in modes of production and associates those changes with the emerging economic, demographic, technological, and environmental characteristics of Paraguay in the context of developmentalism, or "modernization" of traditional societies.

The text of the study embeds the contemporary history of the town (during the past forty years) within the broader history of the Paraguayan nation and state to emphasize the evolutionary character of Paraguayan society. The first part of the work shows how the town of Tobatí evolved within the national context, from Indian town providing prebendary labor to Spanish and mestizo colonials, to "Free town of Indians" when the town served as a labor reserve, and finally to a "typical" peasant farming community characterized by subsistence agriculture and petty commodity exchange.

The final chapters of the study show how the peasant economy that served as the basis of the community has all but disappeared during the past twenty years. The demise of that way of life is linked to the integration of the national economy with regional development schemes, combined with increased population densities in the local area. At present, farming is a very minor part of the town's economy compared to a growing brick and ceramics industry which now employs a majority of the town's working people. Although the industry began with noncapitalist petty commodity production based on household labor, it is being replaced by capitalist enterprises employing large amounts of wage labor and more sophisticated technologies. Changes at this fundamental level,

in turn, redound throughout the community and affect family and household structure and organization, patterns of migration, and social and political relationships.

The study concludes with an examination of shared ideologies associated with behaviors, and a consideration of the origins of prevalent beliefs and behaviors. Seemingly illogical beliefs can be explained in coherent terms by examining the various options available to individuals. However, the conservative nature of traditional behaviors and ideological systems may act as a drag on the Tobateños as they attempt to meet the demands of new ways of making a living. To the extent that working people in the town strive to maintain precapitalist social relations while new modes of production tend to predominate in the local political economy, they undermine their own position in the social life of the town. However, further changes in prevailing beliefs and behavior are likely to occur as traditional forms of production are increasingly subsumed by economic forces associated with modernization.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In late 1948, Elman Service and his wife, Helen S. Service, settled in at the small rural village of Tobatí, in Paraguay. Elman Service was completing his doctoral dissertation in anthropology at Columbia University and chose Tobatí as a research site because, in terms of a Paraguayan community, "Tobatí came the closest to being representative" (Service and Service 1954: xviii). The results of the Services's work were eventually published by the University of Chicago Press in 1954 as *Tobatí: Paraguayan Town*.

The Services were not so clear as to why they chose the country of Paraguay for their research, but offer an important clue in stating that "this would be the first anthropological field study in a country which is comparatively unknown to the social sciences" (1954: xix). It is also probable that the authors were strongly influenced by Dr. Julian Steward, a mentor of Elman Service's who had visited Paraguay and was at the time deeply involved in editing the monumental five-volume *Handbook of South American Indians*. In his study of South American indigenous populations, Steward was curious about the fact that Paraguay shared certain hallmarks of an Indian society (e.g., high level of cultural homogeneity and the near-universal use of the indigenous Guaraní language) yet, as only Steward recognized, was apparently not inhabited by Indians.

This is the kind of problem that would likely intrigue an anthropologist, and the Services attacked the riddle with gusto. Paraguay was almost universally assumed to be a nation of Indians, but after a seven-month stay in Tobatí, the Services gathered evidence that would cripple, if not wholly destroy, the "Guaraní myth" (Steward 1954: v). The Services provided a plausible, if incomplete, argument explaining the persistence of the Guaraní language in Paraguay and the high degree of cultural homogeneity in the population, but concluded that virtually every other aspect of rural Paraguayan culture was derived from European antecedents with little or no survival or influence of other indigenous elements.

Apart from examining the "Guaraní myth," the Services had the overall objective of providing the first comprehensive ethnographic study of a population largely ignored and misunderstood by the international community of scholars. With this in mind, they turned their attention to all facets of community life in Tobatí, and arranged their work by "functional rather than formal criteria" (xxi) in a broad description of village life that included extensive data on multiple aspects of the economy, society, and ideology.

The Services had a double agenda. They felt an obligation to provide at long last an authoritative study of the society and culture of a Paraguayan community, and they sought--quite likely at the behest of Steward--evidence that would finally put to rest the "Guaraní myth." In terms of this first objective, the Service's 1954 volume remains to this date a benchmark in Paraguayan

studies and is still considered obligatory reading for anyone with an interest in Paraguayan society. This is no doubt due to the talents of the Services as anthropologists and the resultant merits of their book, but also to the fact that *Tobatí: Paraguayan Town* remains, to date, the only general anthropological study of Paraguayan community published in English. Indeed, published ethnographic studies of Paraguayan society with the breadth of the Service's work remain exceedingly rare in any language, including Spanish.¹

With this in mind, I went to Tobatí in late 1988--almost forty years to the day after the Service's arrival--with the purpose of doing a restudy of the town with the benefit of a data base generated by the earlier study. In terms of the Service's description and analysis of the economic and social underpinnings of the town, I had two major objectives: to document both change and continuity, and to explain why certain aspects of life and society in Tobatí changed and why others remained relatively stable over time. This was an exciting prospect for me for two reasons. First, I had already lived in Paraguay for over seven years. I was associated with the Peace Corps from 1974 to 1981 and returned in 1983 on a research project (see Hay 1984). I was grateful for an opportunity to return to the place of which I was so fond.

And second, Tobatí is a radically changed place, in ways that the Services could never have imagined during their stay. Rather than the "typical," peasant-based Paraguayan town that they studied, Tobatí is now a thoroughly industrialized rural town

which retains only a veneer of the formerly bucolic *pueblo*. Not only has the town increased greatly in size, but the underpinnings of the local--and national--economy have changed, demanding a thorough reconsideration of the bases upon which the town--as a society--"works." In these ways, Tobatí is unique among Paraguayan towns, yet the history and trajectory of change in Tobatí may offer clues as to the direction of change in rural Paraguay as a whole. Even with this in mind, I often thought that the Services could probably have returned during my stay and found as much that was familiar (if only on a superficial level) as was changed. In all, it seemed to be a fascinating arena for research.

I believe that such a project has intrinsic value for a number of reasons. First, and probably most important, while the original study remains a classic (and deservedly so) in the field of Paraguayan studies, there is no doubt that for practical purposes it is out of date (see Roett and Sacks 1991: 113). Paraguay may still be regarded by most Latin Americanists as one of the most "backward" nations in the region, but the truth is that Paraguay has been touched by the forces sweeping Latin America as much as any other country, although "development" may have been relatively tardy in Paraguay in relation to other countries in the region.

Second, a study of this nature would add to a body of literature in "development studies" which has an element of time depth. The descriptive and empirical data provided by the Services from 45 years ago were sufficient to warrant a restudy.

Using similar criteria for establishing general economic, social and ideological parameters, I hope to impart a sense of rate of change, direction of change, and critical historical moments.

Third, it is unfortunate that there is still nearly as great a lack of information about Paraguay in the 1990s as there was in the 1950s. It is important that both Paraguayans and others interested in Paraguay provide the kind of current information that could satisfy the desire of other Latin Americanists to learn more about the country. This is important not only in its own right but also because development studies in general will always benefit from an enlarged body of knowledge which provides an opportunity for comparative approaches to problem solving.

Apart, however, from development issues in rural Paraguayan society, I confess that I too, like the Services, had a double agenda in proposing a restudy of Tobatí. The question of ancestry and heritage captivates Paraguayans today as much as it ever did. The extent to which modern Paraguayans express aspects of a pristine indigenous culture is a topic of endless fascination to all Paraguayans, whether they be purveyors of folksy wisdom or serious scholars of modern society and culture. It intrigued both Steward and the Services in the late 1940s and it intrigued me in the late 1980s. In the past few years, there has also been a notable upsurge among Paraguayan scholars' interest in the cultural history of the country. As the pace of development quickens in the countryside, and as the country becomes more closely linked both economically and physically with the rest of the continent--not to say with the world--Paraguayans appear

increasingly worried, and quite rightly so, that "traditional" customs, beliefs, and ways of life may be doomed to disappear, perhaps before they can be recorded for future generations. This implies that there is an added urgency to this kind of fieldwork beyond the immediate concerns of economic and social change.

In truth, it was the second objective--the clarification of the "Guaraní myth"--that focused the most attention on the Service's book, and drew the brunt of criticism, at least from Paraguayan scholars and intellectuals (Cadogan 1956; Creydt 1963; Benítez 1967; Chase-Sardi 1990). Ironically, however, and probably unfortunately, it was not the Service's own work per se which created the polemic in Paraguay, but rather the twelve-page "Foreward" to their 1954 volume, written by Julian Steward. It is noteworthy that while none of the Service's own work was ever published in Paraguay, Steward's "Forward" was almost immediately translated and published in *Historia Paraguaya: anuario de la Academia Paraguaya de Historia* (v. 1, 1956).

In the Forward, Steward stated, rather authoritatively, that the Service's work had shown how the evolution of culture in Paraguay had involved, above all, "a rapid change in colonial times from native Guaraní Indian culture to a rather thoroughly Hispanic culture" (Steward 1954: vi). Such a categorical statement, especially coupled with its complement (p. xi) that "the culture of the peasant farmers is *not* Guaraní" (my emphasis) demands a rebuttal, and the immediate response of Paraguayan critics was to demonstrate the opposite: essentially that much had remained of the aboriginal gestalt, which had escaped the notice

of the naive "gringo" investigators who were so easily "fooled" by their informants (Chase-Sardi 1969), and that Paraguayan culture should be described with the Guaraní heritage firmly in mind (González 1958). Inevitably, the issue has been reduced to two positions: either that the original culture disappeared virtually without trace or that the contemporary culture is basically a transformation and revivification of an (idyllic) indigenous world view. To simply dichotomize the argument in these terms, though, is ultimately of little help, since both alternatives are apt to lead to baseless hypotheses and sterile conclusions satisfactory to no one.²

Both of these positions essentially miss the point, as Steward himself hints at in the following pages, when he remarks, "Thus the emergence of the various subcultures found today in Latin America is a far larger problem than that of tracing individual culture elements to their Hispanic or Indian sources" (1954: viii). I agree with the point that it is hardly productive to attempt to break Paraguayan culture down into its component parts in order to balance the Guaraní versus the European elements and decide on that basis how to characterize the society. Rather, the focus should be on how a uniquely Paraguayan culture--neither Indian nor Hispanic--evolved over time as a result of the myriad decisions made over time by individuals involved in a personal struggle to survive in a world rapidly changed by new combinations of technologies, environments, economic and subsistence regimes, and social hierarchies, not to mention some rather bizarre historical events. Under those circumstances, it was

inevitable that completely new rules and customs of behavior be established which were not lifted whole from either of the so-called "parent" cultures.

While the publication of the translation of Steward's "Foreward" made the Service's arguments about modern-day Paraguayan heritage accessible to the Paraguayan public, it discouraged a perusal of the body of the Service's work which contained the proofs only summarized by Steward. Also, in the polemic generated by Steward's piece, most Paraguayan scholars generally ignored the most solid contribution of the book, which was the Service's observations, analyses, and conclusions regarding rural Paraguayan economy, society, and cultural practices of the time. As a result, with only very rare exceptions, the Service's work remained virtually without readership, critique, or possibility of corroboration by Paraguayans. This was doubly unfortunate since, until that time and for many years after, nearly all contributions to the subject by Paraguayans consisted largely of vague generalities based on simple observation without the benefit of any kind of empirical support, and were often charged by an almost jingoistic nationalism that guaranteed a distorted picture of the *realidad paraguaya* (see Williams 1969: ii). Thus, the conclusions of the original work were never subjected to the kind of disinterested review and critique within Paraguay that they merited.

Therefore, I hope that the present study might add to the initial one by, first, reintroducing and updating empirical data, leading to an analysis of often striking and radical change in rural

Paraguay. Second, I will present new evidence which may lead to a reexamination of both the "Guaraní myth" as well as what may be termed the "Hispanic option" and will suggest ways that this important question could be studied in a way that might lead to a more scholarly--and less polemical--dialogue among students of Paraguayan culture.

Scope and Organization of the Study

In keeping with contemporary anthropological practice, the Services were interested in an overall, holistic view of Paraguayan culture and society. Their book was divided into three broad sections entitled Economy, Society, and Ideology. Within these categories, they studied and addressed a number of specific issues including the peasant economy, commerce and industry, attitudes toward economic development, household composition and kinship, migration, church and social life, education, "magic," medical practice and beliefs, and behavior at "life crises."

Because of my own commitment to do a restudy of the town, I hoped to be able to observe all of those aspects of social life in Tobatí myself, in order to pinpoint the areas in which change (or stability) were most evident, and to see if there were correlations between change in one area and change in others. In addition, there were other issues which I thought worthy of examination, which the Services may have found impossible to study, or which simply may not have been salient at the time that they did their study. These included such factors as child labor, population control, and trends in demographic patterns.

I was also much more interested than the Services in investigating the extent to which Tobatí's political economy was linked to the national, and ultimately the international, economy (the so-called "world system"), and the extent to which those linkages may have determined or conditioned change in modern Tobatí. It is only through this kind of analysis, after all, that Tobatí could be studied as an integral part of a broader Paraguayan society, rather than as an isolated unit within it. In spite of Tobatí's unique historical evolution, one can understand Paraguay and its place in the world through the experience of the town.

Although the Service's were in Paraguay during a momentous time in the country's history, they explained that "the [political] situation was so tense during our stay in Tobatí that we could not interest ourselves in this matter without jeopardizing our other work" (Service and Service 1954: xxi). I was also in Tobatí during a very important time in modern Paraguayan history, and was fortunate to witness the fall of the 35-year Stroessner dictatorship and the events that followed, both in the town and at the national level. However, I felt no such constraints in discussing politics as did the Services, and an important part of my study was observing the impact of politics on ideologies and social change both before and after the *golpe* of February 2-3, 1989.

In keeping with my objective of following up the original study, I have organized my own data in a way that is similar to the Services', although because of the breadth of the historical

aspects of Tobatí's development, the total work falls into two major parts. The first chapters presents a more detailed history of both Paraguay and Tobatí in order to highlight the significance of recent change in country and town. Also, while it is undoubtedly true that, in 1948, Tobatí could be considered representative of small rural Paraguayan communities because the country as a whole was so "well-integrated culturally," and had a relatively simple economy, the same could not be said by 1988. In fact, as I indicated above, Tobatí, because of its predominantly industrial economy, may be one of the most atypical rural towns in the country today, and the changes which have occurred during the last years are pervasive. Therefore, I attempt to place Tobatí in the context of modern Paraguay, with an emphasis on major trends in the "development" of rural Paraguay.

In keeping with my theoretical approach, to be discussed in Chapter Two, I begin with a brief look at the "infrastructural" forces which are fundamental to an understanding of Paraguay's history. The most basic facts of the geology and geography of the country explain much concerning historical trajectories. Factors such as soils and climate, as many earlier anthropologists have observed, may be highly determinative of social and political structures that must conform, in one way or another, to the physical world (cf. Steward and Faron 1959: 44). Together with basic demographic patterns, such factors are critical in explaining both possibilities and choices at crucial times in the country's history.

Chapter Three follows with a general review of Paraguayan history, from the conquest to the time of "modern Paraguay," at the advent of Colorado Party rule in 1947. As Eric Wolf pointed out (1982 ix), there is an urgency to the project of searching out "the causes of the present in the past." While Wolf does not encourage "the study of a single culture or nation" to reach that objective, he did observe that anthropologists should understand that "human populations construct their cultures in interaction with one another, and not in isolation." I hope to demonstrate that, in ways both particular to its own case, and general to countless other colonized societies, Paraguay is a premier example of this concept. Like every nation or population which has a sense of common history, Paraguay is unique, yet a closer analysis reveals parallels that show how the history of this country illustrates more universal experiences and challenges. And, the response of the Paraguayan people to those challenges may add to our inventory of possible solutions to difficult problems. Finally, I hope to contribute to an ongoing debate on how Paraguayan history is to be examined, given the tendency toward romanticism based on "great man" theories of historical development postulated by the classic scholars of Paraguayan history.

Chapter Four returns to the historical account, but of a different kind. I will recap the general history of Paraguay with the history of a rural Paraguayan town. The town of Tobatí was shaped by events at the national level, but it is important to remember that the history of the larger polity was largely a response to the problems and possibilities posed by the

countryside and the country people. Especially in a country such as Paraguay, which was destined to look inward and seek self-sufficiency, the country was very much the sum of its rural parts. There will, of course, be some overlap between the two histories, but the hope is to emphasize the interplay between two levels of the historical record to better appreciate the evolutionary aspect of modern Paraguayan society.

This historical overview of the town, besides its importance to the study as a whole, also serves a personal objective. I found, during my stay in the town, that the people of Tobatí, with notable exceptions, know exceedingly little of the history of their town, yet have a craving for that knowledge. Misconceptions about the town's history abound, and some aspects of that history have come to take on a political tone--a common occurrence not only in Paraguay, I am sure. In a small town, historical "facts" are, I admit, rare, but there are facts that can be related, and a number of observations based on inferential evidence deserve some consideration. If there is anything in this study which might merit a real interest by most *Tobateños*, it will probably be this brief history. However, in this chapter I intend to cover the evolution of the town through the end of the Triple Alliance War and the nineteenth century. By that time, the social and economic underpinnings of the town were essentially established as the Services found in 1948, and the changes from that time on form the real subject matter of the work which follows.

From Chapter Five, the work is organized to correspond roughly to the way the Services presented their own data around

economy, society, and ideology. This form of organization is also coherent with the theoretical stance which guided my research. In Chapters Five and Six I consider the economic imperatives that led to the transformation of the traditional peasantry in Tobatí and ushered in a capitalist mode of production with the rise of the ceramics industry. I will also show how this seemingly localized phenomenon (for Paraguay) is closely tied to current trends in the national economy and is ultimately linked to an international economy. It should become clear, for example, why the options of rural-urban migration and off-farm employment are more viable alternatives for young Tobateños than rural-rural migration under the country's program of "agrarian reform." Finally, because they are so intimately related to recent economic changes in Tobatí, I also consider factors such as the function of labor with changing technologies, the relationship between economic change and demographic trends, and the importance of environmental, or ecological, factors--particularly the tradeoff between development and environment in the case of Tobatí.

Chapter Seven is an examination of the formal and informal structures most important in community life, as well as aspects of migration that have been most closely associated with social and economic change in the town. Changing patterns in domestic structures (family and household) may reveal much about the depth of economic change, and political and institutional structures indicate the degree that the town is institutionally integrated with the larger polities at the state and international levels. As one would expect, contemporary Tobatí is a much more

complex society, and the role of government institutions in the lives of the people is vastly more important than it was forty years ago. More interesting, however, are changes in domestic structures (e.g., household composition and intrafamilial roles), which can probably be traced directly to changes in the economy and mode of production. An intriguing example of this phenomenon is the apparent shift in family structure as a response to a rapidly industrializing economy. This confirms the extreme sensitivity of domestic economy to shifts at more fundamental (infrastructural) levels at a macro scale (see Kuznesof 1980).

Chapter Eight traces important ideological elements which unify the Tobateños, both as a community and as Paraguayans. I will pay particular attention to the pervasive influence of political thought, as well as the growing importance of the mass communications media as a conduit of urban ideology. I will also discuss other areas that the Services found intriguing; e.g., religious and folk beliefs, medicine and practice (including "women's medicine"), critical "rites of passage," and so on. There is much in the ideological content of contemporary rural Paraguayan society that can be considered "traditional," as comparison to the Service's data suggests, but much of that has shifted in response to changes at a more fundamental level. The question, therefore, is not simply that of where ideological change originates, but whether or not the seeds of novel ideas fall on fertile ground.

Finally, I will conclude this work, as did the Services, with a studied consideration of the likely course of events in the future, both of Tobatí and of Paraguay. This is admittedly a risky venture, being well within the realm of futurology. The Service's prognosis proved to be incredibly pessimistic, in hindsight, as they even doubted the capacity of the country to survive as an independent political entity (pp. 297-98). Likewise, my own judgements will no doubt be found wanting at the present or at some future time, but they will certainly not carry the same weight of pessimism. The country has resources not even suspected forty years ago, which can only strengthen a fierce sense of independence that has been a particular characteristic of Paraguay's history.

Methods

The methods employed during my fieldwork were straightforward and not intended to be innovative. I was in Paraguay from October, 1988 to March, 1990, and resided, with short absences, in Tobatí from the first of December until a week before I left the country. After a great deal of effort, and no little anxiety, I finally located a small house for rent in the center of town, exactly one block from the central plaza (reasons for the lack of housing will become clear in the text). It was a very old, brick, two-room house, and the delay in moving in was due to the time it took to reshingle parts of the roof, add on a kitchen, and run a water pipe from the street into the kitchen. Even after

those improvements, by Tobatí standards the house would just barely be considered "middle class."

Although I would have accepted lodgings anywhere, I felt very fortunate with my find. I consider participant observation to be the hallmark of anthropological fieldwork, and in that location I felt that I was in the middle of everything. I soon discovered that I lived right around the corner from the house where the Services initially stayed with a family (who still reside there), before they found their own house. At any rate, I enjoyed close proximity to much that interested me. The location also probably increased my own visibility, which I felt may have shortened the time that it took people to grow accustomed to my presence and feel more at ease in my company. From that vantage point, I frequented the center of town on a daily basis, and more and more ventured out into other parts of the town at a greater distance from the center. Participating in as many aspects of community life as was possible, I kept a journal which was updated daily and served as a record not only of my own activities, but of my observations and thoughts. My main disadvantage was difficulty of mobility, which severely limited the occasions when I could travel to the more distant *compañías*, or rural neighborhoods surrounding Tobatí.

In order to familiarize myself with the town, I began my study by methodically walking the streets with the purpose of mapping the community. As it turned out, this also served a pressing need, since no reliable map existed. It was also an ambitious task, since I was still perfecting the map after a year in

the town, and it still has areas that are incomplete. However, the exercise was also valuable because at the same time I could work on a general count of residences, commercial establishments, cottage industries, and other residence-based economic activity.

After a time, I began to take more formal interviews from persons who had specific knowledge they were willing to share about the many facets of town life that were of interest. Such people included political party and government officials, church figures, industrialists, laborers, business owners, town "characters," small farmers involved in land disputes, teachers, and plain gossips. These interviews were for the most part ad hoc and opportunistic, occurring at what seemed an appropriate time. Only a minority were scheduled in advance and took on a highly formal character. Friends and acquaintances became quickly accustomed to my pencils, notebooks or scraps of paper, and seemed resigned to the possibility of an impromptu "interview."

It also took time to recognize the resources for historical research that were available in the town. After almost four months I became aware of the possibilities inherent in written documents both in the Church (rather, in the administrative section, the *Casa Parroquial*) and the office of the Justice of the Peace. With that discovery, I began spending some time almost every day in both places, making detailed records of births, marriages, and deaths. While statistics covering the three life events are recorded in both places, they are not redundant. Rather, they are complementary, since events may have been recorded at one place and not the other, or because of the content

that was required by one institution but considered unnecessary by the other. I was also fortunate to have access to the records in the local *Centro de Salud*, or health center, which maintained the most accurate population figures available.

During the last five months of my stay, I initiated a formal household survey, based upon a standardized questionnaire (see Appendix A). The Services had a great advantage, since, at the time that they were in the community, they could garner a complete census, visiting every household in the village. Considering the very high growth rate of the town, this was obviously impossible in my own case. Still, I did complete over eighty questionnaires from the town center; one household from each city block, chosen at random from a table of random numbers (Bernard 1988: 460-62). This represented about a ten percent sample of the town's population. I completed over sixty more questionnaires from two semi-rural and rural populations, although distribution of households and difficulty of mobility in those areas precluded random sampling, so households were selected opportunistically. In order to complete the large number of interviews, I enlisted the aid of an assistant; a native *Tobateño* who was a young high school *profesor*. I spent a period of about a week training him, and went over his returned questionnaires periodically, pointing out possible problem areas and suggesting ways of eliciting information that was less ambiguous.

During the same period, I was conducting an informal survey of the many brick and ceramic industries in the town. I was reluctant to formalize this survey because people were

understandably cagey about openly discussing the details of their business. This was apparent after starting a formal questionnaire type of survey which I soon abandoned because there was so little variation in responses. Instead, I began to use the same format of questions during more informal encounters with brickmakers, and recorded responses at a later time (see Appendix B). What was sacrificed in poor sampling and possible inaccuracies was no doubt made up for in the value of more candid and considered responses.

Finally, I was probably typical as an ethnographer in that I considered almost everything around me--even seemingly trivial events or details--as fair game for an interested look. At random times I might be counting cans on a shelf in a local store, bananas in the market, or recording soccer scores. Friends and acquaintances grew weary and at times impatient with my incessant questions. I pored over newspapers and clipped articles every day, recorded radio talk shows, and jotted down what I saw on television. In the capital, I frequently worked in the National Archives--a fascinating but equally frustrating enterprise.³

Some of this material was useful for my purposes, but most of it clearly was not. However, I consider none of that time or effort wasted, since, I hope, it helped to contribute to a better overall understanding of the ambiance I shared with the people of Tobatí.

Theoretical Perspective

The Services wrote at a time when it was the fashion that ethnographic studies be all-encompassing in content, yet confined to a well defined and circumscribed population, as if those populations were not subject to exogenous power regimes and structures (p. xix; see also Wolf 1990). Anthropologists generally emulated figures such as Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, Mead, Redfield, and others. Focusing particularly on "community studies," the classic works of all of these earlier anthropologists had a great deal in common in that they sought to examine nearly every aspect of life within a population and presented the result almost as a portrait frozen in time. There was little sense of history in many of these studies and little of the record of the impact of contact between societies--principally between the indigenous society under study and the dominant international society which was increasingly influencing behavior in traditional societies around the globe. As a result, these studies also tended toward a particularistic view in the sense that each case was presented as unique, defying comparison with other cases with the aim of drawing general conclusions about processes of sociocultural change. This tradition of ethnography was more or less the milieu within which the Services conducted their own study.

Without denying the heated theoretical debates that dominated the field during that time, and the imaginative approaches toward interpretation that were advanced, there was

an "explosion" of critical thought in anthropology beginning in the late 1960s that has continued to the present day. It is obviously beyond the scope of this work to discuss and criticize the varied approaches toward anthropological thought that flourished during the last twenty years, nor would such a discussion prove especially useful considering the plethora of readily accessible works that deal specifically with that task (e.g., Harris 1968, Bohannon and Glazer 1973, Bloch 1985, Marcus and Fischer 1986, and Lett 1987). Of more relevance is a brief discussion of the theoretical underpinnings that guided my own work in an attempt to bring a sense of cogency and integrity to the problem at hand.

My intention, in the present study, is to base analysis on what is commonly referred to as a "materialist" position. More specifically, I will try to couch explanation within the principles of the cultural materialist school, most cogently formulated by Marvin Harris and successfully practiced by anthropologists such as Eric and Jane Ross, Barbara Price, Maxine Margolis, Daniel Gross, William Abruzzi, and Michael Harner, among many others.

Cultural materialists are unapologetic in their professed goal of struggling for "a science of culture" (Harris 1980). This science of the study of human populations has been described as "a synthesis of Marx's causal primacy of the infrastructure and Darwinian mechanisms of natural selection" (Price 1982: 709). In its application to the study of human populations, Harris and Ross (1987: 1-2) succinctly explain that "sociocultural systems are heuristically regarded as having three major sectors: infrastructure, consisting of mode of production and mode of

reproduction; structure, or domestic and political economy; and superstructure, or aesthetic, symbolic, philosophical, and religious beliefs and practices," also referred to as the "symbolic-ideational" realm (Harris 1991).

One of the most basic tenets of cultural materialism is an insistence on the fact of causality in human affairs, and this necessarily leads to a consideration of the principle of determinism. Contrary to what is generally thought, cultural materialists do not disagree with eclectic thinkers that under certain circumstances, the superstructure *might* be determinative of events associated with the structural or infrastructural levels, or that the structure, likewise, *might* be dominant; but they insist that the infrastructure *generally* (usually, or "probabilistically") determines the structure and, in turn, the superstructure (Harris 1980: 289). This point is perhaps made more obvious by repeating the admonition of one philosopher of science that "natural history . . . is preeminently a study of relative frequency, not of absolute yeses and noes" (Gould 1993: 12). In other words, the three domains are not symmetrical in determining sociocultural innovations (Harris 1991: 4). This is nothing more than to paraphrase Harris and Ross' distinction between "optimal" versus "optimizing" behavior, in the sense that, given specific infrastructural constraints, populations do not necessarily behave in a Malinowskian kind of functional mode, but they *do tend* to choose behaviors which, under specific circumstances, are "as good or better than [other] feasible alternatives" (Harris and Ross 1987: 19). Given this marked tendency, the investigator is required, for

purely tactical reasons, to reject an *a priori* argument couched in purely historical or ideological terms without first considering and rejecting the possibility of infrastructural causality.

There are causal links between each sector of the triad, but the probability that the infrastructural level will be determinative leads to the "principle of infrastructural determinism" (Harris and Ross 1987: 2; Price 1982: 710). Indeed, because of aspects of Paraguay's unique history, I will present examples from the study of Tobatí where ideologies were powerful social movers and had determinative qualities, although I believe that it is possible to show how those same ideologies ultimately proved to be extremely fragile when faced with rapid shifts at both the structural and infrastructural levels.⁴ This is an example of the importance of scale (in terms of time) in permitting an analysis of the direction of the causal arrow (Harris and Ross 1987: 3; see Carrithers 1990: 269). Furthermore, it signals the importance of investigating the origins (rather than the mere existence or persistence) of ideologies.

The infrastructural element is grounded in four heuristically discrete areas for purposes of analysis. These include demography, technology, economics, and ecology, all of which are mutually determinative (and provide the preconditions for a given mode of production and mode of reproduction), but which also exert strong pressures for change at the structural and superstructural levels. As Harris and Ross (1987: 2) observe, these areas act as an "interface" between nature and culture "through which the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and

psychology influence the direction of cultural selection and [therefore] cultural evolution, and thus impart to infrastructure its dominant role." The success of this schema is wholly contingent on the simple premise that "human social life is a response to the *practical* problems of earthly existence" (Harris 1980: ix; emphasis mine). Put in another way, while it is admitted that *some* individuals may often behave in ways that run counter to their own well-being, or even survival, *most* individuals (constituting populations, the demographic unit of general interest to social scientists) tend to respond to material challenges--at least over time--in ways that favor the well-being and survivability of the individuals themselves and, by extension, of the population. In strictly Darwinian terms, any population whose members generally do not behave in such a manner is non-adaptive and runs risks of extinction. Of course, this may well have been the fate of countless populations during the millennia since the paleolithic, but the overall tendency has undoubtedly been toward adaptation--a response to "temporal and/or spatial differences in demands placed upon productive and reproductive success" (Ross 1980: xxi).

Adaptive change does not, therefore, occur mechanistically, as an automatic one-to-one reflex in response to a particular "perturbation." Culture change is analogous to biological evolution in that both are inherently conservative processes. That is, a system is highly resistant to change as long as the integrity of the system itself is not threatened (See Harris 1977: 5). Rather than changing in a gradualistic and ever-incremental fashion,⁵ then,

culture systems tend to remain at a certain dynamic, or "metastable" equilibrium (Butzer 1982: 289) until major disruptions or multiple events at a fundamental level demand a rapid shift of the system to a different (one is tempted--however erroneously--to say "higher") state of equilibrium. Thus, it is not difficult to appreciate how civilizations, such as ancient Egypt's, can remain remarkably stable over millennia as long as they "work" within an established natural regime, while other civilizations may rapidly crash or flourish as a result of major infrastructural events (Eldredge and Tattersall 1982: Ch. 7). This principle is perhaps easier to appreciate in reference to the common practice of historians in identifying "periods" in history, which are far from arbitrary divisions in delineating a certain pattern in the occurrence of historical events.

For this reason, one should expect stability as the norm, although stability as well as change demands explanation.⁶ In an inherently conservative world, change, other than the perturbations observable in any state of equilibrium, must be the result of fairly high order events which, theoretically, must be amenable to observation and explanation. And, given an inherent resistance to change, there will usually be a "lag" between events and adjustments to those events. Certain demographic phenomena, such as fertility rates for example, may be remarkably sensitive to, say, certain economic variables (Bongaarts and Menken 1983), but noticeable change in fertility rates will only occur as an adjustment to economic change after an appreciable amount of time. This is mainly because it is

individuals who respond to common challenges, and only the accrual of a host of such individual responses can be measured as social change.

Therefore, cultural materialism is above all the study of "real people doing real things" because it starts from the Darwinian assumption that individuals, each faced with countless mundane and critical decisions, determine not only the course of their own lives, but ultimately the evolution of the population (or society) of which the individual is a member. That most of the survival decisions made by individuals tend to be responses to the exigencies of production and natural phenomena is the basis of the "materialism" of this approach and an "acknowledgement of the debt owed to Marx's formulation of the determining influence of production and other material processes" (Harris 1980: xi; see also Harris 1991).

Finally, cultural materialism is programmatically positivistic and scientific in its approach. Since the object of study is human behavior in response to material constraints or opportunities, such behavior can be observed, measured, and described, at least with as much accuracy as the behavior of other biological populations. Cultural materialists recognize that there are two methods of acquiring data: from the informant's own testimony, and from direct observation by the investigator of behaviors. Unlike many "traditional" anthropologists, cultural materialists recognize the dangers inherent in taking an informant's own testimony uncritically and without reservation, or at "face value." This is for the indisputable reason that "people can be mystified about their

own thoughts as well as about their behavior" (Harris 1980: 39; cf. Marx 1967: 72). Therefore, a materialist research strategy "is consonant with an observer-oriented canon of proof, i.e., with verification or falsification phrased in terms of the operationalized state of the system" (Price 1982: 710), which, in cultural materialism is termed an "etic" research strategy. Informant concurrence is not essential to the "proof" of a given proposition (a so-called "emic" strategy) if investigation can yield valid and reliable data independent of the "emics" of either the investigator or the subject.

A caveat is probably in order here. The above is in no way meant to imply that the informant is somehow bypassed or belittled. Individuals are, after all, ultimately the source of all data concerning social behavior. The only thing that is implied by an etic strategy is that the anthropologist *qua* scientist is utilizing a complement of tools or instruments that provide data which can be challenged and verified--that a particular exercise can be, to some degree, replicated by another investigator and yield data which are comparable; preferably data which are--or can be--quantifiable. Such instruments range from questionnaires which elicit reliable and appropriate information, to adequate statistical treatment of data, to outright counting and measuring of anything germane to the objectives of the study (see Bernard 1988). As *social* scientists, however, such "hard data" ought to be subject to qualification and clarification based on the critical observations of both the informants and the investigator.

Among the array of research strategies from which an anthropologist can choose, cultural materialism has consistently produced results of practical as well as esthetic value. The results of cultural materialist work can be, of course, and have been, attacked on a number of counts. There is nothing, for example, which makes a cultural materialist immune from starting with false premises or using faulty instruments, but the strength of the strategy is precisely that results *can* be examined, subjected to verification, and overturned, using the same epistemological principles upon which the strategy is based. While the above is only the briefest outline of those principles, Harris (1980), Ross (1980), Price (1982) and Harris and Ross (1987) provide a much more exhaustive treatment of the cultural materialist strategy.

Bibliographical Comment

Compared to other geographical areas of study, the literature in Paraguayan studies has always been sparse, indeed. Fortunately, the social sciences in Paraguay are in their vigorous youth and Paraguayan scholars are publishing excellent work in history, sociology, and economics. There are also troves of untapped data sources in the country that are only recently yielding information to the prying minds of both Paraguayan and foreign scholars of all disciplines. As a result, it is not so infrequent any longer that a real gem appears in the literature of Paraguayan studies. In fact, it is becoming difficult to keep abreast of the new works appearing in Asunción bookstores and academic institutions, and there has even been even a modest

surge in scholarly work done in Paraguayan studies in other countries. A few of these sources have been of particular help in completing this study, and should be mentioned in the interest of students of similar issues.

Other equally valuable works have been omitted, not because of their secondary importance in Paraguayan studies, but only because they were less appropriate to the issues covered in this study. Anyone familiar with Paraguayan history would also be justifiably upset at the omission in this section of some of the greatest scholars of the country's past, such as Cecilio Báez, Juan Natalicio González, and many others, several of whom appear in the Bibliography. These are undoubtedly the giants upon whose shoulders all contemporary work must stand, but the intention here is only to highlight those works of most use to a basic understanding of the country's history and contemporary social problems.

A number of sources have served as classics and mainstays in the study of Paraguayan history for many years. The published works of Félix de Azara, written toward the end of the eighteenth century provide firsthand data on seemingly every aspect of colonial life in Paraguay and the Rio de la Plata region. Commissioned by the Portuguese king to report on the assets of the South American territories, Azara spent much time in Asunción, where he combed the colonial archives, one of the oldest on the continent. Many of those original sources have since been lost, and it is only through this remarkable scholar that much early history survives. He was also an accomplished, though

informally trained, geographer and biologist, and anticipated Buffon in his classification and description of species of the lower continent.

Azara, other than his merits as a scholar, was a meticulous Spanish bureaucrat, as was another author of the same period, too often ignored by modern historians. Juan Francisco Aguirre, a frigate captain, left a voluminous diary of his travels in the region during the same general period as Azara. Aguirre was a superb mapmaker and logician as well as an interested observer of all aspects of colonial life. His work was finally made accessible to scholars when the National Library in Buenos Aires published a transcription of his diary in three volumes and four parts in its *Revista*, between 1949 and 1951.

Readers of English are fortunate in that there is a small number of qualitatively excellent works on Paraguay which, taken together, constitute a solid referential core of historical material. For many years, the only really authoritative work on general Paraguayan history was Harris Gaylord Warren's *Paraguay: An Informal History*, published in 1949. Between 1976 and 1981, however, there was an outpouring of very good work on Paraguayan history. Warren's central volume was followed by the same author's work on the Triple Alliance War (1978), as well as John Hoyt Williams' (1979) history of *The Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic 1800-1870*. Adalberto López, in 1976, wrote about another critical time in the country's history with *Revolt of the Comuneros, 1721-1735*. During the same fertile period for Paraguayan studies, Richard Alan White published a

central work dealing with one of the most fascinating figures in world history, José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (Paraguay's "Supreme Dictator from 1811 to his death in 1840), and Paul Lewis (1980) released the story of Francia's contemporary, the enigmatic dictator Alfredo Stroessner, president of the country from 1954 to 1988. In 1981 Michael Grow helped considerably to round out a complete coverage of the country's history with his *Good Neighbor Policy and Authoritarianism in Paraguay*, an excellent short history of Paraguay after the Chaco War, fought from 1932 to 1935. In fact, the only major period of the country's history which remains to be examined by a principal work in English is the early twentieth century through the Chaco War.

A number of scholars have done new and intriguing work on different aspects of colonial history. One of the most noteworthy examples of recent scholarship was Juan Carlos Garavaglia's work on the economics and sociology of trade in the colonial era in *Mercado interno y economía colonial* (1983). Especially valuable is his treatment of the economy of yerba mate, which played such a predominant part in early Paraguayan history. Historical demography has also been the subject of much investigation, and a good overview of the work is presented in a collection edited by Domingo Rivarola (1974), *La Población del Paraguay*. An idea of how controversial aspects of Paraguayan demographic history can be is clear in the revisionist statement of the country's death toll during the Triple Alliance War, by Vera Blinn Reber (1988), a version which will surely come under heavy challenge (Whigham and Potthast 1990).

Carlos Pastore wrote the definitive study of the history of land, land tenure, and land reform in Paraguay, *La Lucha por la Tierra en el Paraguay*. His work formed the basis for a number of posterior works, such as work by the opposition political figure Domingo Laino which deals with the divestment of the national patrimony after the Triple Alliance War and during the twentieth century. Branislava ("Branka") Susnik is undoubtedly the doyenne of Paraguayan historical anthropology, and all other authors bow to her authority in matters of the ethnology of the native peoples of the country. Miguel ("Gato") Chase-Sardi and Bartomeu Meliá, on the other hand, have written on the impact of the indigenous culture on the gestalt of traditional rural Paraguay.

The social sciences have been held suspect during the administration of the Stroessner dictatorship. The faculty of sociology of the Catholic University of Asunción was closed down by government order for many years because of the "subversive" nature of social research. For many years, the only real institutional refuge of the social scientists was the Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociales (CPES), a private institute of social research. The directors of CPES were of necessity circumspect in the activities they could "legitimately" sanction, but they nevertheless succeeded admirably in sheltering some very fine students of Paraguayan society and culture. A very large percentage of the scholarly research of note has either been published by the editorial branch of CPES or by their journal, the *Revista Paraguaya de Estudios Sociales*. During later years, a number of younger social scientists have split from CPES to found

similar, independent, research and publishing entities, although competition for scarce resources affects the stability and composition of these new groups to the extent to which it is probably unhelpful to mention them here individually.

The directors of CPES have published or edited many volumes on different aspects of Paraguayan society and history. Dr. Domingo Rivarola concentrates on Paraguayan economic and demographic history, as well as contemporary rural social issues. Graziella Corvalán, on the other hand, has had an enormous impact on linguistic research in the country and investigation of all aspects of bilingualism, diglossia, and history of language in Paraguay.

Some of the principal young scholars who have been or are still closely associated with CPES include Ramón Fogel, Daniel Campos (rural sociology), Luís Galeano (economics), and Roberto Céspedes (political science). Almost every other scholar of historical and social questions in Paraguay has also been in some way involved with CPES, either as staff or as contributor to their journal, editorial, or seminar series. A bibliography of work made available through CPES would surely constitute the most authoritative core of research and information regarding contemporary Paraguayan studies, as well as a list of the country's most energetic and imaginative scholars.

Notes

1 Rare exceptions include two excellent anthropologically oriented studies of change in rural Paraguay from two different perspectives, by Ramiro Dominguez (1966) and Ramón Fogel (1986).

2 A not uncommon solution to this problem of giving equal credit to both ancestral branches is what could be termed "the poetic option" such as that taken by Benítez (1967: 83) who declares that "In whose substrata beats [the heart of] the Guaraní but whose culture is of the Spanish style. Transformed, then, the European had been impregnated by the medium."

3 The Archive, housed in an historic building in the center, could still be accurately described, as did Williams (1969: x-xi), as a "forbidding disarray ... atmospheric ... *cuadro de costumbres*." Curiously, though, one could hardly imagine a more congenial place to sit down and browse, given the friendliness of the Archive staff and the close proximity of the ever idiosyncratic street scene outside the wide-opened windows.

4 Critics of cultural materialism (e.g., Roseberry 1989: 19) frequently overlook, or ignore, the "emic" aspect of the methodology which recognizes the dynamism and creativity inherent in culture. As long as determinism is probabilistic rather than absolute, ideologies and "moral choices" are always essential in fleshing out social and cultural histories (see Harris 1990: 205).

5 This is not to say that change is not ever-present. Equilibrium is maintained in a dynamic state, which means that feedback mechanisms are constantly in operation which tend to "regulate" social phenomena. This interplay between elements of a system appears, especially up close, as constant movement and change. The closer that one is apt to stand in relation to a particular historical event, the more "radical" that event is apt to appear even though it may be a very minor social phenomena, indeed, within the context of true culture change.

6 Stability must not be overlooked as a phenomenon in its own right (see Gould 1993) and must be explained as a result of a peculiar matrix of infrastructural, structural and superstructural elements which are in at least tentative equilibrium.

CHAPTER 2
THE SETTING:
LAND, PEOPLE, AND RESOURCES

The Land

On a map, Paraguay appears as an unremarkable lozenge in the center of a continental land mass. The Paraguayan tourist bureau proclaims that the country is the *Corazón de América*. Citizens and school children delight in the phrase, but the flip side of the saying "Heart of America" is the more troubling reality that Paraguay is practically buried in the heart of a continent, with limited (and expensive) access to the seas which invigorated the commercial and cultural horizons of its neighbors. True, the Paraguay-Paraná river system, second largest in South America after the Amazon, provides access to important maritime ports, but the rivers--particularly the Paraguay, which serves the capital of Asunción--are more impressive in their expansive width than in their depth and navigability. The Rio Paraguay, particularly in dryer times of the year, is too shallow for all but the lightest of ocean-going vessels. The Paraná, distant from the commercial heart of the country, is too swift and beset with rapids upstream from the confluence with the Rio Yguazú to serve as a truly navigable river for major commercial exchange. In fact, not until 1991 was a major port constructed on the upper Paraná, about two hundred kilometers upstream from the hitherto only important port at Encarnación (*ABC Color* 6/1/91: 1).

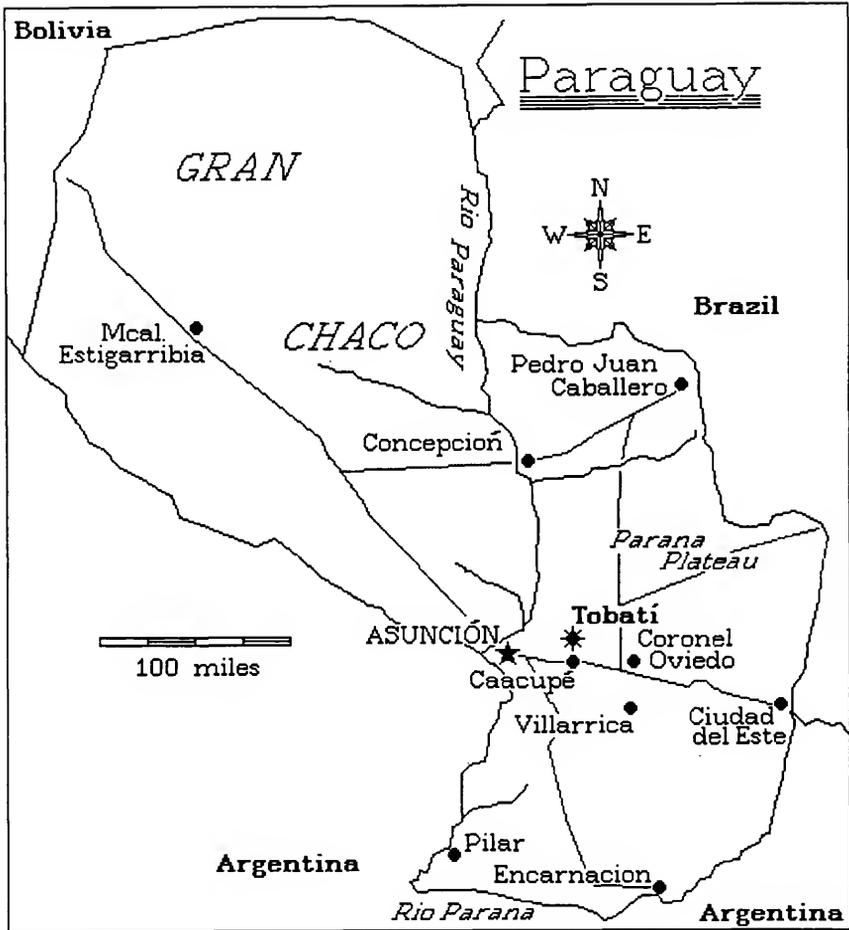


Figure 2.1 Map of Paraguay

Many authors emphasize the geographic isolation of Paraguay, and the effect that this has had on the history and development of the country and its people. Historians are ambivalent; while all agree that the country was hindered in its initial development by severely restricted access to the sea, many also observe that the same inaccessibility probably accounted in no small way for the continued sovereignty and independence of the country (e.g., Pendle 1967: 81). In this respect, one should heed the observation of scholars in another field, who insist that there is "a similarity between cultural and biological evolution worth noting: geography seems to play an important role in each. Geography *isolates*" (Eldredge and Tattersall 1982: 180; their emphasis). Isolation, in turn, can lead both to independent evolution as well as stasis, but both of these conditions are elements of history.

Just so, an appreciation of the physical resources and limitations of the country is essential to understanding the course of its historical development. This realization guided the work of several of Paraguay's most important historical and social commentators, such as Félix de Azara and Natalicio Gonzalez, and stands in opposition to others who explain Paraguayan history as an ideological heritage derived from the pre-Colombian Guaraní and the early colonial populations, which reinforced a "tradition" of government by ruthless and powerful dictators.¹ Miranda (1990), for example, in an analysis of the Stroessner dictatorship, attempts to show how this twentieth century phenomenon was a logical, almost obvious, result of historical preordination, based on a set of

particular values inherent in the population (see also Hanratty and Meditz 1990: 4; Roett and Sacks 1991; see Cardozo 1988 for a critique of this view). This view, of course, fosters an image of a population which, although adaptive--in the sense that these "values" abet survival--is almost pathologically predestined to subservience. More important, it neglects--and is utterly incapable of explaining--the uncountable instances of popular initiative and rebellion which have checkered much of the country's history, as well as fundamental changes taking place in contemporary Paraguay.

Besides the purely physical infrastructure of the country, one must have a basic understanding of changing demographic, economic, and technological realities to appreciate the causes of rapid change after a long period of what many view as virtual stagnation. Such knowledge also goes far in explaining contemporary problems, issues, and challenges, and provides a basis for a discussion of the microcosm of Tobatí.

By starting with a description of the physical realities of both the country and, to a lesser degree, the locale of Tobatí, I hope to provide a solid context for a realistic historical account of the country and the town which follows in the next two chapters. I will briefly examine both geographic and geological infrastructures, as well as ecological bases resulting from the continued interaction between human populations and the physical environment. Much of this will resurface in the chapters which follow, but in a different and, I hope, more meaningful context. Finally, I will provide a broad overview of the transformation of the rural sector in general in the country, and

how that is related to new economic realities and demographic trends.

Paraguay's apparent geographical unimportance may be exaggerated by its proximity to its two gigantic neighbors; Argentina and, particularly, Brazil. Even its northern neighbor, Bolivia, is very large by comparison.

In fact, Paraguay is not so insignificant in its physical size as sovereign nations go. With 406,000 square kilometers, Paraguay is the size of the state of California, almost ten times the size of Switzerland, a third again larger than Italy, and it outranks unified Germany, Finland, VietNam, and Poland, in terms of sheer size (Rand McNally 1985). I begin with these observations not only to give a notion of the physical size of the nation, but also to emphasize from the beginning that size alone can not be considered as a significant factor to explain the trajectory of Paraguayan history nor the direction that it might take in future years. This is important, because in Paraguay one so constantly hears a kind of *apologia* from Paraguayans--both citizens and officials--about the country's small size that it appears to border on what Argentine humorist Quino (Salvador Joaquin Lavado) terms a "complex of *muychiquitismo*". Foreign observers also abet this notion, although frequently in an oblique and perhaps unconscious way. Instead, a host of other factors also must be considered, ranging from the country's physical and human resources to the limits placed on economic and social options both within the country and at the level of the world economy.

However, and only seemingly contradictorally, we must return to the question of geography and size, although in the sense that it is

closely related to variables such as population, climate, technologies, and modes of production. First of all, until recently, reference to Paraguay in historical or economic analyses has been understood as *Paraguay oriental*, or eastern Paraguay, which covers some forty percent of the country's territory; that part lying east of the Paraguay River. In fact the differences between eastern Paraguay and the Gran Chaco, lying to the west of the river, are so marked in terms of geography, climate, and resource potential, that even Paraguayans tend to conceptualize the Chaco as wild, dangerous, and foreign.

The Paraguayan Chaco

The Chaco, which also includes vast areas of both Argentina and Bolivia, was one of the last regions of South America to be wrested from the control of hostile Indians; typically nomadic horse-riding bands, for the most part completely unrelated either linguistically or culturally to the Tupí-Guaraní groups on the eastern side of the Paraguay River. Remnants of these warlike tribes, while greatly diminished in numbers, are still an important segment of the population of the Paraguayan Chaco although they are thoroughly deculturated and survive as a servile labor force for the ranchers, farmers, and extractive industries in the area (Steward and Faron 1959: 413).

At present, less than three percent of Paraguay's population lives in the Chaco, which comprises over 247,000 of the country's total area of 406,000 square kilometers. Other than the Indian labor force, a cluster of successful Mennonite colonies constitutes the most

important agriculture-based population. The greatest part of the land is in the hands of both foreign and Paraguayan ranchers, who range herds extensively over vast, largely unimproved, private holdings which may cover hundreds or thousands of square kilometers (see Laino 1976: Anexo 9 for early land endowments). The major industry, declining in importance, is the felling of *quebracho* (literally, "ax-breaker") trees, for the extraction of natural tannin, used in curing leather hides. Otherwise the Mennonites have contributed importantly to deforesting the area through the extraction of a waxy "essence" (used in cosmetics and varnishes) from the aromatic wood of the palo santo tree, a very slow growing broadleaf which has one of the most dense and heavy woods in the plant kingdom (López et al. 1987: 384). The Mennonites more recently embarked on the industrial-level production of charcoal as fuel for the country's modest iron industry, which utilizes less valuable species in the area.

While economic activity is viable at the scale it is practiced, the extremely low population densities of the Chaco² are easy to explain. Beginning with startling abruptness at the western bank of the Paraguay River, the Chaco bears little similarity to the eastern half of the country. A brief glance at the geology of Paraguay shows how fundamental the difference is. The Chaco, almost in its entirety, is formed of extremely deep sediments of Andean origin. This sedimentary layer is up to two thousand feet thick, and is mostly "unconsolidated to semiconsolidated sand and clay" (Eckel 1959a: 68, 77). The potential fertility of the Chaco soils is severely limited by a "periodic lack of water" and "bad water. . . so highly mineralized as to

be unfit for most uses" (Eckel 1959a 99). What is most striking is the uniformity of the Chaco's geology, with significant variation occurring only near the northern border with Bolivia (Eckel 1959b; GOP and OAS 1986a).

Finally, the Chaco is very different from eastern Paraguay in climate, especially in terms of rainfall. Unlike eastern Paraguay, rainfall is seasonal. As an entire region, the area may be wholly flooded during part of the year, only to lose the last of its surface water to drought scant months later, as summer temperatures soar above 100 degrees F (Eckel 1959: 8). However, in spite of these devastating floods, there is also considerably less total rainfall. On a map, the pluviometric isolines that illustrate mean annual rainfall distribution show a direct correlation between rainfall and longitude. Moving westward from the Paraguay River at Asunción, rainfall drops from 1400 mm/year to 500 mm/year at the most western part of the Paraguayan Chaco (Paraguay 1986b). To date, there has been little exploration for water in deep wells in the Chaco, and the possibilities of wide-scale irrigation using Paraguay River water remain beyond the capabilities of the government or the private sector.

Because of these very real limitations, the Chaco continues to be an area of very extensive ranching and extractive industry, and the largest part is still under nearly impenetrable thornbush and scrub forest. The only exceptions are a "typically Paraguayan" small-farm economy in a small area across the river from Asunción, where the landscape is still familiar to Paraguayans, and the Mennonite colonies, which owe their success largely to advanced technologies

(often financed internationally) beyond the scope of large-scale application by Paraguayan colonists. The Paraguayan government, during a time of relative prosperity, did initiate an ambitious program to pave the TransChaco Highway, and to date they have completed 700 kilometers, reaching Filadelfia, near the Mennonite developments (map, p. 37). While there was some promotion on the government's part of Paraguayan agricultural colonies in the Chaco, the TransChaco program probably had more to do with geopolitical concerns (*vis-à-vis* Bolivia) and promotion of the large-scale livestock establishments. Because of the severe limitations of the Chaco, it is clear that it will be many years before it will become a major axis of migration and colonization by the Paraguayan people.

Eastern Paraguay

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that an overview of the physical infrastructural attributes of the Chaco would be essential to understanding a history of the trajectory of development in the area. *El Paraguay oriental* is much more diverse and complex in geography and resource potential, but an understanding of these bases is likewise important in appreciating both Paraguayan history and the various forms of ecological and socio-political relationships that came to define contemporary Paraguayan society.

Until Paraguay vindicated its claim to the Chaco after a successful, if bloody, war with Bolivia (1932-1935), eastern Paraguay was the only territory indisputably Paraguayan. It was this part of the country that inspired so many travellers and itinerant residents

to describe it as a "natural paradise" (Lopez 1976: i), a "natural Arcadia" (Pendle 1967: 81), or otherwise report on "the natural richness of the country and consequent ease of life there" (Williams 1979: 3). As Williams further observes (ibid.) "There can be no doubt that nature paraded all its bounty in Paraguay." Charles Ames Washburn (quoted in Warren 1949: p. 246), the United States' first minister plenipotentiary to Paraguay, described the country as "a suburb to the Castle of Indolence," since the natural wealth of the place enabled the citizens to lead lives of "lazy idleness and harmless delights." Likewise, Thomas Carlyle (n.d.: 366) in his 1843 essay on Francia, remarks on the Paraguayans' "drowsy life, of ease and sluttish abundance."

Indeed, all of eastern Paraguay is startlingly verdant, harboring a wide variety of ecosystems, such as broadleaf, evergreen tropical to semi-tropical forests, broad grasslands studded with "islands" of dense forest, and low-lying areas of permanent grassy wetlands. Domesticated livestock thrives in the country, as does a rich variety of native fauna. In thinly populated parts of the country where they are not yet hunted out, panthers, jaguars, capybaras (a four-foot, 110-pound rodent), tapir, caiman, and deer are abundant, while the South American ostrich (*ñandú*, or rhea) is only the most notable of the immense number of avian species that make the country an ornithologist's (and exotic animal and skin smuggler's) paradise (Warren 1949: 8).

Until recently, landlocked Paraguay has been a "riverside nation" (Pendle: 1967). "Old" Paraguay (the eastern part) is bordered on the west by the Paraguay River and on the south and east by the

deeper and swifter Paraná. The two great rivers debouch at the southwest point of the country below Pilar to form the lower Paraná, the second river of the continent after the Amazon. Lacking any other efficient transportation network, minor rivers served the interior of the country until the late 1950s. Nearly all of these rivers--the Tebicuary, Manduvirá, Jejuí, Aguaray, Ypané, and Apa--drain into the Paraguay, further enhancing Asunción's status as chief port city and further isolating the more eastern part of the territory.

While Paraguay still has, at best, a very deficient road network, an ambitious government program paved roads to both the Argentine and Brazilian borders during the 1960s, facilitating overland trade. Otherwise, the country has relied for years on one of the oldest railroad lines on the continent, still barely upgraded since the last century. Wood-burning steam engines still provide service between Asunción and Encarnación, where a transfer to Ferrocarriles Argentinas carries passengers on to Buenos Aires. While most raw cargo (grains, cotton, and tobacco) is still exported via river, increased tonnage is transported by truck (mainly to Brazil) on newly paved highways.

The waterways have lost much of their former importance with one major exception: the deep and rapid Paraná was recognized as one of the most valuable sources of hydroelectric energy in the world. Joining in a bi-national venture with Brazil, the two countries completed the Itaipú dam in 1984, which now generates more electricity than any other facility in the world. A nearly equally massive undertaking (Yacyretá) is presently being constructed in agreement with Argentina, and yet a third (Corpus) is scheduled to

begin within a few years. Discussed in more detail below, it became evident that Paraguay's rivers will turn the country into the largest electric energy exporter in the world by the mid-1990s. (Hanratty and Meditz 1990: xv).

The physical infrastructure

The land between the rivers is rolling to flat countryside, well watered, and fertile. The territory is intersected by a number of ranges of low mountains, of which the Cordillera Central--where Tobatí is located--is a minor one. The most important range is the Cordillera de Amambay and Mbaracayú which defines the northeastern border with Brazil, but even the tallest of these mountains only rise some 700 meters above the broad central expanse of the region. On a whole, the eastern part of Paraguay is inclined in a westerly direction toward the Paraguay River, dropping from about five hundred meters above sea level to about one hundred meters at Asunción. In very few areas does physical relief present a serious obstacle to cultivation, and it is clear that the country has the capability to support much larger populations than have been historically recorded, or perhaps underestimated in the case of pre-colonial populations (Hay 1986).

The geology of the territory is stable, and ultimately accounts for its wealth in natural resources, even if also for its disappointing (for Paraguayans, tragic) lack of mineral resources. While not highly complex, the geology of the eastern region is varied, especially in relation to the uniformity of the Chaco.

Eckel (1959a: 11) divides the rocks of Paraguay into five main types, although the formations of perhaps greatest interest are the

"igneous extrusive and intrusive rocks." These underlie most of the eastern border region, which was the target of a massive colonization program launched during the early 1970s. This material is not of great age and consists of a large basaltic flow which extends deep into Brazil "where [it reaches its] maximum thickness in the Paraná basin" (see also Paraguay 1986b). Eckel refers to these large beds as the "Serra Geral lavas" (1959b). Ultimately, these rocks are the foundation for the very fertile soils in the region (in Brazil, famed as the *terra roxa*) which eventually accounted for a boom in agricultural production and exports that has continued unabated for the past twenty years. Similar material underlies large parts of the central zone around Asunción; the area which supported small communities of peasant farmers at relatively high population densities for over four hundred years after the conquest.

A greater part of eastern Paraguay's bedrock consists of older sedimentary rocks of continental origin; principally sandstones, but also limestone and marble. While the soils throughout the eastern part of the country may be very deep, these formations frequently break the surface in the form of outcrops, bluffs or hills, so the parent material is rarely so deep that weathering does not contribute to the renovation of fairly fertile soils. In the southern, Misiones, area, these sedimentary materials underlie some of the country's richest pastureland.

Finally, in the area of the Central Cordillera--in which Tobatí is located--the rocks are micaceous and fine granite-based white sandstones which often break through in "prominent and impressive hills," particularly outside of the town of Tobatí (Eckel 1959: 55).

Because this material lies, in large areas, so near the surface, it is extremely friable, and forms the basis of the white crumbly soils common in the area. More significantly, it is interlaced with clay pits and thick layers of clays, possibly resulting from altered shales, as well as deposits of ochres and chalk. Just east of Tobatí, however, this sandstone bed "dips below the surface of the broad valley of the Rio Piribebuy [see map, p. xx]. The underlying beds are covered almost everywhere by as much as 6 meters of river-deposited clay, silt, and sand" (Eckel 1959: 56). The more highland areas in the Cordillera Central, such as the areas more to the west of the town, have historically been noted more for their (mostly non-metallic) mineral resources than for their agricultural potential (Azara 1943a: 20).

However, it should be plain that, on the whole, Paraguay's economy has always been dependent on the bounty of its soils and climate. Later in this work I will have more to say on mineral resources of the country, but for the moment it will suffice to point out that the country shows no proof of possessing what the people most covet. Gold has been the legendary stuff of myth and legend in Paraguay but, in spite of tales of buried treasures and lost ore deposits, frustratingly out of reach. In the modern period, oil has been the object of both widespread rumor and hope. The Bolivians have been pumping it for years just scant miles north of the border of the Paraguayan Chaco, over which so much blood was spilled, and more recently the Argentines have discovered oil barely south of the Pilcomayo River, which marks another major border.

In any case, eastern Paraguay, given its bedrock geology and benign climate, has a very high potential for agricultural productivity. In the eastern border region, particularly, estimates for arability range up to 92 percent, with sixty percent considered suitable for intensive cultivation (World Bank 1978; Nickson 1981). In a 1979 study, the World Bank concluded that, of the total area of Paraguay (including the Chaco), 19.7 percent was suitable for crop production, versus the figure of 3.8 percent in crop production at that time, signifying an enormous potential for increased cultivation. Considering that the vast pasturages of the Chaco would not be suitable for crop production, the figure for the eastern half of the country alone would be very much higher, at the order of 62.7 percent (GOP 1985: 101).

Natural soil fertility is only one ingredient in land use capabilities. Rainfall is abundant in the eastern part of the country, averaging about 1400 mm/year in the area of Asunción and increasing to 1700 mm/year toward the eastern border region (Paraguay 1986b). There is no definable rainy season, and droughts are rare. The soils are well-drained, and irrigation is generally not necessary, except in the case of rice and certain horticultural crops. Furthermore, while there is an occasional frost, or even a devastating hail, the climate allows for a two-crop system, divided between summer and winter produce.

Significantly, the same World Bank study cited above suggested that 43.4 percent of the country's area would be most productive if left under forest cover. Considering the great number of often valuable forest species that are native to the country, and the high

rate of migration to new land areas, it is not surprising that the country is losing its natural forests at one of the highest rates in the world. Understandably, the areas of most rapid deforestation are the areas of colonization where new populations utilize more advanced technologies to strip some 1500 to 2000 square kilometers per year (Seyler 1990: 129; FAO 1981: 258), a significant percentage of the remaining forest cover in the region. Furthermore, eastern Paraguay harbors many species of valuable hardwoods, but since mill capacities cannot handle the enormous amount of material, only the finest trees are exploited while the remainder is simply burned in the field (Hay 1984).

As for the central region of the country, the Services' 1954 book was illustrated with a photo of an *alzaprima*, or giant-wheeled kind of oxcart, hauling a huge log cut just outside of Tobatí. Most assuredly, there is not a single tree left of similar stature in the whole region of the town today, and an *alzaprima* has probably not been in use in twenty years. At present, the central region of the country is virtually denuded of tall forest, and most households must buy charcoal to replace firewood. Otherwise, all members of the poorer households keep a sharp eye out for firewood throughout their daily activities, and scavenge sticks of dry wood where they may. In more densely populated parts of the country, of course, the problem is exacerbated by the fact that Paraguayans use over three times as much fuelwood, per capita, than any other South American country (Seyler 1990: 129), probably because of the lack of electricity, coal, and petroleum products as alternate sources of energy. The kind of habitat destruction that this fosters has

depopulated the central region of the country of virtually all of its non-avian predator species as well as deer and other species valuable as food for human populations. The same scenario is being repeated at a much faster rate at present in the rest of the country.

The rural transformation

This transformation of the landscape accompanied a rapid change in the swidden-type agricultural practices common only a very few years ago (see Weil et al. 1972: 186-188). In the newly colonized areas targeted as "axes" (*ejes*) of development, the more modest holdings of the migrants from the traditional areas of settlement tend to be absorbed into larger tracts controlled by farmers with the capital and knowledge to utilize advanced technologies in the form of machinery and chemicals (Fogel 1989; Campos 1982; Wilson, Hay and Margolis 1989). In the areas of new settlement, at least, this led to the widespread practice of intensive monocrop production of exportable commodities, most notably soybeans but also including cotton, wheat, and sugar cane.

In the central zone where small farmers still predominate, there has likewise been a strong shift in production techniques, although the more labor intensive crops, such as cotton, tobacco, manioc, corn, and beans are favored. In the most densely inhabited parts of the country, with a ready access to the capital, there is a new emphasis on horticultural products to satisfy the demand by the city's new *supermercados* as well as the burgeoning open-air Mercado Cuatro (Zoomers 1988: 66). A great deal of this shift away from more traditional methods of subsistence agriculture has occurred in a period of only ten to fifteen years (cf. Ewart 1977, for

example), which indicates the strength of the economic and demographic imperatives at play in the country.

The most illustrative case of this change can be seen in the role of a single crop: soybeans. Seyler (1990: 118) emphasizes that "It is difficult to exaggerate the drastic growth soybeans enjoyed in Paraguay." The crop was virtually unknown in Paraguay during the late 1960s. In 1970, over 54,000 hectares were planted for a harvest of about 70,000 tons. Production and profitability began to rise meteorically, perhaps aided by the *El Niño* events of 1972-73 and 1982-83 which destroyed fishing off the coast of Peru and, in turn, encouraged soy as a substitute for fish meal in livestock feeds in industrialized countries (Ludlow 1985). In any case, by 1987 production capped one million tons, and more than 700,000 hectares were planted in the crop. The export of soy netted the economy over \$150 million dollars annually (Seyer 1990: 118), and much of that income was used to further the application of technologies to further increase yields. Indeed, during the 1990-91 season--only three years later--the crop was expected to yield about 1,200,000 tons, making Paraguay one of the largest soy exporters in the world (*Coyuntura economica*, no. 45, 1990: pp. 14, 16).

Although a traditional crop grown since colonial times, cotton, which tends to be cultivated by the smaller to medium producers, has also enjoyed a recent boom, although often wildly fluctuating market prices affect areas planted on a yearly basis (and sufficient labor for harvest is also a perennial crisis). While Seyler (1990: 118) notes the increase in the cotton crop from 1970 (37,000 tons) to 1985 (159,000 tons), the record harvest in 1989 of 750,000 tons

cannot seem but extraordinary (*Coyuntura economica*, no. 39, 1989: 25). Continued harvests at this level make cotton the country's most productive crop, and promise to make Paraguay a major exporter of the commodity (FBIS Dec. 27, 1991: 36).

These kinds of increases in the basic commodities production, as summarized in Table 2.1, could only be accomplished by a fundamental change in modes of production--from one based on family labor for subsistence with a small excedent for trade (the classic peasant economy [Wolf 1966]) to one based on wage labor and automation (agro-industry). The magnitude of the change can be inferred by the fact that the two crops now account for fully eighty percent of the country's exports (IDB 1991: 98). However, there was considerable "horizontal" growth--growth in production as a result of increased acreage--in agriculture as well. The 3.8 percent of land under cultivation in 1979, mentioned above, had increased to over eleven percent by 1989, although most of that increased acreage was under mechanized production (*Coyuntura económica* no. 44, 1989: 37).

A half generation ago, the major exports were mostly extractive in nature: timber, free-range beef, and a variety of less important products, with cotton and tobacco trailing far behind as cultigens (Weil et al. 1972: 228). In 1972 it was still stated with authority that "Paraguay is one of the few countries in which gathering remains a pursuit of economic importance" (ibid.: 17). Today, with the possible exception of timber, such technologically barren production activities account for a relatively miniscule percentage of total trade.

Table 2.1
Agricultural Production (in tons) for Paraguay

	<u>1943</u> ^a	<u>1956</u>	<u>1970</u> ^b	<u>1981</u> ^c	<u>1990</u> ^d
Cotton	32,288	39,945	39,600	345,015	631,728
Corn	105,188	200,645	258,600	470,141	401,339
Soybeans	163	94	51,800	762,974	1,032,675
Wheat	2,056	1,869	47,700	61,673	240,538

^a Years 1943 and 1956 from Censo Agropecuario (Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería 1943; 1956).

^b Small Farmer Sub-Sector Assessment 1975 (USAID, Asunción), citing the Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería and the Banco Central del Paraguay.

^c ABC Color (Asunción, Jan. 19, 1984) citing the Censo Agropecuario of the Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, 1981.

^d Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería. Dirección de Censo y Estadísticas Agropecuarias. Feb., 1993.

Other important crops include tobacco and palm nuts (for oil) for exports, and food crops such as manioc, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, and rice for domestic consumption. Unlike the two big export crops mentioned above, production of food crops has basically kept pace with population growth, although in some cases--as with the staple, manioc--it has fallen behind (Zoomers 1988: 87). While it is true that, for the most part, these great increases in production are the result of increased acreages and increased yields based on new technologies, there is no doubt that much of this increase (in the case of cotton, for example) has been a direct result of a decline in subsistence farming in favor of monocrop cash-cropping. The concomitant phenomena of changes in demographic patterns and modes of production have much to do with the story of modern Tobatí, and will be examined in detail in later chapters.

The Modern Social Landscape

The Emergence of Finance Capitalism

As Galeano (1991: 2) points out, Paraguay underwent a revolution during the late 1970s and early 1980s in the role that investment and finance capital played in transforming both the rural and urban landscape. Apart from the massive influx of capital based on the hydroelectric construction projects briefly mentioned above, the government also legislated highly permissive investment laws that attracted "flows of capital in volumes unknown in the history of the country," not to mention official tolerance of contraband trade in

commodities, luxury items, and drugs, which gained for Paraguay the dubious sobriquet of contraband capital of South America (see Roett and Sachs 1991: 76). While figures are understandably hard to pin down, it is likely that the volume of illegal (smuggled) trade "at the very least came close the matching that of legal commerce during the mid-1980s and possibly surpassed it" (Cooke 1990: 236-37). It would be equally difficult, if not impossible, to measure the amount of hard currency which flows through the country's many ill-regulated exchange houses--*Casas de Cambio*--which have the capacity to function as laundromats for all the major currencies of the world. While servicing the tourist who wishes to exchange twenty dollars for local currency, these places also deal with clients with briefcases stuffed with cash or laden with bullion--often in plain view, but more commonly in warrens of small back rooms. Both contraband and exchange funds are transient, but some significant percentage does accrue to swell the reserve of purely speculative capital in the country.

International financial institutions have been generous in their support of emergent capitalist enterprise through provisioning of capital for investment. Not surprisingly, the three largest industries in the country are cotton ginning, cotton spinning, and edible oils (both from soy and palm nuts), and the Inter-American Development Bank has recognized the need for "long-term financing for industrial investment" (IDB 1991: 98). That institution alone has invested \$654 million in Paraguay since 1961, and less than one quarter of disbursements were distributed for environment, public health, education, science, and technology. In addition to the infusion of

capital to stimulate investment in the above industries, the Bank also hopes to facilitate agricultural storage and transportation by building more silos and larger river barges (*ibid.*: 98-99).

However, for truly serious players, the game in Paraguay continues to be energy. The construction of Itaipú, alone, was achieved at the cost of some twenty billion dollars, of which about two billion flowed directly into Paraguay, both for salaries of thousands of workers, and for strategic materials, such as lumber for forms, and cement for the base. Also, a number of Paraguayan, or international "joint-venture" consultancies were founded in Asunción and other South American and European capitals to subcontract for tasks ranging from basic training and health care for labor, to equipment maintenance and repair, to the highly technical aspects of generating vast quantities of energy, all of which accounted for additional millions in contracts (Roett and Sacks 1991: 71). All this was, indeed, heady stuff for a country the size of Paraguay. It would be difficult to estimate the impact of a peripheral aspect of the construction industry, but the number of palatial mansions built in Asunción during the peak of the Itaipú years was significant as well.

The cumulative result of the feverish economic activity accompanying the agrarian transformation and hydroelectric construction boom was the growth in finance capital. In 1972 there were ten private commercial banks in Asunción, mainly "oriented toward financing foreign trade and commerce" (Weil et al. 1972: 254). From about 1978 to 1990, however, dozens of much larger banks, savings and loans, insurance companies, and other financial

institutions opened in the city, the majority of new banks being multinational in ownership (Seyler 1990: 142-43).

However, the more serious problem is not the unprecedented and largely unregulated inflows of capital into the country, but the uses to which it is being put. In 1989 the president of the Central Bank of Paraguay (BCP), the government's central financial institution, sharply criticized private sector institutions for mere speculation, and for only directing credit toward the commercial sector, while virtually ignoring the needs of the productive sectors (*Coyuntura económica* No 44, Dec. 1989: 30). The inevitable result of such policies is the circulation of capital within a relatively small group, and the tendency of capital flight toward the exterior, to the detriment of small producers in agriculture and manufacturing.

Demographic Dynamism

The population of Paraguay is nearly always described as being remarkable in its homogeneity, both culturally and physically. However, as the Services observed (1954: 42), this is not quite so if one considers the numbers and concentrations of diverse peoples found in the country as a result of immigration. During the middle of the century, there were whole communities and areas with densely settled populations of Germans, Ukrainians, Mennonites, Japanese, and other groups. More recently, a flood of Brazilian immigrants which began in the late 1960s has converted the eastern border region into a bicultural Brazilian-Paraguayan zone, where the Brazilians, and Euro-Brazilians often predominate (Hay 1984). However, it is just as true that the central zone--the true "nuclear

Paraguay"--is, in fact, almost as pristine in its ethnic homogeneity as most observers describe. The general historical tendency among most groups of immigrants has been total cultural and biological amalgamation with the Paraguayan population (cf. Macintyre 1992). Therefore, to the extent that one can speak of "nuclear Paraguay" as a geographical and cultural whole, the claim for homogeneity is strong.

The Paraguayans have always been described as a handsome, robust and healthy population. During the eighteenth century, Azara observed that the different peoples--European and Indian--were "bettered for the mixing" although he was no doubt pleased to note that the European genotype seemed to be more "inalterable," which resulted in a general lightening of the population (Azara 1943a: 192). On the whole, however, the Paraguayans were more "elegantly formed" than either their Spanish or Indian predecessors, and they were generally "astute, wise, active and alert.." Lacking a more precise index for general vitality of a people, Azara's description is probably as useful today as it was then.

In 1992, with the latest census, the population of Paraguay was counted at 4,123,550 persons, of whom over 97 percent lived in eastern Paraguay (Paraguay 1992). This represents a growth rate in real numbers of over one million since 1982, confirming an estimated rate of annual growth between 2.5 and 2.9 percent (Hanratty and Meditz 1990: xiv). Based on these estimates, the population will climb to above five million by the end of the century. The impact of this steady growth in population would be apparent to a Paraguayan old enough to remember the census of 1962--just

thirty years ago--when the country counted 1,854,400 residents (Paraguay 1982: 29). Population statistics are always suspect in the country because of porous borders and high rates of migration, but there is no doubt that the country is feeling the effects of this kind of population growth.

Even within eastern Paraguay, however, the population is far from evenly distributed. The central region, the historic home to most of the country's population, still registers densities of about 42 persons per square kilometer, which means that 38 percent of the national population resides in seven percent of the national territory (Zoomers 1988: 34). The Eastern Border Region³ was scarcely more inhabited than the Chaco before 1970, but since then, hundreds of thousands of migrants have settled in the border departments after the government and private sector opened the area during the 1970s. Still, population densities are usually less than 25 persons per square kilometer in the most densely inhabited parts of what is the most highly productive area of the country.

Finally, given the fairly high rate of annual growth, Paraguay's population is disproportionately young, even with declining death rates among the elderly. The 1982 census showed that 41 percent of the population was under fifteen years of age. Also, the country is still predominantly rural (58 percent in 1982), and the overall fertility rate of rural women was double that of women from Asunción (6.6 percent vs. 3.3 percent) (Paraguay 1986). This explains why even high migration rates out of the most densely populated areas of the country have not been, and are not likely to, relieve pressure on land and other resources in those areas in the

near future (Zoomers 1988). The population is a dynamic one in terms of growth rates, structure, and movement.

"Free" Lands and Invisible Borders

The Services (1954: 50) noted that, in 1948, title to property was not generally coveted--and perhaps even considered an outright liability--by Paraguayan peasants. The reasons for this were straightforward: there were sparse population densities, an abundance of cultivable lands, and traditional technologies which rendered extensive landholdings unprofitable, except in areas of pastureland or where extractive industry (mainly of yerba mate) was practiced. This situation prevailed even into the 1970s in some areas of the country (Ewart 1977: 33), leading some observers to point out that "Paraguayans are restless people without profound ties to their place of birth," illustrated by the fact that 22.5 percent of the population lived in a locality other than place of birth (Weil et al. 1972: 24). However, as will be emphasized in more detail, this situation is rapidly changing in character with increased population, changing technologies, and a monetarization of the rural economy based on new market opportunities for commodity crops. No longer can massive movement of populations in Paraguay be attributed simply to opportunity as it may have been in the past.

Still, many Paraguayans had traditionally enjoyed the option of geographical relocation through simple squatting on lands that were not "rationally exploited" by their owners. This was a practical response to generational increase in family size and progressive decrease in soil fertility over time. It also ensured that population

densities would remain uniformly even and prevent generalized environmental depletion. Legal landholders tolerated squatters. Large landowners lacked the technological means to intensify production on their lands (so-called "vertical" growth [Zoomers 1990]), and squatters offered the possibility of "horizontal" growth (i.e., increased acreage under cultivation) as a source of labor during critical times in the production process, such as harvest (Weil et al. 1972: 184). In essence, latifundistas and minifundistas in the central zone occupied different niches, and as Rivarola (1982: 26) explains, "there was a clear delimitation between two sub-economies which did not impose upon one another, nor enter into dispute--in terms of land, markets, capital, and labor" between the two groups for almost a century after the War.

Eventually, this tradition of "free lands" was the object of direct bureaucratic and political frontal attack, following fundamental changes at a more basic level soon after the mid-1960s. Population densities in the central region of the country were nearing intolerable levels and, emulating the Brazilian "March to the West," the government, with the assistance of various international agencies, decided on a course of colonization and resettlement in the sparsely populated but rich eastern and northern regions of the country. Such a move was encouraged by generous international assistance (most notably from the U.S. Agency for International Development) which provided resources to cut new roads into the area, and the promise by Brazil to build a bridge across the Paraná River, linking Asunción, for the first time, overland with the major cities and seaports of southern Brazil.

Significantly, this era coincided with parallel demographic developments in southern Brazil, and a consequence of the new policy was to encourage hundreds of thousands of land-short Brazilians--who enjoyed advantages in capital and technology (farm machinery and petro-chemical inputs) foreign to the great majority of potential Paraguayan settlers--to migrate into the region as well (Hay 1984: 6). While the region offered great potential for agriculture, a more fortuitous event was the sudden rise in the value of soybeans and other commodities mentioned above. Therefore, all of the elements were in place by the early 1970s for a great transformation in the area: fertile land, benificent climate, cheap forms of transportation, technological resources, a potential cheap labor force, and a high demand in the international marketplace for the products of the region.

The only element which might be lacking was a mechanism for regulating migration into, and economic activity within, the area. Given that the right infrastructural variables were essentially in place, the government moved in 1963 to create the Institute of Rural Welfare (IBR), which was to function as a land reform agency, replacing the old Instituto de Reforma Agraria. However, the purpose of the new agency was never true land reform (i.e., parcelization and redistribution of latifundia to landless or land-short farmers), but redistribution of the population through settlement on state lands (Pastore 1972: 464), or, in some cases, lands seized from perceived adversaries of the government.⁴

A secondary, unwritten, goal of the IBR apparently was to enhance the value of land as a commodity in and of itself. While the

agency did establish and title a great number of lots in the newly colonized regions of the country, at least as many titles were established for small plots in the densely populated central zone of the country. Families who may have lived on a particular parcel for many years were suddenly in the position of being "precarious" occupiers, and risked danger of eviction should their claim be challenged by anyone with authority. With a rapidly increasing population in the area, coupled with new technologies to eke out sustainable yields on shrinking lots, there was a rapid increment in land speculation which often led to purely artificial values (Rivarola 1982: 61).

Moreover, the taxes with which new lands in the east were to be acquired and distributed did not materialize (Pastore 1972: 465). When state lands were depleted, the IBR could only settle unproductive latifundia through full payment of the "market value" of those lands. In order to raise funds, new lands were sold to those who could pay, which served only to break the enormous latifundia (sometimes consisting of hundreds of thousands of hectares) into merely modest latifundia consisting of thousands of hectares. Not surprisingly, these lots became prebends enjoyed by higher-ranking military officers, government bureaucrats, and well-heeled foreign individuals and firms (Rivarola 1982: 75), who either cleared them for ranching or broke them up in turn and sold them in private colonization schemes to better-off farmers, often Brazilians of German origin (Wilson, Hay and Margolis 1989). Paraguayans of more humble means who did secure lots in the newly colonized areas tended to be disadvantaged both in terms of capital and technology.

Economic differentiation occurred in remarkably short periods of time, leading to small-farm failure (inability to meet payments on land, agricultural inputs, and consumer goods) and eventual abandonment of sale of improvements to the land without title. The tendency was for rapid consolidation of land in the new areas of colonization and the consequent pauperization, proletarianization and out-migration of the smaller producers, a common process thoroughly documented for Paraguay and other regions (see Hay 1989; Fogel 1989; Campos 1982; Foweraker 1981; Margolis 1973).

Thus ended a centuries-long tradition of "free" lands in eastern Paraguay. As stated above, Paraguayans have long been a transitory population, in spite of the often cited value placed on close family ties (e.g. Kluck 1990: 65). In the past, however, as will be discussed more fully in the case of Tobatí, rural-rural migration was normally a question of settling a short distance from the family *valle* (traditional home), and relations were closely maintained between sister or daughter communities. Otherwise, migration to the exterior--nearly always to Argentina--was a response not only to economic needs, but to political persecution in its various forms, ranging from forced military recruitment to "the application of violence as a method in democratic decision making" (Pastore 1983: 54). Because of the close cultural affinity between Paraguayans and Argentines (many of whom, in the north, are Guaraní speakers) the border between the two countries is virtually "invisible," and Paraguayans have long passed with ease from one country to the other.

During times of great political upheaval--such as the civil war of 1947, for example--many Paraguayans from different social

classes "retired" to Argentina, mainly to Buenos Aires. Thus, over time, a fairly close-knit Paraguayan community became established in that city which provides a certain security for new arrivals. However, with opportunities for access to new lands restricted during and after the 1960s, and a meager industrial base in the capital limiting urban growth, a great new class of economic *émigrés* began to gather in the Argentine capital, forming ever more dense networks of relatives and acquaintances from place of origin who offer support and assistance in finding jobs. The possibility of migration to Argentina removed a sizeable burden from the Stroessner government, since estimates of the numbers of Paraguayans residing in Argentina for both political and economic reasons is commonly put at up to one quarter to one third of the entire population of the country (Rivarola 1982: 50). In more recent years, however, with strong economic growth in Paraguay, and more dismal economic performance in Argentina, migration has become a back-and-forth phenomenon, since so many Paraguayans have developed close personal and family ties in both Buenos Aires and their *valle* of origin.⁵

The issues discussed in this section concerning the physical infrastructure and potential resources of the country, the possibilities and challenges posed by new technologies, the changes in economic imperatives over time, and the overview of more recent demographic shifts may offer only the broadest background against which a more intimate understanding of the more subtle aspects of day-to-day life in rural Paraguay can be comprehended. However, detail can only be perceived with an idea of the general. A close look

at the town of Tobatí, backed by a basic understanding of these infrastructural forces and the historical imperatives should benefit from these prior observations.

Notes

1 Paraguayan authors are certainly not unique in attempting to identify the gestalt of their people as a result of mixtures of psychological traits supposedly inherent in their "blood," and somehow transmitted across generations. One scholar, for example, explains that, along with a suite of physical traits, the Guaraní contributed the psychological qualities of " ... a sweet and hospitable character and the tendency to submit to authority; the propensity of the women to accept the rudest of chores, including the maintenance of the home. [The Paraguayan] remained retiring and silent, above all in the presence of strangers. [He is] stoic, sober, and resilient." From the Spaniard, however, the Paraguayan inherited "intelligence and mental acuity." Happily, however, the physical traits of the Peninsular predominated, resulting in a people that "the majority of observers has always admitted to being a pure white race" (cited in Pangrazio 1989: 150).

2 According to the 1992 Census, one department of the Chaco, Nueva Asunción, had only 1,426 people in an area of almost 45,000 square kilometers. The department, also called Chaco, had only 442 persons. The entire territory of the Chaco had a total of 97,208 people for an area close to the size of the state of Arizona.

3 The nomenclature was coined by Nickson (1981) to describe the strip of land between sixty and 120 kilometers wide which abuts neighboring Brazil in the east, and was site of massive and rapid Brazilian and Paraguayan immigration and development.

4 In any case, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, Zoomers (1988) convincingly shows that this program did virtually nothing to reduce pressure on lands in the central minifundia areas.

5 The *valle* is more than the geographical setting of the community. It also consists of relations of real and fictive kinship, and shared personal histories that create the identity with community.

Therefore, with massive migration in recent years the *valle* can be recreated in the *barrios* of Asunción or even in Buenos Aires.

CHAPTER 3
THE EVOLUTION OF A SOCIETY:
FROM THE COLONY TO MODERN ERA

A sense of a common history is the ideological glue which binds a population together, whether it be a kin-based lineage, a loosely formed chiefdom, a modern industrialized state, or even an isolated ethnic enclave within a larger, perhaps dominant, society. It matters little whether that history is largely fictitious (idealized) or, as may be the case, based on years of shared oppression. Premier figures may be deified or villified by historians, but if they really do "make history" it is, indeed, under conditions not of their own choosing. The truest history is the result of the cumulative exigencies of a very real world which force individuals to make decisions on a day-to-day basis in order to survive and maintain their identity as a people. The history of Paraguay is a fine example of this principle.

While every integral population tends to imbue its own history with a sense of uniqueness and glory, one is occasionally struck by a particular case; a history which seems truly remarkable in the way it reveals the forces behind historical change as well as the triumphs and tragedies of a people involved in a shared struggle with the material world. For those few scholars who are familiar with the history of Paraguay, that country offers such an example. John Hoyt Williams, one of the premier scholars of Paraguayan history in the English language writes, for example, that "The Paraguayan past is

etched in acid, all sharp line and high relief, few rounded, softened curves" (1979: ix). On the other hand, Richard Alan White, in a groundbreaking work on the period of the *Franciata* (1810-1840--the time of Paraguay's first post-independence Dictator, Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia), correctly points out that Paraguayan history, like that of so many other countries around the world, was largely shaped by the political economy of European colonialism, which enforced dependent relationships benefiting the metropoli over the interests of the colonies (1978).

However, an understanding of proximate causes accounts for why history may seem eccentric. In Paraguay, for example, Dr. Francia--"El Supremo"--quite successfully "attacked the interests of the national and international elites" (White 1978: 8) and, in the process, "enacted a radical social revolution." This is one specific case in which Paraguay diverged in remarkable ways from the patterns which are normally associated with the histories of the many colonized regions of the world in general and the various Latin American republics in particular. Because so many of the critical junctures of Paraguay's history are associated with the name of a single individual, be it Dr. Francia or General Alfredo Stroessner, the temptation has always been to treat Paraguayan history in terms of "great man" theories. As the previous chapter implied, though, it is more instructive to examine that history with a constant consideration of more basic factors such as geography, demographics, resource bases, and political economies. These complexities and apparent contradictions in formulating an historiography of the country are perhaps what led a young Paraguayan scholar, Juan

Carlos Herken Krauer, to remark that "Paraguay is not a country--it is an obsession" (cited in Warren 1985: xvi).

A basic grounding in the history of the country and society should save the story of modern Tobatí from being "orphaned," and isolated from a current of which the town is still a part. For example, the circumstances which led to radical changes in the economic base of the town are coincident with the forces of "modernization," but the responses of the Tobateños to those changes are very much conditioned by relationships which were formed and proved useful during times when other modes of production were dominant. Likewise, some aspects of social organization and behavior which may seem unintelligible or even bizarre make sense when observed against the historical backdrop within which they originated. Above all, a basic understanding of the history of the people may help drive home the depth of their experience in struggling to survive in a rapidly changing world which in some ways offers pitifully few overt cues toward rational behavior.

For purposes of exposition, a brief history of Paraguay could be divided logically into five broad time periods: the period of the conquest (1527-1555), colonial Paraguay (1556-1810), independence through the War of the Triple Alliance (1811-1870), the post-war period (1871-1955), and a time which can be referred to as "modern" Paraguay (1956 to the present), beginning soon after the advent of the *Stronato*, or Stroessner dictatorship in 1954.¹ Fascinating and popularly known as it is, I will treat the case of the Jesuit "empire within an empire" (López 1976: 40) as tangential to this history. The Jesuit "state" is probably best described in its own

context, although I will discuss the role of the Jesuits in the important junctures where they were decisive in the history of Paraguay as a nation. The final period, corresponding to the modern era is largely the subject of the work to follow, and will be described in the context of Tobatí.

Mohammed's Paradise or Pangloss' Folly? The Conquest

The first European to penetrate present-day Paraguayan territory was Aleixo García, an adventurer shipwrecked on the coast of Brazil who heard tales of riches to the west. García crossed Paraguayan territory and reached Peru in 1525, but was killed by Indians on the banks of the Paraguay River upon his return to the Atlantic. In 1528, Sebastian Cabot sailed up the Paraná-Paraguay River, motivated by the same rumors of mineral wealth in the region. Failing to find the silver he pursued (legend of which gave the name to the Río de la Plata, or lower Paraná), Europeans found little reason to stay in the area. Still, the possibility of an overland route to Peru prompted other expeditions.

In 1536, Pedro de Mendoza led an exploratory expedition to the region, and founded the first city of Buenos Aires. Gravely ill with syphilis, the embattled *conquistador* sent two lieutenants, Juan de Ayolas and Juan de Salazar, north up the Paraná and Paraguay rivers. The ambitious Ayolas split his party in two, and set out overland in search of Peru, leaving his second in command, Domingo Martínez de Irala behind at the temporary settlement of Candelaria. In the meantime, the Salazar expedition succeeded in establishing the fort of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción on August 15, 1537. The

fort was strategically located on bluffs overlooking a protected bay on the Paraguay River, and the countryside was heavily populated with seemingly peaceful Guaraní Indians who likely viewed the Spaniards as possible allies against the marauding Chacoan tribes on the opposite bank of the river. Meanwhile, Mendoza, the captain-general and *adelantado* of half the continent, sought to return to Spain after Buenos Aires was ravaged by hostile Indians, but died in mid-voyage. Ayolas and his party fared no better. When Irala, patiently awaiting his chief's return from Peru, learned that the party had been massacred by nomadic Chacoans, he joined the Salazar group in Asunción and took command. Popular and able, Irala would be the dominant figure during the settlement of the province until his death in 1556.

Irala hardly usurped his new position as *adelantado*. The remarkable circumstance regarding his succession concerned a *cédula* signed by the King, who heard of the death of Mendoza, but did not know if he had named a successor. In the case that there were no clear successor, the King empowered the survivors of the expedition to gather and freely elect their own governor. The importance of this event is clear, for as López (1976: 7) explains, "The *cédula* of 1537, which one historian has called the Magna Carta of colonial Paraguay, is unique in the history of the Spanish American colonies. No other part of Spain's empire in America received the privilege of popular elections." Whether the *cédula* was to be applied only to the particular case of Mendoza's heir is unclear, but the people of Paraguay invoked it often during the next two centuries to maintain an independent position with regard to the

metropolis--a position tolerated by the Crown only to the extent that the upstart colony was unimportant in the overall process of New World conquest and settlement.

As governor, Irala acted decisively. In 1541, he ordered the few survivors of the Buenos Aires settlement to abandon the fort and regroup in Paraguay. At this time, the entire population of Spaniards in the province of Río de la Plata numbered from 350 to 400, and all were now in Asunción (Service 1954: 20; López 1976: 8). The official act of foundation of the city was signed on September 16, 1541, and the first five *regidores* were elected by lottery from the names of ten nominees, placed in a water jar with a mouth "small enough to fit the hand of a child who is presumed to be without malice" (Aguirre T.II, pt.1 1948: 240). That election was a radical step, for it established the first town council, or *cabildo*, "which was to develop into one of the most independent political institutions in Paraguay and was to remain so till its abolition by the Dictator Francia in December 1814" (López 1976: 8). The *cédula* of 1537 granted certain unique powers to the small colony, but this action clearly went beyond the wishes of the king. However, there was no move to crush the council's authority, and with the help of the *cabildo*, the governor provided for the defenses of the city, increased construction, encouraged the planting of crops, and "[kept] an eye on the neighboring Guaranís, who were becoming increasingly unhappy with their Spanish guests" (López 1976: 9). In the meantime, the city of Buenos Aires ceased to exist until it was refounded in 1580 by an expedition of settlers from Asunción.

Irala immediately set about to control the Indian population, expand the colony, and provide for its defense. He also created a number of *pueblos de Indios*, or "Indian towns," which ringed Asunción. Already, by 1539, Irala had designated fourteen such towns, of which Tobatí was one, along with the towns of Itá, Acaí (Acahay?), Yaguaron, Areguá, Altos, Yois, Ipané (Ypané), Guarambaré, Atirá (Atyrá), Maracayú, Terecaní (Terecañy), Abirapariyá, and Candelaria (Azara 1943a: 174). This policy continued, and in 1555 thirteen other towns were established. Close to the date of independence, 53 *pueblos de indios* had been founded, although some were destroyed by Portuguese invaders or consolidated with other towns (Azara 1943a: 174-75).

Irala was replaced in 1542 by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, an adventurer of some fame for his explorations of Florida and central Mexico, who brought "the first and only important reinforcement that the young colony was to receive for many years, [bringing] the total number of Spaniards to about six hundred" (Service 1954: 20). Cabeza de Vaca was unpopular with the Spanish colonists, possibly because of his attempts to limit the exploitation and abuse of the Guaraní allies (López 1976: 10, and Graham 1901: 41; but see Service 1954: 22, and Prieto 1988: 65) and was deposed upon his return from a disastrous and profitless year-long expedition toward the west in 1543-44. Citing the *cédula* of 1537, the citizens of Asunción again chose Irala to lead them. Cabeza de Vaca was thrown in chains and returned to Spain the following year, accompanied by Juan de Salazar, the actual founder of Asunción, who had supported him

during the revolt (López 1976: 12). Only Irala would be forever remembered as the "Father of Paraguay" (Warren 1949).

Regarding this formative period in Paraguayan history and society, scholars traditionally emphasized the fraternal relations existing between the Spaniards and the indigenous Guaraní noting, principally, the rapid rate at which the Spanish took Indian wives and began the process of mestization, and the symbiotic nature of the reciprocal relations between the two groups (cf. Service 1954: 29; Roett and Sacks 1991: 88). While there is perhaps much truth to this interpretation, especially during the time of initial contact, it is often stressed to the point of suggesting an idealistic fantasy (cf. González 1948: 109; Díaz de Guzmán 1980: 147-148; Benítez 1967: 87-95) or, otherwise, a situation of voluntary--perhaps even pathological--submissiveness on the part of the Indians (e.g., Miranda 1990: 13; Burton cited in Warren 1949: 95-96). One author (Sacks 1990: 12) neatly summed up a difficult period in the country's history by simply noting that "In 1610 Philip III (1598-1621) proclaimed that only the 'sword of the word' should be used to subdue the Paraguayan Indians, thus making them happy subjects."

In fact, all of the evidence points to the fact that the relations between the Spanish and their Guaraní "hosts" did not differ significantly from the usual patterns of domination and exploitation practiced by European conquerors in all other areas of the hemisphere. However, the particular forms by which domination and exploitation were expressed probably were unique to Paraguay, and served to veil the true relations between the two groups. The circumstances which largely determined these relations can be

briefly summarized. First, Paraguay lacked the moveable (principally, mineral) wealth which could attract a significant number of settlers, and assure regular traffic in and out of the colony and a steady rate of immigration. Second, the very small number of Spaniards who did settle in the colony included a mere handful of women--probably less than ten-- some of whom likely returned to Spain (Bertoni and Gorham 1973: 113). Third, fairly low population densities of natives, probably due to the catastrophic mortality rates of the Indians (Garavaglia 1983: 164-5; Necker 1990: 133) precluded the availability of a ready source of labor necessary for the establishment of a plantation economy. Finally, the physical isolation of the territory and its great distance from the sea made trade in what products the colony could produce difficult in the extreme. These same factors also severely limited the primitive accumulation of capital, which would delay the establishment of true economic classes, although this had no effect on the institutionalization of significant social strata.

The first alliance between the Spaniards and the Guaraní was a military one. When Salazar first arrived at the bay which would be Asunción, he encountered Guaraní Indians "who were hard pressed by the raids of other [Chacoan] Indians" and who "chose to receive them [the Spaniards] as allies rather than as enemies" (Service 1954: 19).² Citing Rubio, Service continues to explain that "the alliance then made between the Guaraní and the Spaniards was a factor of extraordinary importance, without which it would not be possible to explain the action of the latter in Paraguay, for, thanks to this friendship, the conquest was possible." The importance of this

military alliance cannot be denied in the survival of the colony, for loyal Guaraní consistently aided the undermanned Spanish force in battle against recalcitrant Indians³ (be they traditional enemies of the Guaraní or other Guaraní rebels), the always threatening Portuguese expansionists or slavers invading from Brazil, or even between rival factions of Spaniards themselves (López 1976: 62). The Guaraní benefitted from the superior weaponry of the Spaniards, while the Spaniards benefitted from the superior numbers of the Guaraní, but the relationship between the two groups, as explained below, was by no means truly symbiotic.⁴

Of equal importance, especially in terms of the eventual formation of a Paraguayan society, was the Spaniards' practice of taking Guaraní women as mates. While this would seem perfectly explainable by the fact that there were so few women accompanying the Spaniards (Potthast-Jutkeit 1991: 218), many authors take a more romantic view of this aspect of history. Cardozo (1987: 24), for example, explains that the Guaraní "Offered their daughters, as was the custom, as a sign of friendship, and provided food and auxiliary warriors. This alliance, pacted on a marriage bed of love, was to be the foundation of the new community" (see also González 1948: 101, and Díaz de Guzmán 1980: 147).⁵ In this respect, the Guaraní would seem to have been exceedingly generous, for the Spaniards not only took their women, but took them in exaggerated numbers. Scarcely a single author writing about this period fails to highlight the prevalence of polygyny in an extreme form among the Spaniards, warranting the reference to the colony as a "Mohammed's Paradise" (López 1976: 16; Potthast-Jutkeit 1991). Actual numbers of

concubines may have been inflated for various reasons, but reliable sources do indicate that each Spaniard kept an average of ten Indian "wives" (Garavaglia 1983: 265; Warren 1949: 132-33).

While the relationship between Spaniards and Indians was esteemed to be reciprocal--the Spaniards acquired warriors and wives, and the Indians received protection through alliance bonded by affinal ties--it is rather more obvious that the relationship was an unbalanced one.⁶ As much as warriors and "brothers-in-law," the conquerors obtained, initially, food, and soon after, virtually free labor. More than a wife, the conqueror acquired a "mistress, worker, mother, companion, and slave" (López 1976: 16). A superabundance of wives and "brothers-in-law," therefore, was much more significant to the Spaniards as a captive labor force and source of heritable wealth than a source of sentimental solace (Susnik 1965: 13).

The Spaniards began to abuse the generosity of the Guaraní soon after their arrival in the territory. Requests for assistance in food and labor soon became demands enforced by violent actions, and the grateful acceptance of a valued sister or daughter soon metamorphosed into an expected right, coerced through rape and abduction. In a territory where metal (and, therefore, coinage) was virtually absent, the only source or sign of material wealth was through the control of captive labor, which was had through the simple accumulation of "wives" and affinal kinsmen. It was not long after the arrival of the Spaniards before the Indians had ceased to "volunteer" their labor and women, and the Spaniards became accustomed to going among the villages and forcing them to work (López 1976: 48). As one scholar explains,

. . . this relation of kinship which, in the framework of community life, involves a series of functions indispensable for the reproduction of the group (from the political to the ceremonial) had been converted by the whites, to an *economic relation* almost completely despoiled of its initial complexity; to a *servile relationship* (Garavaglia 1983: 264, author's emphasis).

While it could be pointed out that nearly all "functions indispensable for the reproduction of the group" have an essentially economic basis, it still seems overly apologetic to explain, as did Service, that

The relatives of these women also helped provide food and labor for the Spaniards in the same manner in which they customarily provided for the heads of their own lineages. The Guaraní apparently considered this situation a normal consequence of the alliance (1954: 20).

There is simply too much evidence that the Guaraní did not consider these relationships to be "normal," for the first years of the colony were fraught with threats and actions of bloody rebellion by the Indians against the Spaniards. While unknown numbers of Guaraní simply refused to collaborate with the invaders and continued to retreat further and further into the forest until well into this century (Rehnfeldt 1983), those who were in contact with the Spaniards began to express their displeasure very quickly. One of the most well documented of the early revolts occurred on Holy Thursday of Easter week in 1539, when 8,000 Guaraní arrived in Asunción, ostensibly to view the ceremonies, but with the true purpose of massacring the Spaniards (Díaz de Guzmán 1980: 146-47). However, the Spaniards were tipped off by a chief's daughter, who was "in the service" of Salazar, and routed the Indians. The chiefs

were summarily tried, hanged, and quartered although the warriors were pardoned and, as a result, learned to "fear and love" the Spaniards even more, moving them to more eagerly "volunteer" their daughters and sisters to the Spanish captains (see also Gonzalez 1948: 103). Prieto (1988: 60) declares that this indicated to the Indians "the necessity of changing their procedures," and that "violence would give way to the astuteness of love."

That was not necessarily the case. Besides constant, isolated acts of rebellion, serious concerted efforts to annihilate the "anarchic" Spanish occurred in 1543 and 1545. Such incidents during the period were frequent enough to reveal a strong pattern of generalized Guaraní resistance against foreign domination (Necker 1990: 131-32). The last major revolt, in 1560, was nearly successful, but after it did fail, the Guaraní could never afterwards muster the strength to rid the land of the invaders, although scattered conflicts occurred well into the seventeenth century (*ibid.*).

Ramón Fogel (1989) gives a more thorough account of these and other important violent uprisings in the early years of the colony. Otherwise, beginning early in the period and extending well into the present century, shattered groups of Guaraní expressed their despair through a long history of messianic movements leading to often suicidal migrations to a legendary "land without evil" (*yvyraae'y*) (Hay 1986; Meliá 1988: 115; Nimuendajú 1978). Despite the fact that "Spanish-Guaraní relations are usually described by modern historians as having been amicable from the period of their first contact" (Service 1954: 1), collaboration of the Guaraní was "not a spontaneous and voluntary decision, but rather a forced and

conditioned one" (Fogel 1989?: 5). Domination of the Indians was important to the Spaniards for security reasons, but even more so for their value as labor in the production process. After a fairly short time, the Spaniards realized that the promise of precious commodities was a chimera, and they faced the task of forging a permanent, perhaps prosperous, settlement and colony. Even at this stage, with the most primitive of economies, the relations of production which would underpin future economic development were already established, with the all but vanquished indigenous population as a major actor in the process.

Maturation of the Colony 1556-1811

From 1537 to the year of his death in 1556, Irala led the new colony through its transformation from a simple expeditionary base to a permanent settlement of some promise. After a single generation, the Spaniards had become cognizant of, and reconciled to, the realities and demands of the world in which they found themselves, and began to adapt accordingly.

Life may have been relatively rude, but the *conquistadores* did father large families, and enjoyed the benefits of comparative freedom from Spanish law, a benificent climate, and a seemingly endless supply of free labor. The natural bounty of the land was virtually at hand for the asking. Given the lack of mineral wealth, and the amenities attracted to places that possessed it, the Spaniards doubtlessly could have simply abandoned the colony at any moment, but the fact that they did not is assurance that they recognized promise for the future.

Regardless of the personal comforts or hardships of the Spaniards, the colony was undergoing profound changes. First of all, there was demographic expansion, both through natural growth and recruitment of individual natives, most likely captives and affines of the Spanish men. This, in itself, bore the seeds of a modest market economy even though, lacking currency, exchange would continue to take place, well into the eighteenth century, almost wholly by barter (Service 1954: 27-8), with *yerba mate* eventually serving as the basic unit of exchange (López 1976: 65). Second, there was a fairly radical change in the ethnic composition of the colony after only a short period of time. Given the negligible immigration of Europeans to the colony, the very few Spanish women who stayed, and the polygynous habits of the Spanish men, it was not long before the *mestizo* population began to outnumber the *peninsulares*.⁷ By the end of the sixteenth century, in fact, "not a single living Spaniard was to be found in the land" (Bertoni and Gorham 1973: 113). Also lacking a substantial *criollo* generation (New World-born Spaniards), common in other colonies, the *mestizo* offspring of the first conquistadores gained considerably in political and economic influence (*ibid.*: 114; Warren 1949: 133), and were early given both legal and social recognition as Spaniards (Krüger 1981: 37). Finally, and of extreme importance to Paraguayan scholars, this new generation--the first generation of true Paraguayans--assured the position of Guaraní as the maternal language of the colony and future nation. Aside from other decisive factors (see Rubin 1968: Ch. 2), it was most natural that these children would speak the language of the hearth, especially given the frequent absence of the father, who

would be apt to spend large amounts of time in other households, or away for long periods of time on expeditions or explorations (Roett and Sacks 1991: 88). With succeeding generations raised under similar conditions, Guaraní was to become embedded as the first language of the society, although Paraguay's condition as a colony, in some ways still strictly accountable to the Crown, precluded that Spanish disappear as a second language.

A particular event occurred in 1556 which speaks much of the changing condition of the colony. In what was probably the last major act before his death, governor Irala finally acceded to the growing demands of the Spaniards and institutionalized the *encomienda* (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of this institution). This important act provides indirect evidence for significant changes at both the infrastructural and structural levels. That the Spaniards recognized the need to institutionalize and legally enforce a system of labor peonage could only mean that their "unlimited supply of free labor" was in some way threatened, most likely by elevated rates of mortality in the Indian population and increased competition for labor by new mestizo *encomenderos*. It also strongly indicates that there was a new emphasis on production, not only for subsistence, but to create a surplus for exchange.

Rapid demographic growth, at least in part due to a polygynous population, gained Asunción the reputation in the last years of the century as being the "mother of cities" (Necker 1990: 32). While Irala had already established a series of Indian, or *mitayo*, villages outside of Asunción, governors after his death sent out numerous expeditions to found new settlements, which included

the present-day cities of Villa Rica (originally in Brazil; now in Paraguay), Santa Cruz de la Sierra (in Bolivia), and Santa Fé, Trinidad, Corrientes, Santiago de Jerez, and Buenos Aires, all in Argentina (Velázquez 1982: 117). The idea was to create trade links both with Peru and overseas, via the port of Buenos Aires as well as overland, through the Andes. It also provided opportunities to a mestizo population which had little hope of mobility in the mother colony and, not unimportantly, further legitimized the Crown's claim over a large part of the continent.

While direct trade with the mother country was precluded by the hegemony of Peru and Panama over the nascent port of Buenos Aires, there was a steady growth of trade among the new cities themselves (Garavaglia 1978), as well as with Peru, strengthening linkages already established with the regional markets of Potosí by 1580. There was a certain demand for the two pillars of early Paraguayan trade, wine and sugar, (Garavaglia 1983: 66), as well as beef, hides, tobacco, and lumber. Most significantly, though, the era saw the rise in popularity of *yerba mate* as a trade commodity. This "Paraguayan tea," or "green gold," as it would become known, proved to be the mainstay of the Paraguayan economy for centuries to come. Because of the importance of this commodity in Paraguayan history, it merits some discussion.

Yerba mate is a tea made from the dry-cured and crushed leaves of a shrub of the holly family, *Ilex paraguariensis*. Like many staple crops discovered in the Americas, such as manioc and corn, use of the product was rapidly and widely diffused, and in a short time there was a demand for yerba not only in the region, but in the

provinces of Peru and even in the Iberian peninsula. Known as *ka'á* in Guarani, it was likely used for both ceremonial and gustatory purposes in the pre-Columbian era (Garavaglia 1983: 36). Juan Carlos Garavaglia, in an exhaustive study of the history of the economy of yerba in colonial Paraguay, points out the fact that, along with other caffeine-bearing beverages--chocolate, tea, and coffee--yerba mate is associated with a strong sense of conviviality, and there is a high social content involved with its consumption (1983: 43). From the earliest times until the present, yerba-drinking has had an almost ritualistic aspect. The dried yerba is put in a recipient, usually an ornamental cowhorn or a dried gourd, and after either hot or cold water is poured over it, it is sipped through a silver straw with a perforated spoon-shaped bowl at the bottom (known as a *bombilla*) which acts as a filter. Everyone shares the same cup, and rules of hierarchy dictate who shall pour, or *cebar*, each portion. Drinking companions, ideally of only one sex, usually sit in a circle, and the cup is always passed to the right, and only the right hand is used to pass it. The drinking of *mate* (hot yerba mate) or *tereré* (cold), is a central feature of nearly all Paraguayans' daily existence, both in urban and rural areas.⁸

However, as Garavaglia also points out (1983: 40-41), yerba differed from the other social beverages in the sense that, at least for many years, coffee, tea, and chocolate were associated with a particular "higher," (mainly hispanic) class (with the possible exception of chocolate in Mexico), while coca (another mild narcotic with social and ceremonial aspects) was always associated with another "caste," or ethnic group, the Indians of the Altiplano. Yerba,

on the other hand, was eagerly accepted by all, without distinction. In Paraguay, this was probably because of the intense mestization and relative cultural homogeneity of the population, but it is not so easily explained for other areas. Garavaglia (1983: 40-41) points out that "not only the stately lord of Salteño Indians (just like his Indians and peons), but also the Potosí miner, the rich merchant of Lima, and the rancher of Quito, were adept in their use of maté" (see also White 1978: 18), although the poor would drink out of simple painted gourds, while the rich had gourd-shaped cups and *bombillas* fashioned of the finest gold and silver. Probably only tobacco and alcohol had this same level of diffusion during the colonial period in the Americas.

The importance of the foregoing cannot be overemphasized. Although fortunate in soils, climate, and other resources, Paraguay possessed almost nothing that could not be produced in virtually every other province on the continent. Paraguay did, however, enjoy a virtual monopoly on yerba, for dense stands of the shrub grew wild almost entirely within the province's territory. While the Jesuits did succeed in cultivating the plant (with historic results, as will be shown), it proved to be temperamental in its biotic requirements, giving Paraguay a lasting hold on the market of the sought-after commodity. During the latter years of the colony "nearly half the colony's men found employment in the collection, preparation and transportation of yerba" and the product accounted for nearly three-fourths of export income (White 1978: 18).

The Jesuits and the Común

From the early seventeenth century and well into the next, the encomenderos and petty merchants of Asunción were sending their Indian charges deep into the most hostile reaches of the territory to harvest the yerba, cure it, and pack it back to the capital, often on their backs (Warren 1949: 129).⁹ Meanwhile the Jesuit priests and their "reduced" Indian population, using much more innovative (and generally more humane) techniques, were slowly beginning to dominate the market.

Through a series of about thirty missions, or *reducciones*, eventually sheltering over one hundred thousand Guarani (López 1976: 36), the Jesuit fathers achieved virtual control over all of the area south of the Tebicuary river, beyond the Uruguay, and extending well into Portuguese-claimed territories (Caraman 1975: 332). This was a territory much larger than that under effective control of Asunción during the same period. Also, from the time of their arrival in Paraguay around 1588, the Jesuits were an important element in both the civil and ecclesiastic life of Asunción. By 1610, they had both their church and college on the main plaza of the city and, until the order was finally suppressed in 1767, the college was "the only educational institution of any consequence" in the province (López 1976: 35).

In spite of the phenomenal accomplishments of the Jesuits in creating a "vigorous civilization comparable to that of the Incas" (Caraman 1975: 11) in the midst of a semi-tropical jungle, there was great hostility between the Jesuits and the Asunceños, for a number

of reasons. First, and most important, the Jesuits controlled the largest disposable labor force in the area, for by decree, the missionized Indians under the protection of the fathers were exempt from the *encomienda* and other forms of tribute to the Spaniards, although each missionized Indian was required to pay a token tribute directly to the Crown (López 1976: 38).

Second, the Jesuits controlled a provincial-sized piece of some of the most potentially productive real estate on the continent, and they apparently exercised their access to Indian labor with an eye toward increasing the wealth of the area for the security of the commonweal. Besides controlling the richest natural *yerbales* in the territory, they cultivated yerba, a skill the colonists were never able to imitate (Necker 1990: 149), and they received special concessions from the Crown to facilitate the export and trade of the valuable commodity (Caraman 1975: 332, López 1976). Of great value as well, were the vast natural pasturelands controlled by the order that supported "uncounted herds of cattle" which are estimated at above a million head, not counting horses, mules, sheep, and other livestock (Caraman 1975: 236). All of this wealth in terms of both material goods and labor power would be perfectly sufficient to explain the covetousness of the settlement population of Asunción, yet one other major factor explains the bitterness with which the Paraguayans regarded the Jesuits and their supposed *imperium in imperio*.

The Crown was gratified by the success of the Jesuits in evangelizing and protecting the native population, but they were rewarded with advantageous trade concessions for other reasons. *Bandeirantes*, from the Portuguese territory of São Paulo, raided the

territory with impunity to acquire Indian slaves, and in the early years carried off great numbers of missionized Indians.

Such raids promised territorial conquest as well, and the Crown in Spain would have been virtually helpless to stem such moves, since the much richer provinces in the Andes, Mexico, and the Caribbean demanded primary and fullest protection. At the same time, the settlement population of Asunción was hard pressed to protect its own flank, with a rag-tag militia that was financed by its own members, lacking the barest of support from any government (González 1948: 241; Garavaglia 1986). The Paraguayans could hardly be expected to defend the much larger territory of Indians and priests to the south.

In response, the Jesuit fathers ingeniously promised the Crown to transform the masses of converted Indians into an army, in exchange for certain privileges never before granted to a religious order. Over the protests of the cabildo of Asunción, the fathers were given the unheard of authority to arm the Indians and train them for battle (Necker 1990: 211). In time, the Fathers "developed what is without doubt one of the most impressive military organizations in the Spanish American colonial world" (López 1976: 41; cf. Caraman 1976: 238). The Jesuits simply agreed to defend a large part of the Spanish empire in exchange for strategic concessions granted by the Crown, those privileges which were so resented by the Paraguayans.

The Jesuits, then, had "a near monopoly on Indian labor" (Roett and Sacks 1991: 19), superior economic assets, and the military power to protect those treasures--not only against raiding unfriendly Indians and slave-seeking Paulistas, but against the covetous

Paraguayans themselves, should the need arise. In fact, the need did arise, and more than once.

Throughout this period, however, the Paraguayans insisted on the right granted by the *cédula* of 1537, and they did not hesitate to use that perceived right to remove unpopular governors and elect new officials. This situation tended to put any court-appointed governor in an uncomfortable position, given the influence and power of the Jesuits, and the unpredictable humor and clout of the *cabildo*.

According to López (1976: 59-63) and Benítez (1967: 120) the first crucial incident of this nature began in 1644, when the Bishop of Asunción, a Franciscan, became involved in a power struggle with the governor, who was openly sympathetic to the Jesuits. While the Paraguayans had recruited missionized Indians before for protection against hostile Indian attacks, the governor took the unprecedented step of calling on the missions to send Indian militia to Asunción to guard the Jesuit college against hostile actions threatened by citizens supporting the Bishop--a move which infuriated the Asunceños. The rebellion was quelled, but in 1649, when the governorship became vacant, the citizens invoked the *cédula* of 1537 and elected the old Bishop as governor, after which a tumultuous crowd expelled the Jesuits from their college and "dragging the surprised and bewildered Fathers into the streets [the mob] proceeded to loot the place" (López 1976: 61; Benítez 1967: 120). It is telling that, in a message to Crown authorities informing them of the action, the Paraguayans pointed out that a major purpose was to "return to the obedience and dominion of His Majesty one hundred thousand Indian

vassals and their tributes, services, and great useful interests which had been usurped [by the Jesuits]" (Benítez 1976: 13).

Of course, the Jesuits appealed to the authorities in Peru and were favorably received with evidence of what was clearly mutinous behavior. An interim governor has hastily appointed and set out for the province. Refused admission into Asunción by the Cabildo, he decided to take the city by force, with the aid of the Jesuits. Although the Paraguayans were confident, a battle on October 5, 1649 was brief and decisive, and "the humiliated residents of the capital witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of a victorious Indian army marching through the streets of their city" (López 1976: 62).

Humiliated as they may have been, the Paraguayans soon had to close ranks with the Jesuits, for by 1652 the Paulista *bandeirantes* renewed hostilities and entered the province "with the purpose of completely subjugating Paraguay and relieving the place of its entire indigenous population" (Cardozo 1987: 35). This forced alliance between Paraguayans and Jesuits did achieve victory over the invaders, who had even threatened the city of Asunción itself.

Not surprisingly, by 1688, as the Paulistas abandoned their project of totally sacking the country, there was a renewal of tension between Paraguayans and Jesuits. Not only did the Jesuits continue to exploit their advantages over the Paraguayans in both production and trade, they did all they could to impede the practice of the *encomienda*, a system to which they were diametrically opposed on moral grounds (Cardozo 1987: 39).¹⁰ Furthermore, as the population of Indians *encomendado* to the Spaniards around Asunción plummeted, the numbers of Indians sheltered by the Jesuits in the

reducciones expanded, probably reflecting the better conditions of life under the latter system (Garavaglia 1983: 188-190). Over time the disparity in the labor potential between the two populations was becoming more marked and more irritating to the encomenderos.

Throughout these years, the Paraguayan population was becoming palpably estranged from the Crown in Spain and its representatives in Peru. Virtually abandoned, the Paraguayans had learned to expect little to nothing from the higher authorities. They became accustomed to adapting laws and edicts to their own necessities, while still claiming extraordinary powers under the *cédula* of 1537. The militia was loyal only to the province, as the Crown had not cared "to divert a *maravedí* of the exchequer to support them" (Cardozo 1987: 38). López (1976: 72) succinctly describes the prevailing situation in saying that

By 1700 the cabildo of the Paraguayan capital and the province as a whole had acquired a reputation for insubordination and rebelliousness. . . .the Paraguayans were bound by only the slightest ties of sentiment to the mother country and by no sentiments at all to the authorities in Charcas and Lima.

As a result, conflicts with the Jesuits, who always reaffirmed their obedience to the Spanish authorities, were increasingly viewed as challenges to the center, both in Peru, and to the seat of power in Spain. Because of their history (of isolation) and the powers assumed under the *cédula* of 1537, the Paraguayans considered themselves to be ruled by the "will of the *comun*" (Cardozo 1987: 38), which could only be interpreted by alarmed and distant authorities as treason,

and as a threat to the lawful relationships between governors and governed; metropolis and colony.

Therefore, when relations between the Jesuits and Paraguayans began to build to crisis proportions by 1717--and to reach a state of virtual warfare by 1724--the movement became known as the revolution of the Comuneros. This sobriquet recalled an earlier (treasonous) movement which was finally crushed in Spain, but the action in Paraguay was the first of a series of such insurrections in the New World which would eventually culminate in the independence movements throughout Spanish-America in the nineteenth century.¹¹

The Revolt of the Comuneros, which lasted roughly fifteen years between 1721 and 1735, was an exceedingly tumultuous time in Paraguay's colonial history, and it was to become a critical symbol which helped to define Paraguayan history in its own context and Paraguayan nationality in a palpable sense. Two of Paraguay's most enduring national heroes figured among the leaders of the Comuneros, José de Antequera and Fernando Mompox.

There is little point in dealing with the movement in detail here, but some highlights (from López 1976) are of interest. Belying its name, the revolt was not one of the "common people" of Paraguay, but was initiated by the notables of Asunción--encomenderos, hacendados, and merchants--who sought to diminish Jesuit privileges to augment their own advantages. As the forces of the Crown allied with the Jesuits to crush the rebellion, though, the notables did recruit the peasants *en masse* to form a true Paraguayan army, for these basic producers shared the same objections to the Jesuits as did

the upper class. Early rebel victories made it appear to some that "Paraguay seemed on the verge of breaking away from the Crown" (p. 116). There were stunning victories and defeats for both sides, but the combined strength of the Jesuits and the Crown eroded the force of the rebellion at the same time that the peasantry became increasingly radicalized. The notables, conversely, became more and more nervous, and reiterated vows of loyalty to the Crown, couching their arguments only in terms of their economic and social rights under existing laws.

Significantly, the revolt grew in intensity as the Paraguayan economy entered a stage of "bonanza" after a long period of stagnation (Garavaglia 1986: 26). With increased production combined with cheaper costs of export, there was no doubt greater competition between the primary producers in the countryside and the exporters in the city for new profits. In the long run, distribution of profits was linked with control of the ports, leading to a struggle for government in the colony.

In short, the notables became genuinely alarmed as the "rabble," which had formed the true power base of the revolt, began to occupy Asunción and formed a *Junta General* made up of "illiterate militia commanders from the countryside" (p. 143). The peasant comuneros let loose a "reign of terror" on the countryside, raiding the farms, ranches, and homes of the influential Asunceños.

In 1734, the leader of the Junta died, and the movement rapidly petered out. The efforts of the new leaders to raise a resistance for a final defense against an approaching Spanish force netted few volunteers, and news of an arriving army was greeted

with great joy by the notables of the capital who "had lived in fear of their lives and had silently suffered the arrogance of the comuneros" (p. 153). The principal rebel leaders were captured and brutally executed. The new governor proclaimed the invalidity of the cédula of 1537, the closure of the Cabildo, and "imposed perpetual silence over all that had occurred" (Cardozo 1987: 43). The new Cabildo which would be formed later to govern the city was overwhelmingly Spanish and royalist until the first days of national independence (Roett and Sacks 1991: 21).

The elites who had recruited the peasantry and rabble of the countryside to aid them in an economic and political struggle against the Jesuits were, at the end, literally overwhelmed by the zeal of those same recruits. The rural poor had become radicalized after perceiving the struggle for advantage to be their own. Unlike the notables, however, they were much less reluctant to idealize the movement as a truly Paraguayan one, and displayed outright contempt for the Crown. The rebellion signified the birth of a self-conscious Paraguayan nationalism.

Of course, the conditions that caused the revolt did not disappear with a Spanish-Jesuit military victory, and other minor rebellions surfaced after 1735. For the Paraguayan elites, the problem eventually was resolved, but only through a change in the political fortunes of the Jesuits in Europe. Out of favor with the Bourbon court, the Fathers were banished from Spain and all her provinces in 1767, and the missions in Paraguay--with all their wealth--fell to the Paraguayans.

Reform of the Errant Colony

After that time there was chaos in the missions as they were placed under the charge of secular administrators, while "white settlers migrated into the mission territory in search of land, labor and treasure" and "the Indians, once so well protected by the Jesuits, found themselves at the mercy of unscrupulous bureaucrats, dishonest merchants, land grabbers and cattle rustlers" (López 1976: 162). The mission population declined precipitously (White 1978: 26) and, while the common assumption was that they had fled to the forest, new evidence casts doubt on the likelihood that Indians who had been missionized for over 150 years would "naturally" revert to nomadic forest dwellers. Instead, it appears that they slipped away to cities such as of Buenos Aires, Corrientes, Santa Fé and Montevideo, in search of an urban milieu much more like that in which they had been born and raised (Rehnfeldt 1983).

The withdrawal of the Jesuits did, however, leave a vacuum in terms of protection of the territory against the threat of Portuguese expansionism. This threat was mitigated by the formation, in 1777, of the new viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which effectively checked aggression from Brazil. The highest administrative polity thus was located in Buenos Aires, and it exercised authority over most of the Southern Cone, including Paraguay, although Paraguay always maintained its independence as a captaincy general. This did bring about a modicum of prosperity to Paraguayan merchants, since direct trade with the exterior via Buenos Aires was finally legalized, allowing Paraguay to benefit even more from its virtual monopoly

over yerba production (Cardozo 1987: 47). On the other hand, it also increased the direct authority of the Crown over the province as the factors of distance and difficulty of travel were diminished as a check on direct bureaucratic controls.

Rather than the homogenous mestizo population living in "perfect equality" (Stewart 1889: 175) which supposedly characterized the nation--many claim almost up to the present--the society was growing increasingly complex throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as a result of increased production and the expansion of trade. There was a clear and rigid social and economic hierarchy extending downward from the Spanish elite, through the Creole and mestizo notables, to the urban poor (*gente rei*) and the peasants (*coyguá*), remaining Indians, free blacks and mulattos (or *pardos*), and black slaves (Lopez 1976: 66-67).¹² Although Afro-Americans as slaves never became as critical to the colonial economy and society of Paraguay as they did, for example, in Brazil, Blacks constituted about ten percent of the total population by the date of independence (Cooney 1974: 149).¹³ During the eighteenth century, and especially after the expulsion of the Jesuits, it is likely that there was increased immigration of Europeans and South Americans from other provinces, as production increased and the demand for Paraguayan products, especially yerba, brought the area well within the mercantilist network which both knit the continent together and linked it with the rest of the world. If increased trade afforded some complacency to the merchants of Asuncion, though, the period of Independence would certainly bring some harsh surprises.

Independence: The Period of Great Dictators

Perhaps the early period of Paraguay's independence was most notable in that the government was so stable. During the first sixty years of independence, from after 1811 to 1869, the country knew only two real governments, one of those the result of a son succeeding his father. However, those first three presidents (the first took the title of "Supreme Dictator") ruled absolutely, and with no visible opposition. Until the end of the nineteenth century, there was not even a hint of the liberal-conservative dichotomy in the formation of political parties that characterized nearly every other country in the hemisphere. It is probably through a consideration of this period of the country's history that many authors (e.g., Miranda 1990; Roett and Sacks 1991; Warren 1949), conclude that "naive" Paraguayans share some kind of quasi-pathological need for dictatorial guidance, a view which would seem to be refuted by the history of the colony.

It is true that the governments which reigned in Paraguay during most of the last century were, to put it mildly, absolutist. At the same time, the definite, if seemingly perverse, pride that modern Paraguayans have for this period in their history is testimony to the fact that the country represented, for a time, what many believe was one of the most daring and unique social experiments in history.

Independence and the Franciata

Another great point of self-definition in Paraguayan history was the period under the first post-independence government; that of Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, posthumously known as El Supremo. Francia, who governed from independence in 1811 until

his death in 1840, is undoubtedly the most controversial figure in the history of Paraguay. Whether vilified or sanctified, there is probably no educated Paraguayan who does not recognize the historical importance of his leadership and wonder at his almost incredible audacity in governing the new republic.

The Paraguayans had little love for the Spanish Crown, but even less for the viceregal authorities in Buenos Aires. The movement for independence in 1811, therefore, was not so much a rejection of Spain in favor of independence, as it was a defensive gesture against the incipient Argentine confederation that began to take shape with a call for independence a year earlier, after the disintegration of Spanish authority with the fall of the King to Napoleon. For the majority of Paraguayans then, it was not merely an issue of independence, but of independence as *Paraguayans*.

The Viceroyalty of Buenos Aires declared its independence on May 25, 1810, and pretended to maintain intact its hegemony over the entire Plata basin. The Paraguayans responded in July of the same year, calling for a congress in Asunción to consider the new course of events. A young Dr. Francia, already an influential figure in Paraguay, spoke, and reportedly laid two pistols on the presidential table, declaring "My arguments in favor of my ideas are these: one would be used against Ferdinand VII and the other against Buenos Aires" (Cardozo 1987: 62).

The following year was one of constant intrigue, involving an Argentine military expedition into Paraguay led by Manuel Belgrano, who naively believed he was helping the province to "liberate itself from its [Spanish] oppressors" (Cardozo 1987: 63). Instead, and much

to his surprise, his force was soundly repulsed by the Paraguayans, who then ceased all further communication with the Argentines. Afterwards, when it was discovered that ranking Spaniards in the city were orchestrating an alliance with the Portuguese,¹⁴ a plot was hatched among a group of young and powerful Paraguayans to take total control of the cabildo. On May 14, 1811 the conspirators, under the command of Captain Pedro Juan Caballero, took control of the general barracks in Asunción, and on the following day the governor capitulated. Soon after, a council of five men, including both Caballero and Francia, formed a governing *Junta*, and the province began to function, *de facto*, as an independent polity. As one historian writes, "Unlike any other province of the old viceroyalty, Paraguay had, in only a few months, severed the ties with both its metropolises (White 1978: 45).

The governing Junta proved to be unwieldy, and most of its members were remarkably ignorant of the arts of statecraft and diplomacy (Warren 1949: 148). Francia resigned in disgust and retired to his cottage outside of Asunción, only to return to the Junta in 1812 at the behest of the remaining members. In 1813, a special assembly of citizens named a consulate, composed of two members, to govern in place of the Junta. Francia was elected along with Fulgencio Yegros, a crafty military figure, but hardly the equal of Francia in government. By the following year, another congress gave Francia sole powers and by 1816 he was proclaimed Dictator for life (Warren 1949: 155-56). There was no need for another congress to meet during his "term," which ended with his death in 1840.

Francia, a taciturn and intensely private individual, was likely the most highly educated and sophisticated intellectual in the province. Born in 1766 in the small town of Yaguaron, south of Asunción, his father managed to send him to the University at Córdoba, Argentina, where he was educated in the progressive doctrines of the Enlightenment and formed his own "radical philosophy" (White 1978: 6). He graduated in 1785 with the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Theology, and returned to Asunción to practice law. Within a short time, Dr. Francia was one of the most sought after legal practitioners in the city and was quick to defend the Guaraní-speaking peasants as well as other members of his own class--the Spanish-Creole bourgeoisie (*ibid.*).

Francia prospered in politics and by 1809 was a full member of the *cabildo*, having "occupied almost every one of the political positions permitted to Creoles within their own province," although an inability to advance even further made him a "fine example of the frustrated Creole" (Williams 1979: 23). With his reputation for political acuity and his popular base of support, he was immediately integrated into the core of individuals who formed the reactive coup which resulted in an independent government.

In the literature, Francia is frequently reviled as a "prototype of despotic tyranny. . .The most infamous of Latin American dictators. . . a grim and somber potentate, a cruel despot with an insatiable lust for power, or simply as a vile monster" (White 1978: 8). However, this bowdlerized view of the Franciata is largely that of "the national and international elites--the class that has written the history of Paraguay" (*ibid.*), (an elitest venture in itself) to justify continued

domination by that same class (see Wolf 1982). Thomas Carlyle, nineteenth-century essayist, spent no few pages in his famous 1843 essay on Francia bemoaning the shroud of ignorance surrounding the dictator as a result of the "wooden" and "inextricable" accounts of the man in the contemporary literature--sources which are still often cited today. In fact, he refers to one of the most popular accounts--J. P. and W. P. Robertson's *Francia's Reign of Terror*--as little more than a "running shriek" (Carlyle n.d.). Nevertheless, it is still true today, as White maintained (1978: 12) that

The oligarchy's hatred of Francia has been passed down through the generations, and he remains the subject of heated emotional arguments. To this day it is impossible to hold a rational discussion about Francia with many of the descendants of Paraguay's former upper class.

In fact, Francia initiated changes in nineteenth century Paraguay that were probably as sweeping as those of any true revolution (but see Roett and Sacks 1991: 27 for a curious argument against this view). Those reforms were profoundly structural, and utterly crushed the power of both the peninsular and Creole elites. Most of those major reforms can be easily summarized and need no particular corroborating evidence (but see White 1978), since virtually all authors--*francistas* as well as bitter critics-- are in agreement as to their nature.

First, Francia stripped the bureaucracy of all its colonial trappings. His "cabinet" consisted of a private secretary, and the country was divided into political and administrative *distritos*, each governed by a delegate directly under the Dictator's watchful eye. There were also rural justices and a very few customs officials, but

virtually no decision could be made independently of his personal consent. Furthermore, all the authorities necessary for this minimal bureaucracy were drawn from the common people, since, without a congress or a professional bureaucracy, there was no class of politicians. Francia also took complete control of the army, allowing no rank higher than that of Captain. He rode to the barracks daily and personally reviewed his troops, although he pretended to no military rank himself, and not once was seen dressed in uniform.

Second, he utterly crushed the old oligarchy--that class to which he, himself, belonged. One of his first actions, when Yegros was still co-consul, was to ban marriages between Europeans, and prohibit Europeans (i.e., Spaniards) from serving as godparents. Marriages could only be authorized by Francia himself, and clerics who officiated at "illegal" marriages bore the same threat of punishment as the marriage partners. (Potthast-Junkheit 1991: 219). For real or imagined transgressions of any kind, he fined Spaniards and Creoles--the so-called "respectable people"--enormous sums in property and specie, impoverishing them and enriching the treasury at the same time (Stewart 1889: 175). Of course, there was enormous resentment on the part of the elites, and they actively resisted. After uncovering the so-called "Great Conspiracy" in 1820-1821, the Dictator arrested virtually every Spanish male in Asunción. He executed the ringleaders (including his one-time co-consul Yegros; Pedro Juan Caballero committed suicide while imprisoned) but let the majority languish in jail, confiscating the remainder of their property in the process. In a single bloody stroke, Francia virtually rid his society of its wealthiest, and most troublesome, class.

Third, he socialized the economy, appropriating to the state the vast properties of the former oligarchy and all rights in international trade. The best cultivable lands were distributed freely to the peasantry, and the great pasturelands were organized under a series of *estancias de Patria*, or "state ranches," the proceeds of which went directly to the treasury. All other produce destined for international trade (e.g., tobacco and yerba) could only be marketed through the state. These measures enabled Francia to fulfill one of his strongest desires, which was to do away with all forms of taxation and tribute.

Fourth, although the Church was never as strong in Paraguay as it was in most Latin American countries, Francia placed what apparatus there was under the direction of the state. He abolished all religious brotherhoods and monasteries, and expropriated all of the Church's considerable holdings. Maintaining that no foreign power could exercise authority within the country, he disavowed the right of the Pope to make ecclesiastical appointments. Francia named his own Bishop, who lapsed into obscurity, and the Church lost what authority it ever did have in Paraguayan secular life.

Finally, and most importantly, Francia utterly isolated the nation, forbidding either the entrance of foreigners or the exit of Paraguayans, without his explicit consent--which he very rarely gave. The few foreigners who did wander into the territory were forbidden to leave, and lived for years under close watch, usually in rural communities near the capital.¹⁵ International trade was conducted at two points on the frontier, with goods exchanged from ship to ship, since no foreign vessel could enter the country and no Paraguayan vessel could leave. Francia maintained an absolute neutrality in

international affairs, neither seeking nor allowing foreign legations, and rejecting all overtures for international dialogue. In this respect, Paraguay under Francia could have served as a model for Albania under Hoxha, although Hoxha never came close to achieving the insularity of Paraguay.

As White quite rightly points out (1978: 13), histories of Francia have usually erred in attacking his character rather than his policies. Even presumably disinterested scholars such as Warren (1949) dwell on the Dictator's personal cruelty and the supposed privations of the citizens under his rule rather than on the actual results of his vision. Yet, even scholars who revile the man admit that he disenfranchized only a small minority, while at the same time implying that all Paraguayans lived a hellish existence under his iron boot. In fact, there is no concrete evidence of popular or general discontent with his government.

Francia's real "crime," according to Domingo Laino (1976: 9), was the prohibition of foreign investments in Paraguayan resources and trade. As a result, "Paraguay was the only country which established an independent political economy. It [thus] constituted the only black stain on the map of the countries of America." Pomer, introducing Laino's study, agrees, ironically adding that the country was an "abominable example. . . insulting to the liberal doctrine" (1976: 7). Abominable or not, the country emerged from the Franciata as probably the richest on the continent, with the wealth most evenly distributed throughout the population, and without even a hint of foreign debt or other obligation. Furthermore, the isolation that the Dictator imposed was probably the only way that Paraguay could

escape the pressure for an unequal alliance as part of the Argentine confederation, as well as the threat of Brazilian territorial ambitions.

It is also true that the "fact" of Francia's personal cruelty has been mythologized out of all proportion to historical reality. In spite of claims that he ordered the deaths of "hundreds" of his enemies while exacting hideous torture on uncounted others (Roett and Sacks 1991: 26; Warren 1949: 162), meticulous scholarship has revealed that, in fact, "the total number of political executions during Francia's entire tenure [was] no more than forty" (White 1976: 92 fn), quite an enviable record in comparison to the accomplishments of neighboring "civilized" governments, whose leaders so harshly attacked him. At the same time that exiled detractors in Buenos Aires criticized him for his network of spies, they conveniently overlooked the institutionalized terrorism exercised by Francia's contemporary in Argentina, the president Juan Manuel Rosas (Scobie 1971: 80; Williams 1979: 106), or the various *caudillos* in Uruguay and southern Brazil. In fact, the only persons executed by the Dictator, at least for political reasons, were members of a group who were proved to have planned to assassinate him--and it is a rare society which does not sanction capital punishment in response to attempted assassination of the highest authorities (see Carlyle n.d. : 379-381).

Finally, not a single author denies the Dictator's scrupulous behavior as head of state. His personal landholdings amounted to little more than had the average peasant, and the greatest part of the generous salary awarded him by the first congress was returned to the treasury. Francia, a bachelor, had no family to claim privileges, and, apparently, his only weakness was for books and scientific

instruments, which were the only gifts he ever accepted during his tenure. With one possible exception "he did not permit a single town, barrio, street, edifice, statue, or coin to be dedicated in his honor" (White 1978: 6). When the Dictator died in 1840, he was virtually penniless, and the material property that he did possess reverted to the state, through laws of his own making.¹⁶

Francia took control of a colonial backwater after 1811, and converted it into an independent (versus "dependent") state (Laino 1976). Much could be attributed to the genius of a single individual, but Francia's wisdom succeeded only through the fortunate circumstances of the country's geography (physical isolation and ability to control access by river), and the prevailing political economy of the region which kept Brazil and Argentina at odds and diverted aggression away from the smaller nation. Also, the country was so productive that subsistence under isolation was a viable alternative, while export products--especially yerba--were valued to the extent that not even closed borders restrained a lively trade and the importation of products which would not otherwise be available. Otherwise, he instituted a land tenure system--practical because of production systems and low population densities in the rural areas--that set a pattern lasting up to very recent times. The glaring error in the Dictator's record was his failure to establish an orderly process of succession to leadership, an error which would remain a legacy to the country's future.

Carlos Antonio López and the *Apertura*

Not all of the Creole elites suffered death or imprisonment under the reign of Francia. A few high-placed individuals had the foresight to choose the course of self-exile. Many left for Buenos Aires, but a number departed for their *estancias* (ranches) far from the capital to live quietly, apolitically, and discreetly.

Carlos Antonio López, though hardly well-born, was bright and had graduated from the *colegio* in Asunción, qualifying him as an educated man and giving him the means to train himself in the practice of law. Although scarcely an author can refrain from commenting on the immensity of his girth and the homeliness of his aspect, he did marry very well, and was fortunate to enjoy the luxury of "retirement" to one of his wife's *estancias*, far from the penetrating gaze of the Dictator.

López, fifty-four years old upon the death of Francia, returned to his house on the outskirts of the capital, where he began to hold court with the no-doubt bewildered "leading citizens" and military officers of the city. In spite of widespread expectations of anarchy and chaos at the death of the Dictator, relative calm reigned in the city and countryside once the pretensions of Francia's ex-Secretary were resolved with swift imprisonment by a hastily self-appointed military *junta*. "After the stunning news of El Supremo's death, no factions, parties, or caudillos arose, no major disorders, no foreign intrigue" (Williams 1979: 102).

Still, discontent grew at the sheer lethargy of the interim government, composed of inexperienced men fearful of

countermanding any of the Dictator's policies or initiating their own. Trade was at a standstill (fearful of meddling foreigners, they had closed the trade entrepôts) and no political prisoners had been released. Two barracks revolts followed on the heels of that which had established the original junta, and by March 1841 an ineffective and weary government consented to a general congress of 500 freely elected members from all parts of the country. López, who had spent the intervening months lobbying from his parlor, was elected co-consul, along with a military figure, Mariano Roque Alonso--a man for whom a village, and a *barrio* in Asunción are now named, but who otherwise played no other part in Paraguayan history than as a ceremonial shadow to López for three years. As with Francia, the military would have no real role in a one-man government.

Under different circumstances, López would probably have been cast as a true liberal in the style of Latin American politics of the period, but he was also shrewd and cautious. He recognized Francia's economic policies as being advantageous to the welfare of the state, so he maintained--even increased--the policy of state ownership of lands and the restriction of trade through state control, and was probably just as suspicious of foreigners as the Dictator himself (Warren 1949: 180). This continued stronghold over the economy, with the absence of a landed aristocracy, explains how "a small, rural, and supposedly poor nation could pay for its own modernization in the markets of Europe without the need for foreign investment capital or loans, all on a cash and carry basis" and even with "almost no need for internal taxation" (Williams 1979: 132).

Indeed, this was López' program: the modernization of the country through a series of structural programs and laws (i.e., fiats, given the lack of legislative control over his edicts). While he emphasized programs such as rural education (which had languished--if, indeed, it had ever thrived--under Francia), public health, and agricultural production, he was more clearly enamored with progress in its monumental sense. The parsimonious Francia bequeathed to his country a treasury bulging with gold, and Lopez used a good portion of that to send young Paraguayans to study in Europe, as well as to bring European engineers, architects, surgeons, and mechanics to work in Paraguay. López oversaw the construction of the continent's first railroad and iron foundry, as well as roads and a number of Asunción's most important public edifices, including the national theater, the cathedral, the Cabildo, the Pantheon, and the presidential palace. He also built an impressive arsenal, fortified military installations, and considerably beefed up the army. In the meantime, the government of the "nation of tenant farmers" continued to pull in impressive revenues at the same time that rents on state-owned lands were kept very low and tied to both amount and quality of lands occupied (Williams 1979: 133). The volume of foreign trade increased dramatically, and income from state monopolies on yerba and other commodities also filled the treasury (Warren 1949: 184).

A radical departure from the *franciata* was López' policy to open the country to foreign representation, although always warily. He accepted overtures from both the Brazilians and Argentines to maintain legations in Asunción, and eventually established relations with a number of other countries, including the United States, France,

Britain, Prussia, and, curiously, Sardinia (Warren 1949: 186). This was possible because, after forty years, Paraguay's position as an independent nation was no longer an international issue, and international dialogue was necessary, given López' vision of increasing trade, utilizing foreign technologies, and maintaining a profile in the affairs of the Southern Cone. Because of the country's potential for production and its economic solvency, Paraguay was not a country to be ignored.

El Mariscal and the Immolation of a Country

An important difference between the ascetic Francia and the corpulent López was that the former was a bachelor with exceedingly few personal ties, while the latter was a proud father with a large and demanding family. Perhaps it is only half true that there was no landed aristocracy in Paraguay during the time--in the sense that "when one refers to the Paraguayan elite in the 1840-1870 era, one refers only to the extended López clan" (Williams 1979: 133). Warren (1949: 180) waxes ascerbic in describing the "remarkable business perspicacity" of the López progeny, and their ability to accumulate properties and goods during their father's tenure.

The eldest son, Francisco Solano, was the apple of his father's eye. Educated outside of formal schools, he was quite bright, especially, it seems, in military science. By the time he was eighteen he held the rank of brigadier general in the army. Still in his twenties, he was his father's chief envoy to Europe, heading a delegation charged with purchasing warships and armaments, and engaging foreign artisans to work in the country (Warren 1949: 186).

During his extended stay, he met the beautiful, divorced, red-haired Eliza Alicia Lynch. The young Irishwoman from the French court returned to Paraguay with the triumphant general, became his mistress, fathered five of his children, thoroughly scandalized the *crème* of Asunción society, and entered forever into the highest strata of the pantheon of Paraguayan mythology as the wondrous Madama Lynch, "woman on horseback" (cf. Barrett 1938; Brodsky 1975).

During the stay of López *hijo* in Europe, the father became increasingly involved with diplomatic settlements with Argentina and Brazil. In spite of the apparent "opening" of the country, the elder López was still an isolationist, but there were pressing boundary and navigational rights problems, especially with Brazil. These called for negotiation in order to avoid conflict, and according to Warren (1949: 187), both López and his envoy to Brazil, José Berges, proved a match for the skillful José Maria da Silva Paranhos, later the Baron of Rio Branco, who would gain fame as Brazil's most able diplomat and negotiator of territorial rights. Still, the aggressive claims of Brazil to land which was clearly Paraguayan, and the yet unstable union of the Argentine confederation, posed a threat of war which the dictator begged his militaristic son to avoid, even as the old man lay on his deathbed (Warren 1949: 188).

Such words were wasted on the young general, who seized the presidency upon his father's death in 1862, and with little wonder. By this time, Paraguay, constantly threatened both territorially and commercially by her neighbors, was unified, vital, financially self-sufficient, and militarily more prepared than either of the giant neighbors. And Francisco Solano, recently returned from the court of

Napoleon, was convinced that "military science held no secrets unknown to him" (Warren 1949: 180).

One of the great debates (and there are many) in Paraguayan history, is that of whether the younger López was a simple megalomaniac with illusions of creating a South American empire,¹⁷ or a true patriot who saw the opportunity to liberate his country once and for all from foreign trespasses. A Brazilianist historian, E. Bradford Burns, is probably closest to the truth in recognizing that, whatever his personal character, López had legitimate and pressing concerns as to the territorial ambitions of both Argentina and Brazil (1980: 231; see also Warren 1978: 8), and it was certain that "Paraguay had [territorial] disputes at the four points of the compass" (Prieto 1988: 175). In any case, López broke with the dictates of both Francia and his own father, and decided upon an active role in the geopolitics of the region. After the massive arms build-up of a preceding decade, Francisco Solano decided to attack, rather than waiting for the inevitable erosion of the borders of the country.

The proximate precipitating factor of the war was bitter conflict between Argentina and Brazil over control of the *Banda Oriental*, or Uruguay. Uruguayan nationalists, resisting overwhelming pressure from the Empire, had long sought an alliance with Paraguay, which the elder López resisted. Strong partisan factions within Uruguay also sought alliances alternately with Brazil and Argentina, in efforts to hold power. The crisis in Uruguay rapidly escalated to civil war during and after 1863, and Solano López apparently believed that the time was ripe for the emergence of Paraguay as a "third force" in the region (Roett and Sacks 1991: 30) capable of forging a triangular

structure of force and diplomacy to preserve a balance of power and resolve myriad and long-standing territorial and trade disputes.

By early 1864, it seemed to all sides that war was inevitable. López' army was formidable; the largest on the continent, with some 64,000 men under command (Warren 1949: 213; but see Williams 1979: 211). When the Brazilians invaded and their faction took power in Montevideo, the Paraguayans seized a Brazilian steamer, and soon after surprised Brazilian garrisons in Mato Grosso, claiming easy victories and netting valuable stocks of arms and ammunition. López, by this time elevated from General to *Mariscal* by an obedient Congress, then turned his attention to the southern campaign, intending to march into Montevideo in aid of the Uruguayans. In spite of Argentina's refusal to allow passage of his army through their territory, López forged ahead, expecting the provinces of Corrientes and Entre Ríos, among others, to declare in his favor, against Mitre's yet unsteady confederation based in Buenos Aires.

Instead, after some facile initial victories based mostly on surprise, federal forces cut the Paraguayan ground and naval forces to ribbons in the following battles of Riachuelo, Yataí, and Uruguayana, from June to August of 1865. The world still did not know that on May 1 of that year, the governments of Brazil, Argentina, and the now compliant Uruguay had already signed, in secret, the document known as the Triple Alliance, uniting those three countries in an offensive against Paraguay and agreeing to split the territorial spoils of war (Williams 1979: 209).

Driven back onto native soil, Paraguay never regained the offensive. The allies--especially Brazil--were stimulated by the war

to increase and modernize their own armies (see Flynn 1979: 18), and they soon held a great advantage over the Paraguayans. The first battles on Paraguayan soil would seem to have shattered the Paraguayan army: by early 1867, "From a population base of perhaps four-hundred thousand in 1864, at least sixty thousand [Paraguayan] young men were dead, captured, or hopelessly mutilated. . . and another sixty thousand had been called to the colors" (Warren 1979: 214). As many as fourteen thousand Paraguayans were killed in a single day in battle at the same time that smallpox and cholera epidemics raged through the increasingly hungry and ill-clothed population.

To anyone who has scrutinized this war, it seems amazing--if not miraculous--that the Paraguayans should have continued to fight. Even after 1867, however, the war raged amid appalling carnage, and the Allied troops did not enter Asunción until January 5, 1869, after the "impregnable" fortress of Humaitá fell, and the remnants of López' army fled the capital. As early as December, 1866, the first volunteer unit of boys, aged ten to fourteen years old, entered into combat (Warren 1979: 215) and for the duration of the war, virtually every Paraguayan male who could carry a weapon was at or near the front, while every capable female was occupied in tilling the soil to feed a starving army, or otherwise working to nurse a dying one.

López, accompanied by "La Lynch," fled into the Cordillera with a mutilated force, establishing provisional "capitals" at a number of villages, only to leave them in deepest misery as the allied (by now, almost all Brazilian) troops hounded the shattered army further into the interior. Even before this time, the Mariscal was crazed by defeat

and "gave in to a carnival of paranoia." Imagining a vast conspiracy accounting for the failure of the war, in 1868, at the camp in San Fernando, he imprisoned his mother and sisters in a makeshift oxcart/prison, and ordered the arrest and execution of his "two brothers, his two brothers-in-law, dozens of ranking government and military personnel, the bishop, and at least five hundred foreigners, including many a diplomat" (Williams 1979: 223).¹⁸ As López retreated, the mass executions of his followers continued, adding to the fearful toll taken by shot, disease, and famine.

Incredibly, the pathetic force kept moving. The war did not officially end until March 1, 1870, when López and his followers were surrounded at a natural redoubt at Cerro Corá, near the Brazilian border. Still resisting under the banner of "Independence or Death," the Mariscal suffered a lance wound from the Brazilian cadet Francisco Lacerda--known as Chico Diablo--and was finished off with a bullet to the heart. His fifteen-year-old son was cut down with him, as well as the vice president Sánchez. Madama Lynch lived to bury her lover and her son where they fell.

The Second National Period

The most immediate and painful result of the War of the Triple Alliance was the utter demographic collapse of the country. In terms of sheer numbers of dead and the conditions of misery surrounding the survivors, the war was one of the most destructive in human history. Although pre-war population figures still remain the subject of great controversy, most scholars agree that at least half of the population died during the war, including about ninety percent of all

males (Warren 1978: 32; but see also Reber 1988). This left a cohort of some 28 thousand men over the age of fifteen years, and many of them were aged, wounded, or infirm (Herken Krauer 1984: 77; Roett and Sacks 1991: 32). Virtually all production activity--at the level of barest subsistence--was entirely in the hands of women.

Nor was life to improve significantly during the immediate aftermath of the great war. One can only imagine how the surviving Paraguayans interpreted the significance of a period of drought and the swarms of locusts that ravaged the countryside after the close of the war, on top of the generalized disease and famine that was the inevitable outcome of such large-scale conflict. The naked and desperate survivors immediately began drifting into the capital (Warren 1978: 44), exacerbating the problems of provisioning and epidemic control in the crowded city--never an urban showcase, but now reduced to little more than a reeking asylum. The streets were "covered with cadavers," and the governments was unable to conduct the "corpses to the public cemeteries . . . because of the lack of conveyance . . . and also a lack of men" (Williams 1979: 225).

The effects of the devastating conflict touched every aspect of Paraguayan life. On the national level, the country had sacrificed its rugged and defiant form of independence. As the allied forces moved in, they were followed close behind by a contingent of Paraguayan dissidents, who had either sat out the war in Buenos Aires or banded together to form a *Legion Paraguaya* in alliance with the Argentine army (see Warren 1978: 48). With notable exceptions, these so-called *legionarios* would form the core of a new political-economic elite. With the initial support of the occupation forces, they

were in an excellent position to assume control of a new political apparatus as well as most of the country's considerable wealth in real estate.

The armies of the occupation were also accompanied by considerable numbers of "camp followers," an often rag-tag bunch of foreign opportunists who could sense the possibilities inherent in the post-war chaos. Besides the Argentines and Brazilians, there were significant numbers of Italians who had previously emigrated to Argentina (Herken-Krauer 1984: 79), and later on they were followed by large numbers of Syrians and Lebanese, whom the Paraguayans would ever after refer to as "Arabes."

The allied forces--almost entirely Brazilian--occupied the city and countryside from 1869 to 1876. The occupying army was, of course, privileged to behave as most such armies do, and the period was further characterized by generalized lawlessness, pillage, and rape. There was previously unknown licentiousness in the city and its outlying towns, and "the postwar decade witnessed the worst outbreak of individual crime and revolts in more than four centuries of Paraguayan history" (Warren 1978: 150; Roett and Sacks 1991: 32).

In the meantime, the allies were most concerned with the "reconstruction" of the country. In fulfilling the agreement under the pact of the Triple Alliance, Brazil and Argentina did end up carving some 55,000 square miles off of the country and apportioning it among themselves¹⁹. Fortunately, renewed disputes, and rivalries between the two large powers was the only factor that kept them from dividing the entire country between themselves altogether, thus ensuring the continuance of a reduced, if integral, Paraguayan nation

(Warren 1949: 262). Just as significant, the next most immediate concern was to "reform" the economic, productive, and trade regimes of the country. This required, of course, capital and human investment, and the allies were quick to assure that the resources of the country were managed most efficiently--mainly by removing them from the hands of the Paraguayan people.

National Divestment

In the years immediately following the war, international political and economic powers, represented principally by the British, offered their good offices in the reconstruction of a new republic based on the principles of laissez-faire investment and free trade. The new political leaders of the country--quislings, really, of the Argentines and Brazilians--immediately sought to rebuild the shattered nation through international loans and immigration of foreign hands and capital. The first foreign loan in Paraguay's history was secured in 1871 from the English, but the cash proved to be "too great a temptation," and promptly disappeared into the pockets of a series of prominent figures (Warren 1978: 139). Incredibly, a second loan was secured soon after, but the money evaporated even more rapidly than the first time. The new government had ruined its credit and was forced to satisfy London bondholders with grants of over two million acres of land.

Fortunately or unfortunately, vast land reserves were the only real assets that the government had with which to finance reconstruction. By the close of the war, in fact, only 261 square leagues of national territory were in private property, while the

government held all of the remaining 16,239 square leagues (Pastore 1972: 178). That first land concession was the hole in the dike, and it was followed by a veritable torrent of land divestments during the following years, with the great majority of land ending up in the hands of British, French, Argentine, Brazilian, and American speculators. Under the leadership of the Colorado Party (see below) the government divested the country of the greatest part of its wealth in lands, the railroad, and even public buildings. Foreign proprietors owned vast sections in the millions of hectares, almost all in the resource-rich but relatively unpopulated areas of the country. One company alone, the Industrial Paraguaya, possessed 13.4 percent of the rich eastern half of the country, while another Anglo-Argentine firm, under the Casado family, had even larger holdings in the huge Chaco region. With a small number of other British, French, Brazilian, and American *latifundistas*, foreigners completely supplanted the Paraguayan government as trustees of the lands and economic power in the country (Laino 1976). Underwritten by these massive holdings, the new landlords of the country established rural industries consisting of yerba extraction in the east, and tannin extraction and processing (from the tannin-rich quebracho--"axe-breaker"--tree) in the Chaco.

Once again, Paraguay--for a time--was saved by distance and isolation. A peasant culture thrived in a rich land only because population densities remained low, and production was most profitable through extensive--and cheap--exploitation of relatively evenly distributed resources which could be shipped cheaply on barges (e.g., yerba, cotton and tobacco), floated out (e.g., timber), or

walked out under its own power (beeves and hides). Since the country was in no sense a specialist in terms of the international marketplace, capital investment would never become concentrated or focused, and a more advanced, national form of capitalism was thus hindered in its development.²⁰ The subsequent slow growth of the economy fed back on this process, encouraging population dispersal within the traditional area of settlement and small-scale production. As long as population densities and domestic consumption remained low, severe competition for resources could be avoided.

Institutionalization of Political Power

According to Pastore (1972: 245) this policy of financing reconstruction through land sales was a direct cause for the crystallization of political factions into institutionalized parties. This policy, continues the author, divided the elite class of Asunción along ideological lines: one group was conservative and supported a government willing to expatriate the country's resources, while the other was progressive and aligned with the peasants in favoring land reform and distribution. Of course, other observers would attribute these radically different ideals to the opposite groups (cf. Diaz de Arce 1967: 47). Most likely, informal groups fashioned stronger political nuclei when the elites recognized a real danger of losing all control over the process of dividing the government's vast holdings.

The two major factions which dominated the political life of Paraguay until the present were conceived at the end of the war. Both started out as political "clubs" as the allies were still mopping up in 1869. The first was the Club del Pueblo, which changed its name to

the Gran Club del Pueblo, while the second faction assumed the discarded name and became, in turn, the Club del Pueblo (Warren 1978: 71). These ephemeral "clubs" finally were chartered as political parties within days of each other in 1887. The Club del Pueblo became the Asociación Nacional Republicana (The Colorado Party, or "Red" Party) and the Gran Club del Pueblo regrouped as the Centro Democrático (later to become the Partido Liberal or the "Blue" Party).

Some authors try to define a consistent ideological base identifying each party from its inception (Pastore 1972: 249-251), but they more likely represented shifting alliances of powerful individuals vying for the spoils of a shattered nation. The Colorados tended toward a nationalist stance with a reverence for the Mariscal López and Francia while the Liberals were more identified with the enlightened Argentines, but individuals switched parties without remorse in those early days, in great contrast to the fanaticism with which Paraguayans later embraced their parties (Warren 1978: 71).

Thus, immediately after the war, opportunistic alliances of individuals rather than political parties seized power as they could. Only after some time did the country achieve a measure of political stability. After some ten years of political intrigue during which one president was assassinated in 1877 and the government changed hands seven times, a clique of strong men under the banner of the Colorado Party took power and would be charged with stabilizing the country until the end of the century, when that party became rife with internal struggles and bickering, leading to its eventual downfall in 1904. Victory first came to the Colorados in 1880 after they unified under the first *caudillo* of the post-War period, General

Bernardino Caballero, one of the few of López' men to survive the war. Caballero and his close friend and ally, Patricio Escobar, controlled the political scene in the country for nearly thirty years, and Caballero is still revered as the founder of the Colorado Party (Warren 1949: 264; Prieto Yegros 1986: 23). And, as two of the founders of the largest yerba-extraction complex, the Industrial Paraguaya, Caballero and Escobar were among the happiest beneficiaries of the wholesale government land liquidation after the war (Laino 1976: 191).

The Platonic Republic

After the Liberals seized power in 1904, it was assured that they, too, would share in the further division of the country's wealth. The Liberal families which controlled the country for the next thirty years became comfortable landholders in their own right although major losses were inevitable with subsequent reversals of political fortune.

Liberal government was hardly more stable than during the later years of the Colorado period. Between 1905 and 1936 when a flash-in-the-pan Febrerista Party briefly seized power, the Liberals went through eighteen presidents, and only two completed their mandated four-year term. Thus, it might seem odd to refer to the Liberal period as the "Platonic Republic," other than the fact that the country was governed almost exclusively by civilians, including a succession of intellectuals and philosophers from a post-War generation. This so-called "Generation of 900" included some of Paraguay's greatest educators and men of letters, such as Cecilio Báez,

Manuel Gondra, and Eligio Ayala (see Plá 1967). Their successors, of only slightly lesser renown, were Liberato Rojas, Pedro Peña, Eduardo Schaerer, Manuel Franco, Eusebio Ayala, Luis A. Riart and José P. Guggiari (Velázquez 1965), most of whose families are still among the commercial and cultural elites of Asunción.

If the realization of a democratic state was not achieved during this period, it was certainly not because of a shortage of lofty ideals from the political sector. But, even in Plato's idealized state, only the citizens--a fairly small minority--were privileged to hold power and vote for their leaders. Also, while foreign and elite Paraguayan landowners consolidated their fortunes in cattle and forestry products, there was a small but significant European immigration, including some idealistic colonizers of future utopian communities²¹, who settled in rural areas (Warren 1949: 273). Some of these groups merged with the "*mancebos de la tierra*"--the yeoman Paraguayan country folk--and added a host of exotic surnames (and fair-haired Guaraní-speakers) to the national directory.

The rural population had lived fairly quietly and untouched by intra-party political intrigue in the capital as long as affairs were dominated by the circle of caudillo politicians. In 1922, however, the new President Eusebio Ayala threatened the hegemony of long-time caudillo Eduardo Schaerer who appealed, in turn, to a military uprising for support. An increasingly dissatisfied popular sector, led by students and the super-exploited yerba and tannin workers, answered Ayala's plea for help. The rural population, long dominated by a powerful landed class and foreign rural industrialists, was easily recruited into the movement and civil war erupted in the streets and

countryside (Flecha 1988). Eusebio Ayala was forced to resign in favor of his Minister of Hacienda Eligio Ayala (no relation) who shared the same reformist philosophy. In a bitter struggle that lasted for fourteen months, Eligio Ayala prevailed and the power of the old military elite gave way to an armed civilian coalition.²² A new military leadership underwrote the President's move toward modernization and popular democracy. The pace of reform, however, could not satisfy the discontented popular sector and Ayala's successor, plagued not only by civil resistance but a territorial threat from Bolivia as well, responded with repression and an uneasy peace was maintained for the rest of the decade.

The tranquility of the country folk was again shattered in 1932, when the Liberal government finally reached a showdown over Bolivian claims to the Chaco which dated from colonial times. Claims as to who precipitated the crisis depended on what side of the conflict one was on, but both countries maintained a tenuous hold over the territory through rickety military installations. Eventually, though, the Bolivians, frustrated by the total loss of their ocean provinces after the War of the Pacific, began moving their *fortines* closer and closer to the Paraguay River--and Asunción.

War and Revolution

Bolivia was not the only country stinging from territorial losses through war. Paraguay had lost considerable extensions of territory after the end of the Triple Alliance War, including most of what now constitutes the Argentine Chaco. So both sides pressed their claims and violence began to escalate around Chaco military placements

after 1928. As Paraguayan blood was shed, nationalistic furor escalated during the final months of President José Gugiarrri's tenure. When Eusebio Ayala, reelected long after the term he truncated in 1923, assumed the presidency on August 15, 1932 the country was virtually in a state of war, and by the end of the year both countries were fully mobilized.

Thousands on both sides of the conflict perished before President Ayala formally declared a state of war on May 10, 1933. Argentina, Chile, Peru, Uruguay and Brazil hastened to declare neutrality. Rumors flew across the continent that Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell financed the armies of Paraguay and Bolivia, respectively (Warren 1949: 294).²³ Use of surplus World War matériel by both sides led to other assertions that the war was a proxy for conflict between the United States and Germany. Both of these theories have persisted in popular Paraguayan belief up until the present.

The Chaco provided a tortuous battleground, deserving of its reputation as the "Green Hell." Half the year it was bone dry and searingly hot, while the other half of the year it was a thorny mire of mud and stagnant pools. Although many claim that Paraguayans were more at an advantage in the hostile environment than the highland Bolivians, both sides suffered horribly. Another common claim is that Paraguayans could use the Guaraní language as an effective code because it was spoken easily by both officers and men (e.g., Corvalan 1983: 39). Bolivia did not enjoy the same advantage, because only Spanish was spoken by the upper-class officers who did

not understand the Quecha and Aymara of the conscripts, an assertion which could benefit from conclusive research.

Paraguay seized an early advantage in the war through the aggressive audacity of the Paraguayan commander, General José Félix Estigarribia, who pressed forward into the interior of the Chaco despite Asunción politicians' insistence that Paraguay wage a defensive war along the river. However, the Bolivians resisted as tenaciously as the Paraguayans pressed forward, and casualties mounted continuously. By 1935 when hostilities ceased, Paraguay had "won" the war with losses of 40,000 while Bolivia buried 60,000, and total war losses had totalled two Paraguayan and three Bolivian deaths for every square mile of territory won by Paraguay (Warren 1949: 313). An indication that it was, indeed, a pyrrhic victory is the fact that Paraguay lost 5.6 of its pre-war population, while Bolivia lost 3.2 percent of its population (Reber 1989: 308). In turn, Paraguay secured unchallenged title to a very large piece of real estate of very questionable value, which led Warren (1949: 314) to call the conflict "one of the most senseless wars in history."

The Chaco War had lasting effects in Paraguay, both directly and indirectly. Probably most important, it nurtured the new group of young, powerful and independent men within the ranks of the military who would take charge of Paraguayan affairs for years to come. Also, the disbanded army of veterans formed a powerful bloc in their own right. The war had taken thousands from their tiny farms all over the country and created a new mass of people with an ideology of *compañerismo* and purpose that exceeded the modest claims of the country hamlet (Grow 1981: 47). With the populist

claims of a new leadership reaching far beyond the traditional Liberal (i.e., conservative) philosophy, they would form natural allies with a young, activist urban intelligentsia not satisfied with the mere territorial gains of the war.

There was an initial frustration on the part of officers and veterans that Paraguay was willing to sign a treaty of peace while not pressing for possession of the entire territory won by Paraguayan troops during the war.²⁴ Activists began linking these frustrations with demands for government initiatives for social reform (of a national socialist slant) similar to those underway in Argentina, Brazil, and much of Europe at the time. Student and labor demands joined with claims of veterans for land reform, and the ambitious new officers corps was enlisted to topple the government in a popular revolution on February 17, 1936 under the leadership of Colonel Rafael Franco, a premier hero of the war. The movement was dubbed the *Revolución de Febrero*, and its protagonists and followers are still called the *Febreristas*.

It should come as no surprise that such a political movement could not sustain itself in Paraguay, as it did in other parts of the world. First, the urbanized proletariat in Paraguay was anything but transcendent in the decidedly non-industrialized country of the time. Second, land reform for the peasants (in terms of titled grants of land) was not the life-or-death issue it might have been, considering the conditions under which peasant agriculture was successfully practiced at the time. As explained elsewhere, peasant mobility unhampered by legalized ties to the land was no great liability in areas of low population densities and simple technologies of

production. Finally, foreign interests were still simply too powerful in comparison to the weak national bourgeoisie of the time. Harris Gaylor Warren proved to be prescient when he wrote in 1949 that "A would-be dictator acceptable to the good people [i.e., the small upper class] and to the foreign interests could hold on for years; without such support, there could be no successful dictatorship of any stamp . . ." (1949: 323).

Besides all this, Febrerismo was perhaps similar to the Peronist movement in Argentina, in that it was claimed as the political banner of ideologues from across the political spectrum, from reborn Liberals to communists and fascists, all of whom struggled for leadership in the new regime (cf. Wynia 1978: 43). The new movement burned brightly but a little too hot, and after little more than a year (August 13, 1937) the Chaco commanders again took charge and ousted the president in favor of the old guard Liberals. The Febreristas would continue to be a force of some influence, but they never again exercised decisive power in the country.

The new president, Dr. Félix Paiva, was never regarded as much more than a caretaker, and the government called for elections after two years. José Félix Estigarribia, the supreme commander of the Paraguayan forces during the Chaco War, was nominated by the Liberal Party in 1939 and won with enormous popular support. Estigarribia returned from Washington, D.C. where he had headed the Paraguayan legation, and displayed great vigor and determination in instituting a new program of governmental reform. However, the country was still plagued by discontent and near anarchy, and the President dissolved Congress and assumed dictatorial powers in 1940,

after which he continued to direct his ambitious program aimed toward administrative, fiscal, labor, and land reforms. Estigarribia passed a new Constitution in 1940 that was hailed overwhelmingly by the people, and his popularity was reaching a very high peak when he and his wife were killed in an airplane crash on the way to a weekend retreat at Lake Ypacaraí. After his death on September 7, 1940, the youthful Estigarribia was elevated to the rank of Mariscal, the only Paraguayan other than Francisco Solano López to be so honored.

The New Internationalism

The "revolución de Febrero" was very much a nationalist movement and "Democratic nationalism" continued to be a dominant theme in Paraguayan politics in the aftermath of the War. However, Estigarribia's Minister of War, General Higinio Morínigo, suddenly inherited the presidency during a critical period when it was most impossible for the country to once again turn inward upon itself. Along with the rest of Latin America, Paraguay suddenly had a new relationship with a world on the verge of war.

As in other areas of the continent, many Paraguayan intellectuals were caught between the traditional philosophies of liberal democracy and the modernist trends of European fascism. In Paraguay, particularly, Germany wielded great influence in comparison to the United States because a large community of German immigrants had formed a pervasive network of schools, hospitals, churches, agricultural cooperatives, and social organizations (Grow 1981: 52). As a propaganda campaign directed by the German

Embassy escalated and attracted great support among Paraguayan officers and the public, Washington began to take notice of the situation in Paraguay.

First Estigarribia, then Ambassador in Washington, and later President Morínigo recognized opportunities for Paraguay in the new international power struggle. Estigarribia took immediate advantage of German offers of investment to secure attractive counter offers of aid from the United States as early as 1939. A close friend of American interests, Estigarribia was Washington's assurance that German influence in Paraguay would be curbed and cooperation with the United States--and protection of U.S. investments--would be guaranteed.

After Estigarribia's untimely death, though, General Morínigo--now President--was not nearly so pliant to Northamerican interests. A truly modern type of military authoritarian figure, Morínigo moved to crush the power of both political parties in the country in the name of efficiency and progress. True to his word, he moved rapidly to institute long-awaited reforms and initiate projects for the public benefit, all under the banner of a Paraguayan Nationalist Revolution. More alarming to the United States, though, Morínigo's officers and advisors began expressing open support for the Axis powers and displaying the visual trappings of their sympathies. The influence of the United States in the country had reached a very low ebb, and Washington decided to "attempt to lure Paraguay back into its orbit by cultivating the Morínigo regime with offers of foreign aid" (Grow 1981: 66). After no small amount of negotiation, the United States finally found the secret of tacit--if unenthusiastic--support from

Paraguay in an offer for a large grant of military aid which would strengthen the bases of Morínigo's power.

Even so, the United States did not find it easy to maintain Paraguayan cooperation. Morínigo envisioned a return to the state socialist policies of Francia and the Lopezes, and insisted that Paraguay could develop without the benefit of international intervention. The Paraguayan military was especially suspicious that American assistance would be gained only at the cost of imperialist inroads that would threaten Paraguayan independence. There were good reasons for their suspicions. Almost all of Paraguay's requests for economic assistance to fashion an industrial base were rebuffed by Washington in favor of infrastructural projects which involved lucrative contracts by Northamerican corporations. More than once the officer's corps threatened outright revolt against a pro-American stance in the war, which was probably the only thing that encouraged the Americans to fulfill their basic promises in terms of road, airport, and communications construction. Under the circumstances, Morínigo's only chance to make the best of a risky situation was to follow a policy of strict opportunism and try to wrest whatever support he could out of the American "ally" without severing all ties with pro-German interests in the country. Accordingly, he waited until February, 1945 to declare war on Germany in order to safeguard Paraguayan claims against the Axis for war-indemnities and secure a seat in the new United Nations (Grow 1981: 101).

After the end of the War, the United States found Latin American cooperation necessary in different ways. In order to maintain its great economic power and the prosperity the War had

generated within the country, the U.S. recognized the pressing need to create new markets for peacetime goods and find new avenues of investment for American capital. Latin America, which at the time also had excess capital reserves from supplying allies with raw materials during the War, was an inviting area to do business. However, under the leadership of Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, Spruille Braden, the U.S. government wished to rid the area of the last vestiges of economic nationalism in order to prime the region for unfettered free trade. Thus, the post-War period was to become one of unrestrained U.S. interventionism in Latin American political affairs in order to assure safe grounds for American business. Even little Paraguay--recalcitrant as ever--was to be no exception.

Michael Grow (1981) provides a concise and revealing portrait of U.S. machinations in Paraguayan internal affairs after the end of the war. Without the benefit of any balance against U.S. demands, Morínigo was forced to capitulate to American Embassy pressures for "democratization," even though the Ambassador had advised Washington that Morínigo's regime, unapologetically authoritarian as it was, was less harsh than most of the governments of the region, and his administration was known for "its devoted insistence upon honesty and good character . . . bona fide indignation at previous political corruption . . . obsession with purity of government." In fact, the Ambassador had "never seen any government in any country which came more nearly to deserving to be known as Spartan in its principles and conduct" (cited in Grow 1981: 101). Morínigo, it seemed, bore much in common with the Dictator Francia, and they

were both reviled for the same reasons--their hostility to foreign intervention and "free trade."

It may be cynical to suggest that the United States' interest in replacing the authoritarian regime of Morínigo was based on principles other than spreading the benefits of democracy to the masses, but that was certainly not the result. The President, over time, was forced to respond to the hard line of the Embassy (which was in constant touch with the old party hierarchies), but his "decision to liberalize his government set in motion a rapidly evolving chain of events that soon plunged Paraguay into chaos and bloodshed" (Grow 1981: 105). Morínigo halted all forms of political repression and press censorship and formed a coalition cabinet with representatives of all political parties, except for the Communists. Predictably, rather than use their new position to prepare for democracy, the former opposition parties "instead concentrated on mobilizing their respective forces in a power struggle to seize the government and monopolize the perquisites of office" (*ibid.*). The assailed President was forced to align himself with the Colorados and in 1947 he staged an armed coup against his own government and installed the Colorado Party in power for the first time since 1904. The Colorado Party is still in power in 1993.

The Embassy was no doubt gratified that the new government was so friendly to its interests. The Colorados immediately pledged their support to Inter-American cooperation, and repudiated the "unnatural thesis that all foreign capital is 'imperialist' capital which should be combatted" (cited in Grow 1981: 108). The leader of the party stated that the country's most pressing problem was to "attract

capital," and the Ambassador informed the State Department that "The new government should be a vast improvement over the preceding one" (ibid.). Within weeks the Colorados had banned all opposition political activity and confiscated the newspapers. Liberal, Febrerista and Communist leaders were all in hiding or had fled the country, and the army and all public positions had been turned over to party loyalists.

In a last-ditch effort the opposition parties joined forces in one grand attempt to resist the Colorados, and brutal civil war raged for five months in 1947. The Colorados were nearly unseated, but they managed to mobilize thousands of peasants from the countryside to fight in Asunción and the surrounding area. Such was the birth of the famous *pynandí*-- "barefoot ones" in Guaraní--who would remain as a vanguard of the party's civilian force. As the war gathered force, Morínigo "chided United States officials over the results of democratization in Paraguay" (Grow 1981: 110). After the Colorados prevailed, "pynandí troops were permitted to engage in a spree of looting, rape, torture, and murder against rebel partisans that eventually forced an estimated four hundred thousand persons to flee into exile" (ibid.). In February of 1948 Morínigo himself was forced out of office by a "rigidly controlled" election, and the Colorados had consolidated their control in the country. It was in the immediate aftermath of these events that Elman and Helen Service arrived in Paraguay in 1948, and there is no wonder that they reported that "the situation was so tense during our stay in Tobatí that we could not interest ourselves in this [political] matter without jeopardizing our other work" (Service and Service 1954: xxi).

After years out of power, the Colorados were, themselves, divided ideologically, and during the next six years there were five Colorado presidents, each as friendly as the last to the commercial interests of the United States. Paraguay had truly become a "good neighbor." No more would the country be tempted by economic nationalism or the isolationist policies of previous governments. The power and influence of the United States in the whole of southeastern South America was unchallenged, and Paraguay became more and more linked with Brazil and Argentina, as well. After centuries of both geographic and ideological isolation, Paraguay finally became a full member of the international community, although, perhaps unfortunately, not necessarily on its own terms.

In 1954 one of the young Colorado protagonists of the civil war became president, and managed to create an institutional unity among the government, the armed forces, and the Colorado Party. With such a formidable alliance, and the firm support of the United States, General Alfredo Stroessner managed to maintain near-absolute power for the next 35 years. The effects of such a government upon social and intellectual life in the country were enormous and pervasive, and form one of the most fascinating aspects of the story of Tobatí during the modern period.

Notes

1 Before long, with the perspective of some historical distance, a post-Stroessner epoch (1889-) will undoubtedly be regarded as a distinct period of Paraguayan history, to be distinguished in fundamental ways from the Stroessner years.

2 In one article, Service (1955: 418) argues that because the Guaraní were threatened by the other warlike tribes of the region " ... the Spaniards were much more truly the 'protectors' of the Indians in Paraguay than elsewhere, and the Indians were less inclined to flight." This view, of course, ignores the fact that the Guaraní, themselves, were a "warlike tribe," they had certainly been in contact with the other tribes since long before the Spanish arrived (and managed to survive without "protection"), and that they were much given to flight anyway, after they were reduced by the Spaniards.

3 In a report written in 1541, Irala stated that " ... with the help of God and with the service of these Indians we have destroyed many generations of other Indians who have not been our friends" (Susnik 1965: 19).

4 Symbiosis is understood as mutual dependence of two populations, where both populations share equally the benefits of the relationship.

5 It is easy to make too much of this early relationship between the Spaniards and their Indian wives. Marriage between the groups did not, in fact, foster the generation of an egalitarian society, since the offspring of the conquistadors and their wives of "noble" Guaraní lineage formed an elite class in the colony which became highly endogamous over time. The practice of taking Guaraní wives virtually ceased after the first generation, and the children of the first families merely traded partners among themselves, appropriating to themselves the titles and privileges of Spanish peninsulars (Krüger 1981). However, the process of mixing did continue at a steady pace due to the large number of illegitimate births and the formation of a popular mestizo class. Therefore, there was no foundation for a biologically viable underclass and the institutionalization of racism.

6 The ideological ties of kinship, or *parentesco*, were no doubt greatly exaggerated and exploited by the Spaniards as a tool in the domination of the Indians. The implications and consequences of the relationship of the Spaniards to the Indians as "in-laws" is discussed in Susnik 1965 (v. 1).

7 This new population of true Paraguayans was given the name of *mancebos de la tierra*, or "sons of the earth." The term appears

frequently in the literature, and is still commonly used to fondly refer to the "yeoman" population of the country, much as is "the salt of the earth" in English-speaking countries.

8 Hot mate is a popular beverage throughout the Southern Cone and much of Brazil. However, it is only taken cold, as *tereré*, in Paraguay, or otherwise by Paraguayans.

9 This practice continued well into the twentieth century until the plight of these indentured laborers, called *mensú*, became the scandal of respectable Paraguayans--after, of course, the decline of the importance of yerba to the Paraguayan economy.

10 Of course, the Jesuits were able to take the moral high ground in this case since their own system of labor organization was at least as efficient as the *encomienda*, and possibly as coercive (cf Warren 1949: 155; Garavaglia 1983: 171).

11 Since the rebellion was not formalized, the dates are subject to interpretation of historical events. Service (1954: 96), for example, dates the movement from about 1590, while Benitez (1976) writes of two rebellious periods.

12 Azara (1943: 191) speaks of the "three castes" in Paraguay: the Indians, Europeans, and the Africans.

13 The first African slaves were received in 1612--another sign of a rapid disappearance of available Indian labor. Cooney (1974) provides an excellent summary of the slave system in Paraguay. He shows that manumission was very common and, due to the social--as opposed to economic--nature of the institution, Blacks were rapidly subsumed into the indigenous culture. In fact, the general equanimity with which slavery was allowed to lapse--as opposed to its legal abolition--shows that it was relatively unimportant as an economic institution during the colony. Notwithstanding a new interest in the survival of pockets of *pardos* in the country (see Plá 1972), Blacks are virtually nonexistent in contemporary nuclear Paraguay.

14 The *Peninsulares* in the colony hoped to recognize Doña Carlota, Queen of Portugal and sister of Ferdinand VII of Spain, as sovereign. Such a solution, of course, would certainly have threatened the status quo with regard to Brazil-Paraguayan relations.

15 Two of the dictator's "captive guests" were particularly well known. Aimé Bonpland, a celebrated French naturalist, was captured in Paraguay in 1821. However, the scientist prospered so well in captivity that when he was released in 1831, his greatest regret was that "there was no chance of the Dictator's *allowing him to return to Paraguay*" (White 1978: 136; author's emphasis). Also, the renowned Uruguayan *prócer* and dictator, General José Artigas, was granted asylum by his Paraguayan colleague in 1820. His fate was not so happy as the Frenchman's, however, as he was exiled to a small town deep in the interior of the country.

16 The only exception was a bequest of four hundred pesos to his sister, Petrona (Williams 1979: 194).

17 Efraím Cardozo, one of Paraguay's ablest historians, explains how the young López laid the plans to marry a daughter of Emperor Pedro II of Brazil and declare himself the head of a new Paraguayan empire (Cardozo 1987: 99).

18 Alcibiades González Delvalle, a daring Paraguayan journalist, incurred the wrath of the Stroessner government when he published the play, *San Fernando*, as a graphic representation of these events. The author, long a thorn in the side of Colorado Party officialdom, was jailed in 1989 after the play appeared. For a good first-hand report of the astonishing events at San Fernando, see Thompson 1869.

19 An interesting aside is the fact that Paraguay retained control over a major part of the Chaco as a result of international arbitration, chaired by United States President Rutherford B. Hayes. A grateful nation named a large department of the Chaco and one of its cities after President Hayes, and as a result, the man is undoubtedly more widely and fondly remembered in Paraguay than he is in the United States.

20 The exception to this might be yerba and tannin, but as extractive resources their production was relatively extensive. Also, since the major *yerbales* were isolated in the northeast and east, near the borders, capital from the trade was diffused through Brazil and Argentina, as well as Asunción. Also, the tannin economy extended straight downriver to Argentina, with almost no distribution of wealth in the Paraguayan countryside.

21 One of the more bizarre of these communities was Nueva Germania, founded by Elisabeth Nietzsche, sister of the famous German philosopher, and her visionary husband, Bernhard Förster. Although the colony eventually failed, the modern village is still inhabited by the colonists' descendants, and a few of the older folk who still speak German (MacIntyre 1992).

22 The process of succession is often confused during the Liberal period. Eligio Ayala also had to resign for a year in 1924 so that he could run for the presidency as a non-incumbent in the elections of 1925. The line of succession during this time was as follows (from Warren 1949: 358):

1921	Eusebio Ayala
1923	Eligio Ayala
1924	Luis A. Riart
1925	Eligio Ayala
1928	José Patricio Guggiari
1932	Eusebio Ayala

23 Except where noted, this account of the Chaco War and its aftermath is documented by Warren 1949, Ch. 17-18.

24 Paraguayan forces had advanced as far as the Rio Parapití, some sixty kilometers further into Bolivian territory than where the boundary line was finally fixed. Ironically, it was precisely in this area that major oil fields were found in Bolivia after the war, while to date, no oil has been found on the Paraguayan side of the line.

CHAPTER 4 A RURAL HISTORY

A New Town in the New World

The town of Tobatí has a venerable, if fragmentary, history as New World cities go. The most reliable chronicler of early Platine history, Felix de Azara, professes ignorance of the exact date that the town was founded (1904: 57) although in one source he gives the date both as 1536 and 1539 (1943: 174, 217)--very soon after the foundation of Asunción, and earlier than most of the towns and cities on the continent. The Services, citing Azara, also give the date of foundation of the town as 1538 (Service 1954: 52). Gutierrez (1983: 282) further muddies the waters by citing Azara for a date of 1541, although he believes that the date given by Aguirre of 1597 was the most likely, when the town was built by the Indians of Tamimbú, Yeruquizaba and Pirapó. The original site of Tobatí was on the southern bank of the Manduvirá river, some sixty kilometers due northeast of the capital, at one of the outposts of the new Spanish colony, in the so-called "upper provinces" (Necker 1990: 63). Azara at least is accurate in pinpointing the location at 25° 1' 35" South latitude and 59° 29' 1" West of Paris (1943: 174).

Tobatí was one of the earliest *pueblos de Indios*, or Indian towns, created by the Spanish. There is very little remaining history of these early towns, but it is evident that the purposes of the Spaniards in their settlement was to provide for frontier defense and

to maintain control over their new subjects. This latter aspect no doubt included forms of political, economic, and social control in order to a) increase the military security of the Spaniards, b) organize the Indians for production purposes, and c) facilitate their catechism and conversion to Christianity. In the case of Tobatí, it seems that there were other circumstances involved, as well, since the settlement occupied a particularly strategic port of embarkation from Paraguay *oriental* to across the river, into the Chaco, and onward to the Andes and Peru (Susnik 1982: 37).

The area north of Asunción and east of the Paraguay River was populated by the *Tobatines*, close cousins of the aboriginal Guaranies nearer the capital. The Spanish called the territory the Province of Tobatí, but it was also known as Yeruquisaba (Necker 1990: 71). The appellation of these Indians may have stemmed from the use of a white clay with which they painted themselves (*tová* = face; *morotí* = white). Otherwise, the Guaraní word *tovati* is freely translated as kaolin, the whitish clay so common in the area (Guasch 1961: 732). Azara implies that the true settlers were actually Guaraní from the central zone who were moved to the territory of the Tobatines, but it is more likely that both Tobatines and Guaranies (Carios) from around Asunción were settled in the pueblo.

Early Tobatí was probably typical of the first pueblos in that enforced settlement under foreign domination was associated with daily displays of petty rebellion punctuated by occasions of overt insurrection. A complicating factor was that, apparently, the Spaniards organized the Indians of the territory into pueblos at a moment in history when the Indians were already in a state of social

flux, and involved in a regrouping and generalized migration toward the south (Susnik 1965: 61). As outlined in Chapter 3, the early years of the colony were characterized by a series of bloody uprisings. A particularly serious instance of armed revolt involved a rebellion of the natives of Areguá and Tobatí in 1545, which Irala only succeeded in quelling with the aid of a thousand allied Guaraní (Gonzalez 1988 : 103). By 1570, the situation of the colonists was critical, and the Tobatines, along with other groups, were on the verge of ridding themselves of Spanish domination (Necker 1990: 37)

Even after the pacification of the Indians by military force, however, there clearly lingered symptoms of dissatisfaction with regimented village life, accompanied by attempts to escape from colonial rule. In a letter dated 1620 from the National Archive in Asunción, one Alonso, "Cacique of Tobatí," complains of the disappearance of young men from the village, and exhorts his people to cultivate their fields to maintain themselves, and to behave in a "respectful manner" (ANA/UNESCO v. 45). Indeed, throughout the colony the Spaniards were plagued by a constant drain on labor as the people, especially the working young, filtered back into the forests at any opportunity, or otherwise engaged in shirking and other passive forms of resistance (Necker 1990 : 190). Collective flights in nativistic messianic movements to a "land without evil" were also characteristic of the Guaraní populations, more commonly in the early years but recorded well into this century, and were a source of despair and frustration to encomenderos and clergy alike (Hay 1984).

Aside from the tedious rigors of their regimented life, the early Tobateños had to deal with more immediate dangers. Despite the possibilities for social control and increased production, sedentary life has its drawbacks, as well. Denied the freedom to shift their village location with changing circumstances, the people were subject to virtual siege by other, non-reduced, groups indigenous to the area, whether recalcitrant bands of Tobatines, the more independent Itatines to the north or the even more warlike Chacoan groups from across the river. Azara specifically blames the aggressive "Albayos" (Mbayás) from the north for murderous attacks on Tobatí (1943: 210). The town was fortified by a wooden stockade, but nevertheless it was nearly destroyed on 1672, and again in 1679, by unfriendly Indians (Quevedo 1984 : 21, 52). During the year of 1697, the Indians of Tobatí (as well as those of Atyrá, Ypané and Guarambaré) were exempted from tributary labor by the Governor in order to "assist in the functions of warfare" (Garavaglia 1983:325). While there may have been other factors at play of which we are ignorant, Azara cites the constant harassment from these groups as the reason the first site of Tobatí was eventually abandoned for the present location of the city, some 25 kilometers to the southeast. That move, according to Azara (1904: 57), and supported by other authors, occurred on the last day of February of the year 1699.

The first site of the city is still known as Tobatí Tujá (Old Tobatí). The old locale has never been touched by archaeologists, and nothing remains to be seen of the original settlement. For now, the site is known principally as a good place to launch boats for fishing on the Río Manduvirá. The last mention of old Tobatí in the

archives is a report from October 22, 1700, that the boat *San Lorenzo* struck a covered outcrop in the river in front of the "presidio of Tobatí which is called Santa Rosa" (ANR-NE v. 361).

Toward the end of the seventeenth century there was a general contraction of the colony as several other *pueblos* were pulled in closer to the capital as well, over a period of some years (Velázquez 1982: 127; see Susnik 1982 : 132 map). These included Indian towns much further afield than Tobatí, such as Atyrá (or Yois), Altos, and Ypané, all from the north. Atyrá and Tobatí, in fact, were finally located within an easy day's ride of each other. Geographic proximity and ethnic homogeneity would both be factors creating close links between the towns, situating them almost as "sister cities."

At its actual site, Tobatí was laid out as a planned city, typical of the Spanish towns of the New World. Set apart and above a small river, far enough from mosquitoes but close enough for easy water, the town was platted as a series of regular city blocks around a central church square, or plaza. Such an arrangement bespeaks order and production, and leaves no doubt as to the locus of authority, both temporal and spiritual. In the new site, Tobatí was still designated as one of two Indian presidios, or forts, to guard the colony against hostilities from the warlike Mbayá who attacked from the north (Velázquez 1977: 45). Susnik points to the high proportion of *párvulos* (young children) in relation to adults (214 out of 474 individuals) as an indication of the high toll that these raids exacted on the pueblo (1965: 96-7).¹

During the earliest years, Tobatí was undoubtedly a rude-looking village, with only the barest of amenities. According to one early chronicler, the *pueblos de Indios* consisted of

a great square of huts, on which one side stands a decent house for the administration and the priest, and together with this, alone in the plaza, a church. The administration has a patio for the town offices and outside of the block of the plaza there is a street, of sorts, of *ranchos*. They try to have only one entrance, and across this there is a door where they stand guard (Aguirre, cited in Maeder 1975: 76).

Still, this arrangement may have seemed quite urbane to the early colonists. Azara explains (1943: 207) that only the cities and the *pueblos* of *Indios* and *pardos* are laid out in the style of towns, for the rest of the settlements consist only of "scattered houses."

Unlike in the present, Tobatí, for most of its history, had been very much on the beaten path. Tobatí was reached from Asunción (a distance of some sixty kilometers) by the old road of Ñu Guazú, one of the few principal highways out of the capital (Gil Aguinaga 1973 : 83). Passing out of the capital through Ñu Guazú (now the site of the International Airport), the road arrived at Areguá, skirted Lake Ypacaraí, and passed through Altos, linking Caacupé, Atyrá, and Tobatí. From there, the road continued to Barrero Grande (now Eusebio Ayala), San Estanislao, and finally culminated in Curuguaty, center of the yerba mate territory and at the farthest reaches of the colony's authority. Because the road served such a large territory, and because of the trade in yerba, there must have been considerable traffic through the town throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

"Service to the Christians, and to the Indians, shelter":

The Encomienda²

The character of Tobatí in relation to the colony changed *de jure*, if not in fact, after 1556. This marked the year in which colonial law, under Irala, formally established the institutional structure of the pueblos de Indios, defining the social and economic functions of the pueblos within the colony up through the first years of independence. This marked an important decision on the part of the Spaniards to remain in Paraguay and consolidate the colony, ending an initial phase which Service (1954) typed as the "Exploratory Phase."

The colonists finally realized that in Paraguay there was no real extractive wealth except labor, and the society was organized accordingly. While technically not enslaved, Indians were dedicated to landowners through other legalistic mechanisms, the most important of which was the *encomienda*. As an organizing principle, the *encomienda* gathered Indians in landed villages, facilitating both the reproduction of the labor force and the distribution of labor. The *encomienda* granted to the *encomendero* only the labor of the Indians, which was considered to be independent of any endowment of land which the elites might otherwise acquire. The *encomienda* also existed in other colonies, but Paraguay was supposedly unique in that labor exclusively was extracted rather than a cash or material tribute by the Indians. This was simply because, in Paraguay, there was no money economy, and too few Indians under *encomienda* to provide a profit from tribute in kind.

The Indians settled in the Pueblos de Indios were organized as *mitayo* encomiendas. With permanent residence in the pueblo, they were not only given usufruct over the lands of the town, they were to have legal and hereditary rights of ownership over the lands in perpetuity. The holders of encomiendas could have no rights over lands within the jurisdiction of the Indian towns, and their own ranches and plantations were to be located within a prescribed distance of such towns (Pastore 1972: 33). In Tobatí, along with Itá, Yaguarón and Altos, that distance was reduced since those towns were legally classed as *antiguas*, presumably already settled when the laws took effect (*ibid.*: 42). In theory, the communities were to preserve their autonomy in terms of tribal organization and subsistence. Under these conditions, the encomienda bore little resemblance to the *haciendas* of the Andes and colonial Mexico, where landed estates were associated with specified labor contracts by resident Indians (Wolf 1982: 142-43). Still, the residents of the Indian towns were essentially given over to the Spanish, with the consequent fate that would be expected for a servile labor population.

Ironically, the encomienda was originally conceived as a form of protection for the Indians against possible abuses of power by the conquerors, as well as to protect the authority of the State against challenges by an emergent class of landed chieftains (cf. Bagchi 1982: 48). The laws of the encomienda, as dictated by the Crown, were precise and detailed in enumerating the limits to the encomienda, the freedoms that it guaranteed to the Indians, the obligations of the encomenderos toward the Indians, and even the punishments to be

meted out for any breach of contract (Service 1954: 42-43). In fact, it appears that Irala, with his numerous Indian wives and progeny, was sympathetic to the plight of the Indians in Paraguay, and foresaw the possibilities for abuse inherent in the laws, and for that reason delayed the establishment of the institution for as long as possible, until he could no longer ignore the petitions of the settlers (Pastore 1972: 20-22).

According to Pastore (1962: 31-32), Indians who were *encomendado* to the Spaniards were subject to work for them from Mondays through Thursdays. Sundays were dedicated to worship, and Fridays and Saturdays the Indians were to work their own plantations, for their own subsistence. However, Indians were only bound by law to work for the encomendero a total of two months of the year, or be paid for any time of service longer than that. Only able-bodied men owed labor tribute, and the caciques, as well as their first-born sons, were supposedly exempt. Other regulations governed the conditions of the *mitá* (actual period of service under supervision of the encomendero, as opposed to time spent in the pueblos), such as how many Indians could be taken at a time, for what periods of time, and to what purposes. However, as one scholar observes, the result was the "persistent evasion of these laws by first Spanish and then Paraguayan (creole) masters" (Saeger 1981: 60). In actual fact, the encomienda most often was a form of prebend which was different from more traditional forms of slavery only in the provisions for reproduction of the labor force (cf. Maeder 1975: 75).³ The encomenderos, having no doubts as to their relationship with

"their" Indians, even took for themselves the title of *vecino feudatario* (Saeger 1981: 60).

In terms of the number of Indians granted to a particular claimant, an encomienda could be quite small, and was usually under fifty Indians, at least during the seventeenth century. One Jesuit chronicle (cited in Velázquez 1982: 120) states that

. . . because the governor Domingo de Irala was quick to protect himself and so gave out Indians to all sorts of people, and as he had to divide so few Indians among so many claimants, over time he used them all up, to the point where there were encomenderos of six or seven Indians and some that did not have two.

In Tobatí, for example, the population--which numbered only a few hundred persons during this time--was divided among a number of encomenderos (see Service 1954: 73). Specifically, in 1651, 427 Indians in Tobatí were divided among eleven encomiendas. However, of those Indians, only 110 were classed as adult males, so the number of working hands per encomienda was fairly small (Garavaglia 1983: 221). By 1784, Susnik (1965: 120) lists only seven encomiendas for Tobatí, and of these, two consisted of less than five "real" workers, while the largest had 51 and other others were midway in numbers between the two extremes. Over time, there was ever greater resentment about the small sizes of encomiendas as increasing numbers of mestizos claimed rights over the labor of a population of true Indians drastically diminished due to epidemic disease, deplorable living conditions, and intermarriage (Service 1954: 76; Azara 1943a: 165).

At the same time, the number of residents listed as "mitarios," or Indians incorporated within the encomienda, did increase at the same time that the total number of encomiendas tended to decrease. It would seem logical to conclude, therefore, that the encomienda was strengthened with time, but most scholars think otherwise. Although Saeger (1981), for example, argues that the encomienda was made more robust by the consolidation of small encomiendas during the time, he also admits that it was essentially an inefficient way to exploit Indian labor, and that it pitted the encomenderos against the government for control of Indians for both production and colonial defense. Also, as the mestizo population grew, so the population of Indians did not, and it became increasingly easy for creole Indians to desert the encomienda and melt into the population of lower-class mestizos in the cities. The demographic summary of Tobatí (Appendix C) shows a significant number of these fugitives from the encomienda throughout the colonial period, but it does not show the gravity of the problem. One must remember that only the able males (perhaps one out of four Indians) actually worked directly under the encomienda, and these were exactly the Indians most likely to flee. Therefore, the fugitive population represented a much larger proportion of the actual labor force than is immediately apparent.

In any case, after the middle of the eighteenth century the colonial government put increasing pressure on the encomenderos to observe the laws regarding the well-being and education of their charges, and the government granted more and more of the adult males exemption from service. The encomienda represented a

"weighty hindrance on provincial economic development" (Velázquez 1982: 156), and the institution finally lapsed in 1803. The former encomenderos, constituting an economic elite in the capital, moved away from crop production and into livestock, forming an incipient cattle industry and distancing themselves from local politics (Krüger 1981: 44).

There was another form of *encomienda* which was, however, less important to the colonial economy than the *mitayo* *encomienda* described above, although probably more profitable to the encomendero. Many Indians were separated from Indian pueblos, and were bound to year around service within the household of the encomendero. Called *originarios*, or *yanacona*, these Indians may have been convicted of crimes, or were captured in war, or may have desired to be household servants. This form of *encomienda* was as old as the colony itself, and was probably of more importance in the early years when large numbers of women were taken into the households of the Spaniards as servants and concubines (Service 1954: 61). This form of *encomienda* was even more difficult to monitor and regulate than the *mitayo* and, hence, "the status of these Indians, legally *encomendados*, more closely resembled that of slaves" (Saeger 1981: 63). These *encomiendas originarias*, it appears, had little impact on the political economy on the *encomiendas mitayo*, such as Tobatí.

The Franciscan Missions and the Pueblos de Indios

The missions of the Jesuits have gained considerable fame among historians of Latin America for their remarkable

achievements in Paraguay, southern Brazil, and northern Argentina. Of considerably less renown is the history of the Franciscan Order, which operated in the same part of the world at the same time as the Jesuits--often in pointed rivalry with them. Although not nearly as flamboyant as the Jesuits in their "experiment," the legacy of the Franciscans possibly was more fundamental and lasting because it was they who actually organized and initially administered the network of towns which survived to become the nucleus of Paraguayan society, and which still thrive, as in the case of Tobatí, right up to the present.

The government in Asunción relied on the Franciscans to fulfill the obligation of the Spaniards to catechize the new subjects of the Crown, mainly because no other clerics would come to that part of Paraguay. One of the early governors of the province, Hernando Arias de Saavedra (Hernandarias) put it succinctly and honestly: "The Franciscans are the only *religiosos* that this province needs, because they are poor and they are content with little, while the others attend to their own comforts, founding colleges and haciendas to support themselves" (Duran 1990: 954).

By the time the Franciscans arrived, the hinterlands of the colony--including the pueblos de Indios--were in near constant turmoil and practically ungovernable. Although there were Franciscans in Asunción practically since its first days, the Franciscan presence only took on "force and life" with the arrival of two men of remarkable energy, Fray Luis de Bolaños and Fray Alonso de San Buenaventura, in 1575 (Duran 1990: 956). San Buenaventura was martyred in Paraguay, but Bolaños lived to almost single-handedly

oversee the foundation of all of the Franciscan pueblos and reductions of the area. Along the way, he also wrote the first catechism in Guaraní, which was widely disseminated throughout the colony, and authored a Guaraní dictionary and grammar. He eventually became one of the most influential clerics in the land, and various miracles were popularly attributed to his intervention in times of grave need.

The Franciscans asserted their authority over the increasingly anarchic and rebellious Indian territories through a process perfected in the early twentieth century and most associated with the great pacifier of the Brazilian Indians, Candido Rondon (Davis 1977: 4). Basically, that process consisted of creating a social niche in the Indian society by a) offering protection against other social groups, especially the government, which the Indians had learned to distrust, b) supplanting the traditional authority of the relatively powerful shamans by claiming association with a higher-order spiritual world, c) bestowing nominal powers on a traditionally weak local "chief," or cacique (creating new and manipulable lines of authority within the society) and d) creating a dependent relationship through strategic gifts of metal artifacts and other trade goods (Necker 1990: 81-90). All of this, of course, was backed up by at least an implicit recognition on all sides of the possibility of modern armaments as an ultimate arbiter⁴.

The first task of the Franciscans was to enlarge the dominion of the pueblos. The Fathers recognized the abuse that the Indians suffered as a result of the encomienda, and proposed to protect the Indians against those abuses. However the consolidation of the

villages, intended to bring all of the Indians under the protection of the Fathers, had the unfortunate effect of recruiting for the encomienda as well (Duran 1990: 963). Still, the Franciscans were successful in ridding the towns of the *pobleros*, outsiders who lived in the villages and served as the *capataces*, or "foremen" of the encomenderos. These people had had unfettered power over the Indians of the encomienda, and were known for their capricious treatment of Indian workers, and their brutish behavior toward Indian women (Necker 1990: 92). The Franciscans essentially displaced the civilian authorities who were the direct agents of the encomenderos and rid the pueblos of other non-Indians in order to assure themselves of unquestioned authority in the administration of village life. At the same time these measures, together with edicts from the Governor in Asunción, severely curtailed the powers of the encomenderos during the *mitá*, or period of service away from the village.

After the end of the seventeenth century, there were far fewer missionaries coming into the colony. The Franciscans no longer had the clergy nor the resources to administer the large network of towns. Instead, the Order concentrated its resources in the administration of a single reduction in the central zone (Itá) and four others in the eastern part of the colony: Caazapá, Yuty, Itatí, and Itapé. In 1744 Tobatí, along with the pueblos of Atyrá, Ypané, Yaguaron, Altos and Guarambaré was given over to the administration of secular clergy (and denominated as "*encomendados a clérigos*") while the rest were either abandoned by the Fathers or destroyed by Portuguese invaders (Duran 1990: 966).

So, the Franciscans, themselves, had ceased to be the dominant figures of authority in Tobatí. Under the titular administration of the secular clergy, the encomenderos were once again able to assert their control over the Indians with little interference, aside from governmental edicts which were rarely heeded. Still, the legacy of the Franciscans was critical: they

"produced an effect which was desired but never achieved by arms: the pacification and the submission of the Guaraníes to the Spaniards. This permitted not only the evangelization of the Indians, but their submission to the encomienda, as well" (Necker 1990: 79).

In other words, they preached to the population an ideology that the burden of the Indians was to work for the benefit of the encomenderos, while they also left administrative structures in place in the towns which served the encomenderos and the government well during the remainder of the colony.

The Fitful Sleep: A Rural Town in Old Paraguay

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the stability of Tobatí was constantly threatened by epidemics, migrations, and attacks from hostile Chacoan Indians. The relocation of the town in 1699 undoubtedly provided welcome relief from the constant dangers of unfriendly Indians. However, the townspeople still had to remain in a state of military alert, maintaining a citizens militia at their own burdensome cost, both in terms of matériel as well as in the time and energies of the ablest young men (Garavaglia 1986: 41).

Not surprisingly, the *encomienda* proved to be the most logical administrative division around which to structure the rural militias (Velázquez 1977: 56) so the most stable *encomiendas* (that is, the *pueblos*) were liable to bear the brunt of defense. Also, closer proximity to the capital made the *Tobateños* more accessible to the demands of the *encomenderos* and placed them more directly under the watchful eye of government officials.

The government settled on a form of administration of the *pueblos* that was common throughout hispanic America, and a favorite of colonialists throughout the world: directed self-rule. Each *pueblo* was given a government administrator, but there was a rigid hierarchy of native officials who oversaw community affairs. The administrator, though, was not precisely a civil servant, being paid a percentage of the *pueblo's* production as well as sustenance (Susnik 1965: 208).

The administrator's counterpart in the village was a Guaraní *corregidor*, named by the Governor to "look after the common works, assisting the administrator in all of his tasks, and avoid public transgressions, dissensions, and partisanship among the natives of the *pueblo*" (Susnik 1965: 210). Responsible to both the administrator and the *corregidor* were a series of other Indian officials; normally an *alcalde*, two or more *regidores*, *alférezes* and *alguaciles*, each of whom had different nominal responsibilities. There was a village council, or *cabildo*, with yearly election of Indian *consejiles*. These village offices frequently rotated among the same individuals,⁵ who formed an hispanicized elite within the village (Susnik 1965: 213). In reality these functionaries, and principally

the corregidor, served as simple mouthpieces for the Spanish administrator, a situation which encouraged resistance and produced deep social divisions within the native community itself. Susnik (1965: 211) documents a case where the orders of the administrator in Tobatí were disobeyed by subordinate officials, and it fell to the corregidor to punish the officials and disobedient chiefs, with the lash and with terms of forced labor.

Most notably, the Spaniards maintained the *cacigazgo*, or native chieftainship to maintain social relations within the village lineages and divide up labor for the *mita*. This position was undoubtedly much altered from what it traditionally had been, since the office of chief, or *cacique*, was made hereditary, and the Spanish elevated the chief and his immediate family to the level of a Guaraní "nobility." The cacique, as well as the corregidor, was endowed by the Spaniards with the title of Don, and both, along with most of the village officials (the so-called "necessary Indians") were exempted from the *mita* and enjoyed a number of other privileges (Pastore 1972: 69).

Historical Demography

Population figures from various censuses and *visitas* provide only a rough picture of the demographic situation of the town during this time. Part of this difficulty seems to stem from the fact that, since Tobatí was an Indian town, often only Indians were counted. Also, all of the reports refer to significant numbers of Indians listed as "fugitives" from the pueblo, a sure sign of the hardships and poor prospects of village life, especially for the younger men. Likewise, at any one time there were apt to be significant numbers absent in the

mitá (who may or may not have been counted) as well as others taken for work in the *yerbales*--often under illegal circumstances, and therefore not reported. And finally, there is the problem inherent in many historical community studies for Latin America, in that it is often difficult to tell whether numbers referred to the town or the municipality, since the latter, bearing the same name, included not only the town but the outlying areas and hamlets. On top of this, it is even more confusing to formulate a clear picture of the ethnic composition of the town during the colonial period.

The demographic table in Appenidix C shows that the population of the town remained small during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, creeping slowly from about 300 persons to above a thousand toward the period of independence. A curve drawn over time would show fluctuations, as well, which correspond to episodes of epidemics and recorded migrations. However, during the eighteenth century, growth was steady, reflecting the greater stability of the colony.

An intriguing aspect of the early demographic history of the pueblos is evidence of selective infanticide. According to Susnik (1965: 33), allowing children to perish may have been a response to the harsh conditions imposed under the *encomienda*. In her 1965 work, Susnik gleans demographic data from a number of sources. She gives population figures covering one hundred years during the colony, but unfortunately presents it in a form which is exceedingly difficult to parse. On the other hand, her numbers for children, by sex, are fairly straightforward. Records for Tobatí for the years 1694 and 1784 show total children numbering 202 and 407, respectively.⁶

The numbers of male children from the two counts are 112 and 253 giving ratios of males to females of 1.24 and 1.64. Data from the few other cases shows that these numbers are not unusual; indeed, they show a general trend for the colony as a whole. As shown in Table 4.1 among the following tables, ratios appear normal in only two of these cases, while in eight cases, including the cases of Tobatí, ratios heavily favor males. In the extreme case of Caazapá in 1699, males outnumbered females by over two to one.

These data are enigmatic, and it is difficult to interpret their importance. At first glance, it appears that the people in the encomienda villages are rearing more male children. In itself, though, the data are not conclusive. Aside from not specifying the ages referred to by the term *párvulos*, there is no assurance that data was gathered the same way during different periods of time. Also, as mentioned, from Susnik's tables and accompanying text it seems impossible to glean reliable counts of adults to judge whether sex ratios remain constant between generations.

There is, however, additional data which would strengthen a hypothesis that there was sex selection for Indian children in the encomienda villages, whether it was through selective infanticide or another mechanism of which we are ignorant. This selection may have occurred as a response to a shortage of adult males in the same villages, whether caused by warfare, migration (almost all fugitives from the villages were young adult men), other causes of male attrition, or a combination of factors.

Table 4.1. Sex Ratios, Children Only, for Indian Communities

<i>Case / year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>M/F</i>
Yaguarón 1673	636	350	286	1.22
Arecayá 1673	209	121	88	1.38
Tobatí 1694	202	112	90	1.24
Caazapá 1699	514	351	163	2.15
Altos 1724	155	85	70	1.21
Yaguarón 1778	614	343	271	1.27
Atyrá 1784	420	206	214	0.96
Tobatí 1784	407	253	154	1.64
Caazapá 1784	278	170	108	1.57
Yuty 1785	231	116	115	1.01

Source: Susnik 1965.

Table 4.2. Sex Ratios for Indian Communities, 1651/1652

<i>Pueblo</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Adults</i>		<i>M/F</i>	<i>Children</i>		<i>M/F</i>
		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	
Ypané	678	150	187	0.80	176	165	1.07
Atyrá	455	105	118	0.89	120	112	1.07
Guaram	367	80	100	0.80	103	84	1.23
Arecayá	306	85	95	0.89	61	65	0.94
Yaguarón	1043	259	280	0.93	280	224	1.25
Altos	604	152	144	1.06	181	127	1.43
Tobatí	427	110	118	0.93	117	82	1.43
San Benito	100	34	33	1.03	22	11	2.00
Totals	3980	975	1075	0.91	1060	870	1.22

Source: Garavaglia 1983: 221.

Table 4.3. Sex Ratios for Indian Communities, 1726

<i>Pueblo</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Adults</i>		<i>M/F</i>	<i>Children</i>		<i>M/F</i>
		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	
Ypané	170	47	42	1.12	50	31	1.61
Atyrá	431	115	127	0.91	100	89	1.12
Guaram.	143	38	40	0.95	33	32	1.03
Yaguarón	819	237	233	1.02	193	156	1.24
Altos	591	166	164	1.01	142	119	1.19
Tobatí	368	86	111	0.77	93	78	1.19
Totals	2522	689	717	0.96	611	505	1.21

Source: Garavaglia 1983: 224.

Table 4.4. Sex Ratios for Indian Communities, 1782

<i>Pueblo</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Adults</i>		<i>M/F</i>	<i>Children</i>		<i>M/F</i>
		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	
Ypané	169	69	69	1.00	16	15	1.07
Atyrá	824	338	290	1.17	87	109	0.80
Guaram.	268	117	98	1.19	21	26	0.81
Yaguarón	1388	516	509	1.01	186	177	1.05
Altos	717	282	264	1.07	98	82	1.20
Tobatí	799	335	266	1.26	94	104	0.90
San Joaquin.	759	241	303	0.80	125	90	1.39
Santaní	518	211	223	0.95	40	44	0.91
Yuty	642	242	228	1.06	85	87	0.98
Caazapá	616	234	243	0.96	76	63	1.21
Itá	965	237	331	0.72	107	153	0.70
Itapé	62	16	28	0.57	7	11	0.64
Totals	7727	2838	2852	1.00	942	961	0.98

Source: Aguirre 1948: 437 (T. II, pt. 1)

Juan Carlos Garavaglia presents population data from different sources which also suggests that more male children were being reared as a response to high attrition rates among older males. As is clear from Table 4.2, there was a high proportion of male children in all of eight encomienda villages except one, Arecayá. With adults, the relationship was reversed, however: women outnumbered men in all cases but two, and in one of those villages there was almost parity.

Population data from encomienda villages taken 75 years later indicates that these relationships still held, with the difference that male/female ratios among adults were approaching parity. Table 4.3 shows that there was almost no difference in ratios among children from the earlier time period.

From the data presented thus far, it appears that whatever the circumstances were that caused a numerical imbalance between sexes in the adult population, they were less operative over time. However, there may have been a lag in the cultural response to this phenomenon, and boy babies were still preferred over girls in the society.

If this sequence of events were, indeed, the case, then one would reason that, with more time, there would be a tendency toward sexual parity both among children and adults. This, indeed, seems to have been the case, judging from census data taken in 1782, and shown in Table 4.4. The differences in numbers of males and females among both adults and children diminished, and if the total population of twelve Indian villages is considered as a whole, there was almost perfect parity.

Still, what is perceived as a clear pattern does not necessarily hold true for each village, pointing to the fact that each individual case must be considered in terms of its own historical context. Specifically, in the case of most immediate concern, that of Tobatí, the pattern continued--although it was less marked--over a longer period of time than in the other villages. Possibly this could be explained by the fact--previously mentioned--that as one of the few garrisoned Indian towns, Tobatí bore a larger burden in defense of the colony over a longer period of time, and was particularly susceptible to raids by unreduced Indians. Also, as is detailed below, there were particular aspects of the village economy of Tobatí that might further explain the higher attrition rates of adult males in the town.

In any case, Table 4.5 summarizes the general evolution of the population of the pueblos in Paraguay in terms of age and sex, according to a number of different sources.

Table 4.5
Sex and Age Ratios for Indian Communities
Summary

<u>Year</u>	<u>Adult M/F</u>	<u>n=</u>	<u>Child M/F</u>	<u>n=</u>	<u>C/A</u>
1651	0.91	2050	1.22	1930	0.94
1726	0.96	1406	1.21	1116	0.79
1782	1.00	5690	0.98	1903	0.33

As suggestive as these data are, it is clear that only a meticulous search in the National Archives and in other sources

would solidly disprove a null hypothesis that differences in sex ratios were not significant. As mentioned, there were no standardized methodologies for census gathering over the many years represented by the data in hand, so restrictive categories of any particular census are probably less reliable than the global figures.

This difficulty in comparing different censuses also creates problems in interpreting the last column in Table 4.5, which shows the ratios of children to adults over time. If one were to assume that the "children" counted in each census were of roughly the same ages, then it would appear that there had been a severe decline in fertility in the Indian pueblos over time. However, since we know with certainty that the population of Paraguay was growing rapidly during the same period (with very little effect of immigration), it seems more likely that these numbers indicate the effects of a rapid melding of the Indian population into the mestizo population.

This observation leads to another aspect of colonial demography which is of great interest to scholars: the ethnic or racial composition of the society over time. This interest is a result of a widespread belief in the "Indianness" of Paraguay's population, and the even more widely held view that ethnic homogeneity has been one of the most enduring facets of Paraguayan history.

As the relatively inefficient *encomienda* gradually lapsed during the eighteenth century, the labor problem, in Tobatí probably more than in most towns, was partially resolved through an increasing use of black slaves. In 1694 there were significant numbers of slaves in Tobatí "charged with working the lands of the Virgin, Nuestra Señora de la Limpia de Tobatí" (Susnik 1965: 92). By

1846, there were 35 slaves under the proprietorship of the church, more than for almost any church in the country (Williams 1976: 433). This feature of slavery was not uncommon in the colony, and many slaves were attached to the Church, or to a particular Saint, often as a bequest from the original owners (Plá 1972: 112). Many individual Tobateños held slaves, as well, judging from the scant--if largely unsatisfying--population data available.

But, while nearly all records remark on the existence of a slave population and numbers of *pardos* (mestizos, of Indian or Caucasian background, with some at least some black African parentage), Maeder (1975) is the only source which gives concrete numbers, which he extracted from the previously unpublished census of 1799 taken under the colonial intendant governor Lázaro de Ribera. Even allowing for variance due to Maeder's definition of some terms such as "Español" and "Mestizo," though, (1975: 82) it is extremely difficult to reconcile his numbers with data presented by all other sources (see Appendix C). While Maeder's argument for a marked "whitening" (*blanqueamiento*) of the population is well taken, his figure of only 65 Indians for Tobatí (6.5 percent of the population) is almost certainly misleading. What is more certain is that these individuals, together with the so-called "Españoles" and "Mestizos," actually constituted the *encomienda* class, and were counted as *Indios* or *Mitarios* in other censuses. Likewise, it is not improbable that the large number of *Pardos* listed were also involved with the *encomienda*, which would bring the number of *encomendados* more in line with censuses taken just before and after the census of 1799.

However, Maeder's record of 83 slaves and 168 pardos in Tobatí is not unbelievable. Other records show a slave population for the period exceeding ten percent of the total, (e.g. Warren 1949: 134) and Tobatí was near the so-called *pueblos de pardos libres* (towns of freed mulattos) of Emboscada, Tabapy and Areguá (Plá 1972: 123). Likewise, Plá indicates that there were a considerable number of slaves in Tobatí in 1843, although, admittedly, her figure is only the roughest of estimates. Williams' (1976: 429) figure of 165 slaves for 1846 is undoubtedly much closer to the mark. It is more in line with Maeder's figure for 1799, and is very near ten percent of the population of the town--keeping in Mind Warren's estimate for the percentage of slaves for the whole colony. The point should not be lost, though, that the town was far from ethnically homogenous, but rather, as Azara (1943: 191) suggested for the colony as a whole, Tobatí's population consisted of three "castes:" Indians, Whites or Mestizos, and Africans.

One should emphasize that Azara's use of the term *casta* is only roughly approximated by the use of the term "caste" in English. The hallmark of a caste system, as it is understood in anthropology, is strict endogamy: that is, proscription of marriage outside of the group (Harris 1975: 413; Kottak 1987: 180). This was hardly the case for ethnic groups in colonial Paraguay. It is clear how quickly and thoroughly the process of *mestisaje*, or Spanish-Indian biological mixing, was during colonial times, and Cooney (1974: 150) explains how slavery, also, became as much of a social institution as an economic one, which cleared the way for the rapid and thorough assimilation of African genes into the general Paraguayan biological

pool. Indeed, Azara follows up his own discussion of *castas* in Paraguay with an explanation of the intense mixing of the races, and the resultant common physical and intellectual types of people, while emphasizing a progressive lightening and Europeanization of the population as a whole (1943: 192-93). Therefore, as Garavaglia emphasizes, the terms associated with ethnicity were unreliable, since the conceptions of individual race and ethnicity were so unstable and fluid over the course of the history of the colony (1983: 153). The only thing that is certain, however, is that by the end of the Triple Alliance War there were virtually no ethnic distinctions based on race in the Paraguayan society at large (cf Plá 1972: 166).⁷

Williams (1976: 434) also believes that the Indian pueblos were noteworthy for their household structure. While family size in the mestizo *partidos* could be quite large, including non-family members living in the household, the opposite was generally true for the Indian villages. Small nuclear families generally prevailed in these towns, averaging about five persons. In Tobatí for 1846 the average was 6.0 persons, although the numbers of slaves owned by private citizens probably contributed to a slightly higher household size.

Economic Evolution of the Pueblo

It is obvious that the encomienda villages played a critical role in the economy of the young colony. What may not be so clear is the ambiguous nature of that role, and the true function of the villages within the global political economy of the region.

As in the hacienda economies dominant in other regions of Spain's empire in the new world, one would suspect that the *encomienda* served as the major unit of production, to satisfy the subsistence needs of the urban population as well as to provide the raw materials of trade to satisfy a nascent mercantilist class. A closer reading of the documents of the period indicates that this was true only in a limited sense, at least in the case of Tobatí and other *encomienda* villages nearer the capital.

In spite of statements protesting the inherent poverty of the town (Azara 1904: 57),⁸ Tobatí produced a variety of crops for both subsistence and commercial purposes, as well as a thriving livestock industry. The mainstays of the local agricultural economy were sugar cane and tobacco (Susnik 1965: 119-120), but an inventory of crops grown on the lands of the town administration also included appreciable quantities of corn, cotton, wheat, and beans, as well as the ubiquitous staple manioc (ANA-NE v. 597). The same source shows that a ranch and a *puesto* managed by the administration ran several hundred head of cattle and fattening calves, and horses and sheep, while the corrals of the town held 91 oxen. The question remains, then, of why the town was considered so poor in spite of its obvious capacity for production and admittedly good soils (Azara 1904: 57).

The answer to this anomaly of poverty amidst abundance is most likely explained by the fact that the most important export of the town was raw labor, in the form of its youngest and strongest men. While both cane and tobacco were labor intensive in their production requirements, the colony's main sources of income

through foreign trade were yerba, hides, and timber. These products required labor to gather and process and, above all, men to ferry them down river to the points of sale in La Plata. The *encomiendas* near Asunción were the most obvious sources of harnessed manpower for these jobs, but local production was bound to suffer as a result, from a lack of hands for the essential tasks of cultivation and harvest. Moreover, resident labor remaining in the *pueblo* was forced, under constant punishment, to work in commodity crops (sugar and tobacco) for the *encomendero*, rather than in food crops for domestic consumption (Susnik 1965: 119).

The principal problem with foreign trade was that of transport. The Paraguay River was the only avenue of trade, but for most of the year the river was too shallow and unpredictable to accommodate large sailing craft. Aguirre describes in great detail how the indigenous ships, while equipped with sail, needed to be rowed or literally towed down river from the banks for much of the journey to Buenos Aires (1949 t. 1: Ch. 4). Such an arduous journey occupied a large crew for months at a time, and was both tedious and dangerous. Furthermore, upon reaching their destination, crew members were tempted to escape into the city rather than undertake the long return trip upriver, and had to be coerced by force. Since Tobatí was especially known as a good source of rowers and sailors (Susnik 1965: 120; see also Garavaglia 1983: 175) recruitment into the merchant fleet must have constituted a great drain on physical resources. Finally, the Indians were removed from the *pueblos* to satisfy the labor requirements of public works⁹ as well as the debilitating jobs of gathering and processing of yerba in the distant

parts of the territory. These external demands for labor combined with prestation for military service should be more than sufficient reasons to explain the skewed sex ratios among the adult population, discussed above.

In one study, Juan Carlos Garavaglia interprets the movement of labor toward such "poles of attraction" as both a consequence of poverty in the villages, and as an "escape valve" for a village-based political economy unable to support a growing population (1986: 58). In such a view, there is an inevitable "expulsion" of the peasantry during times of cyclical economic stress. However, the alternate view explains the loss of labor through coercion as the *cause* of poverty, and the source of inevitable shortages of subsistence goods in the village. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain how the same pueblos could have supported much denser populations in later years without accompanying changes in technology. While there may have been real problems in marketing the kinds of goods produced in the pueblos, it is clear that the limiting factor on production, at least at the level of subsistence, was labor, and a drain on labor, in spite of considerable resistance on the part of village chiefs, was the source of great misery (Susnik 1965: 211). Indeed, this misery must have been felt in many ways, for Susnik herself calculates (1965: 120) that toward the end of the eighteenth century in Tobatí only 68 percent of the adult Indian men were married, while 23 percent of the women were widowed and 31 percent of the marriages had produced no children. These statistics are could hardly be more eloquent in signaling the kinds of abuse inherent in a system where human beings were the commodity of highest importance.

In terms of the household economy, surviving records tell little of day to day economic functions of the family during the colony. Under the terms of the *encomienda*, the Indians retained title to the lands of the *pueblo*, and were expected to work those lands when free from the *mita* for their own subsistence. Since the onus of the *mita*, or required servile labor quotient, fell upon the adult men, and since the adult men were in constant shortage, it is safe to assume that the burden of family subsistence fell upon the women and children of the *pueblo*. As in many cases of female and child labor, the fact that this component of the economy went underreported is most likely due to the fact that it was largely non-taxable or otherwise difficult to appropriate, or that it did not necessarily circulate within the market economy (see Nash 1985).

That women were responsible for the greatest share of subsistence farming (principally cultivation of manioc, corn and beans, and care of domestic animals) is abundantly supported by what is known about the role of captured Guaraní women during the initial settlement of the colony as well as a host of ethnographic reports from similar peasant-based economies throughout Latin America and the world (Aguiar 1985). However, the women were also expected to maintain a large component of the industrial base of the economy, which consisted of cultivating and spinning cotton. A major share of the cultivated crops in all of the *pueblos*, including Tobatí, was in cotton. *Lienzo*, or cotton cloth was produced at the household level, and was of highest value in early Paraguay. Lengths of the cloth were distributed yearly throughout the village as a form of "payment," and bolts of cloth, along with metal artifacts such as

fishhooks and blades, were commonly used as currency all through the colonial period (Garavaglia 1978: 18). All women in the Indian towns were expected to spin, and the quality of the finished cloth was reputed to be as fine as any in the colonies (Aguirre 1951 t.3: 125-6).

There are no known records for the history of ceramics in Tobatí (but see Azara 1943a: 20), but given the scarcity of metalware, the need for pottery utensils, the abundance of raw material (clays), and the Indian ancestry of the population, it would be most remarkable if pottery were not common in the repertory of goods produced in the village. Most of the villages, after all, were fairly self-sufficient in terms of the production of basic goods other than foodstuffs. Among the villagers, there were bound to be people skilled in the basic arts of construction, carpentry, and leatherwork, and most likely wagon making and metalwork, as well. Skills in herbal curing were shared by men and women alike, and are still very much in practice today.

Thus, the pueblos were expected not only to be self-sufficient, but to provide for the subsistence needs of the larger colony as well, along with surplus production for trade. However, the most important function of the pueblo was to maintain and provide for the reproduction of a reserve labor force which could be tapped at will to satisfy the interests of an urban-based trading class. Such a system might have been a great deal more successful than it was, were it not for the isolation of the colony, its sparse population, its wealth of resources, and its lack of an ethnically distinct bourgeois class. As it was, the system grew progressively weaker by generations, and a

basic change in the social relationships of labor was inevitable. The reasons for this explain the demise of the *encomienda* system itself.

The Problem of Labor

The change from an economy based on prebendary labor to one supported by a rural peasantry began long before the nineteenth century. By that time, though, the transition was all but complete and it became increasingly clear that the rules governing the administrative and social management of the *pueblos* were archaic.

It bears repeating at this point that one of the most salient features of colonial Paraguay was the porosity of the society. Specifically, the country never did have racially or ethnically distinct populations which were endogamous and stable. While it is true that the descendents of the first conquistadors intermarried and served as a peninsular, or "Spanish" population, the social distinctions of such a caste were difficult to maintain. As a class, the urban elite of Asunción was miniscule in numbers and was not appreciably strengthened through recruitment from the outside. As a result, any instances of unions outside the group were significant. Just as important, the small economy did not permit the amassing of great wealth, and there was little of distinction to spend money on in any case. Still, an elite mestizo population might have predominated as it did in other Latin American countries had such a class adopted social "markers" to clearly distinguish itself from the population at large. In other societies, such markers are most commonly language, forms of dress, access to privileged institutions (schools, churches, military units, etc.), and distinct manners and customs. None of these things

were likely in early Paraguay given the isolation and low population density of the region and the historical circumstances of settlement.

After 1556, an attempt was made to isolate the pure Indian population in the *pueblos de Indios*, and thus maintain the biological and social distinctions required for a subservient labor force. However, the possibility of truly isolating a subservient Indian population was probably sacrificed within the first generations of the colony, during which time there was an explosion of mestizo births. For similar reasons, a black population of slave descent failed to cohere as a class. Their numbers were always few, and close social proximity with the mestizo population encouraged mixed unions, easy manumission and the consequent blurring of racial and ethnic lines. Also, the lack of a plantation-based industry discouraged the physical isolation and social regimentation of the blacks as a labor force as it did in other New World societies. In short, all the "rules" were in place to regulate a class-based society with strict divisions of labor, but the rules did not correspond with the infrastructural realities of the colony. Clearly, a growing mercantilist economy could thrive only if a reliable source of labor were guaranteed under a different set of rules.

In summary, the situation toward the end of the eighteenth century was thus: There was a large labor force in the countryside theoretically "bound" by the *encomienda* system. The contradiction in the system was that the *legally available* labor source was diminished with each succeeding generation, under conditions of super-exploitation. As that sector of the population lessened, it was increasingly necessary to demand more of each available worker,

which further fueled the cycle of self-destruction. One of the principal reasons that this labor force was diminished was that increasing numbers of the *encomienda* population became unavailable for service. First, the absolute numbers of Indians exempted from the *mita* (village authorities and their eldest sons, the older men, and fugitives) may have stayed the same, but over time consisted of a greater proportion of the total Indian population. This was because the total Indian population shrank as increasing numbers of offspring were recognized as *mestizo*. At the same time, that sector of the technically non-Indian population was still a part of the *pueblo*, and the total population of the *pueblos* (with *mestizos*) increased with time. The net result of this process was that the *pueblos* grew larger while their contribution in terms of labor diminished. The final irony was that the natural resources of the country were so abundant that this rural population could be sustained without undue sacrifice. Therefore, in the absence of mechanisms to enforce social distinctions, individuals were relatively unrestrained from seeking ways to change their social standing which, in the case of Paraguay, was relatively easily done by "passing," or moving from the categories of "Indian" to "mestizo" to "free mestizo."

Pueblo Libre: The Process of Emancipation, 1803-1848

The challenge, then was to regain control over the total rural population encompassed within the structure of the *pueblos*. By 1785, the population of the *pueblos de Indios*, together with the former Jesuit *reducciones*, totalled 27,970 persons, which

represented over one fourth of the total population of the country (Kostianovski 1970: 215).¹⁰

The inherent untapped wealth of this sector of the population lay not only in its largely unexploited labor power, but also in the possibilities for direct revenues in the form of taxes (annual "tributes"). Azara, ever the watchful bureaucrat, wrote to the King in 1806 that the Indian pueblos had had the most "singular and extraordinary government" ever seen, in which private property was proscribed and, therefore, "no one can secure the least advantage nor utility from their talent, industry, ability and virtues, nor of their physical faculties" (Azara 1943b: 245). Not only was such a system oppressive to the Indians, observed Azara, but "Your Majesty never receives, nor has ever received, a single *peso* as the just rights owed the sovereign, as well as in return for the protection which they are granted." The only solution, according to the official, was to grant each person

the full liberty to work, acquire, possess, enjoy and sell: to be self-directing that in the future they can pay their *alcabalas*, royal duties, tithes, primacies and parrochial duties for the subsistence of the priests and maintenances of the church and their worship, and that they govern themselves by the same laws and customs as the rural hispanics (*ibid.*, p. 256).

Clearly, if ironically, the most efficient way of gaining control over that population under the jurisdiction of the pueblos was by "freeing" them. This was accomplished in a series of steps.

In 1802 the Crown assumed control of all *encomiendas* vacated through the death or absence of the *encomendero*, and prohibited the creation of new *encomiendas*.¹¹ While such an edict actually had

been issued twice before, in 1696 and 1720, the law had never been followed by the government, much less the encomenderos themselves (Saeger 1981: 68). On this occasion, however, the population of Tobatí was "freed from hard personal service" along with the townspeople of Atyrá, Itá, Altos, Ypané, Yaguarón, Yuty, Caazapá, and Itapé (Pastore 1972: 58).

The following year, in 1803, the *encomienda* was effectively abolished through a *cedula* of the Spanish Crown which reiterated the order that all Indian populations be incorporated to the Crown, whether *encomiendas* be vacant or not. In Paraguay, this edict was met with the great opposition of no one, since the institution had been in a state of decay for at least a century beforehand, and a series of lesser laws dating from the 1770s had dealt a virtual death blow to the system.¹²

With the effective downfall of the *encomienda*, the situation of the Indians appeared to be altered only to the extent that their labor--and tribute--now accrued to the treasury instead of to the *encomenderos* (Saeger 1981: 82). Still, the interests of the elites probably coincided with the government in that the exempted Indians and the mestizo population of the villages could not now appeal to the full *amparo* ("shelter") of the *pueblo* structure, which had earlier offered traditional forms of support. And it was surely no historical accident that the period of the abolition of the *encomiendas* coincided with the new "*papeleta de conchavo*," or vagrancy laws (Garavaglia 1986: 63), which effectively outlawed "poverty, laziness and other suspicious motives."

Garavaglia (1986) views these laws as an indirect consequence of frontier expansion and fewer hostile acts by unreduced Indians since, because of these developments, there was a great abundance of cattle. To the alarm of the landowning class, it appeared that ". . . the majority of the inhabitants owe their means of livelihood more to the cheap price of beef and the ease of living almost without work" (Garavaglia 1986: 63, citing Azara). As Garavaglia points out, the idea of living without working is "obviously a myth, but it was certain that one could live without being obliged to offer [in the market] their labor, which is not the same thing"

Obviously in such a situation it became increasingly difficult to control the factors of production. It was a scandal that the "free" population could enjoy "excessive freedom," so this apparent anomaly was remedied at least in part by the vagrancy laws. And, as a new population was released into the working class, not only would wages drop, but labor could be budgeted as a variable rather than fixed cost under a free market regime. Employers could dispense with the administration of the *encomienda* during periods of low activity and insist on the enforcement of labor laws during periods of need (see de Janvry 1981: 214).

The position of the merchant and landowning classes thus would seem to have been assured in nineteenth century Paraguay, as it had been in neighboring Argentina during the period. Unlike Argentina, however, the independence movement which followed soon after had enormous consequences for the elite populations of Asunción and, for a time anyway, made problems of labor allocation the least of their worries.

Chapter Three showed the policies of Francia regarding the traditional elites of the capital, and illustrated his ambitious moves to "socialize" the economy and society, which resulted in the formation of a virtual merchant state. The Indian pueblos were relatively unaffected by Francia's edicts which nationalized a great part of the country's land area and organized the *campesino* population as tenants of the state or residents of the many *estancias de patria* (Pastore 1972: 104). The principal consequence for those villages concerned marketing practices. But the fact that they were required to market only through the state, constituted no comparative disadvantage, since that was true for all sectors of the society. Also, exports (and consequent production) were curtailed during the *franciata*, and the focus was primarily on subsistence--probably not as much of a hardship on a town like Tobatí where administrators and encomenderos always had appropriated surplus production, precluding the formation of an indigenous marketing structure.

There was steady growth of the town during the years of Francia's government, but Williams' population figures for 1846 (Appendix C) showed little effects of a supposed flight from the capital during the *franciata* to escape from the watchful eye of the dictator (Pastore 1972: 105). Otherwise, the administration of the town was unchanged, and there is no indication that the events of daily life in Tobatí varied from the unremarkable pace of earlier years.

After the death of Francia, the elder López continued the policy of state control of lands, but he was even more ambitious than the dictator. Carlos Antonio López continued to amass lands during the

early 1840s, and in 1848 he "freed" the Indians with a decree "that has usually been interpreted in light of its impressive 'liberal' rhetoric . . . A lovely sentiment, followed by more sinister articles" (Williams 1979: 132). At the same time that the Indians of the 21 pueblos were declared citizens of the Republic, almost all the patrimony of the pueblos and lands of the cabildos passed to the state, and the communal administrative structures were suppressed. The Indians thus discovered the "value" of their new status as citizens (Pastore 1972: 132).

For the first time, the Indians were required to pay rents on the land they cultivated, as well as taxes on agricultural and pastoral production. Individuals "theoretically" were ceded private ownership of parcels of land measuring two by six *cuerdas*, or about six hectares (Susnik 1965: 172), along with some animals, but the government absorbed by far the greatest part of the wealth of the towns.¹³ Perhaps most importantly, the pueblos lost their segregated status which had previously made them the "last demographic nuclei that had been somewhat independent" (Williams 1979: 133). There would certainly be no further justification in thinking of the Indians as "free riders" in the larger society.

This was effectively the end of a process that began with the abolition of the *encomiendas* in 1803. During the years of the colony, the residents of the pueblos had been protected from the vagaries of a free labor market system. It is true that the *mitarios* were required to labor--often under extremely harsh conditions--for both *encomendero* and government alike, but there were strict limits as far as to whom they owed their labor. Also, a great many members

of the community were legally exempted from service, and periods of service were, at least theoretically, limited by law even though the communities suffered from the frequent absence of the strongest sector of the population. Finally, the lands of the community were protected by communal ownership which precluded the outside acquisition of their real property. The new vision of the progressives in the government was commercial liberty and the liberty of the Indian as an individual, rather than as part of the collective (Pastore 172: 70). With the end of the *encomienda* in 1803, the stage was set for the conversion of the population into a free labor force.

This consequence was forestalled by the revolution of the Francia regime following independence. For over forty years, the *pueblos* were independent and somewhat protected by an indigenous administrative structure, even though some of the old *encomenderos* continued to exploit illegally their former charges. However, the status quo was irrevocably altered by López' decree of 1848. The Indians gained their citizenship, but at the immediate cost of the greatest share of their material patrimony. Of most importance in the longer run, they became free principally to sell their labor--and the remnants of their land--to any individual at any time, for a price that was determined by factors totally beyond the community and their own understanding. This is most emphatically not to suggest that the population immediately became participants in a capitalist regime (which hardly existed in the country), but as part of a growing peasant labor force they were now at the beck of a larger economic structure which would only benefit from an optimum free labor force.

There is no doubt that 1848 was a watershed year for the pueblos, because their *de jure* status as a "somewhat independent demographic nuclei" had finally been destroyed. However, too much has probably been made of this event by cultural historians, who make the logical--if faulty--assumption that the destruction of the legal status of the Indian pueblos (with the resultant loss of their political economic integrity) must have coincided with the cultural transformation of the people from "Indians" to mestizos (e.g. Gómez-Perasso 1976; Reber 1988: 291; Turner 1992). Gomez Perasso, for example, dates the loss of Indian surnames to a supposed ancillary decree in 1848 which ordered the acceptance of hispanic surnames by pueblo residents. There is a tacit assumption that loss of surnames was proxy for the concomitant loss of a host of other self-defining cultural traits.

It seems more clear that this evolutionary process was begun at a much earlier date in the colony's history and was probably largely *fait accompli* by the middle of the nineteenth century (Garavaglia 1983: 211). Even the abandonment of Guaraní surnames was common by the middle of the eighteenth century (Garavaglia 1983: 209-210), and no doubt this name-changing process accelerated as it became increasingly advantageous to pass as mestizo (or perhaps "non-Indian") to escape the obligations of forced labor and to raise freed children.

Even more illuminating is the fact that by 1784 the cacigazgo in Tobatí was moribund. The institution had been deteriorating for some time, but in 1694 there were still five principal chiefs among eight encomiendas. Within a century, however, the only chiefdom

left in the town was headed by a woman (an extremely rare occurrence), Doña Francisca Mbayurí, who served in place of a fugitive husband and an underaged grandson (Susnik 1965: 120). In short, ethnic allegiance and racial categories were rapidly abandoned for general self-identification as "Paraguayans" and the edict of 1848 merely took advantage of this fact to assure that all sectors of the population were incorporated into the same general political-economic sphere.¹⁴

In fact, it is likely that after 1848, factors of racial identification became almost economically irrelevant. Exempted mitarios lost any advantage that identification as Indians may have given them through association with the pueblos. Likewise, there was no great incentive for young males to "pass" as non-Indian, since the value of their labor was no longer contingent upon their social status. The Indians who had not already changed their names by this time probably felt no great immediate need to do so. In any case, most lingering pockets of "Indianness," as well as the question of Indian surnames, were finally dealt a real death blow, for the great war which was already brewing had farther reaching effects than any laws or edicts could hope for. These and related issues will be explored in more depth in Chapter Seven.

Destruction and Regeneration

After nearly fifty years of rule by an eccentric visionary and his pragmatic successor, Paraguay was certainly a country like no other. While historians point to instances of lingering slavery and bonded peonage as evidence that the society was not perfectly egalitarian nor unstratified, it must be admitted that, by the 1850s,

Paraguayan society was remarkably homogenous and free of class-based distinctions. There was a landed oligarchy, to be sure, but it consisted almost wholly of the López clan: the dictator and his immediate family. However, even the family's avarice virtually precluded the formation of a landed aristocracy in the country (Williams 1979: 133).

Otherwise, racial and ethnic distinctions--even considering the black population--were rapidly disappearing with the lack of economic and social differentiation between peoples. The Guaraní language was nearly universal and knowledge of Spanish was basically a nicety, as was religious practice. Every person was of equal account to the State, private ownership of property, although it existed, was certainly not vaunted, and there was no need for anyone to concern themselves with questions of government. Poverty, if that term would mean "lack of material wealth," was virtually universal but, on the other hand, there were no traces of what one social historian terms "illth," or excessive socio-economic malaise (Worsley 1984: 178). During the López administration, schools, which formerly had been run in Tobatí by the lay administrator, reopened, and education was recognized as a tool in fomenting Paraguayan nationalism (Williams 1979: 125). Crime, contrary to what some have implied, was not unknown, but in general life in the country was as Paraguayans like it: *tranquilo*. In fact, there is little evidence that life was especially difficult for any sector of the population as long as the basic rules were kept: curb personal ambition, pay modest rents to the government, and forget about political matters.¹⁵

It is little wonder that Carlos Antonio López, as virtually a one-man government, was able to keep all his ducks in such a nice row. Paraguay was quite rich in terms of production per capita, self-sufficient in all its immediate needs, and to the extent that it was geographically and physically isolated, it was dependent on no other outside government or force. Any printed media was tightly controlled by López himself, and dissidence was simply not tolerated. Exports increased almost exponentially, and López was able to pay cash on the barrelhead for a large modernly equipped army and the trappings of metropolitan life for Asunción. One historian, who describes the 1850s in Paraguay as a "golden age," explains that

Never before or after were Paraguayans so unified, internally pacific, and externally self-assured. The Indian menace had greatly abated, the Argentine danger had all but disappeared, and although problems with Brazil still lingered, the modernization and militarization of Paraguay served to offset that ancestral anxiety (Williams 1979: 170).

The War in the Cordillera

Tragically, as already described in Chapter Three, the War of the Triple Alliance came hard on the heels of this "golden age." Surely rural Tobateños had no inkling of the significance of the younger López' ambitions and sabre rattling, and may have heard no more than rumors of the country's escalating involvement in the political and military affairs of the Platine basin. Much less did the Tobateños suspect the incredible toll the eventual war would have on their town and region.

After war finally did break out in 1864, Tobatí, along with every other village and hamlet in the country, mobilized all of its men and resources for the coming effort. After initial successes were followed by horrendous defeats, the Tobateños were asked to sacrifice even more, for "the core of the Paraguayan army was gone . . . and recruiters scoured the pueblos in preparation for an invasion of the homeland" (Williams 1979: 209). In 1866 all of the remaining slaves and libertos were taken, and by 1867 López was arming the wounded in hospitals and had issued an order taking all boys, "granting no exceptions," between the ages of twelve and fifteen (Williams 1979: 216). Any scraps that the people had not already given by this time were eventually plundered when the allies finally did advance during 1868 and take Asunción on January 5, 1869.

As López and the tattered remnants of his army fled toward the north, the allies were in close pursuit. The Paraguayan army fled through Caacupé and the allies followed in two columns. One column advanced directly through Atyrá and Tobatí, and was met east of the town by another column which had swept through close to the south (Warren 1978: 23). During the months of July and August, the Cordillera was the scene of some of the worst horrors of the war. While Tobatí was not the scene of any actual battles, marauding groups of both Paraguayan and Brazilian soldiers raided and plundered through Tobatí, and the allies stripped the villages and churches of all vestiges of wealth. When the allies reached Caacupé, they found six hundred sick and wounded in a hospital, along with the stench of their unburied corpses. When the two columns joined in Campo Grande (better known as Acosta Ñú, or Ñú Guazú), a few

kilometers to the east of Tobatí, they wiped out a remnant Paraguayan retroguard of two thousand boys disguised with false beards, in one of the most famous battles of the war (Warren 1978: 25).

The final months of 1869 could only have been pure terror for the remaining people in Tobatí. However, the time that followed was probably only little better, for the town was an easy mark for plundering groups of allied--mostly Brazilian--soldiers, and most likely of desperate bands of Paraguayans, as well. As discussed in Chapter Three, there were also a series of misfortunes during the aftermath of the war, including outbreaks of epidemic disease and generalized crop failures, even had there been hands enough to cultivate and harvest a decent crop. Appendix C gives some idea of the initially rapid decline in population of the town, even though these figures are probably conservative. Indeed, marriage data taken from historical records in the Casa Parroquial in Tobatí in 1989 strongly suggest that the Tobateños lost up to ninety percent of their men and as many as twenty percent of their women during the war and its immediate aftermath.

While there is abundant documentation concerning the allied occupation and provisional government of Paraguay in the capital up until mid-1876, there is little mention of the activity of the allied armies in the surrounding countryside. It is likely, for example, that there were caretaker governments under the watchful eye of the allies in all of the rural towns, including Tobatí (see Warren 1978: 158), and no doubt the towns themselves were expected to provide for the sustenance of the caretaker officials, any occupying troops,

and ancillary bands of soldiers who may have periodically swept through the countryside.

Foreign visitors in the country soon after the war were shocked at the scale of destruction and misery, and all remarked on the rarity of adult men. A British visitor, for example, made a circuitous tour of the countryside in 1874 and published a report for the *Geographical Magazine* of London. While the reporter did not pass through Tobatí, he no doubt would have encountered a similar scene to what he saw in the rest of the country. Even though steps had been taken by this time to deal with the ruinous state of the country, the author paints a series of eerie descriptions of village after village of empty houses, and almost depopulated by men. Even upon approaching the relatively densely populated capital upon return, he remarks only on the "lines of women" along the sides of the roads on their way to or from the market (Keith Johnson, cited in Herken Krauer 1984: Anexo I).

Not surprisingly, the occupying troops behaved much as an occupying army traditionally does--they took what they wanted and they spread their genes. While understandably no accurate records were kept, there are many references to unions between Paraguayan women and foreign soldiers (cf. Warren 1978: 157). In many cases, Paraguayan women may have accepted foreign soldiers as a matter of protection, given the general lawlessness of the country and the disappearance of their own families. Also, the soldiers could secure the best housing and food supplies, which were immediate concerns to women with small children. There is no point in speculating on the possible effects of such unions on Tobatí society, but it is certain

that the occupation left some impact on the town and region in the form of an added African-American genetic contribution to the population, given the predominance of blacks in the occupying Brazilian army. As before, there is no evidence of stigma attached to the offspring of such unions. Many of the women accompanied their soldier-concubines when they left the country, but those who stayed behind raised their children as Paraguayans, and they rapidly merged with the rest of the population.

Reconstruction and the Consolidation of the Peasantry

In 1825, during the Francia administration, the dictator abolished all the old Spanish land grants and required all land holders to present legitimate titles to their lands (White 1978: 110). This did not lead necessarily to outright expropriation of lands (with notable exceptions) but it did place proof of ownership on deposit with the government. Later, many of these landowning families simply disappeared during the war. Also, in 1848, the elder López "liberated" the Indians and appropriated the lands of the pueblo to the state. Many of the original inhabitants who had then received small grants of land met the same fate during the war, and their surviving widows and orphans had no means to retain those lands.

The result was that after the war, there was virtually no titled land in Tobatí nor in the vicinity. This is not to say that there were no claims on much of the land, and no doubt those who had a modicum of influence were, over time, able to legitimate those claims. For a time, however, any claims were tenuous at best, and

almost none of the remaining peasant population had security of tenure.

In post-war Tobatí, as in most of the rural towns of the country, this was not particularly an immediate problem. Indeed, the challenge of the government was to get as much of the land into production as possible, regardless of the niceties of ownership. Also, given the greatly diminished population and the lack of means for large scale cultivation, there was no shortage of land to induce much competition. The real fight for land, as explained in Chapter Three, was among the new class of ranchers and yerba extractionists who required huge extensions of land in other, largely unsettled, parts of the country. Also, the large number of foreigners who followed the victorious armies into the country were not interested in farming as a means to fortune, but in business and trade.

The Paraguayan peasants made the most logical use of this situation by relying on the inherent advantages of swidden cultivation and frequent abandonment of old fields for new. Soil fertility was maintained and weeds and insect plagues were more effectively held in check. The corollary of this system, in Tobatí more so than in many areas, was a highly mobile rural population. This was because the district consists of relatively vast humid grasslands--basically unsuitable for non-plow cultivation--interspersed with "islands" of fertile, wooded areas which are also more elevated and drained.

Thus, a dual economy evolved. On the one hand, ambitious immigrants secured control of the rich grasslands where title to the land held an advantage. Ranching was one of the most extensive--

yet profitable--enterprises, but required very large holdings and larger initial capital investments. On the other hand, the vast majority of the rural population consisted of swidden agriculturalists. This form of more intensive land use could support a much larger population but required little or no initial inputs other than labor. As long as population densities remained low, there was freedom of movement and land title became essentially irrelevant.

A caveat is surely in order here. This should by no means imply that in Paraguay a peasant population existed in harmony with a landed oligarchy. Land title could be critical in areas where mobility was not an option or access to cultivable lands was restricted for any other reason. Also, with the entry of a mass of peasant farmers into the market economy because of a sudden rise in the price of cotton during the 1920s, cultivable land increased in value and title took on an added importance (Flecha 1988: 184). Finally, to the extent that any cash was necessary to secure off-farm necessities, the peasant surrendered surplus production as a form of rent to a dominant class (Wolf 1966: 9).

But, given the conditions which prevailed in the area of Tobatí, in terms of population, technology and environment, this system was stable and could function without difficulty. There was no real competition for land between the ranchers and farmers. The labor requirements of even large-scale ranching were also modest and easily satisfied without drawing from a pool of labor outside of the ranching community. The peasant regime required no significant labor inputs other than family labor. Moreover, the ranchers tended to be urban in their social orientation, while the agriculturalists

remained shy of the urban milieu. A true peasant economy prevailed in Tobatí, based on subsistence farming and participation on a modest scale in a localized market economy (see Wolf 1966: 2-4). This economy supported a modest commercial class and administrative structure in the town center, with comparatively tenuous links to a world more distant than the capital city.

This very briefly describes the Tobatí that the Services encountered when they arrived in 1948 (Service and Service 1954: 49-51), although they took the admittedly pessimistic view that the economy and society were stagnant, rather than stable. While these ethnographers found little reason to hope for change, they did not anticipate the effects that changing circumstances at a basic level might have (*Ibid.* : 296-298). The history of Tobatí since that time can be described from many perspectives, but it is fundamentally a story of demographic and technological changes which had profound effects on the economic and social foundations of the community, and the way that Tobateños were to view and interact with the world at large.

Notes

- 1 Susnik states in the text that there were 212 *párvulos* in 1694, but in the accompanying table, the figures clearly add up to 214.
- 2 Susnik 1965: 58.
- 3 Fogel (n.d.: 8) refers to this arrangement as a transitory, or "linealogical" mode of production, since it depended on traditional tribal lineages to maintain cohesion in the labor force and provide for the self-sustenance and reproduction of labor. However, this arrangement was self-contradictory, since the maintenance of traditional forms of social organization facilitated active resistance to

Spanish domination, leading to the eventual demise of the new mode of production.

4 The "reduction" of the Indians was probably facilitated by the weakened social structure of the indigenous groups as a result of Spanish raids for "wives," which deprived resident groups of Indians of much of their female complement. An immediate result of this policy was the "disintegration of the biological and economic potential" of the groups (Susnik 1965: 14)

5 One researcher, for example, documents how in 1599, one Alonso, the principal cacique of Tobatí, was also elevated to the rank of corregidor of the pueblo (Necker 1990: 90 fn.)

6 Susnik divides *párvulos* (young children) into categories of h (*hombres*, or males), m (*mujeres*, or females) and hf (*huérfanos*, or orphans). Orphans are not distinguished by sex, nor is it clear whether they are also included in the numbers of children by sex. Therefore, calculations are based only on the numbers in the h and m columns, and totals do not include entries from the hf column.

7 The exceptions, of course, were the small numbers of still unreduced Indians which mainly populated the Chaco, or were otherwise marginalized from Paraguayan society in tiny enclaves in the eastern forests.

8 The letters of the lay administrator of Tobatí in the late eighteenth century, one Francisco José de Garza y Palacio, constitute a litany of complaints against the pueblo, mostly centered around the town's poverty and the moral faults of the Indians (usually concerning their methods of avoiding work). It is in these same letters, however, that are found the most meticulous inventories showing the town's abundance in crops and animals (ANE-NE v. 597).

9 Men were routinely sent to the city for public works and other tasks. A manuscript in the National Archive from 1790, for example, shows "to the Royal Hospital are contributed four peons from the month of May ...," and "To Don Fermin Aredondo are contributed four peons" (ANA: NE 597).

10 According to the same source (p. 216) the population of Paraguay in 1796 was 97,480 persons.

11 Under existing laws, the encomienda could be inherited "for two lives," which is to say it could theoretically exist as the patrimony of a family for two generations. However, liberal interpretations of the law allowed powerful families to maintain the encomiendas, or gain control of new ones vacated by other families.

12 Saeger (1981) tries to make a case for great opposition to these laws by the encomendero class, but aside from a series of spirited protests there is little record of real action. Saeger also notes that upon independence in 1811, there was no move to revive the encomienda system, even though the governing members of the new republic were, almost without exception, members of the old encomienda elite.

13 The President, incidentally, appropriated much of this new land to the private benefit of his large family. Pastore (1972: 132) lists the ranches and lands that passed from the State to the old man's sons and son-in-law.

14 Turner (1992) presents a cogent argument that even changes in surnames should not be explained as a hispanicization of the indigenous population as much as a self-conscious "paraguayization" of the peasant sector.

15 Crimes were not even punished that harshly, and "the death penalty was reserved almost entirely for those guilty of political offenses and subversion" (Williams 1979: 127).

CHAPTER 5
BRICK BY BRICK :
FROM PEASANT VILLAGE TO TOWN

Driving toward the basilica town of Caacupé from the capital on a sweltering summer day, one might feel a sense of coolness as the public bus, or *micro*, ascends the flank of the Cordillera Central. From the winding road there is a distant view of Lake Ypacaraí, set like a blue mirror in the broad grassy plains surrounding the metropolitan area of Asunción. The feeling of altitude is little more than an illusion, though, for after about fifteen minutes the creaking and overloaded bus resumes speed at the summit of the modest massif.

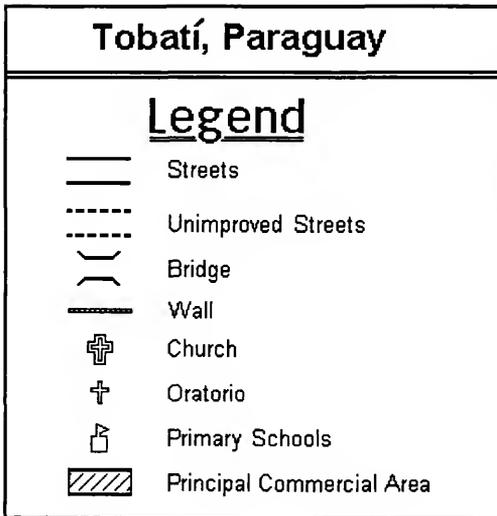
A gain in altitude brings no relief from the heat, for Paraguay's central mountains lie barely more than 150 meters above the river plain. Still, there is some topographical interest in the landscape, in contrast to the utter green flatness--from the air, not unlike a billiard table--which characterizes so much of the country. Caacupé, a charming little city only 54 kilometers from the capital, is dominated by the improbable white immensity of the basilica of the Virgin of Caacupé, patroness of all Paraguayans who flock there every December to venerate the holy figure.

The Tobateña, as the *micro* is known, turns left at the shrine and leaves the asphalt on the last bumpy leg of the trip into Tobatí. The ride is only eighteen more kilometers, but on the uneven cobbled road it takes almost as long as the trip from Asunción to Caacupé. From this road, one first gets the definite sensation of being in the "real" Paraguay, far from

the monotonous concrete modernity that cloaks most Latin American capitals. As usual, the end of the asphalt is like a portal to a change in time to a different part of the world.

There is little of note on the road into Tobatí. Instead of automobiles, there are oxcarts in the trim yards of the colorful brick houses which are spaced at distances along the road. Many are surrounded by small *chacras*--planted fields of maize, beans, cotton, or manioc--but in general, the terrain is mostly grassy pastureland studded with *cocos*, or Paraguayan cocoanut trees. The micro stops intermittently to pick up or drop off its Guaraní-speaking passengers and their baskets and boxes of cargo, then races ahead to make up for lost time. At times, groups of chattering schoolchildren, freshly scrubbed and neatly uniformed, trouble the driver for a free lift. After a while some low-lying hills in the distance begin to merge on both sides of the road. Eventually, there is a half-kilometer-wide bottleneck where the wooded hills become impressive and richly colored rock faces rising abruptly from the green flood plain of an *arroyo*, or riverlet.

After a grassy park-like space by the side of the road, where a trickle of water emerges from the treetops and fronds high above to splash into a crystal clear pool, the road makes a final turn into the *pueblo*. A billboard advertising Coca Cola proclaims "Bienvenidos a Tobatí" and the dusty road, more recently cobbled with rough-hewn, sharp-edged stones, leads straight through the town for another dozen city blocks. Other than a gas station and a few shadeless brick houses set back from the street, there is at first only a series of brick and tile factories--*cerámicas*--sprawling over the treeless sherd-layered earth.



Major Buildings and Places

- 1) Colegio Capitan Pedro Juan Caballero
- 2) Colegio Domingo Martínez de Irala
- 3) Municipal Building
- 4) Colorado Party Headquarters
- 5) Comisaría (Police)
- 6) Bus Terminal
- 7) Municipal Market
- 8) Justice of the Peace
- 9) Health Center
- 10) Water Tank
- 11) Telephone Office
- 12) Cemetery
- 13) Race Track

Fútbol (Soccer and Social) Clubs

- a) Pedro Juan Caballero
- b) Juventud
- c) 15 de Mayo
- d) Porvenir

Figure 5.1 Legend: Map of Tobatí.

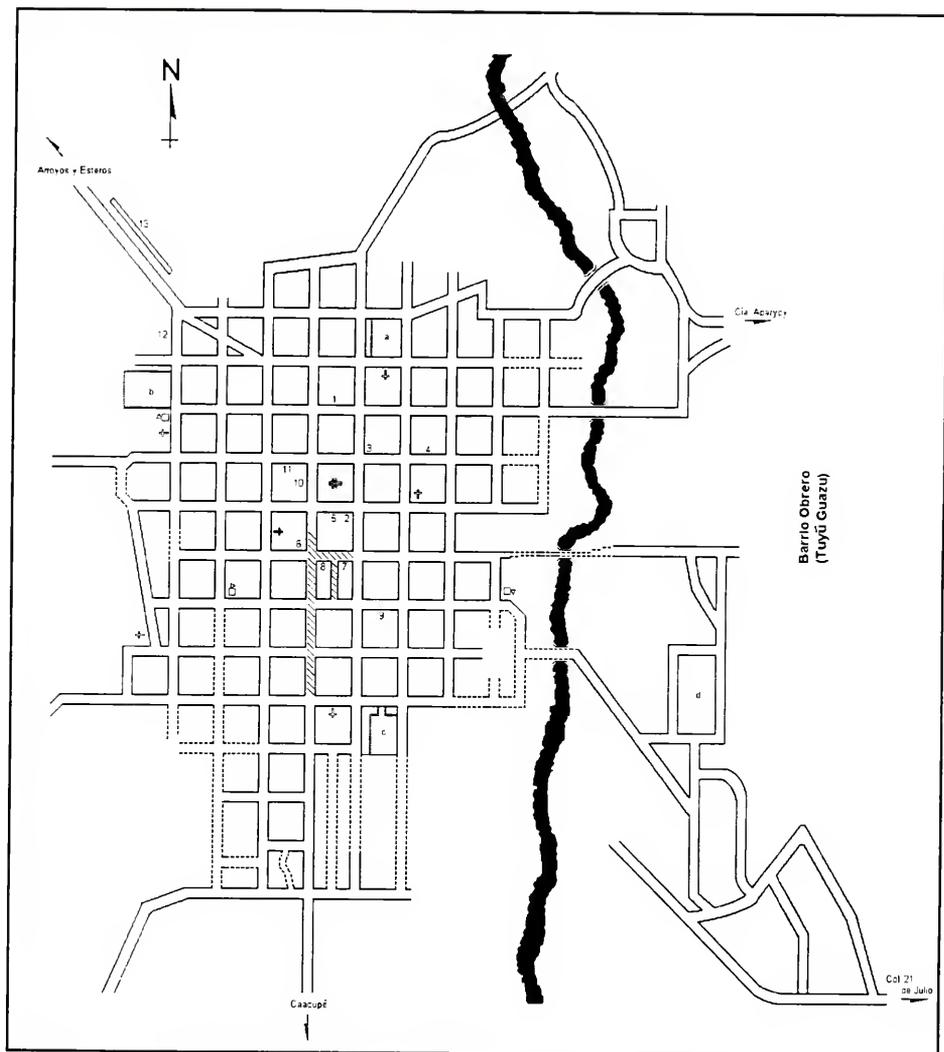


Figure 5.2 Map of Urban Tobatí, 1989

The Changing Town and Country

Passing the factories, the town takes on a more welcoming aspect. The street is lined on both sides with ornamental trees and broad, attractive sidewalks, paved with square red and orange-streaked ceramic tiles. Stuccoed houses and shops are closely spaced along the avenue, most adjoining the sidewalks. At midday, the town would seem to be abandoned, but in the mornings and afternoons all the doors and windows of the houses and stores are thrown open as the people go about the business of the day. Men on horseback pass groaning oxcarts, but both yield to the occasional cars and trucks, and the micros that depart and arrive on the hour. Barefoot women pad along with their loads, or *bultos*, balanced on their heads, and knots of uniformed children pass by on their way to or from their classes. Generally, there is an air of industrious purpose in the day's activity, as expected in a town which, in 1990, was home to nearly 9,000 residents--respectably sized for Paraguay--and provided a full gamut of governmental, commercial, and civic services.

Situated on elevated, flat terrain apart from the arroyo that bears the town's name (the Tobatiry), there were no physical obstacles to the orderly layout of streets and avenues of the original town. Typical of the rational town plans of the early Spaniards, Tobatí is laid out on a regular grid of square city blocks, with the church and plaza at the town's center. While the commercial center of the town has shifted somewhat away, the church, with its massive twin towers and surrounding grassy plaza, is still the focal point of the pueblo.

Paraguayan churches are unique in their architecture. Located square in the center of the plaza rather than facing it, they feature a central nave with the broad side aisles shifted to the exterior, forming two long

galleries. The bell tower, or *campanario*, is traditionally a separate structure located at the front and side of the building. The Tobateños "modernized" their church during the 1940s, adding the blockish façade and joining the bell towers to the front. Behind that front, however, the church is still typically Paraguayan with its stolid pillars and ancient crossbeams, and an elaborately carved eighteenth-century, native-baroquish altar and retablo of prized native hardwoods.

Normally in Spanish towns, the wealthiest citizens lived on lots facing the church plaza, and often built opulent homes. In colonial Paraguay, however there was little opulence to go around in rural areas. Still, the oldest surviving structures in the town immediately face the church, or lie just off the plaza, and are still occupied by some of the town's most venerable families. Only three or four of these old houses still maintain any elements associated with Paraguayan colonial architecture, but several, behind brick and stucco facades, are formed around a solid adobe core of undetermined age. There is a feeling of longevity and quiet, civic-minded prosperity about the town center.

The town is fairly densely settled around the center, with houses evenly spaced on the streets radiating outward from the church. Unlike many Spanish towns, however, buildings rarely abut each other, and most houses are surrounded by a neatly trimmed yard, or *patio*, lush with ornamental plants and popular fruits. Small lawns are an innovation of the modern folk, for the patio is usually packed dirt, immaculately cleaned and swept daily. The older houses are built directly upon the sidewalk while more recent structures are set off the street with a small yard in front. Most of these newer buildings are of the "modern," or *chalet* style, with a peaked roof and a large window emphasizing a central "living room." All

but the very oldest houses are brick, covered with a plaster stucco (*revoque*), and whitewashed in white or faded hues of pastel green, blue, yellow, or pink. Thatch is no longer used in Totatí, as all houses are roofed in Spanish tile. It would be foolish to use anything but ceramic building materials in a town where the nearest brick and tile factory is only meters away, and virtually anyone can find a bargain in ceramic material.

Most of the traffic and commercial activity in town is located on two principal streets, which bisect only a block away from the church. Facing the church is the "highway," (*ruta*) running due north and south, named Avenue Pedro Juan Caballero, in honor of the town's most illustrious historical figure and *prócer* of independence. Calle Palma crosses the avenue one block south of the church. In many ways, Calle Palma is the "main street" of the town, since the largest and most prosperous businesses, as well as the municipal market are located on this street. Most of the movement, in terms of strictly commercial activity, is confined to these two streets, although there are many dozens of small stores and businesses scattered throughout the residential areas of the town. Likewise, the structures housing the various government agencies and services are somewhat removed from this small "downtown."

With the help of an executive-level agency of the national government, the Instituto de Desarrollo Municipal (Municipal Development Institute), the town has begun an ambitious program of street improvement. Since 1988 over 32 city blocks have been paved in rough-cut cobblestone with flagstone curbing. Taking advantage of ready industrial contracts, there is rapid sidewalk construction in the town center, as well. The new walks are broad and attractive, paved with the streaked orange and red ceramic tile that is commonly used for rustic house

flooring. This work began at the Church Plaza and radiated outward over time, so the central area of town is now free of the rutted and frequently impassable streets common on the outskirts of town.

There are a number of *barrios*, or neighborhoods in the town. The six oldest, "traditional" barrios each maintain a small *oratorio*, or shrine dedicated to a particular patron saint, after which the barrio is named. The barrios have no significance in town government as political or administrative divisions, and some are only four to six city blocks in extent. Within the town center, there are no distinctions between the barrios in the sense that any would be considered more "upper" or "lower class" than another, nor are they characteristic in terms of economic activity. As some citizens prospered, they build new, often very impressive, houses away from the town center, but these houses are dispersed throughout the town and may be next to, or surrounded by, the modest houses of the majority of Tobateños.

During the last twenty years the town grew rapidly. The circumstances and characteristics of that growth will be examined in some detail, but a great many of the immigrants settled in new neighborhoods somewhat removed from the town center, across the arroyo. Since growth in those areas was not planned, the streets are neither straight nor uniform, and the area displays little of the order and harmony of the town proper. Since most of the immigrants work in manual labor, these new neighborhoods, outside of the town center, tend to be more associated with social and class distinctions. While there are ceramics factories scattered throughout the town, they are particularly numerous in these neighborhoods. In fact, the largest of these barrios is popularly called

Tujú Guazú, or "Big Mud," since historically the area served as a dumping ground and storage place for the raw material used by the brick factories.

Municipal Government and Urban Infrastructure

The town of Tobatí was not elevated to the level of full municipality (classified as a "city") until 1984. Under this status, the town gained greater autonomy of government with a full complement of municipal officials and town commissioners. This also gave the town more control to levy taxes and dispose of those tax monies as well as greater representation by government agencies and services. While the larger town of Caacupé, only eighteen kilometers distant, still serves as the metropolitan hub of the Cordillera Department, and the national capital itself is also close by, Tobatí has evolved as a respectable administrative and commercial center for a population of about 18,000 persons.

The town is governed by a *Junta Municipal* of nine persons, one of whom is the *Intendente*, or mayor. The members of the Junta are elected by popular vote every five years (corresponding to national elections), but the Intendente is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Minister of the Interior. The Junta, in turn, elects one of its own as *Presidente de la Honorable Junta*. During the last Colorado Era (see Chapter Three) the Junta Municipal traditionally shared power in local government with the local *Seccional*, or governing body, of the Colorado Party. The same person may fill two of these three powerful posts, and it is not uncommon for one person to fill all three offices. There is a *Comisaría* headed by a *Comisario*, or Sheriff, also appointed by the Minister of the Interior, who is in charge with law enforcement. Finally, a local Justice of the Peace is also an executive-level appointment, and administers the Civil Registry and

handles other petty legal affairs. The actual function of all of these offices may be extremely political in nature and subordinated to the local political party structure, an aspect which will be addressed again in Chapter Seven.

The town has modernized enormously in terms of basic infrastructure since the Services conducted their study in 1948. Thanks to the country's first modest hydroelectric project at Acaray, Tobatí has had electricity since 1973. The national electric company, ANDE, provides power to over 1200 businesses and households in the community, and every barrio is fully wired except for San Francisco, on the furthest urban fringe. However, less than one fourth of the rural households had electricity (only those adjacent to lines leading to more populated areas), but in 1989 there were dozens of ANDE contractors in Tobatí working to string wire to all rural populations, taking advantage of the energy bonanza offered by Itaipú. Even before Itaipú the cost of electricity is very modest, and with an average household bill of about 3,300 Guaranies (US\$ 2.75)¹ every family in central Tobatí is serviced.

In 1948 the townspeople retrieved fresh water either from the arroyo or from one of two nearby springs (Service and Service 1954: 11). Shallow wells were "salty," and only three or four families had rainwater cisterns. The women of Tobatí well remember the daily trips to the springs to carry water *akā ári* (upon their heads) in the large clay water jars, or *kambuxí*.

The Stroessner regime's concentration on providing running water systems probably did as much as any single thing to enhance its popularity and authority, at least in the populous urban areas. Tobatí created a Junta de Saneamiento (public health commission) in 1976 to consider the problem of water. With help from the Ministry of Health's Servicio

Nacional de Saneamiento Ambiental (SENASA), the community erected a 200,000-liter water tank, dug two wells into a deep aquifer, and connected the first houses to the new system in 1979. By 1989 virtually every house in the community had at least a spigot. Of the 1,354 users (with more requests monthly) only 360 were metered. Therefore, almost all households paid only a base rate of 500 Guaranies monthly (US\$0.40). Almost all of the metered users were businesses and brickmakers, and even the premium metered rates were extremely cheap.² A large *cerámica*, for example, probably paid less than US\$ 8.50 per month for water. The community water is exceptionally soft, and the SENASA official in charge boasts that it's "purer than distilled water."

Telephones, on the other hand, are still a privilege reserved for the well-to-do. While the phone company, ANTELCO (Administración Nacional de Telecomunicaciones), has a nice new building in Tobatí the townspeople still grumble about the antiquated manual switching system, which only carries 120 lines. All the private lines were taken in 1989 and should one open it would go to the highest bidder (G500,000, or about US\$ 420 according to local employees). However, at the Central, half block from the Plaza, there are three telephone cabins which are heavily used. There is a fee of G70 (US\$0.06) for a local call, and G280 (US\$0.24) for a call to the capital. A call to Asunción might try one's patience and vocal chords but, thanks to a new satellite communications system installed with assistance from the Japanese government, a call from the cabin to the United States or Europe comes through crystal clear. There is usually a half-hour wait on international calls, since the operator has to go through the ANTELCO Central in the capital, where calls are dialed directly.

The Post Office (*Correo*) is in an impressive building next door to ANTELCO. The job of postmistress (as is every government job in the town) is clearly one of political patronage. The office is open half days only, and does not sell stamps. In fact, the postmistress was unsure how much stamps actually cost! One ordinarily buys stamps while in Asunción, and it is usually just as easy to mail the letter from there at the same time. However, if a stamped letter is deposited at the post office, the postmistress will hand it to a bus driver, who will mail it from the terminal in Asunción. Should a letter arrive at the post office, notice eventually will get to the intended recipient by word of mouth.

When the Services lived in Tobatí there was no municipal market--not too unusual, since marketplaces are not always a feature of small and medium-sized Paraguayan towns. However, during the time when the town was pushing for both water and electricity, the municipality built a small but thriving market in the central part of town. The market has one open building containing four stalls for the sale of bulk products such as manioc and charcoal, and another of equal size for meat, although these stalls in the marketplace are better known for their supply of the rougher parts of the animal, such as heads, organs, and intestines. A central, enclosed structure is divided into four parts leased to individuals principally for the sale of vegetables (tomatoes, onions, carrots, cabbage, and at times green peppers, lettuce, cucumbers, or even rarer items such as eggplant). and dried grains (maize, beans, and rice). Behind that is a building divided into three small *comedores*, restaurant establishments which serve cheap meals and cold drinks principally for rural people in town for market and workers in the central businesses. At the front of the market a sturdier brick building houses two well-stocked general stores.



Figure 5.3

Commercial Zone of Tobatí, 1989
Front of Municipal Market

Although Paraguayan towns do not observe "market days" as in many countries of Latin America, Sunday morning is an especially busy time for marketing. The area behind the market is full of tethered horses and oxcarts of the rural folk who come to town for church and to buy supplies. All of the establishments in the center of town are open in the morning and do a brisk business until noon. While the women do the greatest part of the marketing, the men often retire to the comedores or one of the nearby bars to eat and drink cold beer. On sunny days, a truck or two also arrives from the neighboring town of Eusebio Ayala (Barrero Grande) to sell clothes and dry goods which are spread on tables set up in the front of the market. Finally, a large open space behind the market which normally serves as the "parking lot" is fully occupied for two weeks in September as the fairground for the patronal fiesta of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception of Tobatí (see Chapter Eight).

The Ministry of Health supports a health center in the town which is staffed full-time by a nurse and an assistant, and weekday afternoons by a medical doctor who also operates one of two private clinics (*sanitorios*) in the town. The health center is equipped for first aid measures and simple surgery, and routinely delivers babies by both normal and caesarian births. Charges for care are conspicuously posted, and are nominal for most services (for example, a normal birth is about US\$7.50, a "per stitch" charge for closing wounds is about US\$0.20, and a *consulta* (a consultation) is about US\$0.25).

All of these basic elements of urban infrastructure were key planks in a platform of the Stroessner administration, and accounted in no small way for his popularity. However, amenities such as electricity and running water still are absent from towns the size of Tobatí that are a greater

distance from the capital, or further from a paved road. Also, the rural population generally lacks all of these features of urban life although there are few places so isolated that an urban population is not within a day's reach. Clearly, however, a great edge has been taken off the rusticity experienced by the Services in 1948 and the Tobateños feel now that they have little to envy--at least in the way of basic comforts--of the *capitalinos*.

Rural Populations

While *barrios* within the town are of no real significance in terms of government or social organization, administrative and political divisions do exist at the level of urban versus rural areas of the municipality. The town of Tobatí actually covers some sixty square miles and, administratively, corresponds more to what would be considered a county in the United States. Urban Tobatí serves as the *sede*, or administrative seat of the larger municipality, although residents of the rural areas consider themselves to be as much Tobateños as residents of their own locale.

As with all Paraguayan towns, the municipality (also called *partido*) of Tobatí includes a number of discrete rural populations, called either *compañias* or *colonias*. The former were settled early in the history of the town, and got their names from the eighteenth century organization of the *partidos* into rural military units, or companies (Velázquez 1977: 50). The *colonias*, on the other hand, were settlements sponsored by the national government earlier in this century. The bucolic rural communities usually consist of a small nucleus boasting a basic school, small chapel, soccer field, and a very few houses--usually with a small store or two selling "prime necessities." Most of the population, however, is removed from the community center, each house on the parcel cultivated by its owner.

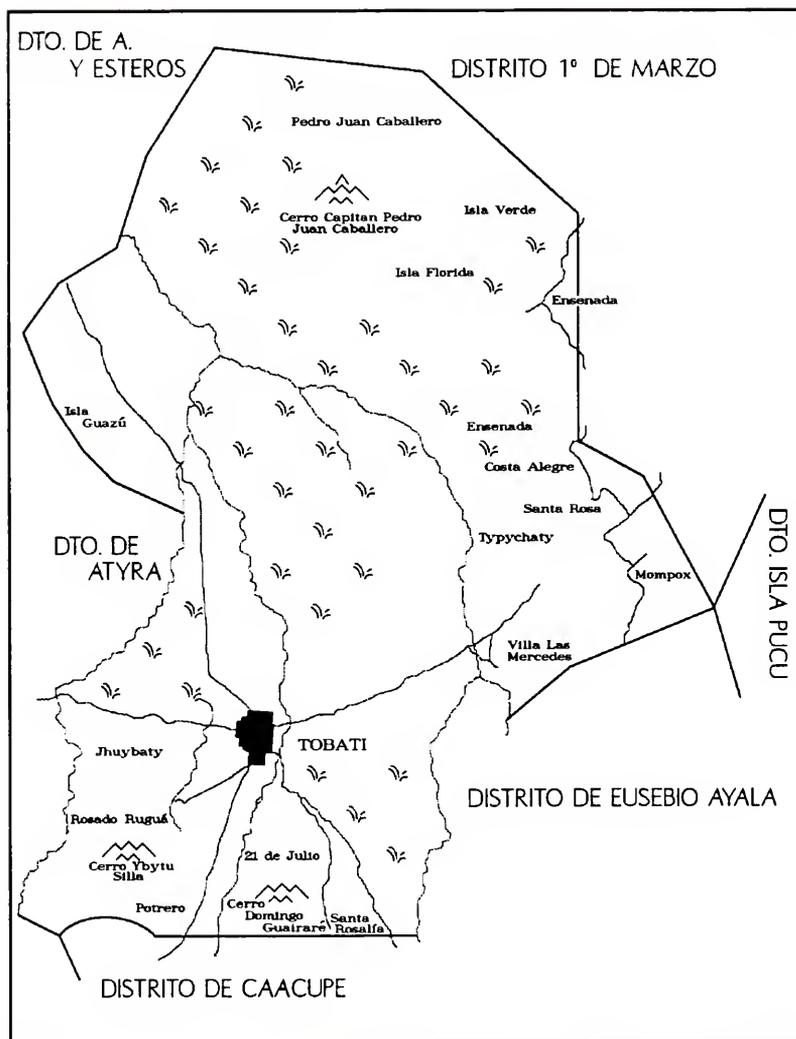


Figure 5.4 Map of Partido of Tobatí.

Usually there is a *campo comunal*, or village common, in the vicinity where animals can be freely grazed. While these communities are governed from Tobatí, each has a subset of government and political party officials who handle immediate affairs and answer to their superiors in the town. The principal authority in each rural nucleus is a *sargento de compañía* (a police official), although the Colorado Party chief may, in fact, wield more power.

There are twelve compañías and three colonias in the partido of Tobatí which supported a rural population of 9,864 people in 1992 (Paraguay 1992). A few of these areas are within walking distance of the town, but most are at considerable distance, so barring a lift on the occasional truck the town is accessible only on horseback or oxcart, given the total lack of public transportation into the interior.³ These rural nuclei, which mostly surround the lowlying lands of the large cattle ranches, include the following populations;

Compañías:

Aparypy
Loma Verde
Isla Florida
Potrero
Costa Alegre
Rosado Ruguá
Ensenada

Mompox
Villa Las Mercedes
(and Typychaty)
Santa Rosalía
Jhuybaty
Isla Guazú

Colonias:

21 de Julio
Cap. Pedro Juan Caballero

Santa Rosa

There is some doubt about whether the Colonia Capitan Pedro Juan Caballero, far to the north of town, is actually administered by the partido

of Tobatí or not. Many people assert that the place lies within the partido, but because of distance and transportation is administered by the neighboring municipality of Arroyos y Esteros. Also, a large area within the compañía Villa Las Mercedes is usually referred to as a separate entity called compañía Typychaty.

The archtypical rural Paraguayan house is the *culata yováí*, or "facing rooms." As the name implies, the basic form of the house consists of two separated rooms joined by a covered breezeway. One room typically serves as a common bedroom, while the other is used for cooking and crop storage. In warm weather--most of the year--family members can move the beds outside under the fruit trees or a *ramal* of grapevine, or sleep in the breezeway during the rains. The more rustic houses are thatched, and the walls are of a type called *tapia francés*; wattle and daub over a base of bamboo or cane (*tacuara*). The split trunks of the spineless coconut palm (*pindó*) may also be used, without the mud covering. Adobes are only rarely used anymore, and most of the newer houses of the more prosperous folk are of brick. In any case, the basic plan of the *culata yováí* lends itself to endless variation, and many of the most elegant homes in rural Paraguay are built around a nucleus based on the eminently simple and practical design (Herrerros *et al.* 1984; Gutierrez 1983: 163 and *passim*).

In the poorest households, the cooking fire is directly on the dirt floor. It resembles a small campfire, except for the one large branch that stretches outwards from the center of the fire. The ever-glowing end of this *tatasy*, or "fire mother," assures that the flame can be easily fanned to life each morning. The noxious smoke drifts upward and out of the house through the eaves. More affluent families can afford small wood-burning

stoves, and four-burner Brazilian gas stoves connected to ten-kilogram gas bottles are more and more commonly seen. The country folk usually have only the simplest and most necessary of furnishings--beds with leather-lattice under cotton mattresses, simple wooden chairs and a table, a large clay water jar (*kambuxí*), a small wooden closet for clothes, and the most basic implements for kitchen and field.

Residents of central Tobatí consider themselves to be very urban and sophisticated in comparison to the people of the *compañías*. Their houses and furnishings are usually luxurious in comparison. On the other hand, there is no feeling of condescension in the relationship between townspeople and the country folk. Almost all Tobateños have close links to the countryside, either through close relatives who live there or by way of commercial and social contacts which date from time immemorial. Indeed, Paraguayans of all social classes frequently appeal to their condition as *campesinos* (rural folk) to identify themselves, culturally, as Paraguayans (Vysokolán 1989: I). And the real *campesinos* are clearly proud of their tidy houses and farms, thankful that what they lack in electricity and other amenities is compensated for by peace and quiet--or more appropriately, that most coveted of Paraguayan resources: *tranquilidad*.

These are areas of small landholdings, known as *minifundia*, and the majority of the population is engaged in small scale farming, although increasing numbers of people are employed as laborers, especially in areas with rural brickyards. However, rural Tobatí has a mixed land tenure regime. At the interstices between *islas*, or "islands" of higher ground most suited to more intensive agriculture, land is held in very large parcels--*latifundia*--and dedicated principally to cattle ranching. These

large ranches (as well as the rural ceramics industries) are invariably held *in absentia*, the owners living in Tobatí or even in the capital.

When the Services resided in Tobatí in 1948, the town was a "typical" one for rural Paraguay. When that meant, more than anything, was that it was an agriculture-based economy supported by a rural peasantry. In the case of Tobatí, as in many towns in the central zone, there was also extensive grassland ranching. The economy was simple, with direct linkages between the town and Asunción. There were virtually no economic inputs originating from beyond the capital, and market relations were highly localized and patron-driven. Other than modest commercial and government sectors, and an embryonic cottage-based ceramics industry, nearly all economic activity in the town derived directly from either small-scale agriculture or ranching. Wage-labor was almost wholly confined to part time day-work and served to supplement a domestic economy based on petty commerce or subsistence cropping.

The Services also described social and ideological formations that were consistent to this kind of economy: personalistic, kin-centered social relations based on a bilateral kinship system and the nuclear household. Social relations and behaviors, in general, were formalized and tradition-bound. Likewise, social hierarchies were closely observed and derived from paternalistic ties spanning generations. While it was not an egalitarian society, there was no evidence of class structure typical of capitalist societies, with ideologies originating in class consciousness. What did surprise the Services was the very high degree of physical mobility of the population, which they argued, as reiterated in the previous chapter, was the historical result of low population densities, low-technology farming methods, and informal land tenure systems. In none of these ways

was Tobatí, with a population of 1,368 persons,⁴ significantly different from the many towns of rural Paraguay at the time.

As explained earlier, the town of Tobatí today is very distinct from the "typical" rural Paraguayan town, but in some ways it might be a harbinger of the future for much of rural Paraguay. Because of its resources, climate, and historical ties with the international community, Paraguay will no doubt remain an agrarian economy. However, it is equally certain that demographic, technological, and environmental changes will inexorably influence the economic underpinnings of Paraguayan society in ways that may be more or less predictable. Economic processes that have occurred, and are occurring, very rapidly in Tobatí are taking shape at different rates, and in different forms, in other parts of the country. There is much evidence for a general stratification of the traditional peasant society accompanied by changes in land tenure regimes, market relationships, and sources of income. The case of Tobatí illustrates one of the ways that these processes may occur, and may further illuminate the course of modern history in the country at large.

The Decline of the Peasantry in Central Paraguay

The history of Tobatí related in Chapter Four repeatedly stressed the dependent relationships between population densities, rural technologies, and land tenure systems, all in relation to the market demands (for labor as well as goods) that existed at the national level. As long as these fundamental relationships were not altered, the rural economy was resilient and stable--although an economist might rather describe it as stagnant because of its limited ability to show dynamic growth. Indeed, there was exceedingly little room for entrepreneurship given the basic inelasticity of

both production and market demands. All of these factors contributed to a conservative ideology that placed a high value on predictability, which likely explains why various more radical movements for social change (some outlined in Chapter Three) failed to resonate among the rural population.

In spite of the Service's rather pessimistic prognosis for the future of the economy and--by extension--the country (1954: 297), fundamental changes did begin to occur soon after the anthropologists left Paraguay, and change accelerated rapidly during the decades afterwards. Most historians trace the "modern" period of Paraguayan history from the advent of General Alfredo Stroessner to the presidency in 1954, although no doubt the more fundamental aspects of change had little to do with personalities nor presidents.

Rather, the important developments of the 1960s and afterwards had mostly to do with the dynamics of population, evolving international markets, new possibilities in transportation infrastructure, and technological innovation, all abetted by aggressive governmental and international programs geared to a "developmentalist" program. Chapter Three outlined in very basic form the push for new investment and market opportunities by the victorious allies after World War II, and the concern of those countries that Paraguay (and countries like Paraguay) be politically receptive to free trade and profitable investments within a new international economic order. By 1948, with the firm establishment of the Colorado Party in government, Paraguay was made a safe haven for new business interests with no little assistance from the American Embassy.

Next to a friendly government, however, development required a stable government. After Morínigo finally fell from power in 1948 there

was a succession of six presidents during a six-year period of political-military intrigue of byzantine complexity and comic-opera overtones.⁵ One of the supporting cast of characters was an ambitious young army officer, Colonel Alfredo Stroessner, who finally engineered his own takeover in 1954. Some of the political circumstances concerning Stroessner's remarkable power and tenacity in the government will be addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight, but he probably benefitted from the sheer exhaustion of the creative political process of the country.

Stroessner inherited a government on the verge of economic collapse after a series of unwise, but politically advantageous, monetary reforms by his predecessors. However, the new president made a commitment to modernization and development in an agreement with the International Monetary Fund called the Stabilization Plan of 1956, "which became the blueprint for Stroessner's subsequent development strategy" (Lewis 1980: 153). The plan called for a number of fiscal and monetary reforms in exchange for extensive credits for a wide range of internal infrastructural developments, such as roads, schools, sanitation, port facilities, electrification etc., which no doubt offset the unpopularity of a tightened money supply and other reforms. However, as a nation whose only source of wealth in the world market was agricultural exports, an implicit clause to the plan was a pledge to increase the production of agricultural export commodities to repay debts and finance further development.

This new push for growth in the primary sector was soon reinforced with the creation of the Alliance for Progress. With heavy foreign borrowing under the Alliance program, the government was further encouraged to promote the production of cotton, soybeans, and tobacco in order to generate a greater foreign exchange base necessary to service a

burgeoning debt. Wheat production was also emphasized to substitute local production for costly imported grain. The initial strategy was to seek "horizontal growth" by opening new lands to cultivation, so the program emphasized road construction into the eastern part of the country to colonize the economically moribund yerbales closer to the Brazilian border. At the same time, the new road network served to more closely link the country with international ports in Buenos Aires and Santos, Brazil. And interestingly, colonization of the region would seem to satisfy a program of "land reform" (an important requirement for Alliance funding) without actually making any fundamental changes in the existing land tenure system (Campos 1982: 122).

Thus, the Instituto de Bienestar Rural (IBR) was founded in 1963 as a semiautonomous government agency charged with "transforming the agrarian structure of Paraguay" by formulating plans for colonization, redistributing the population, and registering land titles (Arnold 1969: 7). Actually, Paraguay had a land reform agency which originated with the Febrerista government in 1936, but the new law substituted the concept of "agrarian reform" with "rural welfare" (Pastore 1973: 438), a conservative Stroessnerian touch. In any case, there was a different urgency to the program by the 1960s. Not only was expanded agricultural production critical to keep pace with development programs, but population levels were increasing in the central part of the country making access to cultivable lands more and more difficult to the majority of non-titled *campesinos*. From the censuses of 1950 to 1962, population density in the Department of Cordillera rose from 29.4 to 38.1 persons per square kilometer (GOP 1982: 4), an increase in density of almost thirty percent in twelve short years.

This was a potentially threatening situation for the latifundistas of the region, so a program of opening new lands for settlement, while increasing area under production, would also relieve pressure on the traditional large landowners, who constituted one of the pillars of Stroessner's political support (Vysokolan 1989: I). Clearly, however, this program was not one of true land reform, for the non-reform sector (the large landowners) preserved their holdings intact, without even the incentive to rationalize production under a system of capitalist-based production (de Janvry 1981: 203). Furthermore, the program tended to recreate the traditional forms of land tenure in the newly colonized areas by awarding very large holdings to military officers and persons of influence, alongside the much smaller parcels distributed to migrating peasant farmers who were largely unable to compete in a market-driven economy (Wilson, Hay and Margolis 1989).

Just as important, the new program was meant not only to settle new lands in the frontier regions, but to rationalize the tenure system in the central area by giving title to lands which had previously been occupied, even in very old communities. Thus the IBR vastly exaggerated its claims for the number of new families settled, by including previously occupied areas as part of the "reform" program. About sixty colonies in the central region which had been officially registered at least since 1944 were counted by the agency as "new colonies," and many of those involved nothing more than a name change while the rest were merely "administratively ordered" (Pastore 1973: 510). Title was granted to the parcels which were occupied at the time, and since peasant farmers could not ordinarily cultivate more than two to four hectares at a time, that was the extent of their new claim. In fact, in 1977 39 percent of the farmers in

the region had less than five hectares, and another twenty percent had between five and ten hectares (Miranda 1982: 169). Over twelve percent of the rural population had no access to any land, under any form of tenure.

Finally, the IBR in its reports never distinguished between provisional and permanent title, and the agency had a very poor record of making the critical transition from provisional to clear title (Ewart 1977: 31). Combined with the fact that since the end of the Triple Alliance War the claims to such lands had always been in some doubt, this only served to add another level to an already tangled web of claims and counterclaims. Larger "landowners" who had never bothered to press their claims in court for lack of definitive proof of ownership (Service and Service 1954: 51) could now find the legal basis to evict "squatters" if they could convince IBR to issue documents in their favor. Peasant occupants who wanted to contest those claims could find themselves in the court system for years, while temporary orders demanded they quit lands under litigation.

The *campos comunales*, or common grazing lands, were especially vulnerable under novel, legalistic mechanisms of determining ownership. Since these lands were, in fact, held in common, they were never titled to a single individual and technically, therefore, remained as part of the *tierras fiscales*, or state patrimony. As such, they could "legally" be adjudicated under the conditions of land reform, and titled to individual claimants, even though they supposedly were "declared imprescriptible and inalienable" by the same laws (Pastore 1972: 352). By 1990, of over one hundred recognized *campos comunales* in the Department of the Cordillera, only 22 remained inviolate (Ultima Hora Feb. 6, 1990: 25). However, they functioned as one of the mainstays of the peasant economy,

for a family holding only enough land for basic cultivation did not have the resources to clear and maintain grazing lands as well. Often, one or two cattle and the occasional horse embodied the entire capital wealth of the household, and meager milk and cheese production was as important a supplement to the diet and purse of the family as any of the crops.

All of these circumstances had consequences that were profoundly social as well as economic. Rising population densities combined with legalistic forms of tenure created a lively market for land as a commodity. With rapid increases in land values, secure landholders would no longer tolerate the traditional casual occupation of lands described by the Services (1954: 50). Those peasants who were fortunate enough to secure larger parcels could find loans in new government and internationally financed programs fomenting commodity-crop production using improved technologies of land preparation and pest control. In order to increase areas under cultivation, they often secured the rights, or *derecheras*, over small neighboring parcels. In the meantime, there was less and less room for peasant cultivators who lacked sufficient acreage, capital, or skills to modernize production, and only the most daring and fortunate could migrate across the country to settle new lands on the frontier--a precarious gamble in itself in an area where the processes of capitalist production were even faster and less forgiving (Campos 1982).

By the 1980s the classic peasant farmer (*kocuecero*) of the Cordillera had practically disappeared. Instead, the once solidary rural population had differentiated into a heterogeneous combination of impoverished smallholders who had to rely on off-farm sources of income, more successful capitalist-oriented small farmers, and a larger landless population wholly dependent on wage labor or odd jobs (*changas*) for

survival (Vysokolán 1989: VII).⁶ Each of these groups had their own, often conflicting, interests, and all were arrayed against a landed aristocracy and an agroindustrial bourgeoisie. As in many other parts of the world, traditional peasant forms of agricultural production and social relations proved to be extremely fragile against a very few crucial changes at a basic level mediated by an alliance between private capital, the state, and international financial and aid institutions (Bagchi 1982).

Rural Conflict in Tobatí

Tobatí was no less affected by these new economic forces and state policies than were any other areas of the country. Because of the town's unique developmental trajectory, however, land disputes were often originated for different reasons, and their consequences were often different than in other areas. Much of the land around Tobatí, of course, is valuable for crop production and grazing, and the town's proximity to the capital perhaps makes it more attractive for investment purposes. What especially distinguishes Tobatí from other areas, however, is that surroundings lands can be mined, as well, and the greatest inherent value of land may be in the quality of clays under the surface for use in the *cerámicas*.

During the past twenty five years there have been innumerable disputes over land claims involving single families and land parcels in all of the rural areas of the partido. These issues frequently pitted individual peasant farmers against each other, as well as against larger landowners or more powerful interlopers. A number of cases involved many families, however, or even whole communities. It would be difficult to assert that the social consequences of these cases was greater than the cumulative

effects of many individual incidents, but it is much easier to isolate the conflicts and articulate the circumstances of the larger and more important disputes. The following three cases attracted the attention of social and legal-aid organizations at the regional or national level which researched and documented the circumstances surrounding the disputes.⁷

A. Aparypy--This case attracted particular attention because the principal litigant was an Asunción lawyer whose mother was a major opposition political figure and head of Paraguay's principal human rights organization. This person secured a section of land outside of Tobatí in the compañía of Aparypy from the previous owner, a ranking military officer. When the lawyer asserted ownership in 1976 a group of campesinos claimed they had occupied that land continuously since 1944 but that their ongoing claims had never been recognized because of the power of the military officer who originally claimed ownership.

This was a knotty case in which the common-law rights of the occupants conflicted with a legal title involved in a cash transaction. However, the situation was apparently resolved amicably in 1981 when 26 families signed an agreement with the lawyer to buy the land in lots of about six hectares each, in exchange for payments made over the course of four years. By 1984 the buyers had paid in full for the lands and requested transfer of title. They became suspicious when the lawyer repeatedly evaded their requests, and found that there had been serious irregularities in surveying the property. Furthermore, the lawyer had also mortgaged the land to both the Fondo Ganadero and the Banco Nacional de Fomento, two of the government's principal development financing corporations.

As the campesinos pressed their demands, the lawyer began to fence the lands, including a section of campo comunal adjacent to the property.

He then contacted the authorities in Tobatí who issued an order that the campesinos quit the disputed lands under threat of arrest. Desperate, the new owners went directly to the lawyer's mother, the Senator, who asserted that she was accustomed to defend "good campesinos," but not those who "created problems." By 1989, six of the claimants had been arrested for violation of private property, and remitted to the National Penitentiary in Asunción. Disturbingly, this is one case where the national political opposition has closed ranks against the claims of the campesinos, insisting that they are only in prison for "common crimes."

B. Santa Rosa'í--Not surprisingly, the most powerful political figures in Tobatí are also the major ceramics manufacturers. Whereas the potential for land conflicts had traditionally involved the rights of peasant farmers against ranchers, the new industrial elites were more concerned with sources of clay for brickmaking. Some of these best clay deposits underlay the common grazing lands in the rural *compañías* and these areas were often targeted for control by powerful townspeople. In 1968, for example, the president of the Colorado Party in Tobatí had claimed ownership of nine hectares of campo comunal in the *compañía* of Mompox, and he promptly built a large *cerámica* (brick and tile factory) on the spot. The same individual was apparently involved in similar cases in the *compañías* of Santa Rosalía and Las Mercedes.

A better-known case was that of 73 hectares of common grazing lands in the *compañía* of Santa Rosa'í, about twelve kilometers to the northeast of the town. The area in question officially had been designated as a campo comunal in 1946. Twenty years later about thirty campesino families had requested title to the parcel after the new IBR had been created to adjudicate lands in the country. By 1975 the IBR had refused

official transfer of the land in the names of private individuals, because of the character of the land as held in common by all the neighbors.

In 1981, however, a number of powerful townspeople had managed to change the IBR's mind, and ten individuals were allowed to purchase the land from the agency in parcels of about 6 1/2 hectares each. The purchasers included the President of the Colorado Party in the town, the town *Intendente* (mayor), the Justice of the Peace,⁸ and several close relatives. These individuals were also given moral sanction by the local church, whose priest at the time was the Party President's first cousin. All of the new owners were also local industrialists, who began to mine the lots for their excellent quality clays.

The residents continued to graze their animals around the widening pits, however, and when the "owners" fenced the lands in 1986 the campesinos tore down the wire and made a bonfire of the fence posts. The offenders were charged with violation of private property and theft of clay and firewood, and warrants were issued against four of the "ringleaders." Two campesinos were apprehended and sentenced to prison at the National Penitentiary in Asunción. During a tense confrontation between the campesinos and owners, a shot from an unidentified source was fired killing a twelve year old campesino boy. An aggressive campaign by a national civil rights organization and fairly extensive press coverage (to the extent that was possible under the government of the time) failed to free the prisoners, although prospects seemed better under the new government in 1990.

When interviewed by the press in 1987, the President of the Party expressed surprise at the attitude of the campesinos (*La Tarde*, May 14: 17). "We intend to provide sources of work for these people," he

explained. The intention of the new owners, he continued, was to build more ceramics factories in the area, in which case "they [the campesinos] will be our first collaborators. But it happens that they won't accept this." The Justice of the Peace complained that he and the others were "under constant threat" from the campesinos, while the priest (the President's cousin) insisted that while he was accused of carrying arms and threatening the campesinos, his only intention was to reconcile them in accordance with his mission to "help the people to live in peace."

C. 21 de Julio--Finally, the case of 21 de Julio, Tobatí's most populous rural community, perhaps gives more of an idea of how deeply rooted in history some of these conflicts are. The lands of 21 de Julio, directly to the south of Tobatí pueblo, were undoubtedly continuously occupied since the town's settlement at its new site, in 1699. Much of the land lies over the rocky escarpment flanking the town, and is difficult to farm, although there are sizeable areas of deeper soils at the base levels of the colony. The areas lying at the summit of the escarpment are still accessible only with some difficulty, and probably provided a refuge for remnant populations during and after the Triple Alliance War.

Since the lands were part of the original Indian pueblo, any existing titles to the area could only date from the years after the elder López dissolved the legal status of the pueblos in 1848, and, if so, must have been made out to indigenous residents of the town in accord with the legal procedures which reorganized the pueblos. If the lands were not titled to resident Tobateños, they were to form part of the state patrimony, to be farmed in exchange for nominal rents by the residents. In any case, any titles that may have existed were lost in the chaos that followed the war.

The Services described in some detail the history of the Rizzi family⁹ in Tobatí, the descendents of Italian immigrants who reached the area at the close of the Triple Alliance War. The patriarch of the family

eventually acquired not only most of the campo surrounding the town but also the land comprising the present Colonia 21 de Julio. This was an old settlement, however, and the residents refused to move, declaring that the land belonged to the Virgin of Tobatí and did not, could not, belong to Rizzi. Eventually this particular tract was bought from the Rizzi estate by the government and made into a *colonia* (Service and Service 1954: 58).

In fact, the government had not bought the lands, but exchanged them in 1929 for a larger amount of land in San Pedro de Paraná, in the Department of Itapúa near the Argentine border. Subsequently, the government officially decreed the establishment of the colony 21 de Julio in 1937, as part of an ambitious land reform program in the aftermath of the Febrerista revolution of 1936 (see Pastore 1972: 321). The new colony included 2015 hectares, divided between campos comunales and individual smallholders.

In 1969 an heiress of the Rizzis began to fence in most of the campo comunal of the colony, a parcel of land covering 519 hectares that was particularly rich in industrial clays. The residents of the colony immediately appealed to the IBR, which ruled in their favor (Resolution No. 947 of 11 December, 1969). The Rizzi family was just as powerful in the town as it was when the Services were there, and they simply disregarded the government order and continued to fence the land. To further complicate an already entangled situation, Rizzi also enjoyed the support of the Minister of Justice, who had married yet another Rizzi daughter. A group of campesinos attempted to impede the fencing

operations, which inevitably led to a confrontation. The husband of the Rizzi heiress appeared on the scene with a group of hired men, the local *Comisario* (police chief), and other police.

During the ensuing quarrel, a campesino was shot to death by the Rizzi foreman, and his twenty-year old son was killed by the conscript. A third campesino was seriously wounded, as was a deputy comisario. The campesino later was removed from the local health center, placed under arrest, and tortured for a month. The nineteen-year old *novia* (girlfriend) of the young campesino who had been killed later committed suicide, and the tortured campesino eventually died of his wounds. The administrator of the colony was placed under arrest and was cruelly treated in the National Penitentiary for over four years.

Not inexplicably, the IBR then allowed the Rizzis to subdivide the land and sell the parcels, in spite of a plethora of suits filed in favor of the campesinos by a major civil rights organization in the capital. Today those lands "constitute one of the places with the most abundant and best quality clays in the outskirts of Tobatí" (Vysokolán 1989: V). What perhaps is inexplicable is that the administrator who was held and tortured for four years was still very hopeful in 1990 that somehow the campesinos could regain control of their campo comunal, now that the government had finally changed hands.

The Changing Structure of Labor

With each passing year, the bucolic economic and social life of the pueblo described by the Services was less a reality and more a thing of the past. Vysokolán is likely only slightly exaggerating in his claim that the traditional peasantry in the central area of the country is all but extinct

(1989: VII). The data from Tobatí show a generational nature to the decline of the peasantry, and it seems likely any remnants of a classic peasant population in the district will, indeed, disappear with the current senior generation. However, the disappearance of a landed peasantry leaves few historical alternatives: either the population must decline precipitously, or labor must be reorganized under different forms of production in order to sustain a stable population. In the Cordillera, both of these things are very much in evidence, although because of the unique circumstances of the development of Tobatí outmigration has been much less of a forced alternative for individuals than it was in other localities. Rather, in Tobatí the tendency has been toward a profound restructuring of the labor force accompanied by the introduction of new modes of production.

There are two important aspects to consider in the nature of changes in labor organization. The first, and most obvious (although in many ways most superficial), concerns simple job structure. An inevitable result of modernization has been an increased complexity and specialization of the labor force. The growing economic and social integration of the country with the surrounding nations of Argentina and Brazil, accompanied by increasing ease of traffic, greater educational opportunities, novel technologies, and new sources of wealth, have also contributed to greater social differentiation and cultural conflicts in the society. This section will deal primarily with this aspect of the organization of labor.

Secondly, however, there have been fundamental changes in the social aspects of work, or that part of the production process which is often called "relations of production." This aspect involves great social and ideological changes as a result of the way that capital (in the form of

production forces) begins to govern the relationships between groups of people, and is most closely identified with the formation of class-based societies. Fundamental change in the class structure of a society is an uneven phenomenon which occurs at different rates for different sectors of the population. The responses of different social groups to these changes--while not altogether unpredictable--might likewise be distinct and contradictory. The ramifications of such profound economic change touch all aspects of social life. The basic data concerning the formation of classes in Tobatí will also be presented in this section, but it will be more appropriate to return to this theme later on, in discussions central to social structures and ideologies.

Job Structure and Occupational Patterns

The focus here will be on the shift in time away from generalized work in agriculture to a labor force dominated by work in industry, particularly the ceramics industry. Within the *casco urbano*, or urban center, there has also been an accompanying movement toward work in services, ancillary industry, and commercial activities that support the ceramics industry and a growing wage-earning population. Also, increased specialization in other jobs, as mentioned above, may not be so much attributable to industrialization as to factors at the metropolitan (national and international) level mentioned above: transportation, technology, education, and economic integration with a broader society.

The Services were able to take a complete census, by household, of the total population of Tobatí in 1948. In that survey they counted a total of 26 different occupations or professions practiced by men and seventeen by women (Service and Service 1954: 85). These covered the basic

Table 5.1

Occupation by Sector, Men Only
Tobatí, Paraguay 1989

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>
1 Ceramics/Brick Worker	1 Crop Farmer
2 Carpenter	2 Farm Laborer
3 Furniture Maker	3 Truck/Dairy Farmer (<i>Granjero</i>)
4 Casket Maker	4 Rancher
5 Distiller	5 Cowboy
6 Baker	6 Tractor Operator
7 Builder (Construction)	
8 Blacksmith	
9 Tinsmith	
10 Tanner	<u>Professional/Service</u>
11 Shoemaker	1 Doctor
12 Harness/Saddlemaker	2 Dentist
13 Artisan (<i>Santero</i>)	3 Nurse
14 Artisan (Ceramics)	4 Herbal curer (<i>Medico pojhá</i>)
15 Tailor	5 Pharmacist
16 Wheel/Cartwright	6 Veterinarian
17 Charcoal maker (carbonero)	7 Funeral Director
	8 Butcher
<u>Commerce</u>	9 Barber
1 Merchant (Buyer/Seller)	10 Musician
2 Shopkeeper	11 Jeweler
3 Restaurateur	12 House Painter
4 Barkeeper	13 Photographer
5 Innkeeper	14 Civil Engineer
6 Chauffer (Truck Driver)	15 Electrician
7 Salesman	16 Mechanic
	17 Tiresmith (<i>Gomero</i>)
<u>Other (Manual)</u>	18 Machinist (<i>Tornero</i>)
1 General Laborer	19 Real Estate Agent
2 Bricklayer	20 Surveyor
3 Day Laborer	21 Bus Driver
4 Watchman	22 Car Body Repair
5 Slaughterhouse worker (Skinner)	
6 Gravedigger	
7 Conscript (Police or Army)	
	<u>Civil Service/Education</u>
1 Teacher/Professor	6 uridical
2 Student	7 Exec./Elect. Government
3 Police Officer	8 Communications Worker
4 Military Officer	9 Postal Employee
5 Pension Holder	10 General Clerical

Table 5.2

Occupation by Sector, Women Only
Tobatí, Paraguay 1989

Industrial

- 1 Seamstress
- 2 Artisan (Santera)
- 3 Artisan (Ceramics)
- 4 Petit-grain Distiller
- 5 Baker
- 6 Specialty Baker (*Chipera*)
- 7 Weaver
- 8 Shoemaker
- 9 Brickmaker

Commerce

- 1 Merchant (Buyer/Seller)
- 2 Shopkeeper
- 3 Innkeeper
- 4 Barkeeper
- 5 Restaurateur

Other (Manual)

- 1 Houseworker (*Empleada*)
- 2 Day Laborer
- 3 Slaughterhouse Worker
- 4 Prostitute

Agriculture

- 1 Farmer (*Agricultora*)
- 2 Rancher

Profession/Service

- 1 Doctor
- 2 Nurse
- 3 Herbalist
(*Medico Naná*)
- 4 Midwife
(*Partera chaé*)
- 5 Architect
- 6 Accountant
- 7 Beautician/Hairdresser
- 8 Secretarial/Clerical

Civil Service/Education

- 1 Teacher/Profesora
- 2 School Director
- 3 Student
- 4 Communications Worker
- 5 Postal Worker
- 6 Exec./Elect. Government

occupational niches available in a fundamentally non-capitalist society. In a study conducted at about the same time in a rural community in Brazil that could be considered an emergent capitalist economy, Harris counted a total of 69 "remunerative activities," but only 26 "occupations"¹⁰ (Harris 1971: 45-47). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the much more diverse "Occupation by Sector" for men and women in Tobatí in 1989.

As Harris noted (1971: 44), the degree of occupational specialization is a good indicator not only of the "strength of the urban complex" but of the level of economic development, as well. In 1989, there were 69 distinct occupations practiced by men in the town. Much of this increase in occupation diversity is simply a reflection of growth in population and increased quantities of money in circulation. However, another important feature of the changing job structure is the degree that some economic sectors within Tobatí are organized as capitalist enterprises. Within those sectors, there may be a strict division of labor and further occupational specialization as well, manifested as differential wages earned, hours worked, and prestige levels. For example, in the ceramics industry, the differences between mixers, machine operators, foremen, and fire tenders are sharply delineated. In smaller, non-mechanized (and non-capitalist oriented) ceramics operations called *olerías*, however, very little, if any, wage labor may be employed. All necessary tasks are performed by family members and there is little specialization of labor within the family.

There has been a general broadening of women's work as well, as shown in Table 5.2. Including the ubiquitous *ama de casa* (housewife) women are represented in 35 professions. As with those listed in the previous table, many of these are traditional professions (e.g., seamstress, shopkeeper, houseworker, *agricultora*, herbalist, midwife, and teacher) but

women also have branched out into a number of areas which, only a few years ago, were strictly the domain of men, especially in the professions. Some of these occupations are purely the result of the mechanical processes of modernization, such as communications worker. Others are probably a result of more organic causes, that is increased growth of the community creating opportunities for remunerative employment simply by virtue of the existence of a larger demand. Increased activity in fields such as specialty baking, nursing, or barbering may be explained this way. Still other occupations, however, reflect a general relaxation of the traditional sexual division of labor. This is also closely associated with modernization, but mediated by factors rooted in the demands for educated labor in a changing and expanding job market, and changing standards of consumption--standards themselves associated with media-generated consumerism and education levels (see Margolis 1984: Ch. 6).

Women are probably best represented in the fields of commerce. The Services remarked that in 1948 women are notable in the economic life of the town "because of their activities of a petty commercial nature, particularly as store operators and sellers" (Service and Service 1954: 89). At that time, seventeen out of 35 small stores were owned and managed by women and nearly all of the rest were tended primarily by women. That situation has changed little over time--if anything, women may have widened their control over "neighborhood commerce." Also, while men are still predominantly the owners of the major commercial establishments in the town, wives are frequently the managers, especially as large storeowners tend to broaden their resources with investments in the ceramics industry.

Table 5.3

Number of Commercial Establishments by Sector:
Central Tobatí 1989.

<u>Commerce</u> 226		<u>Industry</u> 145	
Small stores	88	Cerámicas	52
Medium stores	60	Olerías	51
Large stores	21	Carpintry	10
Restaurants	8	Tanneries	4
Bars	8	Shoemakers	2
(With Pensión)	(3)	Harness makers	2
Pharmacies	6	Cartwrights	4
Butcher Shops	7	(Carrocería)	
Bakeries	3	Seamstress shops	10
Bookstores	3	Tailor shops	2
Shoestores	1	Machine shops	2
Hardware shops	3	Blacksmith	1
Furniture stores	3	Artisanry	4
Charcoal vendors	3	Rice Mill	1
Toy store	1		
Picture framer	1	<u>Services</u> 33	
Jewelers	3	Barbers/Hairdressers	12
Veterinary supplies	1	TV repair	1
Movie theaters	2	Electricians	4
Specialty bakers	2	Funeral Service	1
(Chiperías)		Glazier	1
Water-jar shop	1	Tire shops	2
Newspaper distributor	1	Mechanic shops	5
		Bicycle repair shops	1
<u>Medical</u> 8		Gas Stations	2
Private clinics	2	Photographers	2
Medical laboratory	1		
Dentists	5		
		<u>Miscellaneous</u> 8	
		Pre-schools	2
Sewing schools	3	Real Estate Office	1
Cooperative	1		
Bus Terminal	1		

In any case, a breakdown of all of the commercial establishments in the town shows further evidence of the increased pace of economic activity during the past few years, as well as the opportunities for employment for different sectors of the population. The data in Table 5.3 were drawn from a block-by-block survey of businesses done in 1989. However, that survey only covered the central part of town exclusive of both the barrios on the further side of the arroyo, and businesses in the more rural parts of the community.

In total, there are 420 businesses represented in Table 5.3, and these do not include such household enterprises as the practice of folk-medicine, midwifery, cake-decorating, specialty cooking, and a lengthy etcetera. This contrasts to a survey done in 1949 by the Services, which showed a total of only sixteen kinds of business in 97 establishments in the urban center (1954: Ch. 6 and p. 85). However, as in 1949, women dominate the petty commercial establishments (small and medium stores) which function to supplement the income of other family members outside of the household. In fact, in the household survey, many women who managed such small shops did not even consider themselves to be *comerciantes* (businesspersons), but instead identified themselves only as "housewives" (see Chapter Seven). Often, such small shops served principally as a depository for meager capital reserves and a guard against inflation (see Ewart [1977]: 63).¹¹ Thus, most of the goods in such a shop eventually are probably consumed by the family itself or by close neighbors, who are also likely to be affinal relatives of the household.

The sheer number of business enterprises in Tobatí may seem to be extraordinarily high for an urban population of 9,026, or even a combined urban-rural population of 18,890 (Paraguay 1993). However,

Table 5.4. Number of Commercial Establishments
Urban and Rural Tobatí, 1987

	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Total</i>
<u>Commercial</u>			
Large Establishments	7	---	7
Medium Establishments	90	7	97
Small Establishments	200	135	335
Total	297	145	439
<u>Industrial</u>			
Tanneries	4	---	4
Shoemakers	2	---	2
Manual Olerías	200	50	250
<i>Cerámicas</i>	47	10	57
Rice Mills	1	---	1
Total	254	60	314
GRAND TOTAL	551	202	753

Source: IDM 1987.

even these figures are very conservative. There is a higher concentration of brick-making operations in the urbanized Barrio Obrero across the arroyo, for example, and many others in the rural parts of the *municipalidad*. Also, all the compañías have at least one small store, and usually more than one. Table 5.4 shows the total number of businesses licensed by the municipality in 1987, in both urban and rural areas.

An independent census taken by the local health center in 1989 showed there to be 1,469 households in the urban area of the town. Assuming no growth in the business community between 1987 and 1989, there would have been an astonishing ratio of 1:2.66 for businesses per household in the urban part of the town. However, this is not a remarkable contrast from what the Service's found in 1949, when they counted approximately 97 businesses within an urban radius including 289 families ($r=1:2.97$). The increased density of businesses in later years is probably wholly attributable to the growth of the ceramics industry, which enables many families to manage two businesses. Rather, the constants over time are most likely a) the advantage of investing in small business as a guard against the erosion of capital and b) an ideology of self-reliance fostered by the insecurities inherent in a population so highly mobile that the Services referred to it as "agricultural nomadism" (1954: 53).

The Shift from Agriculture to Industry

With regard to patterns of work and economic organization in Tobatí, the striking trend has undoubtedly been that of industrialization of the economy and proletarianization of the labor force. This is probably more true in Tobatí than in any other rural society in Paraguay with the possible exception of those few loose communities organized around the

extractive industries (tannin and *yerba mate* collection) in the extreme hinterlands of the Chaco and Paraná forests.

There are two contrasting ways to view this change, and two ways to measure such change. First, the increase in industrial jobs can be contrasted with a concomitant decline in traditional agricultural employment. The two ways to measure these changes over time consisted of data obtained in the 1989 survey contrasted with marriage data secured in the archives of the local Justice of the Peace. The first instrument is useful in conceptualizing a generational aspect to these phenomena, while the second shows a more constant rate over time. Both of these measures are corroborative and are strikingly illustrative.

The household survey taken in 1989 covered a total of 153 households, or roughly an eight percent sample of the households in the urban areas of town and the nearby rural area of the Colonia 21 de Julio. The sample was divided over three geographical areas, as shown in the following table:

Table 5.5
Survey Sample, Tobatí 1989

<u>Area</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1	Urban Center	78	51.0
2	Barrio Obrero	40	26.1
3	21 de Julio	35	22.9

The questionnaire was directed toward a "head of household," who was considered to be either responsible parent present at the time the interview was administered. When appropriate (that is, when both parents

were known), the occupations of both a mother and father were recorded. Although employment patterns of women were also gauged, it was more useful to measure changes in employment patterns of men, since men's jobs were more likely to be described in terms of one specific activity. The survey also elicited useful data in regard to occupation of mother's father and mother, father's father and mother, and all adult children of the family, thus yielding cross-generational occupational information.

The most basic form of the job data includes Grandfathers' (father's father and mother's father), Fathers', and Sons' occupations broken down into three categories: Farmers, Brickmakers, and Other. This data is summarized in Table 5.6 and Figure 5.4.

If the category "generation" is considered a proxy for time, these data show a picture of prevailing trends in the local job force across time, with a decrease in the category of farmers mirroring an increase in the category of brickmakers. Thus, in a general sense, the category "Grandfathers" could represent the labor force as it was, perhaps, around 1960. The category "Fathers" would show the contemporary situation, and the category "Sons" would show a future trend in the community. The category "Other" also expands over time, reflecting the greater diversity and specialization of the work force. However, while these numbers show the breakdown of the local population by job area, they also reflect the effects of migration from the countryside into the town. These numbers may be contrasted with another set of data which perhaps more accurately reflects what is going on exclusively in the municipality.

The records of civil marriages in the office of the local Justice of the Peace provide some useful information. The marriage certificate includes

Table 5.6. Summary of Occupation by Generation, Tobatí

Generation	Occupation					
	Farmers		Brickmakers		Other	
	<i>N</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	(%)
Grandfathers	189	(67.3)	28	(10.0)	64	(22.7)
Fathers	20	(16.4)	63	(51.6)	39	(32.0)
Adult Sons	31	(10.8)	155	(53.8)	102	(35.4)

Figure 5.5 Occupation Across Generations

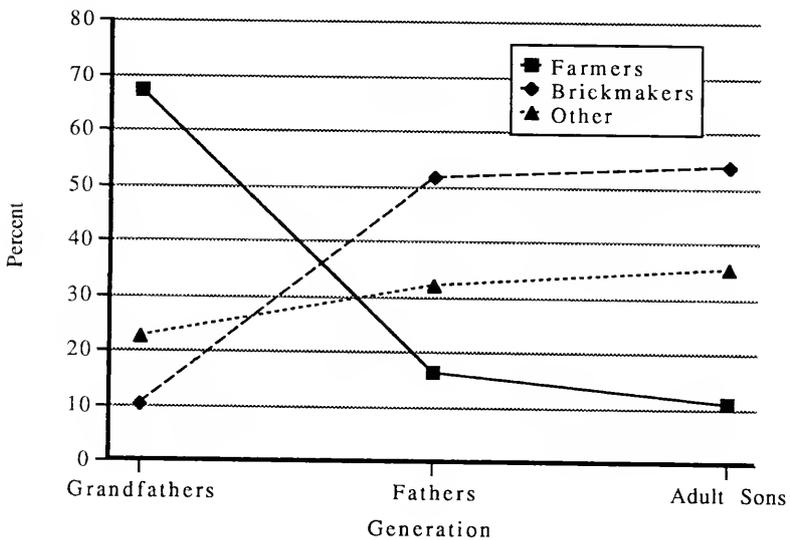
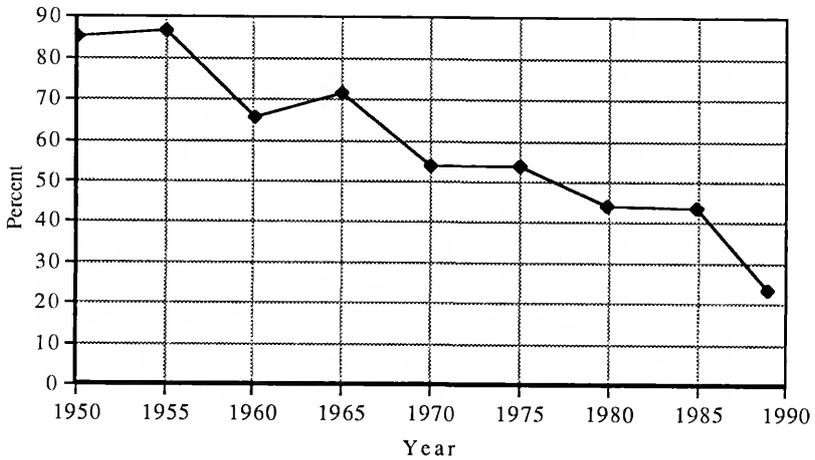


Table 5.7 Number of Farmers Married, By Year

Year	Number	Sample	% Farmers
1950	34	40	85.0
1955	33	38	86.8
1960	23	35	65.7
1965	20	28	71.4
1970	15	28	53.6
1975	21	39	53.8
1980	22	50	44.0
1985	20	46	43.5
1989	14	59	23.7

Figure 5.6 Farmers married as a percentage of all marriages



a statement of the profession of both bride and groom, as well as of their respective parents. These data were duly recorded for five-year intervals, from 1950 (corresponding roughly to the time when the Services were in the town) up to 1989. The data also showed place of birth of both bride and groom. Therefore, it was a relatively simple matter to register the changes in employment across time, choosing only those people born in the *partido* of Tobatí. Figure 5.5, then, shows the declining percentage of grooms who declared their occupation to be *agricultor*, from 1950 to 1989, regardless of urban or rural residence in the municipality.

Furthermore, as revealed in Table 5.7, the absolute numbers of farmers marrying declined at the same time, showing both the ageing of the farming population and the decrease of new opportunities for farming for younger people in the town. This phenomenon was not unique to Tobatí, and indeed has been documented in many other communities throughout the central area of the country (e.g., Zoomers 1988). What was unusual, in the case of Tobatí was the creation of an alternative job market which absorbed the population chased out of the agricultural sector.

The Case of Colonia 21 de Julio

In the more "classic" cases in other areas of Paraguay, the decline in peasant farming has been met by three major alternatives: migration out of the area in search of either new lands or new job opportunities (a so-called "horizontal" response), intensification of production on existing acreage (a "vertical" response) or diversification into other off-farm jobs in search of supplemental income (the "diagonal" solution) (Zoomers: 1988: 65). The 1989 survey of Tobatí indicates that any of these responses may be appropriate. In general, however, the high expense of intensifying

production on severely depleted lands, or the relatively high alternative value of the land for its clay deposits, initially encourages a diagonal response. Even when title to the land is lost, or the rights over production ("derecheras") conceded, farmers are reluctant to abandon the enterprise altogether, and instead send growing sons in search of jobs to supplement declining on-farm earnings. If there are no suitable sons, the farmers themselves must seek supplementary employment. In Tobatí, this ordinarily means wage labor in the ceramics industry. Meanwhile, there is a parallel tendency for growing daughters to emigrate to the capital region to work as household servants, called *empleadas*.

In the nearby rural Colonia 21 de Julio, 26 of 31 families sampled (83.9 percent) were farming families until recently.¹² At present, only fourteen of those 26 families continue to farm. An additional eleven fathers became employees in the ceramics industry, and one family started its own brick operation. Among the fourteen remaining farming families, in turn, there were a total of 28 working sons and 22 working daughters. Of all the working sons, only six continued to farm, but none of the six secured their own land apart from the family farm. In contrast, nineteen of the sons worked either as brickmakers or in other manual labor (generally in construction or as general *empleados*). Fourteen of those nineteen sons had to continue living at home, and seventeen of the nineteen contributed from their wages to the support of the family, whether they lived at home or not. What is perhaps more telling is that, within a region of high migration rates, only three of the 28 working sons migrated away from the town, and none of those went to the new areas of the country marked for land reform. Instead, all three went to Asunción, where two of them were in the military.

The role of grown children in supporting the family enterprise can be measured by looking at comparative rates of outmigration, and the contribution of grown children to the continued upkeep of the household (called "contribution to the *canasta familiar*, or the family subsistence"). While the phenomenon of migration will be discussed more fully in Chapter Seven, it is useful to review some basic migration data in regard to family subsistence. The 1989 survey contrasting the families in the rural Colonia 21 de Julio with the townspeople indicated that rural families are the least likely to send children outside of the community. As shown in Table 5.8, less than one quarter of rural families had at least one outmigrating member as opposed to half of the families in the urban center. This data indicates nothing more than that rural families are most likely to stay in the area to search for alternatives for work (thus enabling the family to continue farming), while urban families feel fewer constraints in searching for employment outside of the community.

With so few families in the sample with migrating sons and daughters, it is more difficult to draw conclusions based on where the migrants go or how they behave outside of the community. The scant data available, however, do indicate that migrating children of farming families are more likely to continue to assist in supporting the family in Tobatí even after migrating. Of the fourteen families identified specifically as farmers, six families had adult children living at home and six families had children who migrated. In five of the six families with adult children at home, one or more children contributed a wage to the *canasta familiar*. That is, it appears that it makes more sense for these families to seek a supplementary income off of the farm, rather than to employ the children on the farm in order to intensify or increase production. Likewise, of the six families

Table 5.8
Families With Outmigrants, by Location

<u>Location</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>% Yes</u>	<u>n=</u>
Urban Center	39	39	50.00	78
Barrio Obrero	18	22	45.00	40
Rural	8	27	22.86	35
Total Families in Survey				153

(Pearson chi-square = 0.024)

with migrant adult children, all six received cash supplements from children who were employed in wage-paying jobs. Only three of the six families, however, could employ at least one adult child within the family farming enterprise. Together with the data in Table 5.6 and Figure 5.4 that show rates of movement out of farming and into industry, a picture emerges of farm families seeking alternative means of maintaining the family enterprise, but that temporary off-farm labor in wage paying jobs eventually leads to a permanent move away from farming as a livelihood.

The destiny of adult sons contrasts somewhat with that of their sisters. The above mentioned three of 28 sons who migrated compares with the five out of 22 adult daughters (22.7 percent) who migrated out of the area to Asunción. All five of those worked as domestic servants, and all five continued to send a part of their wage home to Tobatí. An equal number of daughters helped to support the family by working in artisanry (ceramic pots and figurines) within Tobatí. The remaining twelve listed their occupation as housewives, but only one of the twelve did not contribute in some way to the upkeep of the family, even if only through assistance with on-farm chores during visits, or with gifts of foods.

To summarize, of a total of fifty adult working children of the fourteen farmers, only one daughter (a housewife) did not contribute in some material way to the upkeep of the parents' family. Nearly half (24 of the fifty) remitted cash from a wage, while 25 contributed in some other form. However, only six adult sons continued to work on the family farm, as part of the "family enterprise" while over half of the adult sons (sixteen of 28, or 57.1 percent) found jobs as brickmakers. The question of whether the search for outside employment was considered an "attractive"

or preferable alternative to farming is probably answered by the fact that fourteen of nineteen wage-earning sons had to continue living at home.

What of this remnant agriculturalist population, though? There are far fewer farmers in Tobatí than before in absolute terms, and they certainly form a much smaller segment of the society and economy of the rural municipality. However, is the stability of this smaller population secure at least? The data from the 1989 survey indicate that even the remaining farming population is in a very precarious position with regard to a continued future in agriculture.

Probably the most telling statistic is that only one farmer of the fourteen active farmers in the sample actually owned the farm and possessed title to it. The most common form of tenure was rental, which was a solution for six of the fourteen. Two others owned land in partnership with relatives (only one of which held title), and the other five in the sample farmed very small--two hectares or less--subsistence plots on borrowed land. Colonia 21 de Julio, the area from which the sample was taken, was once the most secure of places for the peasant farmers of Tobatí because of the intervention of the revolutionary Febrerista government in 1937 which guaranteed ownership of these traditionally occupied lands (see above). Because of its proximity to the town, however, and its wealth in clay deposits, it is the rare farmer in the colony who actually possesses land today. Land "rights," if not outright ownership of the land, have fallen mostly to the urban-based *industriales* who mine the subsoil, rent what they can, or let resident farmers continue cultivating very small marginal plots. The only part of the colony where people continue to live unmolested lies at the top of the escarpment, in an old area called Pa'í

Kokué ("field of the priest") with its thin and rocky soils and socially marginalized population.

Six of the fourteen farmers practice commercial agriculture, meaning that the bulk of a crop is intended for market sales. The rest are truly subsistence-oriented farmers who take produce to the local market from time to time, or send a basket of fruit to town with a young child to sell to the local *despensas*, or neighborhood stores. All of the people in the area grow at least some manioc, the tuberous staple of every Paraguayan table, and the most common products taken into the town include oranges, tangerines, bananas, tomatoes, leaf lettuce and beans. Many of the houses keep small patches of tobacco for home-rolled cigars, and women and children dig and gather herbal remedies sold from house to house or in the town market. Another strategy of the small farmers is gathering the small nuts from the ubiquitous *mbocajá* palms, or "cocoteros." The fruits can be raked into piles after they dry on the tree and fall, and held until a cartload can be sold to the processing plants in nearby Itauguá or Capiatá for oil and soapmaking (see Vysokolán 1989: V).

The commercial farmers still rely on the traditional crops of the area: cotton and tobacco. Both of these crops are labor-intensive and, when grown in small parcels, respond well to minimal inputs of fertilizers and pesticides. Two of the farmers, however, are growing tomatoes under a contract with a cannery in Asunción. This is a new venture which may spread if successful. Tomatoes can be a highly labor-intensive and productive crop, but they require relatively high initial investments in hybrid seed, fertilizers, and pesticides, creating a riskier enterprise for the farmer. However, under terms of the contract, the company advances these inputs against the eventual value of the crop. The company also

employs its own agronomist, who occasionally visits the farmers, checks their crop, and advises them on cultivation practices. Conceivably, a farmer could make a living on only two or three hectares of the crop, which may prove to be a viable solution for a few fortunate and business-minded farmers. On the other hand, a severe hailstorm or plague could imperil a farmer's whole operation. In any case, no farmer in the area can continue to rely solely on farming for a livelihood, but must remain dependent on urban employment for earnings above bare subsistence and final refuge from total poverty.

Summary

The 1989 survey acquired tenure and production data only for the colony of 21 de Julio, just one of the town's sixteen rural nuclei. As mentioned above, the case of 21 de Julio may be exceptional because of its proximity to the urban center and the value of its subsoils. However, the generalized data on the shrinking farming population given above applies to the entire area, and a general closure of the peasant niche within the larger economy has been described in detail for the region as a whole (e.g., Zoomers 1988, Fogel 1986, Vysokolan 1989). The particular severity of the decline of small-scale agriculture in the economy of Tobatí is especially evident, however, in the fact that it is one of the very few towns in the Cordillera where the government does not maintain an agriculture extension branch through SEAG, the Servicio de Extensión Agrícola y Ganadera. Also, among the great array of stores and businesses in town, not a single one carries more than a desultory stock of seed, fertilizers, and agricultural chemicals. However, there is a veterinary supplies store in town and the government does maintain a branch of the government

livestock agency (SENACSA) for the benefit of the estimated fourteen large cattle ranches surrounding the town.

The commercially oriented farmers toward the outskirts of the municipality grow somewhat larger quantities of cotton, tobacco, and sugar cane. However, the totality of the crops are marketed in Asunción via the towns of Caacupé to the south, Arroyos y Esteros to the north, and Caraguatay to the east. Therefore, the small economy associated with the agricultural communities on the outskirts of Tobatí has very little impact on the town's economy as a whole although the large rice plantation, still in operation since the Service's were in town, mills and packages their grain locally, employing a handful of local people. Also, local farmers supply a part of the produce sold in the neighborhood stores and the municipal market, although larger vendors can usually acquire a more reliable and cheaper source of produce in urban markets of Asunción.

The town's still-prosperous cattle industry, which traditionally was so important to the town, likewise has little effect on the local economy. The government's cattle control office in town (SENACSA) registered fourteen cattle operations within the partido, ranging in size from 200 hectares to 2,000 hectares. Although most of this land is still in the hands of local elites (especially descendents of the Rizzi family), much has been transferred to absentee owners with no ties to the town. Two generals of the army and another high-ranking government official own ranches in Tobatí totalling over 2,000 hectares, while two other ranches are owned by outside businessmen. Even the local owners do all their trade in the capital, and almost none of the money accruing to the cattle industry finds its way into the local economy.

During the 1982-1992 intercensal period, the total rural population of Tobatí shrank by seven percent at the same time that the total population of the partido grew from 16,301 to 18,890. While many of the rural poor are moving on to Asunción, Tobatí is more notable among towns of central Paraguay in the small numbers of campesinos migrating to the the eastern poles of rural development, toward the Brazilian border. Instead, the sons, particularly, of the farming population are attracted toward the urban part of the town, to work in the ceramics industry or one of the many other ancillary businesses made possible largely through the growth of that industry.

Notes

1 The exchange rate in Paraguay fluctuated a great deal from 1988 to 1990, from about 1,050 Guaranies (G) to the dollar (U\$S) to about G1,300 to U\$S 1.00. For purposes of exposition, the constant figure of G1,200 to U\$S1.00 will be used when estimating costs in dollars. Admittedly, this provides a poor measure of what "real" costs are in terms of the people earning and spending Guaranies. As a rough guide, it might be helpful to know that a brickmaker (employee) in town earned about G3,500 per day (without meals), and an agricultural laborer in a compañía earned about G2,200 per day, with meals. However, the question of salaries will be discussed in greater detail.

2 There is a three-tiered charge for water:

A. Households pay G500 base for ten square meters (10,000 liters) and an excedent of G150 per cubic meter.

B. Olerías (non-mechanized brickmakers) pay G3,000 base for 12 square meters and an excedent of G200 per cubic meter.

C. Cerámicas (mechanized brickmakers) pay G5,000 base for 22 square meters and an excedent of G250 per cubic meter.

3 In late 1989 the Tobateña bus company did institute a line into the colony of 21 de Julio. Their most ancient vehicle made an eight-

kilometer round trip twice a day on an experimental basis, but given the condition of both the vehicle and the roads, the management was pessimistic that the service would be permanent.

4 The Services' population figure was the result of their own household census, which only counted the people in the town proper. The Paraguayan census of 1950 (four years after the Service's study) showed an urban population of 1,915, which must have included households in the urban periphery which the Services did not count.

5 Paul Lewis (1980) narrates the most concise and engaging history of the convoluted events of the period in *Paraguay Under Stroessner*.

6 A large part of the population which was simply superfluous swelled the ranks of an urban proletariat as the population of Asunción soared by over four percent per year during the period (GOP 1982: 21).

7 For the discussion involving the following cases, I was given access to the files of the Comité de Iglesias in Asunción, which is probably the most influential defendant of citizen's rights in the country. I also spoke with many of the principal persons involved on both sides of the disputes and, of course, had recourse to newspaper items which appeared from time to time.

8 All of these officials were removed from office after the *golpe de estado* of February, 1989. The priest was no longer in Tobatí during the time I was there.

9 This was the pseudonym used for the family by the Services.

10 The "remunerative activities" counted by Harris tended to split occupations very finely. For example, he listed Federal Tax Collector, Federal Tax Clerk, State Tax Collector and State Tax Clerk as four different activities. The classification system used herein is much more inclusive.

11 I was told on several occasions that a good hedge against inflation (which usually has been much lower in Paraguay than in neighboring countries) was to "buy canned goods."

12 The total sample size for the rural area was 35 households, of which there were missing data on four families regarding occupation of grandfathers.

CHAPTER 6 THE BRICK AND CERAMICS INDUSTRY IN TOBATÍ

Tobatí was probably always known as a modest ceramics center, simply because of the existence of quality clays in the immediate area. No mention of ceramics is found in connection with the town in the earliest sources, but probably only because ceramics, as a cottage industry, was ubiquitous in a society virtually without metals for crafting pots and other vessels. The great Paraguayan author, Augusto Roa Bastos, mentions in his famous historical novel *Yo, el Supremo* "the listening-flowerpots that I fashion with the china clay of Tobatí" (1987: 70). There is no recorded history of actual brickmaking in the town, and even during the late 1940s there were few houses made of brick, as common adobe was the cheaper and preferred alternative (Service and Service 1954: 100). However, brickmaking was probably incipient as a local industry as long as there was a regional demand for the material for public buildings and houses of the rural elites.

The surge in brickmaking as an economic activity in Tobatí was no doubt linked to the major changes accompanying the push for "modernization" during Stroessner's tenure in the 1960s. As discussed in Chapter Four, changes in rural policies concerning land tenure, export-based agriculture, and the development of a rural communications infrastructure had the dual effects of infusing new cash into the economy and increasing the rate of rural-urban

migration. As the growth of the Asunción region mushroomed during the period, there was a corresponding demand for durable construction materials at the same time that forests in the central zone were being obliterated for urban expansion and agricultural intensification. An increase in the money supply was the only thing needed to stimulate production in clay-bearing areas as new roads and vehicles provided cheap access to markets.

The larger industrialists in Tobatí mention another significant event in recent history as providing a great impetus for the ceramic industry in the town. When construction was finally begun on the gigantic hydroelectric complex at Itaipú in 1975 there was an instantaneous demand for materials to create urban and infrastructure works on the Paraguayan side of the river to house an estimated 12,000 Paraguayan workers, their families, and an attendant ancillary population. The Itaipú treaty stipulated that fifty percent of expenditures for such works be granted to Paraguayan firms, but only on the condition that Paraguay could meet the demand. The approximately one billion dollars budgeted for such tasks was no small stimulus in an economy the size of Paraguay's, but even so, "the magnitude and swiftness of the demand created by Itaipú has exceeded the entrepreneurial capacity of the Paraguayan manufacturing sector" (World Bank 1978: 16).

Paraguayan business tried its best, in any case. Compared to commodities such as steel and cement, brick production was relatively easy to expand and modernize. Construction and financing of brickworks was within reach of individual small entrepreneurs as long as there was an abundance of raw material and access to

markets--a clarion call to the new class of brickmakers in Tobatí. There were, however, challenges. Not only did Paraguayans have to produce in quantities equal to the demand, but they had to produce materials of improved quality in order to compete with Brazilian suppliers and Argentine interlopers. The demand for quantities was met by "industrialization;"--mechanization, division of labor, and maximum efficiency derived from a salaried, tractable labor force. Higher quality was also achieved by these same processes, which increased uniformity of product and facilitated checks on quality control. Finally, business people searched for, and found, different sources of clay and developed new techniques in kiln design, clay admixtures, and firing procedures. However, although industrial materials were lighter, harder, and more durable, they were slightly more expensive and thus did not close the niche for the producers of the traditional ceramic products.

New Bricks and Old Bricks: The Technological Variable

Once the Itaipú boom passed, the growth of the ceramics industry in Tobatí was curtailed, but never seriously threatened. Because of the continued strength of the agricultural sector, the Paraguayan economy continued to grow robustly during the 1980s. After an initial post-Itaipú slowdown, the construction industry also continued to grow due to continued urban expansion (IDB 1993: 2). These days, there is no question that the "business" of Tobatí is bricks. However, in Tobatí one commonly speaks of brickmaking operations (*olerías*) and ceramics operations (*cerámicas*) as if they were two different industries, which in a very real sense they are.

The fundamental difference between the two lies at the level of technology, which in turn is highly determinative of forms of business and labor organization and capitalization. These last factors are likely to be correlated with an array of social phenomena, from family organization and household economy to the development of working class ideologies. Furthermore, industrial technology has an incalculable impact on factors as diverse as resource exploitation and construction engineering, which have ripple effects throughout the national economy.

In a nutshell, the *olerías* can be defined, as does the municipal government, as "non-mechanized" ceramics operations, while the *cerámicas* are "mechanized" ceramics operations. At another level of analysis, it is most useful to describe these industrial structures as "pre-capitalist" and "capitalist" formations. When the Services stayed in Tobatí in 1948, there were eighteen of the former and only one of the mechanized operations. The latter, large, enterprise employed up to forty people (at maximum production levels), of whom over half (23) were women and children. The remaining small kilns were all owned and operated entirely as small family enterprises. The combined impact of the ceramics industry at the time was so slight that it merited less than three pages of discussion in an entire chapter on "Commerce and Industry" (Service and Service 1954: Ch. 6).

During the period of time from 1988 to 1990, there were roughly 400 active ceramics operations within the municipality of Tobatí, of which close to 300 were *olerías* and 120 were *cerámicas*. About thirty of the *cerámicas*, in turn, were very large operations

with two or more kilns.¹ There were no figures more precise than these, because new operations were constantly under construction, older ones often were in a process of abandonment or rebuilding, and others may have been idle for indeterminate lengths of time. As shown in Table 5.4 (Chapter Five), the municipality's figures from 1987 showed a total of 250 *olerías* (200 in the urban area and fifty in the rural areas) and 57 *cerámicas* (47 urban and ten rural) (IDM 1987). In terms of numbers employed, the 1982 census gives occupation by sector as shown in Table 6.1.

These figures are not inconsistent with the data drawn from the 1989 survey, shown in Chapter Five. The census figures showed 51 percent of working men to be in manufacturing. The survey data showed 51.6 percent of fathers to be employed as "brickmakers." However, the proportion of ceramics workers no doubt increased between 1982 and 1989, since the census included a variety of other occupations within the manufacturing sector, which may have reduced the proportion of men actually working in ceramics in 1982 to around 45 percent. Moreover, the 1982 census data figures showing a total of 36.83 percent of adult men to be working in agriculture (55.36 percent in rural areas and 4.77 percent in the urban area) also squares roughly with 1989 survey data showing forty percent of male heads of household to be farmers in the semi-urbanized area of 21 de Julio. Likewise, Figure 5.5 showed that the proportion of farmers marrying as a percent of all marriages declined from 44 percent in 1980 to 23.7 percent in 1989. Indeed, every source of data illustrates not only that the importance of the

Table 6.1. Population Economically Active by Sector, Tobatí 1982

	<i>Agric.</i>	<i>Manuf.</i>	<i>Const.</i>	<i>Comm.</i>	<i>Services</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
<u>Men Only</u>							
Urban	90	962	117	183	279	256	1887
(%)	(4.8)	(51.0)	(6.2)	(9.7)	(14.8)	(13.5)	(100)
Rural	1807	1067	70	65	105	150	3264
(%)	(55.4)	(32.7)	(2.1)	(2.0)	(3.2)	(4.6)	(100)
Total	1897	2029	187	248	384	406	5151
(%)	(36.8)	(39.4)	(3.6)	(4.8)	(7.5)	(7.9)	(100)
<u>Women Only</u>							
Urban	6	97	1	69	178	25	376
(%)	(1.6)	(25.8)	(0.3)	(18.4)	(47.3)	(6.6)	(100)
Rural	28	186	0	20	64	20	318
(%)	(8.8)	(58.5)	(0)	(6.3)	(20.1)	(6.3)	(100)
Total	34	283	1	89	242	45	694
(%)	(4.9)	(40.8)	(0.1)	(12.8)	(34.9)	(6.5)	(100)

Source: Paraguay. Dirección General de Estadística y Censos.

[Resultados del censo nacional de población y viviendas, 1982]

ceramics industry in the economic life of the town has grown enormously in recent years, but that it was still ascendant into the 1990s.

The most useful way to describe the ceramics industry in Tobatí is by briefly reviewing the structure and operations of the two types of industry; non-mechanized and mechanized. This should simplify the task of assessing the effects that the industry as a whole has had and is having on the economic and social life of the local society.

Brickmaking as a Family Enterprise

In 1949 the Services described the eighteen manual brickmaking operations, or *olerías*, in Tobatí as "typically owned and operated by a family" (Service and Service 1954: 100). The minimum requirements to operate a brickmaking operation consisted of at least two or three adult men (supplemented by women and children) for manual labor, a source of good black clay, an animal (horse or ox) for mixing the clay, the most basic of tools (a wheelbarrow, hoes and shovels), and a modest capital outlay for a drying shed and wooden forms, or brick molds. Given the lack of efficient and modern transportation, the factories were necessarily located on sites adjacent to clay deposits, almost all found to the east of town in the area now known as Barrio Obrero and traditionally called Tuju Guazú, or "Big Mud." The Services did not discuss sources of firewood for fueling the brick kilns, and presumably there was sufficient wood in the immediate vicinity to allow each brickmaker to cut firewood as needed.

As long as there was a continued demand for the cheap bricks produced in the *olerías*, that sector of the economy continued to grow, although most recently the construction of new *olerías* has slowed down in comparison to the construction of new, modern *cerámicas*. While a great number of the *olerías* continue to thrive, recent changes in the conditions for their existence may signal their eventual decline.

The *olerías* in operation in the late 1980s were probably nearly identical in technology and operation to those the Services found forty years earlier, except that size and capacity tended to increase over time. The brickyards consist of three major components: the clay processing site, the drying shed, and the kiln (Figure 6.1). Usually, but not always, the *olero's* home shares the same property, which is a cheerless place to live with little room for a shade tree, much less a garden.

At an earlier time, the *olerías* were adjacent to the sources of clay. Over time, however, those original sources were nearly exhausted and now there exist only small, isolated lenses of suitable clays in the populated areas across the arroyo. Most of the brickmakers buy their clay off a flatbed truck, which hauls it from the newer, but more distant sources in 21 de Julio or the more outlying *compañías*. The *oleros* tend to choose their clays mostly on the basis of price rather than quality, since usually they lack the technology necessary for firing materials of highest quality anyway.

The clay is dumped in a mound next to a processing area, and needs no protection from the weather. The processing area consists of a circle of level packed earth about sixteen meters in diameter, at



Figure 6.1

Family-Operated Olería
Tobatí, Paraguay 1989

the center of which is the *tónel*, or mixer. The *tónel* is little changed from the way the Services described it (1954: 101), and still consists of

a tall, slender, upright cylinder of staves bound together with wire. Inside is an upright log with short pegs or spokes arranged spirally, so that, as the log is revolved by ox power, the mud is mixed and at the same time forced down from the top of the mixer and out at the bottom.

The only real change in design of the *tónel* seems to be that the wooden pegs are now replaced by stubby metal blades, which are both more durable and more efficient. Also, a horse, rather than an ox, is now preferred to turn the long, rough-hewn pole attached to the log, since the horse is faster. In fact, the young boy (*mital*) usually assigned the task of goading the horse is commonly known as the "*kavajú-reví*" ("horse's ass") since he has to follow directly at the animal's backside to keep it moving. The rut defined by horse and tender on their interminable rounds defines the circumference of the mixing site.

As the clay is shoveled into the *tónel*, it is mixed with sand and water. No other tempering material is used. The pitch-black mixed material moves down through the *tónel* until it is forced out of a rectangular hole at the bottom, and carried outside of the circle or into the drying shed to be molded into bricks or tiles. These molded bricks are of the "common" type (*ladrillos común*), usually the only kind made by the non-mechanized *olerías*.

The *olero* usually has two sizes of wooden brick molds. There are molds designed for two bricks for the young ones to manage, and

molds designed for four bricks for the adults. The mud is packed into the mold, which is then carried to the side where the bricks are gingerly popped out to be air-dried. The children, explain their parents, can then easily carry one brick in each hand. If the olero has a large patio, the bricks are usually placed outside on the ground to dry for the first two days, provided there is warm sun and no threatening clouds. Otherwise, the bricks are carefully stacked on edge, cross-wise in a latticework fashion, inside the drying shed for about a week or ten days, depending on the weather. The drying shed is little more than a low-lying roof, open at the sides, to protect the drying material from the rain while still allowing for a cross-current of air.

The experienced brickmaker knows when the bricks or tiles are ready to be fired by examining a thumbnail scratch on the surface of the clay. When ready, the dried material is carefully stacked in the kiln, bricks on the bottom and tiles on top. The kilns are made of the same brick material to be fired. They are normally square, about five to eight meters on a side, and taper slightly inward toward the top, about three meters from the ground. The walls are massive, about a half meter thick, and unmortared toward the very top. At the base of the kiln, there are usually two to four fireholes, or *boquillas*. A kiln this size can usually hold fifteen to eighteen thousand bricks, or perhaps a third less with six or eight thousand tiles on top. When loaded, the kiln is sealed off at the top with a thick layer of loose brick.

Loading the kiln and tending the fire are tasks requiring a degree of expertise. Hasty or indifferent loading, of course, can lead to

breakage of the unfired material and uneven firing. A kiln owner will hire an experienced tender rather than risk a bad firing. A firing usually lasts for thirty to sixty hours, and the fire must be tended day and night to assure a slow, even burn. Hard firewood is bought by the truckload of about twenty cubic meters, and it takes a full truckload for one firing. Different woods are also chosen for starting the fire and finishing off the burn, and a successful burn determines the rich orange-red color of the finished products.

At least thirty hours pass after the end of a burn before the kiln has cooled enough to uncover. After the kiln is uncovered, the finished material is removed and stacked on the olero's property. The small brickmakers sell their materials right off the property, although the larger ones may take it into the capital. Specific marketing practices will be discussed below.

Brickmaking practiced at this scale is essentially a non-capitalist enterprise. Most importantly, there is no wage labor involved--indeed, the labor input of family members usually is not even considered a factor of production. Therefore, there is no "surplus value" extracted from labor which accrues to the owner of the enterprise as capitalist. Income from the operation usually goes into the family's subsistence rather than being invested in increased production. Undoubtedly, however, mechanized, capitalist forms of production may often be a goal of the small olería owners which may indeed be achieved by the conscientious investment of profits from the enterprise. It is even possible to identify some of the small brick-making operations as transitory from pre-capitalist to capitalist

operations as, for example, part-time outside labor is employed during peak seasons.

The scale of these operations is indicated by the fact that the average owner of a brick kiln had slightly more than two grown sons still living with the family and working in the family operation (in the sample there were 32 sons making bricks among fifteen kiln owners). However, wives, daughters, and young boys are commonly employed at least some of the time for lighter tasks, so the total average labor force for one of these families is probably about the equivalent of four adult men. Theoretically, then, production might be significantly increased by employing as few as two or three extra men, although even such a modest upscaling of the business would require additional capital inputs per firing.

Brickmaking as Industry

The actual steps for manufacturing ceramics materials do not vary significantly between the *olerías* and the *cerámicas*. Rather, the differences are in terms of scale, organization of labor, scope of operations, adaptability of operations, marketing and, of course, use of industrial machinery.

Normally, the industrial enterprise is larger than the *olería* to the extent that the economy of necessary capital inputs demands increased size. This means that the added expenses of machinery and a better designed kiln are not justified unless the operation can produce at optimal capacity. After a minimum justified increase in scale, a point of decreasing returns on investment is not easily reached unless there is a diminished demand for the product or an increase in

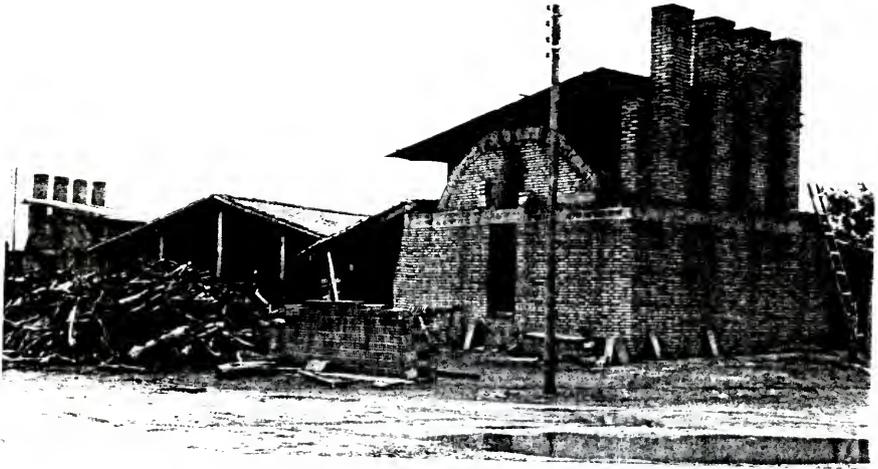


Figure 6.2

Industrial-Level Cerámica
Tobatí, Paraguay 1989

the cost of inputs. It appears that, in Tobatí, there is still a tendency toward larger operations, although the most limiting factors are probably the supply of labor and availability versus risks of increased capital investment. Costs of raw materials have steadily increased in past years although, so far, brickmakers have been able to compensate by increasing the cost of their products while still staying competitive with brickmakers from other areas.

The largest industrialists in Tobatí have traveled to Argentina and Brazil to view ceramics operations in those countries, and consulted with engineers regarding efficiency of kiln construction. They pay particular attention to the tightness and insulation of the kiln interior, the ventilation ("draw") of the fireboxes, and the system of internal baffles which distributes the heat from the fires up through the kiln. The larger kilns may handle sixty thousand "pieces" (combination of materials) per burn, while the average industrial kiln holds about forty thousand (Figure 6.2). The two largest operations have four kilns and they can turn out material at a fairly constant rate. About thirty others have two or three kilns each.

The industrialists take special care in choosing clays and buying fuelwood. While the non-mechanized brickmakers would purchase any acceptable clay for the right price, the industrialists mixed clays from different sources, and each claimed to have a "secret" mix that guaranteed the superiority of the product. However, any such "secret" was probably impossible to guard considering the limited milieu of the town and the mobility of labor. In any case, the industrialists often owned at least a share of their source of clays, but they usually

paid as much for their fuelwood as the oleros, since it was brought into the area from a considerable distance.

The use of machinery, combined with an assembly-line production regime, is the key to the efficiency and profitability of the cerámicas. However, there is no great complexity involved with the industrial machinery, which is based on rotating blades to cut and mix the material and a screw mechanism to keep it moving. In fact, most of the machines are manufactured right in town by one of five different makers. In contrast to the simple brickmakers, the industrialists use no molds. Therefore, there are only two basic machines required: a mixer (*amasadora*) replaces the animal-powered *tónel* to prepare the clay, and an extruding machine (*extrusora*) to force out the unfired clay in its desired form. Both of these machines can be connected to the same diesel-fueled motor by belts and operated simultaneously. Many of the smaller operators, however, have only one machine which can be adapted both as a mixer and an extruder. These operators mix one day and "cut" (extrude) the next day.

The cerámicas are much more versatile than the olerías, and manufacture a much wider variety of products. The principal product, of course, is bricks, although not the common bricks made by the non-mechanized olerías. The extruded bricks are usually "three tubes" (*tres tubos*), although some companies are making brick of "six tubes." These are bricks with three or six holes through their long sides. These bricks use less clay, fire harder, and are supposed to be stronger in construction, since cement falls into the holes and binds the bricks more firmly. After bricks, the most common product is *tejas*, or the

Spanish-Mediterranean rounded roofing tiles common in the United States southwest and ubiquitous in Latin America. In the case of *tejas*, the clay is extruded as a flat tile which drops onto a wooden form shaped like the finished roofing tile. As it is slipped off the form onto a pallet for drying it retains its rounded shape for firing.

The next products in importance are *tejuelas* (flat square tiles), *tejuelones* (long flat tiles placed on top of the rafters and underneath the roofing tiles), and *pisos* (large square tiles used for floors). A very few of the *cerámicas* are also experimenting with the production of *ladrillejos*, or small brick-shaped tiles just coming into fashion in Asunción for use as housing façades. All of these products can be made with the same machinery. The clay is extruded in much the same way that frosting comes out of a pastry decorator's cone and, likewise, the form of the product is changed by simply switching the tip of the extruder. Finally, the largest factories have only recently begun manufacturing large ceramic pipes used for water and sewer conduit. This type of work is more complex, however, than simple brick and tile making. It requires specialized, imported extruders and a more highly skilled work force and, so far, is a relatively unimportant part of the industry in Tobatí.

These modern *cerámicas* are designed and operated as thoroughly capitalist enterprises. Wage labor may be the greatest and most elastic cost factor for some of the larger businesses, so a great deal of care is taken to extract the highest value from available labor. Since these industries do not rely on family members and relatives, labor can be carefully regulated, hiring more hands during busy times and laying workers off with impunity during slow times. Likewise,

labor cost is a negotiable factor between ownership and workers, although for reasons peculiar to the town, the workers have very little bargaining power in such negotiations. This has to do with a continuing surplus of labor supply over demand, as well as a paternalistic relationship between management and labor which persists as a pre-capitalist relic from the recent past.² These aspects will bear some further discussion in the following chapters.

There is also a tendency toward an increasing division of labor in such industries. The larger and more diverse cerámicas rely on more skilled personnel to manage and repair machines, mix clays, and tend fires, as well as to fill supervisory functions. However, as Tilly remarks (1981: 188), the real hallmark of proletarianization in capitalist industry is not so much increased specialization of labor as it is "de-differentiation," as labor is concentrated and homogenized into repetitive and easily supervised tasks. While the labor force as a whole may be segmented, individuals function uniformly and monotonously, almost as parts of an industrial machine.

The Máquina Humana : New Class Structures

According to at least one young man, the motors, mixers, and extruders are not the only new kinds of machinery to sweep the brickmaking industry in Tobatí in recent years. During the course of interviewing workers in the cerámicas, one young worker asked me what I meant by "industrialization." I explained in simplest terms that in regard to the brick industry, it referred to mechanization. The worker--probably about 21 years old--regarded me levelly and declared "Yes, that is what *we* are--the *máquina humana*" (human

machine). After a year in the town and talking with so many different people, I was stunned to finally hear one person articulate in such simple, yet eloquent, terms the general, indefinable dilemma seemingly faced by so many workers.

In the cottage-type brickyards, family members typically work side by side and produce bricks with a certain rhythm that accomodates each member of the working force. Each person, from child to adult, works with their own mold and at their own pace. Of course, the emphasis is on production, which dictates an optimal use of labor, but each worker maximizes output according to personal capabilities and demands. While labor is personalized, however, value from the finished product accrues to the family, rather than to the individual. In short, there is a close link between the social and industrial aspects of the family business.³

It is interesting to examine the bricks that come out of the *olería* as opposed to those made in the *cerámica*. The practice that the small family brickyards have of sun-drying in the patio of the house before placing under the drying sheds is revealed in the occasional prints on the bricks of little hooves, paws, and hands. Every once in a while, however, a brick turns up with a heart etched in the surface, or a pair of initials, a cryptic message, or any other icon left by its maker in a moment of reflection. These anomalies serve as a reminder that each brick was made by an individual worker *cum* artisan as a conscious act. There is no point in searching through the materials of a *cerámica* for a similar artifact, however. Even if the machine allowed time for a helper to leave a mark in a still-wet piece of clay, a foreman would not

likely be tolerant of destroying the ideal uniformity of the manufactured items.

In the capitalist, mechanized *cerámicas*, there is no such personal aspect to labor. The screws and blades of mixers and extruders turn at a constant rate, which means that the machines set the pace of work that varies for no worker. Once the machine is switched on, the worker is more or less an adjunct to the machine and, in a sense, becomes a part of the machine. Therefore, a problem with a worker is regarded more as a technical, rather than a personal, problem. Similarly, production can be valued according to precise measures regarding number of pieces produced per unit of wage. This "subsequent standardization, segmentation, and surveillance of work," is a hallmark of the process of labor under a proletarianized regime (Tilly 1981: 185). The frustration expressed by the young worker mentioned above is a logical result of the depersonalization of work within a conservative social milieu that still emphasizes the traditional, personalistic, relations of production described above (cf. Baran and Hobsbawm 1961: 49).

This change in the social relations of production which accompanies a shift in the forces of production defines the formation of new class structures within the society. Therefore, it is one thing to look at change of job structure over time, and another to consider change in class. Like the mayor of Tobatí who was involved in the land dispute in Santa Rosa'í (Chapter Five) many people assume that jobs equal "progress," and the acquisition of a job title is a change in status in a positive sense. In terms of political economy, however, there is no necessary correlation between "class" and "status," and

status should not be confused with class.⁴ The people in Tobatí who have moved from the somewhat amorphous condition of "peasant farmer" to wage earner during the past generation also have undergone a shift in class. The move from farm to factory often involved the simultaneous forfeiture of control over the family's means of production, which implied, at least, the loss of an intimate control over one's economic and social destiny.

For many farmers, however, the growth of the brick industry presented new opportunities for upward mobility. Many farmers, after all, who felt constrained by diminishing possibilities for new lands as population increased in the area decided to invest their capital and labor in the construction and operation of brickyards. Many of these same farmers and their families prospered in the new venture. The 1989 survey showed, for example, that fourteen out of 22 owners of brickyards (63.6 percent) were originally from farming families. Whether or not these people did prosper in the brick industry, their change of profession did not necessarily involve a shift in class (see Dore 1983: 363). As owners of the kilns--in control of their own labor power and means of production--it was relatively easy for these families to make a transition from small farmers to incipient bourgeoisie, as urban petty commodity producers.

The other side of the coin, of course, is that the great numbers of wage laborers in the *cerámicas* of Tobatí also came from farming families, and for those people there was an accompanying shift in class, from peasantry to proletariat⁵. From the same survey, 26 out of 38 employees in the brick industry (68.4 percent) came from farming families. Furthermore, the trend toward movement out of farming

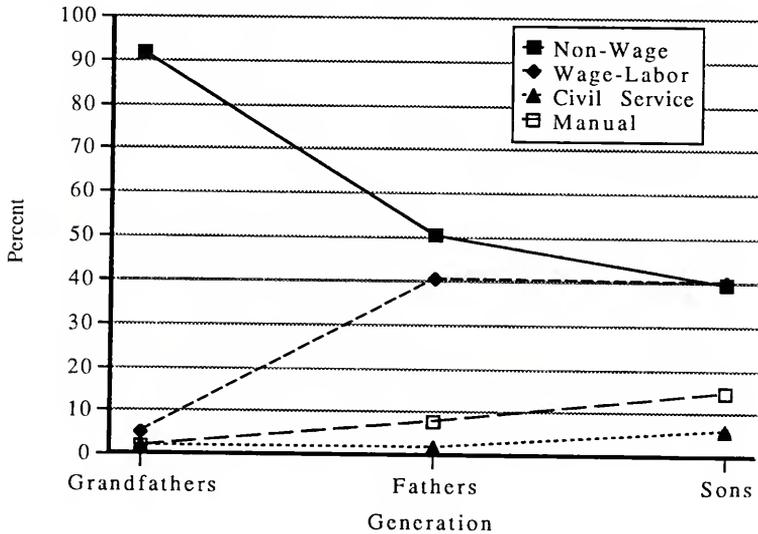
and into wage labor in the *cerámicas* appears to be accelerating. Thirteen active farmers in the sample in 21 de Julio had a total of sixteen sons working in brickmaking, of whom twelve were wage laborers (75 percent) as opposed to only four who worked in their own brickyards. It is certain that as the mechanized *cerámicas* replace the increasingly non-competitive *olerías*, the possibilities for farmers to invest in the brick industry will diminish even more, since ever increasing amounts of capital and organization are required to open the new *cerámicas*. Therefore, at one level there is a trend toward the industrialization of the economy in Tobatí, but on another there is an equally strong trend toward the proletarianization of the working population. A large body of research shows the effects that this may have on social organization and domestic economy, and those aspects will be discussed in Chapter Seven. The perspectives for the actual development of a "working-class ideology" will likewise be addressed in Chapter Eight.

Table 6.2 gives a basic idea of the impact of these changes in the employment situation in Tobatí in terms of the formation of a new proletariat in the town. In the 1989 survey, assignment to a particular class was determined by whether the subjects controlled the means of production which provided for their own, and their families' subsistence (peasant farmer and bourgeois) or whether the subjects subsisted principally through the sale, for a wage, of their own labor power (wage-labor, or proletarian). Certain occupations share characteristics of both groups, and are difficult to pigeonhole for theoretical reasons. Civil service employees, for example, receive a

Table 6.2. Wage-Earning Population by Generation, Tobatí 1989

Generation	Class							
	Non-Wage		Wage-Labor		Civil Service		Manual	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Grandfathers	109	(91.6)	6	(5.0)	2	(1.7)	2	(1.7)
Fathers	60	(50.4)	48	(40.3)	2	(1.7)	9	(7.6)
Sons	101	(39.6)	102	(40.0)	15	(5.9)	37	(14.5)

Figure 6.3 Wage-Earning Population by Generation



wage as employees, but as "mental laborers," the "means of production" is inherent in their own selves and not, in a strict sense, alienated. On the other hand, certain kinds of manual laborers are essentially separated from any class (see Bottomore 1983: 292). They hire out their labor, but as independent agents they neither receive a "salary" nor relinquish a portion of the value of their labor to a third, capitalist, party. Common examples of these kinds of workers in Tobatí include bricklayers and housebuilders who work as independent, contracted labor for specific tasks.

In relation to the major changes in the socio-economic foundation of Tobatí in recent years, the emergence of an urban proletariat is of greatest interest. As a glance at Table 6.2 clearly shows, there has been a very significant generational decrease in the proportion of the society defined as petty bourgeois and peasant. Traditionally, this portion of the population represented, above all, the small independent farmers and the people in local business and commerce. These same sectors of the population are still major components of the contemporary population, but they are joined by the very high numbers of ceramics industry owners, both capitalist and non-capitalist. Even so, the decline in the relative proportion independent producers was still very large and was matched, in the course of a single generation, by the very high growth in the number of wage-laborers.

In many "modernizing" agrarian societies, the rise in a wage-laboring population is accounted for by greater numbers of farmers seeking paid agricultural work as they are forced from their own small holdings as a consequence of consolidation of land holdings (Saint

1981). As the previous chapter showed, this was not the situation in Tobatí. The new proletarian population was, indeed, "expelled" from the land, but primarily as a result of increased population density rather than from consolidation of rural holdings (although this also has been a factor to some extent). Rather than working for a new class of capitalist farmers, the very large wage-laboring population in Tobatí found work primarily in the brickyards, both in urban and in rural areas. To a lesser degree, wage labor is also absorbed in other occupations, many of which support the ceramics industry, such as trucking and mechanics.

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show the shift from peasantry and small business owners ("independents") to proletariat from the first and second generation, and again from the second to the third generation. Table 6.3 illustrates the movement into wage labor between the time that the Services were in Tobatí (the time of the "grandfather generation") and the following generation. Of all the male parents interviewed, a full forty percent were wage-earning sons of independent fathers. None of the independent fathers in the sample, however, were sons of wage-earners. In that first generation, there were only five men who worked in wage labor, and all five had sons who followed them into the proletariat.

Table 6.4, in turn, shows that the same trend and direction in social mobility continued over time into the third generation. While a large number of sons who were born into independent families eventually took jobs as wage-laborers (34.26 percent), there was very little movement from wage-labor into professional self-sufficiency in bourgeois occupations (13.16 percent). Simply speaking, social

Table 6.3. Change in Wage-Earning Population from Generation 1
(Grandfathers) to Generation 2 (Fathers)

<i>Grandfathers</i>	<i>Fathers</i>					
	<u>Non-Wage</u>		<u>Wage-Labor</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<i>N</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	(%)
Non-Wage	59	(59.6)	40	(40.4)	99	(100)
Wage-Labor	0	(0)	5	(100)	5	(100)
Total	59	(53.7)	45	(43.3)	104	(100)

Test Statistic: Fischer Exact Test (Two-Tail) = 0.013

Table 6.4. Change in Wage-Earning Population
from Generation 2 (Fathers) to Generation 3 (Sons)

<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Sons</i>					
	<u>Non-Wage</u>		<u>Wage-Labor</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<i>N</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	(%)	<i>N</i>	(%)
Non-Wage	71	(65.7)	37	(34.3)	108	(100)
Wage-Labor	5	(13.2)	33	(86.8)	38	(100)
Total	76	(52.1)	70	(47.9)	146	(100)

Test Statistic: Pearson Chi-Square = 0.000

Note: Includes Fathers of adult Sons only.

mobility is not symmetrical, and there is a high net movement of labor into the proletariat that has persisted for at least three generations. In Tobatí, this process is endemic to the community and is not linked with high rates of rural-urban migration, as in so many other examples of proletarianization in developing societies (Hauser 1961: 36). Moreover, with all indications that a traditional pre-capitalist sector of the family-based brickworks will eventually give way to the capitalist ceramics industry (see below), this trend should continue for at least a generation to come. Some of the more salient social implications of these changes will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

The Economics of Brickmaking

The non-capitalist *olería* and the capitalist *cerámica* have certain fixed costs which are similar in both cases. The major cost ciphered into the cost-profit calculus by the industrialized producers but not the non-mechanized producers is that of the cost of labor. As mentioned above, the family-based brickmakers working only with family members do not place an incremental value on their labor and calculate earnings more by whether the product sells for more than the cost of the cash inputs. Also, while both kinds of producers have initial costs of construction, the industrialist capitalizes these costs while the cottage-type producer tends to absorb the costs more as a labor input. As long as initial costs are low enough, the small producer does not consciously figure this investment as a deficit, even though the kiln itself may be regarded as an asset.

After these costs, however, both kinds of producers have to pay for valuable raw materials; namely clay and fuel. In many cases, these costs are fixed, although there is some variation depending on circumstances. Also, as mentioned earlier, the household brickmakers may pay much less for clay of a much poorer quality. Because of the many variables influencing both costs and quantities of materials used, the following figures are given only as fairly accurate estimates, and actual profits may be affected by yet other, more "invisible" factors unique to each producer.

There is still some clay left in the immediate vicinity, especially near Barrio Obrero and in nearby 21 de Julio, although it is of the poor quality used in some of the more rustic *olerías*. Most of the clay, however, is brought in from five or six *compañías*, and the price varies by place of origin, which is known for a particular quality of clay. The places most frequently mentioned as sources of clay, with prices, included Santa Rosa'í (G 25,000 per truckload), Typychaty (G 22,000), Villa Mercedes (G 27,000-32,000), Aparypy (G 29,000), San Luis (G 22,000-25,000) and Mompox (G 32,000). Many of the larger industrialists, however, have acquired clay-bearing lands themselves, or defray costs by sending their own trucks and labor to the sources. In late 1989 a load of good clay cost on average G 25,000, and a medium-sized kiln would fire materials representing about ten truckloads of clay.

Firewood represented more of a fixed costs to all manufacturers alike. Since there is virtually no suitable firewood left for many miles around Tobatí, it is brought in from a distance. Some industrialists attempt to cut corners in firewood costs by sending their own trucks

and personnel into firewood-producing areas. Since labor in Tobatí is cheap there is probably some savings. However, the fact that the practice is not more generalized may indicate that savings do not balance with the problems of running such an ancillary business.

Generally, the price paid in mid-1989 for firewood varied from G100,000 to G120,000 per truckload of twenty cubic meters. Although the length of time of a firing may vary considerably, there is not that much variation in the amount of wood used (during slower burning times, the fire is dampened). Again, a medium sized kiln would require about two full loads of firewood--about forty cubic meters--for one firing.

Beyond these most basic raw materials, the other major cost is that of labor. Owners of cerámicas admitted that the industrial materials produced in Tobatí were competitive in the Asunción market not as much for their superior qualities as for their low prices. Since the costs for raw materials were fairly inelastic, industrialists from Tobatí relied on low wages to keep their prices competitive. During the year from late 1988 to late 1989, the average daily wage for labor in the cerámicas rose from G2,500 to G3,000 (from approximately US\$2.50 to US\$3.00) per day "*seco*," or without meals. During that same period, a supposedly government-mandated minimum wage for brick workers in rural areas rose 12.5 percent, to G5,241 per day (*Coyuntura* 1990 45: 41). And, according to the Inter-American Development Bank the consumer price index for Paraguay during the same time was increasing at a rate between 26.2 percent and 38.2 percent (IDB 1992: 331).

Because of these comparative figures, as well as reasons to be discussed in the next chapter, it can be concluded that the wage for labor in the cerámicas of Tobatí was very near, if not actually dipping below, the cost of subsistence. Therefore, in asserting any kind of calculus for the costs of making bricks and ceramic articles in Tobatí, it is probably fair to use the same value for labor for family workers in cottage-style *olerías* as for hired labor in the industrialized cerámicas.

The same hypothetical "medium-sized kiln" may have the capacity to fire the following materials: 15,000 roof tiles, 6,500 small flat tiles, and 2,000 common bricks.⁶ In contrast, an *olería* specializing only in common bricks usually fires a smaller "medium-sized kiln" holding from 15,000 to 16,000 bricks. The prices for these materials in mid-1989 were G45 for roof tiles, G27 for flat tiles, and G23 for common bricks. Based on these costs and prices, Table 6.5 shows comparative budgets for the two kinds of brickmaking operations, together with the estimated sale price of the finished products and net profits. Longer term profits can be estimated from an average number of 2.5 firings per month, although this varies by season. Clearly, the figures presented in Table 6.5 are gross estimates, although they are based on figures given by a number of manufacturers. However, while they serve as a basic model for the economics of the industry, they call for a number of observations.

First, and most obviously, the figures for the non-mechanized *olerías* do not reflect labor costs and, in this way, would more closely resemble a balance sheet used by the household industrialist. The value of labor in this case is much harder to estimate, but if the subsistence labor costs paid by the cerámicas for wage labor were

Table 6.5. Budgets for Brickmaking Operations
Tobatí, June 1989

	<i>Cerámicas</i>	<i>Olerías</i>
<i>Expenditures</i>		
Firewood	G200,000	G100,000
Clay	G200,000	G25,000
Gasoil for Motor	G8,000	---
Firer (Wage)	G20,000	---
Other Labor Costs	G100,000	---
<i>Total</i>	G528,000	G125,000
<i>Sales</i>		
Roof Tiles	G675,000	---
Small Tiles	G175,500	---
Common Bricks	G46,000	G345,000
<i>Total</i>	G896,500	G345,000
<i>Breakage</i>	G42,525	
<i>Profit</i>	G325,975	G220,000

applied, then the cost of labor in the case of the olerías would approach G100,000, including the G20,000 which would be due (most likely) to the olería owner as the experienced firer. Adding G100,000 to the costs side of the olería operation would show total costs of G225,000 against net profits of G120,000, after labor costs. This would yield an estimated profit margin of 53 percent above costs for the olería as opposed to 61 percent for the owner of the mechanized operation.⁷

Actually, the rates of profit for the two kinds of industry are probably even closer. Neither of the estimates show, for example, any cost associated with either initial capitalization of the operation or depreciation--certainly higher, in both cases, for the mechanized factory owner. Also, the mechanized owner has other miscellaneous costs which need to be figured into the balance. By law, for example, large employers are required to pay a form of social security on their laborers to the national Instituto de Previsión Social (IPS). In actual practice, though, none of the employers in Tobatí pay this tax, although the most prominent owners end up paying a small part covering only a very few employees ("the most stable"). However, several people mentioned that there were still periodic expenses associated with the bribery of IPS inspectors who visited the town on a regular basis. Another cost borne by the ceramics factories but not the olerías is that of loss from breakage during firing. While broken bricks can still be sold and used (a small percentage of split bricks in a wall will not weaken it structurally) roofing and other tiles obviously can not. Finally, another factor affecting mechanized operations is that extruded products have to rest on wooden pallets for drying and

moving. These are manufactured locally, and need to be replaced periodically, representing another cost.

In terms of a bottom line, the profit margins for both types of industry are very close and are probably under fifty percent. If a medium-sized cerámica and smaller, but medium-sized olería average 2.5 firings per month, then the net profits per month to the owner of the cerámica would be on the order of G815,000 and to the owner of an olería about G300,000 (approximate 1988-89 exchange rates: 1000 guaraníes = US\$1.00). However, in the case of the family-run enterprise, all of the "wages" would accrue to the immediate family of the olero who would then report a net earning for the month of G550,000.

Neither of these figures represents an exorbitantly high income level. The government's legally defined minimum wage for a rural manual laborer in 1990 was set at G5,241 per day (*Coyuntura* 45: 40). Calculating a working month of 22 working days, a monthly minimum salary would equal about G115,000. Therefore, a family owned olería, supporting four working members of the family, would do somewhat better than strike minimum wage. A medium-sized factory owner, on the other hand, would make a respectable living--certainly not wealthy, but middle class by rural Paraguay standards. Both of these estimates are supported by subjective evidence. However, the goal of most cerámica owners is to increase the size of the kiln (in order to fire more materials in the same amount of time) or better yet, build another kiln so that firings can occur in closer sequence.

As in other brickmaking societies, cheap labor is the linchpin of the entire system, and no cerámica owner can increase profits without

either increasing the efficiency of labor, or actually decreasing the costs of labor, either by depressing salaries or restraining in some way costs of living (cf. Cook 1984: 33). As it is, however, it would be practically impossible to decrease salaries any more than what they are. At a wage of G3,000 per day, labor in Tobatí already makes less than sixty percent of the government-mandated rural minimum wage. Even so, most wage labor in the *cerámicas* does not work full time. When kilns are being fired and during rainy weather (frequently), workers are simply told to stay home. Most common laborers probably work only fifteen days per month for most of the year. During the peak season for bricks (from October to March, when the weather is very hot and somewhat dryer) they may work about twenty days per month, but at the same time they may put in twelve-hour days, with no extra pay--the absolute surplus value accruing to the owners (Cook 1990: 24). In summary, the average workers in Tobatí take home between G45,000 and G60,000 per month, considerably less than a minimum wage.

Strategies for subsisting on these low wages at the household level will be discussed in some detail in the following chapter. An important point worth mentioning here, however, is that upward pressures on workers' salaries are severely undercut by the workers themselves. While workers are reluctant to migrate to the city where the conditions for labor may be even worse (without a home and family), they do take advantage of the yearly cotton harvest to leave Tobatí for up to two months at a time. During that time, they can pick cotton nearly every day, and earn about G4,000 per day, which represents a bonanza for the workers. Factory owners complain

bitterly at the loss of about fifty percent of their labor force during harvest time. However, they do keep operating at that time without resorting to offering higher wages.

While large numbers of (mostly young) men leave town during the cotton harvest, they leave families--sons and brothers--behind. During these times, the *cerámica* owners switch to a strategy called, somewhat cynically, the *regimiento del Mariscal*, or the "Mariscal's regiment." During the Triple Alliance War, discussed in Chapter Three, the Paraguayan army was eventually so shattered that Mariscal López had to draft young boys to replace his fallen soldiers. In a particularly famous battle that took place near Tobatí, over 2,000 very young boys--the "Mariscal's regiment"--were killed by the Brazilians in Campo Grande. Likewise, during times of labor shortages, the very young boys of Tobatí are "recruited" into the ceramics factories. Although at twelve years of age they can not do work commensurate with that of grown men, they boys are paid only G2,000 per day and can provide enough labor for continued--if diminished--production.

Environmental Costs of Industry

To look at the ceramics industry in Tobatí only in terms of costs of inputs and costs of labor is to ignore a large part of the economics of brickmaking. Although not commonly thought of as such, the ceramics industry is fundamentally an extractive industry, and hence has very high environmental costs. It is probably not surprising, however, that industrialists in Tobatí, almost without exception, refuse to recognize these costs; rather, they tend to dismiss them as "gifts of nature." However, even a cursory look at the course of development in

Paraguay may prove this to be an extremely short-sighted view. Indeed, the ceramics industry, as it is now practiced, may be in a precarious position.

Probably the most pressing problem many in the ceramics industry will eventually face is that of fuels. It hardly takes an environmental alarmist to recognize the rapidly deteriorating situation regarding the availability of firewood in the country. Increases on the order of forty percent in the cost of firewood from 1988 to 1989 should have been a clear signal to brickmakers of its growing scarcity. Instead, however, the brickmakers attribute the constant rise in costs of wood to general inflation in the country, which during the same year held at about 29 percent. However, the price of wood, theoretically at least, should not rise faster than general inflation if there were unlimited quantities of the material, as many people claim.

A second clear sign of impending shortages of the fuel has to do with the increasing distances to the sources of wood. In fact, it appears that those sources tend to fade at the same rate as Paraguay's mobile agricultural frontier, although at some distance behind. At the edge of the advancing frontier, forest is cleared at such a feverish pace that most of the valuable wood beyond the limited capacity of local sawmills is simply burned in the fields (Wilson, Hay and Margolis 1989: 225). Past the initial stages of colonization, remaining land is cleared at a more leisurely pace, newer roads provide reliable transportation, and firewood takes on value as a commodity in itself.

By 1989, this "firewood frontier" was already beyond the cities of Coronel Oviedo and Caaguazú, half way to the eastern border with Brazil. Truckers dealing in firewood (*leña*) were going into the most

rural areas of these cities in search of bargains. Others preferred to stay on the paved road, but often had to go clear to the border to find good firewood by the truckload. In general, the areas offering firewood--that is, those areas now at the most settled parts of the frontier--were at the very edge of an expanding frontier about fifteen or twenty years ago, during a time of a "pioneer stage" of frontier development (Hay 1990: 103).

One of the earliest guidebooks for tourists printed in Paraguay profiled the town of Tobatí by remarking that, after agriculture and grazing, timber production was the major industry in the area (Bordón 1932: 419). From their study in 1949, the Services showed photographs of loggers and sawyers in Tobatí. They report that trees such as *yvyrapytá* and lapacho--hardwoods still much prized in the country--were still cut at that time, and provided lumber for housebuilding in Tobatí and Caacupé (Service and Service 1954: 94). The town was wholly self-sufficient in wood products, and the forests were evidently healthy considering the range of game regularly hunted (*ibid.* 81).

By the 1980s, however, poorer families were reduced to scavenging for firewood for cooking, and the only hunting in the area was by boys with slingshots. In fact, the whole central part of the country--belying its lush green aspect--was virtually denuded of all forest except scrub. That the process of total deforestation in central Paraguay took somewhat longer than a generation to accomplish might explain why those brickmakers--the great majority only in business for a few years--are so oblivious to a possible problem of fuel shortages. However, the rate of deforestation has accelerated greatly

in recent years with a growing rural population, increased access to remote areas, a concentration on commodity crop production, and the introduction of chainsaws, tractors, and even bulldozers to clear large tracts of land at a time.

Considering the size of the logging industry in Paraguay, no one would suggest that the brickmakers in Tobatí are responsible for deforestation on a great scale. However, the little town of Tobatí with its many brick kilns does contribute its share to the general deforestation of the country. In 1984, the country's sawmills were processing one million cubic meters of wood per year, which contributed to, by conservative estimates, a twenty percent depletion of the country's great forest reserves between 1976 and 1984 (USAID 1985: 122). Calculating on the basis of 350 *olerías* and *cerámicas* in Tobatí in 1990, each using an average of twenty cubic meters of wood every fifteen days (probably a conservative estimate), then the brickmakers of Tobatí alone would account for the consumption of an astonishing 168,000 cubic meters of wood per year. This represents one sixth of the total used by a logging industry that in 1991 was responsible for six percent by value of the country's total exports and 2.8 percent of its gross domestic product (FBIS Dec. 27, 1991: 37).

Admittedly, the wood that goes into the kilns of Tobatí is not the prime logs that go into the sawmills. Still, the enormous appetite for firewood in this one small town can not help but motivate increased cutting in the eastern regions of the country, especially considering that the 8,400 truckloads of wood consumed per year at G120,000 per load (1990 prices) constituted over a billion guaranies in trade. Also, while brickmaking is nowhere as concentrated as it is in Tobatí, there

are many hundreds more small brickyards scattered throughout the country, each adding to the demand for firewood.

On the whole, Paraguay derived 56.7 percent of its total energy needs from firewood in 1984 (Canese 1987: 5), with the highest per capita firewood use on the continent. The contribution of brick kilns, with their voracious appetite for wood, constitutes a significant part of this use. In 1984, in fact, *olerías* accounted for 19.5 percent of all wood used for industrial purposes, which was double the amount used ten years previously (Paraguay STP 1986: 44). With a total lack of petroleum resources in the country, this situation may be irremediable, and constitute a great threat to the brick industry and economic base of the town. Some kiln owners expressed the opinion that conversion to gas would be an "interesting" idea, but their lack of enthusiasm for the notion was understandable, given the very high price of imported oil. If such a solution is ever fixed upon, it will likely only occur after the availability and price of traditional fuel sources effectively prohibits their continued use. By that time, the costs to the people of the community--and the nation--from the eradication of native wildlife associated with Paraguay's forests will be inestimable, although it will surely be very high as well.

Significantly, probably more brickmakers admitted that they might feel the effects of a shortage of clays before fuelwood, although there were many more who estimated clay reserves in Tobatí to be inexhaustable. There should be no question, however, that the clay sources can be depleted, simply from the observation that the old area of Barrio Obrero, which used to be the source of nearly all clays, yielded only small quantities of low quality clay by 1989.

Clays suitable for the ceramics industry lie trapped in fairly thin lenses under the surface of the earth, sometimes just below the topsoils and at other times over two meters deep. The only way to mine the clay is to scrape off the soil above it and remove the clay much as in strip mining. Therefore, in areas where clay is being mined, there are no other possibilities for associated economic uses of the land. Also, there is considerable doubt that land stripped for clay can ever be reclaimed since no one had ever heard of (or considered) such a project. Once the limits of a deposit have been reached, the area is simply abandoned for another area.

The same people who insisted that the supplies of clay in Tobatf were limitless could not explain adequately why the price of clay tended to increase faster than any other business input. They simply explained that "everything is going up." There is certainly much truth to that observation in a country where inflation, if not galloping, is nevertheless chronic, but the kiln owners paid double for choice clays in 1989 from a year earlier, while the cost of poor clays rose by over thirty percent during the same time. Some brickmakers estimated the rise in clay costs by the month, rather than by the year. Evidently, the demand for good clays, at least, was exceeding the ready supply, which could only have the ultimate effect of stimulating the search for new deposits.

Unfortunately, there is no available data on estimated reserves of clays in the area, or even rates of use. Neither are there estimates of volume of individual deposits and the rate at which they are depleted. One could fairly easily calculate the quantity of clay used in the kilns of Tobatf but such a figure would be meaningless without

realistic estimates of total available quantities. However, the simple fact that some deposits have been depleted suggests that all deposits could possibly be depleted, which would certainly pose another threat to the industry. Nor is it likely that brickmakers could seek alternate sources of clay from outside of the municipality since so many communities hold claims on their own clays against their own modest ceramics industries.

However, the major loss may not be so much to the brick industry as to what is ultimately the town's only real resource. Although no firm conclusions can be drawn, the extensive, horizontal exploitation of the land associated with clay mining very likely destroys large areas of land for any other purpose, much less for either farming or ranching. The nature of extractive industry is that it has the potential to destroy the very basis of its prosperity. By knowing something about total rates of destruction of only one or two essential resources, one likely could say much about the probable future of the economy of a town like Tobatí.

Marketing Structures

It is probably misleading to speak of marketing structures for the ceramics industry, since the market for products is so elementary. Indeed, the market systems which do exist have evolved informally over time and do not bond the primary producers with broader structures embedded in a formalized capitalist regime. That is, the nexus linking the local industry with the broad capitalist regime is not to be found in the nature of markets and exchange but, as discussed, in social relations fashioned by wage labor.

There are very few strategies for marketing ceramics products. The most basic is that used by the small, non-capitalist *olerías*. In effect, they simply pile the bricks in their patios and wait for the buyers to come to them. Architects in Asunción are often responsible for every aspect of construction, including purchase of materials. Either to save money for the client or to increase profits to themselves, these builders will drive to the points of origin and seek out bargains in bricks and other materials. Sometimes informal relationships will develop between frequent buyers and certain brickmakers. However, there was no evidence of more formal subcontracting arrangements against future production at fixed cost.

Other brickmakers have informal arrangements with "*colocadores*," or middlemen who will market the materials for a fee. This is useful to the manufacturer with little room to keep inventories. However, these are not middlemen in the sense that they buy the product to sell elsewhere at a higher price. In this case, the brickmaker pays a fee (for example, one thousand guaranies for one thousand bricks) for the *colocador* to find a buyer. While the *colocador* may negotiate terms of a sale, the sale is not closed without the brickmaker's final approval. Thus, this system does not necessarily impede capital accumulation at the local level.

The larger producers own their own flatbed trucks and employ their own chauffeurs. The most favored strategy of marketing materials is to take them directly to Asunción to sell in a highly informal "brick market" which evolved, apparently *sui generis*, on the edge of the city. In this case, the producers will take a truckload of materials to the capital and park the truck on a particular street just

off the *ruta*, or principal highway into the city. The municipal government of the capital tolerates this activity but apparently does not regulate it. On any day, there may be upward of fifty fully loaded trucks parked on the street, with their chauffers and *ayudantes*, or helpers, sipping *tereré* in the shade of the vehicle. The location of this "market" is commonly known in the city, and prospective buyers--architects, construction engineers, or individuals--arrive on the spot to negotiate sales. The final price includes delivering the materials to the construction site at a minimal cost, since there is no added process of unloading, reloading, and unloading again the heavy materials.

Finally, the largest industriales in the town own *depósitos*, or storage grounds in Asunción which are in almost all cases located on the main highway, not far from the informal brick market. Inventories of bricks, roofing tiles and other tiles are kept at the depósito and on view for prospective buyers. Usually there is a small "office" on the grounds attended frequently by a relative of the ceramics factory owner who studies in the capital or is there for other motives. These businesses offer the best quality materials and are patronized by the wealthier clients. In three or four cases, the factory owners have taken advantage of their property in the capital to open an ancillary hardware store or other store compatible with the building industry on the site of the depósito.

Summary

The sheer number of successful independently-owned brickyards in Tobatí indicates that it requires no exceptional entrepreneurial skill to operate such a business at a profit. The

principal factors of production include availability and efficiency of labor, price and quality of raw materials, and marketing. As long as the market for materials continues to grow and the prices for inputs remain cheap, the industry in Tobatí will no doubt expand. The trend seems to be toward growth and expansion of the large cerámicas but not necessarily at the expense of the smaller, household-based brickmaking enterprises.

Some authors have suggested the importance of a kind of "functional dualism" in unevenly developing capitalist economies (de Janvrey 1981). This theory posits that a thriving peasant economy is not only tolerated but tacitly supported by the dominant capitalist class, because it functions to provide cheap food to an underpaid urban proletariat. It is tempting to view a relationship between the small *olerías* and the dominant capitalist regime in this simplistic light, considering that they do provide building materials which underwrite the construction of the spreading neighborhoods of a new urban working class in the capital. After all, a thousand bricks at G23,000 (approximately twenty dollars in 1989) compares favorably with \$90 per 1000 in Mexico and \$400 in the United States.

However, there are salient differences between the economic position and functional role of the now-famous "traditional" peasant farmers in Latin America (ever more at the very fringes of the Paraguayan economy) and the household-based non-capitalist or quasi-capitalist rural brickmakers of Tobatí. While "super-exploitation" may be at the heart of both kinds of labor, the brickmakers, as described above, are functionally autonomous at least in terms of exchange and marketing. The distinction is important,

especially to political economists of the "marginalist" school who assert that pricing processes and marketing structures are central to determining the subordinate position of non-capitalist sectors of the society to a dominant capitalist sector (see Cook 1984: 113). As explained above, the marketing system for ceramics materials in Paraguay is still primitive and as of now, at least, not exclusive to one class of producers or the other. (However, this condition could conceivably change if the larger *cerámicas* abandon the making of relatively less profitable bricks and sell the better quality materials in exclusive markets.)

The second difference is related to the first and is just as pertinent to understanding the true position of these small industrialists in regard to the larger Paraguayan society. While most of the social and economic relations governing these small enterprises are essentially non-capitalist, it appears that the nature of the occupation tends to condition the operators toward a transition toward capitalist forms of organization. In none of the cases observed were brickmakers averse to hiring outside labor during periods of need, although almost invariably family members were sought and "wages" were negotiated according to personal criteria. At times, in fact, the urban-based brickmakers in Tobatí served a social function of easing migrating family members into the wage-based urban life of the town, providing bed and meals as a form of wage.

Although unfortunately little "hard" data was secured to confirm the notion, it is certain that many of the present owners of *cerámicas* who rely on the formalized "surplus-value yielding" wage-labor force for profits began as small *oleros*. The rates of profit between the two

kinds of brickmaking operations are not significantly different, and "super-exploitation" combined with savings by a family of brickmakers could relatively easily yield the capital necessary for a jump into the capitalist mode of production.

However, it is essential to keep in mind the above assertion that the expansion of the brick industry in Tobatí is likely contingent upon the continued supply of inputs--raw materials, fuel and labor--at a cheap price. If the conditions for availability of these essential inputs change, or the productive matrix is altered (for example, a change in technology accompanying a change in fuel source), the terms of the equation governing both entry into the industry and rates of profits could also change drastically. A significant increase in costs of production could throw a great advantage to the mechanized, highly-capitalized industries to the detriment of the smaller family-based *olerías*, which might eventually be forced out of business.

Regardless of the outlook for the survival of parallel modes of production in the brick industry, however, it is more certain that the proletarianization of the working class is not only *fait accompli*, but is bound to increase with a greater number of ceramics factories and the further decline of agriculture as a peasant enterprise. Moreover, with the continued encroachment of the capitalist mode of production in the area, "the social relations within which individuals produce, the social relations of production, are altered, transformed . . ." to create "a society with peculiar, distinctive characteristics" (Marx 1976: 29). Tilly (1981: 183) describes the depth of the alterations, stating that

Qualitatively, the creation of a proletariat has transformed all arenas of social life: reducing the likelihood that children

would take over the economic enterprises of their parents; snapping the links among marriage, inheritance, and reproduction; swelling the numbers of people who must buy most of their food and are therefore vulnerable to swings in food prices; altering the character and pacing of work itself.

The Services described a rural Paraguayan society of 1948 that was notably devoid of conflict (a raging civil war based on political struggles in the capital notwithstanding) and totally congruent with a simple economy associated with a subsistence-based peasant society. Any mention of inequities in land distribution was tempered with observations that no one actually wanted for land. In modern Tobatí, on the other hand, land disputes associated with violence are common, even though they were practically hidden from the public view under the hermetic censorship of the previous Stroessner regime. These conflicts are only symptomatic of more fundamental changes occurring in the society which are in every way related to basic changes in modes of production.

The social consequences of these more fundamental changes are already apparent in Tobatí, in spite of the very short time since they started occurring on a notable scale. Keeping in mind the infrastructural conditions described in the last two chapters which have changed since the 1940s in rural Paraguay--not only modes of production, but population densities, technological advances, and a changing environmental base--it may be more interesting to examine some concomitant changes of a structural nature in Tobatí. Changes in such areas as family and household structure, socio-political institutions, and the role of schools and church may reveal the real

depth of change in modern Tobatí and help to explain the reason for new and "modern" ideologies and ways of viewing the world which show present-day Tobateños to be distinct from their parents and grandparents.

Notes

1 These are not "official" numbers, but estimates provided by a major town administrator who was, himself, a large *industrialista* in Tobatí.

2 This view reflects a definition of capitalism that is primarily "based on the social relations of production, rather than exchange relations" (Holton 1985: 79).

3 Garavaglia (1983: 171) notes that the change in productive "rhythms" as the aboriginal Guaraní were incorporated into the labor regime of the Spanish colonizers was a major factor in the cultural breakdown of the people, who were, furthermore, unable to understand the necessity of producing more than they could consume. This is the same kind of *choque*, or "shock" that hired laborers in the *cerámicas* feel.

4 This same confusion has greatly diluted the meaning of the term class. Classes, particularly in the United States, are popularly defined as "upper," "middle," and "lower" income groups (a status relationship) rather than as socio-economic concepts to explain the relationships between the forces and relations of production, in the Marxian sense.

5 The class position of the peasantry has been the source of considerable debate (Dore 1983: 363). Because space does not warrant a discussion of the peculiar characteristics of the Paraguayan peasantry, in the present work they will often be lumped with the urban petty bourgeoisie to demonstrate a basic opposition to an emerging proletariat, or wage-earning population. *

6 These were actually the figures for one particular firing which I observed closely.

7 This compares with a cost/value ratio found for the brickyards of rural Oaxaca (Mexico) in 1981 of .56 (Cook 1984: 197).

CHAPTER 7 THE SOCIAL COSTS OF OPPORTUNITY

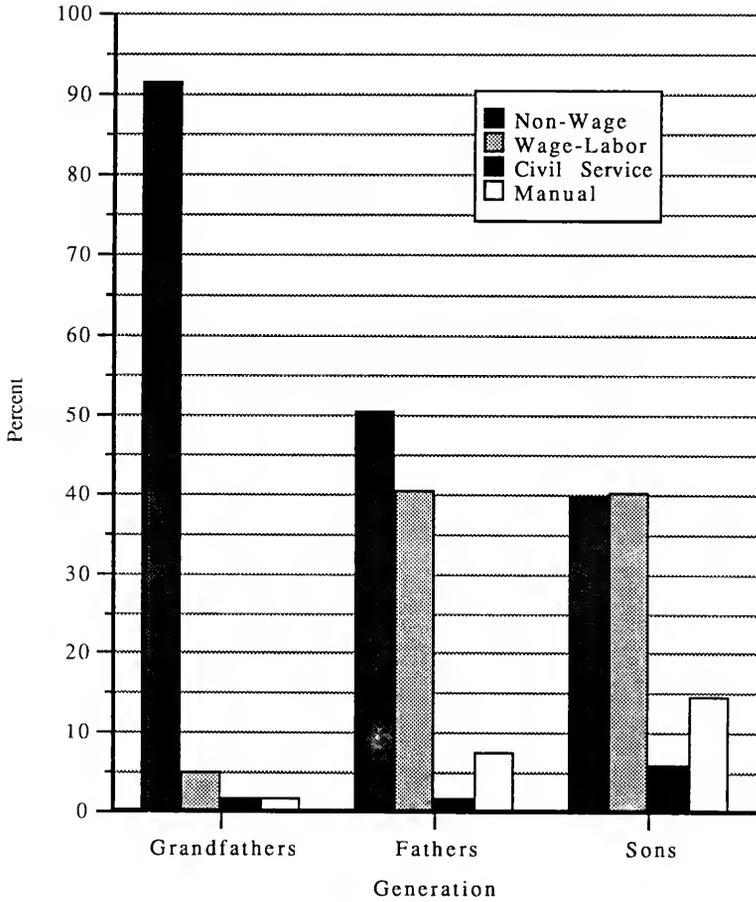
As the Services described social and political life in a rural Paraguayan community in 1948, it was characterized by simplicity and order. Given the homogeneous economic infrastructure of the society and the relatively stable demographics in a society still removed from rapid technological change, such simplicity and order would be expected. By the same token, one would expect increasing social complexity, perhaps accompanied by disorder, in societies emphasizing new economic priorities, introducing new technological changes, and passing new demographic thresholds. As change is introduced at one level, it redounds in increasing complexity at other levels, until a new equilibrium is established.

The Services, for example, viewed the basic social distinction in Tobatí as being between "society" and the "people" (1954: 133). This conceptual distinction is probably more familiar to anthropologists as Redfield's famous "great dichotomy" between "urban societies" (civilization) and "folk societies" in non-industrial populations (Redfield 1966), otherwise expressed as "great tradition" versus "little tradition." Although the Services observed that the "gradation of individuals from top to bottom [of the two categories] is continuous" (ibid.) they nevertheless described the division between *sociedad* and *gente* as dominating virtually all areas of social life in Tobatí.

This basic town-country dichotomy, which was never without its critics, no doubt was useful in describing the kind of social relations that characterized pre-capitalist societies similar to Tobatí in the early twentieth century. The contrasts between the more sophisticated townspeople and the simpler country folk were not only apparent to the observer, they were markers of greatest social distinction to the people themselves. Even in contemporary Paraguay the rural/urban distinction is useful in describing social conditions. However, the same distinction is probably no longer of great use in describing social relations between different groups of people in the country. Instead, it is much more useful to conceptualize modern Paraguayans in terms of class differences that more and more transcend, or cross-cut place of residence.

The last two chapters showed how labor in Tobatí has become increasingly dominated by bourgeois and wage-earning classes over the past generation, as wage-labor increased from five percent of the population in the grandfather generation to forty percent in the third generation. This growth in the proletariat was almost exclusively at the expense of the earlier peasant population, as the number of farmers dropped from 67.3 percent of the population to 16.4 percent. Figure 7.1 recapitulates the data in Table 6.2, by illustrating the concomitant increase in the semi-proletarianized class of unsalaried day laborers (from 1.7 percent to 14.5 percent) and civil-service and government workers (from 1.7 percent to 5.9 percent) during the same period.

Figure 7.1. Wage and Non-Wage Earning Population
by Generation, Tobatf 1989



In Tobatí, industrialization affected rural areas as well as urban areas, with nearly a hundred kilns in the countryside. Furthermore, virtually all rural families have close kin working in the town who help to provide for the family with a share of their wage. Rural dwellers are also working in increasing numbers as non-salaried day laborers and migrant cotton pickers in other areas of the country. Likewise, an emphasis on education in rural areas and access to urban schools has diminished the difference in levels of education between people in the town and countryside. Utilities and other amenities usually only associated with urban areas are also arriving, albeit slowly, for rural folk who, in any case, are more and more familiar with modern technologies and means of communication. Finally, the high rates of migration and travel between rural and urban areas has greatly blurred the distinctions in cultural background between town and rural peoples.

On the surface, Tobatí may appear to be as simple and quiet a place as it was in 1948. Least of all would there appear to be significant changes in the way people regulate and order their lives. The pace of life seems leisurely, albeit purposeful, and social conflict is seemingly nonexistent. A casual *vīṣītor* would no doubt be much more impressed by the similarity of Tobatí to the comfortable stereotype of the rural village than as a locus of significant social change and conflict. But the social changes in the town which accompanied changes in the economic base described previously are profound, and probably beyond the ken of the townspeople themselves. The generational nature of change disguises its true breadth to the younger population, at the same time that the rapidity

of change presents baffling and contradictory challenges to all of the people.

Family and Household Organization and Strategies

As in the past, there are probably no social relations more basic and important to the people than those based on family. Therefore, change in this most inherently conservative of institutions portends even greater change in other arenas of social interaction. There is a particular challenge in studying change at this level in such a rapidly evolving economic order, though. Although materialist theories posit that "the development of the forces of production has thus far been *the* commanding aspect of the historical process," there are of necessity "cultural lags" as the conservative nature of social relations and "dominant thought" shifts in response to the new alternatives presented by infrastructural change (Baran and Hobsbawm 1961: 50; their emphasis). Since the history of economic change in the form of land closure for peasant farmers and industrialization in Tobatí only dates from the early 1960s, it is likely that reactions in the way of demographic and social change are considerably further behind. However, the 1989 survey does reveal changes in the area of family and domestic organization that likely point the direction of more complete change in the future.

Family Structure

The Services pointed out that in rural Paraguay the "extended family" was not important, and instead "In both town and country and in all classes of the society the individual household tends to be

identical with the functional family unit. It is quite rare that persons other than mother, father, and children live under the same roof" (1954: 149). At the same time, "the household also tends to be a social and economic unit" and has "no particular regularized dependence upon" ties of kinship in related households (ibid.).

In a general sense, the same still holds true, although the situation is a apparently a great deal more complex than it was 45 years ago. Also, from the data, one suspects that kin relations were probably not even historically so categorical as the Services implied. Kinship ties have always been highly valued in Paraguay, which may be revealed in other ways than by sharing a physical household. The most striking indicator of such relationships may be in the very high numbers of families who have close relatives living directly next door as well as in the immediate vicinity. After all, there is probably little additional advantage to be gained from family members sharing the house if they live within such close physical proximity that there is still constant interaction between kin.

In spite of high rates of growth by immigration, almost no families in Tobatí are isolated from close family members. In 152 families surveyed, 89.5 percent (136 families) had close kin living in Tobatí. Of possibly more significance, 44.7 percent of all families had close kin living next door, or sharing the same patio. These families, in particular, share some characteristics of the extended family simply through close proximity of living quarters. Close kin who are also close neighbors may be particularly valuable for comfort and assistance in day-to-day life as well as during times of extraordinary need. One suspects, at least, that individual nuclear families are not

so self-sufficient as it would otherwise appear. And most families without close kin sharing the same patio are nevertheless in close proximity to family members in the small town.

This situation was probably common during the time when the Services were in Tobatí, although it is impossible to tell from their data. First of all, since the town was so much smaller then, residence in close proximity to kin would be more likely from pure chance, if not design. Secondly, there is no correlation between class and sharing a patio with kin. Both wage earning families and bourgeois families were equally likely to live next door to family members, so these living arrangements probably were not a novel adaptation to economic differentiation. Also, there was no correlation between this arrangement and female-headed households, which diminishes the possibility that either patrilocality or matrilocality is a factor in determining place of residence.

In fact, the only factor which is highly correlated with kin-proximate living is that of location. As shown in Table 7.1, nearly all families in the rural *compañía* (21 de Julio) live next door to close family members, while there is little variation in either urban location. This residence pattern for the rural *compañía* is logical and probably necessary. As explained in Chapter Five, closure of lands during the 1960s severely limited the mobility of peasant farmers and the possibilities for opening new lands to farming. As families matured, the only way for children to continue farming was by taking a piece of the family farm. In a short time, the farms were

Table 7.1

Kin-Proximate Residence by Location
Tobati, 1989

	<u>Urban Center</u>	<u>Barrio Obrero</u>	<u>21 de Julio</u>
<u>Kin next door</u>	35	16	33
Percent	44.87	41.03	94.29
<u>Isolated from kin</u>	43	23	2
Percent	55.13	58.97	5.71
<u>Total</u>	78	39	35
Percent	100.00	100.00	100.00

Test Statistic: Pearson Chi-Square = 0.000

divided between siblings, and nearly all farmers lived either next to siblings or to parents. At the same time, the size of each farm was diminished to the extent that subsistence crops such as corn and manioc had to be shared among families occupying different households. One farmer explained it as a system of *trueque*, or exchange, whereby a harvestable crop in one field was shared by all kin, until the next field began to produce, that crop being shared in turn.

Strictly within the household, however, it appears that even the Service's claim that the "complete" household with "man wife and several children" was the ideal in Tobatí did not correspond to reality. If one omits households without children and single, childless women living with relatives from their count, only 133 out of 268 families in Tobatí (49.6 percent) fit that ideal. Rather, 135 families (over half) were "incomplete," with one of the parents absent--and in 124 of those cases, it was the mother who was alone (1954: 152).

This situation has much changed in recent years, and in 1989 it much more closely fit the ideal advanced for the society in the 1940s. In the latter survey of 153 families, a total of 130, or 85.0 percent, were "complete," in that both parents were accounted for in the household.¹ Only fifteen percent of the families with children were without a parent--and the father was the absent parent in 19 out of 23 such families, compared to 113 cases in the Service's count (in a total pool of 268 families). While no formal proof was forthcoming from the 1989 survey, the most reasonable hypothesis is that the changeover to a society largely based on wage labor,

combined with the general closure of agricultural land to occupation, encouraged increased stability within the household.

At the same time, though, there does appear to be an increase in the frequency of the extended family as it is more commonly understood--that is, households with members of two or more nuclear, conjugal families. In Tobatí, these are most commonly nuclear families with parents, siblings, or grandchildren of the heads of household, although there are cases where complete related families share a household.

In all, 64 out of 153 families (41.8 percent) included at least one other family member outside of the nuclear family. Bourgeois families were more likely to shelter other family members although the relationship was not strong². On the other hand, 68.4 percent of female-headed households were composed of extended families, as opposed to 32.7 percent of the households where the father was present, showing a very a strong relationship with a chi-square statistic of .005. Unfortunately, the Services did not include the absolute number of "extended" families in their survey, but they did give numbers of ancillary members, by sex of head of household. Table 7.2 summarizes the composition of families from both 1948 and 1989, showing how the numbers of ancillary relatives living with families by sex of head of household has tended to rise over time. Table 7.3, in turn, shows the overall structure of families, in relation to the "ideal type" of two parents and their own children.

Not only the number of extended families, but the total number of related individuals outside of the nuclear family has risen dramatically. Again, the reasons for these changes can probably be

Table 7.2

Other Relatives Living With Nuclear Family,
by Sex of Head of Household
Tobatí 1948 - 1989

<u>Relation</u>	<u>1948^a</u>		<u>1989</u>	
	<u>MHH</u>	<u>FHH^b</u>	<u>MHH</u>	<u>FHH^c</u>
Grandchildren	17	44	51	25
Aged Parent	7	2	7	5
Sibling	11	2	6	6
<u>Other</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	60	69	91	45
No. of Families	133	113	120	32
Number of Others Per Family	0.45	0.61	0.76	1.41

^a Source: Service and Service 1954: 153

^b Mothers with children, only.

^c Includes widowed mothers.

Table 7.3

Family Structure
Tobatí, 1989

	<u>Families</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Nuclear family, complete (Both parents and children)	81	53.6
Nuclear family, incomplete (One parent only and children)	8	4.6
Extended family, complete (Both parents, children and kin)	49	32.5
Extended family, incomplete (One parent only, children and kin)	15	9.3
Total	153	100.0

traced to the changes in the local economic infrastructure. The increase in numbers of outside kin associated with the nuclear family is highest in the cases of grandchildren and the category of "Other," which consists principally of nieces and nephews. Almost always, the reason that these children were living with relatives other than the parents was because the parent or parents had migrated in search of jobs. While a high rate of migration has always been a feature of rural Paraguayan life, farming families were not only in a better position to relocate with the entire family, but usually depended upon the labor of family members to establish a new farm operation. For a parent migrating to a city in search of wage labor, however, children unable to hold jobs may represent a heavy burden, at least until the parents are firmly established in the new area.

Marriage, Consensual Union, and Female-Headed Households

The Services seemed to be especially struck by the casual attitude of rural Paraguayans to marriage, especially among the peasant population. This feature of rural social life has been highlighted by other authors, as well (Weil et al.: 1972: 57-58). However, it is likely that the Services were given biased information by certain townspeople for whom marriage may have been of exaggerated importance. They emphasize (pp. 143-144) that

The rare peasant who has been married even in only a civil ceremony is the object of considerable awe. It was a common experience for us to be riding through the countryside and have our *campesino* companions point out a house to us: "Fulano lives there--he's married." During

our first few weeks of making acquaintances, our friends invariably took us first to the homes of married people and usually announced the fact to us as though it were the most important attribute the family possessed, or at least the one most likely to impress strangers.

In fact, a glance at the marriage records over time shows that marriage among the rural peasant population was probably no less rare than among the townspeople. In Chapter Five, data from the town's civil registry showed the decline in the number of peasant farmers getting married as an indirect measure of the decline of peasant farmers as a percentage of the total population. This same source shows the place of origin of marrying couples and disproves the belief that the people of the countryside are not likely to marry.

In 1950, close to the time when the Services lived in Tobatí, 86 people registering their marriages with the local Justice of the Peace declared Tobatí to be their place of birth. Of that total, eighty percent were from rural Tobatí. The percentage of marriage for rural, as opposed to urban, Tobateños is maintained at the same high rate up until 1965, when the rural population as a proportion of total population began to decline precipitously. In 1965 rural folk accounted for 51.4 percent of the total marriages, a figure which declined to 33.9 percent by 1980, the last year that the civil registry distinguished between urban and rural residence.

Even though the rates of marriage among urban and rural Tobateños may not have been greatly different, overall rates of consensual, or common-law unions--households formed of unmarried parents--were indeed much higher when the Services were in Paraguay. While they give no exact figures, the Services were

undoubtedly correct in the assertion that "free unions are by far the most common type" (1954: 158). However, just as familial stability has risen greatly in Tobatí, as shown above in Tables 7.2 and 7.3, that stability no doubt has been accompanied, and perhaps encouraged, by an increase in rates of formal marriages.

Although cohabitation still is not uncommon in Paraguay as a whole, the norm and ideal is legal marriage. Furthermore, contrary to a belief still cherished among elite Paraguayans, there is not a great deal of difference in rates of marriage among urban and rural dwellers. In 1982, the rate of *concubinados* in urban Paraguay as a whole was about 24 percent, while in rural Paraguay as a whole it was about 26 percent (Dirección de Estadística y Censos 1986: 125-126). The same source (p. 128) shows that the rates are even lower in the department of Cordillera. Although the published figures do not distinguish between urban versus rural areas of the departments, in the department of Cordillera the rate of unmarried partners was 22 percent for men and 22.6 percent for women.

This figure reported for the census of 1982 was remarkably close to the results of the survey of households of Tobatí of 1989. Out of 153 households, 35 were headed by an unmarried couple-- 22.9 percent of all households. Confirming the analysis of marriage data above, there was no correlation between cohabitation and either location (urban versus rural) or social class. Also, as would be suspected, households headed by unmarried couples were much less stable, and in 15 out of 35 households (42.9 percent) where the parents were unmarried, the father was absent at the time of the survey. Of the total of 31 households headed by

Table 7.4
Households by Marriage and
Paternal Absenteeism

Tobatí 1989

	Father Present	Father Absent	Father Dead
Concubines	20	15	0
Percent	57.14	42.86	0.00
Married	102	5	11
Percent	86.44	4.24	9.32

Test Statistic: Pearson Chi-square=0.000

women, five were headed by divorced women, and eleven by widows. These relationships are outlined in Table 7.4.

Although the majority of marriages are formalized with the local Justice of the Peace, the Catholic Church encourages marriage as a sacrament no less today than it ever did. It is still true, as the Service's observed, that "the social obligations associated with the ceremony are so demanding that the expenses are far beyond the means of most people" (Service and Service 1954: 143). However, the Church periodically sponsors open wedding services and encourages all parishoners to come to town and legitimize their unions. Church records show occasions when as many as fifty couples are married over the course of one or two days, and often adult sons and daughters are married along with their parents. The local priest in Tobatí rightly points out that such mechanisms have always been necessary in order for the Church to affirm the importance and universality of the sacrament.

In spite of the esteem with which formal marriage ties are accorded in the society, informal unions are in no way censured. Marriage is never viewed purely as a sentimental act, but instead implies economic responsibilities which a couple may or may not be able to assume at any particular time. When a couple forms a household, a "marriage" is socially sanctioned and any children of the union are granted social approval, although they are recognized as "*natural*" rather than legalistically as "*legítimo*." On the other hand, a formal marriage is a social statement that the family owns or pretends to own property, build a house, and secure financial

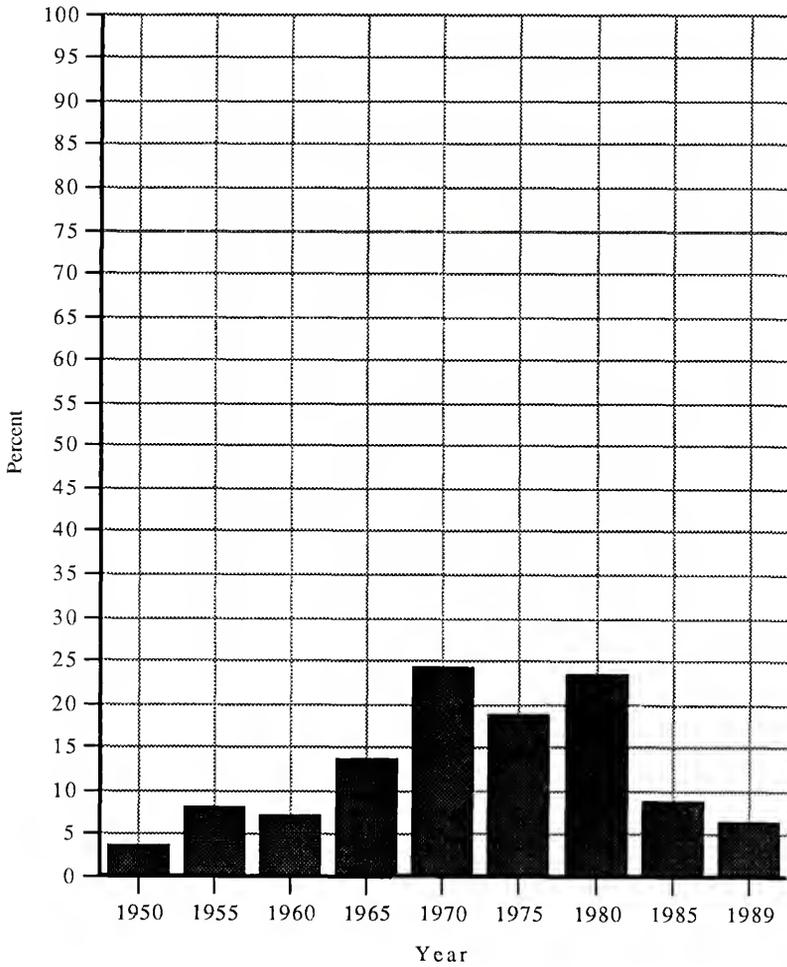
independence. To marry under contrary circumstances would appear nothing less than frivolous to the community.

There is concrete evidence of this economic aspect of the marriage institution in the way that Paraguayans may consciously postpone marriage when financial conditions are less than promising. Once again, a glance at Figure 5.1 shows a decline in marriages among farmers in Tobatí corresponding to the decline in farmers as a percentage of the total population. However, there is another side of the same coin which, at first glance, is more puzzling. While the numbers of brickmakers in the population tends to increase at about the same rate that the proportion of farmers decreases, this increase is not reflected in marriage records in the same way that a decrease in the percentage of farmers is.

Figure 7.2 shows that, from 1960, the number of marriages among brickmakers does, indeed, show a marked increase, reflecting the growth in the industry. Yet, after 1980, the curve plunges downward at the same time that more and more people are working in the brickyards of the town. It is clear from the 1989 survey that brickmakers had not stopped forming households and having children. Without invoking a decline in the morals of the local population, other more immediate circumstances must explain this drop in formal marriage rates in favor of consensual unions.

Instead, the downward curve in marriages among brickmakers is more likely an accurate reflection of the financial circumstances of paid laborers in the cerámicas of the town. Data in Chapter Six showed that wages in the cerámicas were barely at, or even dropping

Figure 7.2. Brickmakers Marrying as a Percent of All Marriages



below, the cost of subsistence of labor. The conditions for labor in Tobatí were improved toward 1980 as brickmakers in the town were rapidly gearing up to meet massive demands from the hydroelectric project at Itaipú, and there was an initial shortage of labor. However, after the Itaipú boom, the demand for ceramic materials fell, effectively halting the upward pressure on salaries for labor. Even though the industry in Tobatí continued to grow, an ongoing crisis in the peasant farming sector continued to funnel labor into the town at an even higher rate, and wages never recovered their former buying power.

Given the association of marriage with financial well-being, the obvious response of labor in the brick industry was to stop marrying. This rational response is reflected in other ways, as well. Data from the 1989 survey showed that 70.8 percent of all adult males residing in the home of parents or relatives were brick workers, a figure significantly higher than the 49 to 54 percent of men working in brickyards among the entire working population.³ This datum indicates simply that brickmakers can not afford to form their own households, and instead have to continue to reside in the home of their parents.

Likewise multiple regression analysis shows the significance of an upward trend in the ages of brickmakers at the time of marriage. Simply put, if brickmakers are postponing marriage, this should be reflected in a change in the average age at marriage. Indeed, Figure 7.3 shows this relationship between age of marriage and the fortunes of the brick industry quite nicely. Among brickmakers, age at marriage shows a modest increase followed by a downward shift in

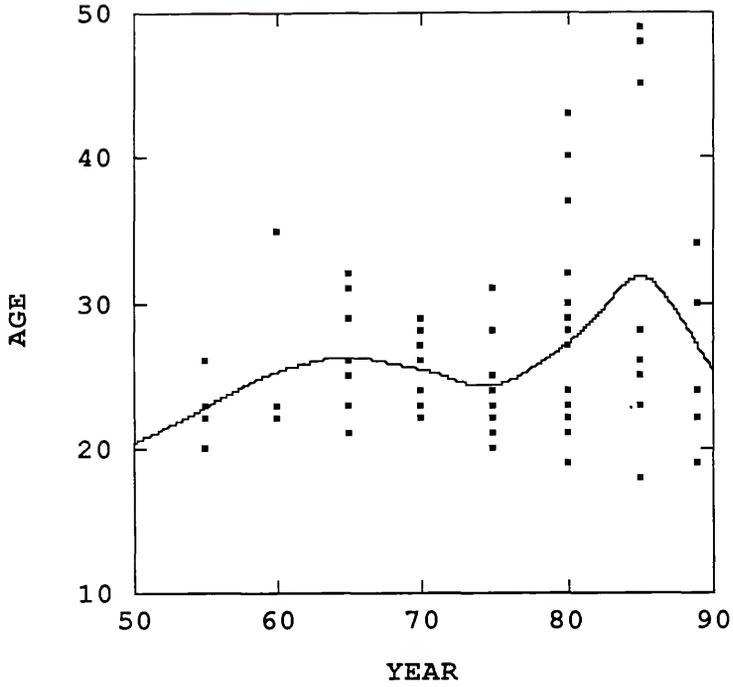


Figure 7.3

Average Age of Brickmakers at Marriage,
By Year of Marriage

the mid-1970s--during the early years of the Itaipú boom. Toward the end of the decade, there was a marked increase in age at marriage, that finally leveled after 1985. By 1989, brickmakers were finally marrying about twelve years later than they had during the 1950s, before the industry surged, and before the period of agrarian reform.⁴

The overall trends from these data are clear. During the past years, there has been a great increase in the stability of the family in Tobatí in terms of formal marriage and complete households, at the same time that extended households have also become much more common. Both of these trends are most likely associated with changes resulting from reduced access to lands and increased monetization of the economy--and particularly in Tobatí, dependence upon wage labor.

Apparently, however, marriage serves more particular economic and social functions for the elite population of the town. When the Services presented the history of the town's wealthiest family, given the pseudonym Rizzi in their monograph, they told how the family was founded upon the marriage of first cousins, whose fathers had arrived from Italy at the end of the Triple Alliance War (Service and Service 1954: 55-58). Within two generations, the Rizzi family managed to amass almost all of the ranching lands within the municipality, and the growing family formed the nucleus of a new local elite.

The many descendents of that family still control a great deal of the wealth of the town. In one sense, though, the fortune has been diluted by division of the inheritance among a large number of Rizzi

siblings during the last thirty years. On the other hand, it is apparent that the Rizzis have managed to consolidate their wealth within a corporativist type of family organization created by back and forth linkages through marriage with all of the major families in the town.

There are about eight surnames in the town associated with wealth and power, and the Rizzis are affines of at least six of them. An examination of marriage records reveals at least four marriages between pairs of siblings which involve the Rizzis (that is, sets of brothers marrying sets of sisters, or brother and sister marrying sister and brother). Otherwise, trying to keep track of back and forth marriages between these families by following the double surnames of the Spanish naming system is a dizzying exercise. What is clear, then, is that the fragmentation of holdings which occurred after the death of the family patriarch has not resulted in the alienation of the family's wealth.

Furthermore, the Rizzis became influential enough that they began to penetrate the higher social circles in Asunción, and now count among their affines at least one minister of government and one departmental governor (under the Stroessner administration). These relationships have proved valuable to the Rizzis in cases of legal disputes of which they have been a part (see Chapter Five: the case of 21 de Julio). It would be a difficult task to unravel the relationships cementing the elite of Tobatí through marriage, but it does appear that marriage has been a conscious strategy for the circulation of increasing wealth and influence within a socially circumscribed group.

Migration

If the changing economic base of the town seems to promote greater stability within the family, it has had no such effect on stability of settlement. Migration rates are as high, or higher, for Tobatí as they ever were. However, as earlier high rates of migration were linked to land tenure regimes and population density, migration in modern Tobatí is connected to major factors already identified: land closure in the rural areas and low wages in the urban areas.

The Services found rates of migration among Paraguayans to be "astonishing" in 1948 (1954: 19). Of 289 family heads they surveyed within urban Tobatí, fully 99 (34.25 percent) were immigrants. Their data were much less precise regarding emigration, but rates seemed to be as high or higher. The motive for mobility among these urban migrants was, not surprisingly, economic opportunity--people were willing to resettle in other towns "depending on the amount of recent prosperity of the town," or in the capital which offered "greater economic opportunity for unskilled labor" (ibid.: 19-21).

In recent times, the rural-rural migration which the Services described as a norm for peasant farmers gave way to a massive rural-urban migration which was largely completed about a generation ago--most likely during the late 1960s and early 1970s. About half of the parent generation living in urban Tobatí in 1989 was born in the rural countryside around the town, or in the rural areas of other towns ("sister communities") in the department of Cordillera. The data in Table 7.5 which shows migration trends from parent generation to child generation only includes those 118

Table 7.5

Birthplace of Adult, Urban Tobateños
By Generation--1989

	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Children^a</u>
<u>Urban Tobatí</u>	76	336
Percent	34.6	79.8
<u>Rural Cordillera^b</u>	103	71
Percent	46.8	16.9
<u>Other</u>	41	14
Percent	18.6	3.3
<u>Total</u>	220	421
Percent	100.0	100.0

^a Adult children 18 years old or older. Unfortunately, the data do not distinguish between urban and rural Tobatí for children.

^b Includes rural Tobatí and rural areas of sister communities.

families surveyed in urban Tobatí, and excludes the 35 families surveyed who lived in the rural part of the town.

Although the survey data did not differentiate between urban and rural origins of children, only a relatively small number (16.7 percent) of adult children were born in other towns of the Cordillera, whether in the urban or rural regions. It appears, from this data, that most of the rural-born population of the town had migrated into town by about 1971, for in 1989 most of their adult children had been born in Tobatí. In fact, the urban population of the town almost doubled between the 1962 and 1972 censuses, from 2,520 to 4,943 people, compared to the 1950 to 1962 intercensal period when the urban area of the town grew by only 32 percent, from 1,915 to 2,520 people (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos 1982: 26)--not much more than would be expected by natural increase.

Tobatí was undoubtedly a pole of some attraction during the latter part of the 1960s. By this time, farmers in the subsistence sector were strongly reacting to the effects of agrarian reform, as there was a rush to title lands and close off the kind of spontaneous occupation that had once been common. As Asunción grew during the period, a demand for construction materials spurred investments in an already growing brick industry. Finally, conclusion of negotiations for the hydroelectric project of Itaipú provided all the incentive needed for prospective entrepreneurs in Tobatí to begin thinking of brickmaking in industrial terms.

By 1989 the cycle had nearly completed itself, and migration had assumed a different character. While employment in the ceramics industry continued to pull in migrants from the rural areas

of the town, as explained in Chapter Five, wages were far too low to keep a young and fairly well educated population of urban-born Tobateños. In 1989, only 50.4 percent of the men and 40.2 percent of the women who had left the parent's household stayed in Tobatí to work. As illustrated in Table 7.6, the greatest proportion of these young people left for the capital, although significant numbers settled in other parts of the country or in Buenos Aires, long a metropolitan attraction for Paraguayans.

A large part of this emigration is conservative, in the sense that remittances from the destination help to maintain the family in Tobatí. In this sense, the migrating proletarians of urban Tobatí have much in common with the children of rural subsistence farmers, who seek employment in the brickyards of Tobatí and contribute a part of their wage to the upkeep of the family (Chapter Six).

Table 7.7 presents data similar to that in Table 5.8, which showed the difference in likelihood of children of farmers to migrate as opposed to children of townspeople. In this case, families with one or more migrating children were compared by their father's status (independent or wage-earning). There is a high correlation between likelihood of migration and class of the household, and 47.69 percent of bourgeois (that is, independent business owning) families send at least one migrant son or daughter, while only 26 percent of wage-earning households do so.

If the son of a factory owner or shopkeeper has no secure entrée in the family business, staying in Tobatí to work in wage labor would very likely involve a decline in standard of living, and

Table 7.6

Destination of Adult Children
Leaving Parent's Household
Tobatí, 1989

	<u>Sons</u>	<u>Daughters</u>
<u>Tobatí</u>	70	66
Percent	50.4	40.2
<u>Asunción</u>	36	59
Percent	25.9	36.0
<u>Sister Communities</u>	8	7
Percent	5.8	4.3
<u>Colonias^a</u>	11	10
Percent	7.9	6.1
<u>Buenos Aires</u>	11	18
Percent	7.9	11.0
<u>Other</u>	3	4
Percent	2.1	2.4
Total	139	164
Percent	100.0	100.0

^a Includes all those areas within the "Eastern Border Region" of colonization, near the Brazilian/Argentine frontier (see Chapter Two).

Table 7.7
 Children Migrating by
 Father's Status
 Tobatí 1989

	<u>Non-Wage</u>	<u>Wage-Labor</u>	<u>Day-Labor</u>
<u>Migrated</u> ^a	31	13	3
Percent	47.7	26.0	30.0
<u>Did not migrate</u> ^b	34	37	7
Percent	52.3	74.9	70.0

Test statistic: Pearson chi-square=0.051
 Likelihood ratio chi-square=0.049

^a At least one child or more in the family migrated out.

^b No children migrated out.

certainly would imply a loss of status. In many cases, migrating to Asunción presents the most likely possibility of avoiding either of those unsavory consequences. Even wage work in Asunción likely provides more opportunities for advancement than working in the brick yards of Tobatí. Meanwhile, daughters of bourgeois families have the alternatives of marriage or entry into the "respectable" professions of school teaching or government clerical or secretarial work within the town's several bureaucratic branches. If the family is well to do or has political connections, children may go to the university, which may also provide opportunities for advancement.

For the children of most factory workers in Tobatí, however, securing work in town usually represents neither a decline in standard of living, nor a loss of social status--indeed, these children were likely already working in the factory from an early age. Furthermore, the small but secure wage in Tobatí might be more valuable to maintaining the family than gambling on the possibility of a better position in the capital. For most of the daughters, though, there is no gamble--migration to Asunción represents the only viable possibility of securing wage labor, usually as a domestic servant. Thus, the remarkably high figure of sixty percent of adult women who migrate, almost all to either Asunción or Buenos Aires (see Table 7.6).

There is surely no lack of desire for the children of working class families to seek to improve their situation by leaving Tobatí--more than a quarter of such families have migrating children. Still, such a move may represent much more of a gamble to such a family than to a family more secure in their holdings in Tobatí

Table 7.8

Remittances by Migrating Children
by Form of Employment at Destination

Tobatí 1989

	<u>Non-Wage</u>	<u>Wage-Labor</u>	<u>Day-Labor</u>
<u>Cash remittances</u>	1	9	40
Percent	2.5	64.3	80.0
<u>Other</u>	15	0	0
Percent	37.5	0.0	0.0
<u>None</u>	24	5	10
Percent	60.0	35.7	20.0

Test statistic: Pearson chi-square=0.00

The difference in the likelihood for children of wage-earning versus bourgeois families to migrate is probably a fairly accurate reflection of the stakes involved for each case.

Finally, the value of the migrating child to the family in Tobatí in terms of remittances seems to be directly related to the kind of work secured at the destination of the migrants. During interviews, informants were asked if absent children contributed to the "*canasta familiar*" (family upkeep), and if such contribution was likely to be in the form of cash or "other" (gifts, food items, etc.). As Table 7.8 (above) shows, children who earn a form of salary will usually remit cash to the family in Tobatí, while those who work as independent business people are more likely to remit nothing at all.

However, data concerning remittances should be interpreted cautiously. There is a strikingly high number of children working in day-labor (usually jobs in construction, or other non-secure types of employment). The very high number of such children sending money to the family in Tobatí compared to children working in the other categories of employment suggests that the children working in temporary type jobs are not considered to be fully independent of the household in Tobatí, and they are quite likely considerably younger than, perhaps, self-employed children, or children employed in permanent occupations. Still, there is no doubt that these children represent at least a minor boon to many families in Tobatí.

Primogeniture

A particularly interesting social feature associated with the formation of new classes in Tobatí is the rise of a form of

primogeniture, or the favoring of the eldest son over the other sons. The Services stated categorically that "primogeniture has never been practiced in Paraguay" (1954: 51), since lands tended to be divided equally among sons with a corresponding decrease in size of holdings over time. Although the authors show no concrete support for these conclusions, primogeniture is not mentioned as a feature of Paraguayan social or family life in other sources.

Primogeniture is most commonly regarded as the preferential inheritance of property by the eldest son. Actually, though, the definition of the term is broader, and includes more kinds of behaviors. Primogeniture can also define "rank, succession, inheritance, and other social rights and responsibilities" (Keesing and Keesing 1971: 218). In other words, primogeniture, or birth order, usually defines the *status* of a son of the family.

It would require considerably detailed archival work to determine if some of these other forms of primogeniture were common in Paraguay. An analysis of the data regarding class in Tobatí, however, does show a striking pattern that can only be explained as a kind of primogeniture, whether recognized and acknowledged by the people who practicē it or not.

The data were coded so that sons were rated from one to three: first born, second born, and subsequently born. Families selected for analysis had a minimum of two adult sons (over seventeen years old). Then these families were compared by the class of the father. For this exercise, wage-laborers and day-laborers were combined into a single class called wage labor, and the class coded as

"students/civil service" was eliminated because of its paucity in the sample.

Following this procedure, a total of 38 families and 111 sons emerged in the sample which met the specifications outlined above. The results, shown in Table 7.9, are dramatic. If the father of the family is either peasant or bourgeois (non-wage sector), the first-born son is very likely to work in an independent occupation as well. The second son is somewhat less likely to follow the father in that class, and subsequent sons may most likely find work in wage-paying jobs. On the other hand, if the father is classed as proletarian (working in wage labor), the first or second-born sons have a slightly higher, though still very small, probability of finding careers in the non-wage sector, while youngest sons will almost always follow the father in class as wage workers.

These data are not only interesting in their own light, but may have much to say about the perception of class as status, or rank, and the nature of proletarianization. If the "cards are stacked," in a sense, so that the eldest son is most likely to succeed the father in class, this would imply that bourgeois status (ownership or control of the means of production) is recognized not only as an economic precept, but also as a question of rank. Conversely, proletarianization, as wage labor, is less highly valued in terms of rank in the society. Thus, the introduction of classes in an otherwise egalitarian society (at least, as described by the Services) also introduces new concepts of rank and order, as well as inheritance rights in the family.

Table 7.9

Birth Order as Determinant of Class
Tobati 1989

For first-born sons:

	<u>Son's Status</u>		Total	
	<u>Non-Wage</u>	<u>Wage-labor</u>		
<u>Father's Status</u>				
	<u>Non-Wage</u>	21	5	26
	<u>Wage-labor</u>	3	8	11
Total		24	13	37

For second-born sons:

	<u>Son's Status</u>		Total	
	<u>Non Wage</u>	<u>Wage-labor</u>		
<u>Father's Status</u>				
	<u>Non-Wage</u>	19	6	25
	<u>Wage-labor</u>	2	7	9
Total		21	13	34

For third and subsequent sons:

	<u>Son's Status</u>		Total	
	<u>Non-Wage</u>	<u>Wage-labor</u>		
<u>Father's Status</u>				
	<u>Non-Wage</u>	11	18	29
	<u>Wage-labor</u>	1	10	11
Total		12	28	40

Statistic: Mantel-Haenszel chi-square=19.438 Probability= < 0.000

These results also reinforce data shown in the last chapter regarding social mobility. If families do in fact stack the cards in favor of first-born sons, that strategy is still only of very limited success in assuring that some members of wage-earning families rise in social rank. Even the eldest sons are unlikely to move from the class of their fathers into the ranks of the bourgeoisie, let alone the chances for the youngest sons. The tendency is clear that rank and status accrues across generations within particular families, and recruitment into that class is limited indeed.

The results of this one exercise may or may not be generalizable. The virtue of this kind of exercise, however, is that it is easily replicable, and further trials should indicate whether this feature, as an accompaniment of proletarianization, may have some universality. Another aspect which merits some investigation is the extent to which behaviors which "stack the deck" may be overt (emically acknowledged, in the cultural materialist sense) on the part of family members.

New Government and Political Regimes

In comparison to the Tobateños described by the Services, the country peoples' lives are affected to an enormous degree by the exponential growth of external governmental and political structures. While this may be expected as a logical result of modernization at the national level, rural Paraguay is perhaps unique in the way in which government and political functions are mystified so that access to goods and services is contingent upon compliance to official dogma.

The Colorado Party secured its absolute power in the political realm of the country through a canny combination of repression, organization, and "education." When Stroessner took control of the government in 1954, the young, energetic officer succeeded in maintaining the loyalty of the armed forces. With both the government structure and the armed forces in rein, Stroessner had control over two of the three pillars upon which political power rested in the country. Although it was no simple task, Stroessner finally consolidated his control over that third major pillar, the Colorado Party, between 1956 and 1966 after crushing numerous challenges to his authority by rival cadres. By 1967, "no factions divided the Colorado party. Everyone was a *stroessnerista*" (Lewis 1980: 99).

The government of Paraguay under the Stroessner regime was notably different from the other authoritarian regimes in Latin America, although the term is usually used to lump the Paraguayan government together with those others (Bruneau 1990: 170). In reality, the Stroessner government, building upon a quasi-fascistic, statist tradition originated by Franco, Estigarribia, and Morínigo and outlined in Chapter Four, bore many features associated with totalitarian regimes, which led one analyst to term the Paraguayan case as "proto-totalitarian" (Sondrol: 1991). That the Paraguayan government was not ordinarily referred to as totalitarian, was probably because of the usual association of the term with Marxist or Communist governments, as well as a more political reluctance to tag "friendly" governments with the harsher sounding label. The association of totalitarianism with leftist regimes was so strong that

many scholars suggest that "With the decay, collapse, or at least partial liberalization of most of the world's Communist regimes in the late 1980s, it is debatable whether the totalitarian distinction is any longer salient" (Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1990: 8).

As a personalist dictator, however, Stroessner had much in common with Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, in defining himself

"in terms of prophetic, personal qualities elevating [him] beyond the rank and file. [His dictatorship] created a mystical bond with the masses, merging authority with control and representation into a leadership principle (*Führerprinzip*) and absolutist regime (*Führerstat*)" (Sondrol 1991: 602).

This charismatic aspect of the Stroessner regime was joined with another "totalitarian impulse" which was a "militant, mass-based party apparatus and a penetrated, politicized armed forces" (ibid. : 612).⁵

The Colorado Party is highly organized around a hierarchical structure supported, supposedly, by the rural *bases* of the country. Thus, the party was built as a parallel administration to the formal, constitutional, administrative structure of the country. Because the structures of the party and governmental institutions are, in fact, nearly parallel, and because key posts in both institutions are so often occupied by the same cadre of individuals, most citizens were either confused about the difference between party and government, or else under the impression that the two were, in fact, the same institution.⁶

The fact that there actually is a distinction between the two institutions is only emphasized in Tobatí to the extent that the municipal government issues licences and collects taxes, while the party apparatus grants favors in return for, at the least, party

affiliation. That the government is associated with bureaucracy and demands, while the party is associated with personalism and largesse, works, of course, only to the advantage of the party.

The administrative base of the party is located at the level of the *Seccional*, or the local party organization, and the president and other officers of the seccional are normally regarded (and honored) as legitimate governmental authorities. The function of these "*organizaciones de base*" (base organizations) is to "maintain party discipline and militancy, keep a registry of members, disseminate propaganda, dispense welfare and patronage to *correligionarios* (party brethren) and keep oppositionists under surveillance" (Sondrol 1991: 616). Above the level of the seccional, the country is divided into 35 *delegaciones*, each of which is granted, almost as a fiefdom, to a *delegado de gobierno* appointed from Asunción. The delegado is not necessarily native to the geographic area that he or she represents. The president of the seccional, on the other hand, usually is a citizen of the town, and is responsible for the organization and administration of the local branch of the party, while the delegado represents the interests of the area at the national level, in the *Junta de Gobierno*, or the national committee of the Colorado party.

The confusion which popularly exists between the nature of government and party was greatly reinforced by the degree that party affiliation was the *sine qua non* for appointment to any governmental post. It is axiomatic that any government official, regardless of how high or low a level, was a member of the party, and it was nearly as true that any person holding a post within the party hierarchy, also enjoyed a government sinecure of some kind.

The significance of this fact lies in understanding the diminishing influence of traditional *caudillos* and members of a rural landed aristocracy. During the modern era, the bureaucratic and administrative functions of the government have expanded enormously, so that even in a rural area like Tobatí there are branches of ten national-level governmental institutions representing the Ministries of the Interior, Education, Public Health, Agriculture, and Justice, as well as three separate cabinet-level autonomous agencies. Together, the personnel of these agencies form a new kind of bureaucratic and technocratic class not associated with the traditional rural elites which had long been dominated by descendants of old Liberal families. The growth of the government sector at the national level, moreover, represents of great pool of opportunities for the children of loyal party members and emerging talent from within the party youth. The fusion of party and government offered avenues of social and economic mobility to a much larger, and broader, segment of the population than ever before.

Even in Tobatí, which is only a modest administrative center, the number of adults employed in government bureaucratic or teaching positions rose from only 1.7 percent a generation ago to 5.9 percent in 1989 (see Table 6.2). At the national level, the government is by far the country's largest *patrón*. In 1982, the government employed over 21 percent of all the paid workers in the country and provided 31.2 percent of all the salaried jobs in Asunción (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos 1986: 312-315). As the principal creator of new jobs, the state provided for 5,019 new positions just in 1992, and 3,924 of those jobs were created in the Central Administration, the

government's bureaucratic clearing-house (*Coyuntura* 81: 13). While public sector jobs may serve as an important guard against high unemployment rates in most Latin American countries, the fact that these jobs in Paraguay are reserved only for Colorado party members provides an extremely high incentive for participation in the officialist political institution.

The Colorado party also employs a great many *correligionarios*, to run its own weighty bureaucracy, as well as its two major propaganda vehicles; the strident party newspaper (*Patria*) and its inflammatory radio broadcasts (*La Voz del Coloradismo*). The party also provides dormitories for university students, retirement homes for war veterans, and boarding houses for visiting rural dignitaries. There are no reliable figures regarding the real budget of the party, but it does have enormous resources in properties as well as income. This income is funded primarily by the *caja partidaria*, a fund made up of monthly "voluntary" donations of a percentage of the salaries of all government employees. A sum is also automatically deducted from most government salaries for subscribing to *Patria*.

Finally, the corporatist nature of the party hierarchy is reinforced by its very many auxiliary civic and professional organizations. There are important organizations of Colorado women, Colorado youth, Colorado students, and Colorado architects, lawyers, doctors, agronomists, economists, and so on. These organizations are the principle route by which special interests groups gain access to the government, and they also provide special arenas for personal and professional advancement.

These administrative structures of the party which parallel and often overlap government functions are enormously important in defining the formal structure of the public sector in Paraguay. At the local level, however, the party serves a much more personalist role and also functions to relieve the old-guard landowners and elites of their traditional social responsibilities which otherwise may have acted as a drag on capital investment and development.

The kind of *patrón-peón* (patron-client) relationship which characterized earlier rural society in Paraguay (see Service and Service 1954: 139) was not based as much on employers and wage laborers as it was the ability of the wealthy *patrón* to bestow favors upon the less wealthy during times of personal crisis, such as illness, death, or marriage of a family member. In return, the *patrón* secured the loyalty of the "client" and thereby enlarged his or her political and social sphere of power. Although the aspiring rural politician still depends on popular support at the local level, the institutionalization of political power in the country has made the patron-client relationship largely dispensable.

Instead, the party Seccional has largely assumed the social role of the traditional *patrón*, which means that entrepreneurs are no longer shackled by the (expensive and time-consuming) social responsibilities which had otherwise been the burden of people of their rank. The Seccional assumes these responsibilities in order to maintain the mass popular participation which legitimizes party rule. Personal political advancement is orchestrated at the national level, from the capital, where politicians without the burden of local constraints are now free to operate (see Migdal 1974: 104).

In Tobatí, as in most rural communities, the Seccional is one of the largest and most imposing buildings in the town. Besides its administrative offices, it also has a large auditorium and an impressive outdoor recreation and sports facility, with the town's largest tiled dance floor and meeting space. One of the Seccional's most important functions is to provide social diversions, such as dances and *asados* (barbecues) on important days. The wealthier citizens of the town--those who traditionally would have functioned as social patrones--are called upon regularly by the party hierarchy to donate goods (typically a steer or two) or cash for social functions. The party effectively rations redistributive wealth and buffers the wealthy from the importuning gestures of the people. In return, the party demands the loyalty and support of the population.

An anecdotal case illustrates how social responsibilities are shifted. An unfortunate teen-aged girl from an impoverished family died suddenly from complications in pregnancy. As was the custom, the body was laid out on tables in front of the house for a public wake. The family, well-known for their Liberal party sympathies, did not have the resources for burying the girl, and friends of the family began asking individuals for cash donations. When a few individuals I was with were approached for donations, they inquired indignantly why the Seccional was not providing for the family in these difficult circumstances. When I pointed out that the girl was from a Liberal family, they responded that it should not make any difference: this was the responsibility of the Seccional. One man explained that he, himself, was a Liberal, but that the Seccional had the responsibility to assist all of the families of the town. I later found out that the

Seccional had, indeed, been approached for help, and that it had made up the difference between the costs of the burial and what had been collected from individuals.⁷

The growth and acquired role of the local seccionales is a wholly new phenomenon. Indeed, when the Services were conducting their study, there were "no organizations which can bring pressure on political bodies" (1954: 122), while "The ancient prototype of the politician, the backwoods *caudillo*, is still close to reality" (ibid.: 130). While the pervasive organization of the Colorado party was certainly a brilliant tactical move and in no small way responsible for the stability of the government, the same political structures were no doubt fostered by the form of economic development followed by the country during the modern period. Unlike other countries of the region, the Paraguayan countryside was never dominated by a class of powerful hacendados who could command the following of large numbers of people. As explained earlier, the population was simply too mobile and independent. Instead, with widespread development in the countryside, new forms of social and political controls emerged which were wholly indigenous to the country. Citizens could become linked to the seccional which provided social and financial services to an increasingly dependent population, and which also served to mediate between state policies and local implementation of those policies.

Rural Organization for Social Action

As discussed above, there was still a large sector of the rural population that was ill-served by the local political party structure. Indeed, the seccionales often were incapable of satisfying the demands of the dispossessed peasant population, because the interests of those people were in direct conflict with the interests of the *seccionaleros*, themselves. The seccional in Tobatí, for example, could be successful in mediating a civil complaint between two campesinos with conflicting claims, by granting or withdrawing privileges until an agreement is reached. However, in Tobatí the situation has often been that powerful members of the seccional, themselves, are the claimants or defendants in a dispute, such as in the land disputes discussed in Chapter Five, in which cases the seccional is the body least indicated to resolve social problems. Furthermore, there may be no outside or higher official recourse for claimants against members of the seccional, since the network of political interests is essentially monolithic, and extends outward and upward from the local to national levels.

Under the circumstances, the country's "traditional" rural sector has not been slow to organize independently when pressed too far. The responses of campesino organizations to the pressures of economic change during the Stroessner years have varied greatly in form, from the conservative to the radical, according to the unique circumstances surrounding each social movement. Almost always, peasant organization has been motivated and assisted by politically aware social action groups from the urban areas, although there have also been cases of the evolution of completely novel organizations and ideologies from wholly within the peasant sector. In all cases, peasant

organization has always been treated with great suspicion by the government, which has never failed to retaliate with brutal violence against any organization which it may have regarded as a threat to the power of the ruling elites in the country.

The normal response of the government, however, is to attempt to counter the growth of politically aware and active movements by co-opting campesinos to organizations strictly sanctioned by the government. These organizations may be sponsored by government agencies, such as the Agriculture Extension Service (SEAG), semi-autonomous government-supported agencies (CREDICOOP), or organizations sponsored by international assistance or relief organizations, as long as government supervision is permitted. There are, in fact, a plethora of such official and non-official organizations working at the "grass-roots" in the Paraguayan countryside (see González et al. 1987). These organizations are allowed to organize small farmers at the local level for purposes of education and extension of credit, as long as any type of political action is not contemplated as a solution for short or long-term problems.⁸ Of course, any such organization must be sanctioned by the local seccional of the Colorado party, and permission is normally required from the local sheriff (comisario) before each meeting.

Given these conditions, and the ubiquity of party officials in the countryside, there has actually been a surprising degree of activity by non-sanctioned campesino organizations. Organization under the aegis of the Catholic Church has often been a way for peasant farmers to contemplate alternative courses of action to solve their most pressing problems. Under Archbishop Ismael Rolón, the Catholic Church was a

major thorn in the side of the Stroessner government because of its activist stance and its work with the dispossessed agrarian sector (Lewis 1980: 189-198 passim). Most distressing to the government was that its power to regulate Church activity was somewhat curtailed because of the Church's contacts with international ecclesiastical and human rights organizations, although the regime only rarely wavered in response to international pressures.

In other instances, wholly autonomous and radically conservative millenarian religious movements have challenged official authority in different ways. Ramón Fogel, in *Movimientos campesinos en el Paraguay* (1986), documented the growth, organization and goals of two radically different religious organizations, one Catholic, and one independent millenarian, and showed how both, by challenging the structure of the traditional social order as well as the authority of the central government, were violently crushed by the state security apparatus.

The best known of such social movements was a network of local organizations known as the *Ligas Agrarias*, or Agrarian Leagues, which operated principally during the late 1960s and 1970s. The *Ligas* were compañía-level organizations formed around prayer and discussion groups led by lay members of the church. The groups were mobilized for mutual aid through traditional forms of reciprocal assistance (the *minga*), but discussion was oriented toward *concientización*, or consciousness-raising, in seeking to demystify the true nature of obstacles to economic and social progress. The government, of course, was exceedingly wary of the intellectual content of Liga activity, but it was even more disturbed by the support the movement enjoyed from

foreign personnel and organizations. In a series of brutal strikes, which culminated in a particularly murderous pre-dawn attack near the town of Jejuí in 1975, the government finally liquidated Liga organization throughout the rural areas of the country, with a still unknown number of casualties.

Fogel also showed how another religious based organization, the Pueblo de Diós, was viewed by the government as equally subversive, even though it was radically different from the Ligas. The Pueblo de Diós was a fundamentalist evangelical sect, led by a charismatic figure, which retired to a rural area in the frontier area of Caaguazú where members of the group established a communal village. While the group was essentially apolitical and radically conservative in behavior, they were a separatist organization which viewed the government as a particularly suspicious component of the secular world. However, as with the Ligas, the ideology of the Pueblo de Diós originated as a response to the rapid processes of development in the rural areas, and rejected the new hegemonic relationships which those processes demanded. And, the government's response to the Pueblo de Diós was equally as violent and final as it had been with the Ligas.

As in most areas of the country, the campesinos of Tobatí suffered a good share of government violence as well. Most of the citizens of the town were aware of the existence of clandestine burials in the nearby countryside, even before the rest of the country was supposedly "shocked" to learn of the widespread existence of such sites after the 1989 *golpe*.⁹ It is even possible that the area of Tobatí was considered especially sensitive, since the comisaría of the town reported directly to the police in Asunción, rather than to the

departmental *delegación* (governorship) in nearby Caacupé, as would normally have been the case.

Tobatí also is unusual for rural Paraguayan towns of its size, by the complete absence of government organization at the campesino level. Almost every rural town of any importance in the country has an agency representative of the Servicio de Extensión Agrícola y Ganadera (SEAG), the agricultural extension agency of the Ministry of Agriculture. The absence of a SEAG agency in the town may be understandable considering the moribund state of the farming sector in the town's economy and the complete lack of interest of local officialdom in strengthening the agrarian base which still does exist. In this light, moreover, it is equally unsurprising that there is a sub-agency of SENACSA in the town, the ministerial agency representing the livestock sector. According to the 1982 census, only 48 Tobateños were active in ranching, while there were 1,848 small farmers in the district. Not coincidentally, almost all of the party and municipal officials in the town are among the town's landowning ranching population, besides their interests in the ceramics industry. Still, it seems surprising that the townspeople would not view a SEAG agency in the town as providing an alternative to other, perhaps less desirable, alternatives for rural organization.

At any rate, officialist organization at the level of the *compañía* has been entirely through the Colorado party, with the formation of sub-seccionales in each of the rural locales. It appears that the principal function of the sub-seccionales is to award positions with titles to loyal members of the party in the rural areas in exchange for their ability to draw people to rallies, inaugurations, and other

occasions requiring a popular turnout, as well as for the regular pro-forma elections. Organization at this level also extends the levels of surveillance into the rural areas, and provides links of communication between the party faithful and the leadership in Tobatí. During periods of dissent or factional conflict at the higher levels of the party in the capital, such as were increasingly common after 1987, the party leaders in Tobatí were dispatched to each of the rural areas to assemble the members of the sub-seccionales in order to quell rumors and inform the people of the position of the seccional.

Extra-officially, however, there is a branch of Acción Social, sponsored by the Catholic Church, which has an office across the plaza from the church. As an agency of the Church, Acción Social was tolerated by the government and party authorities in the town, but it was regarded with some suspicion by the townspeople, as also was the priest, a young man who, unlike previous priests, was not native to the area. Acción Social is an organization working with poor townspeople and rural alike, and functions as the charitable arm of the local church. It organizes classes in practical skills for adults, and holds occasional fund-raising programs, such as dinners and dances, to raise money for the very poor. Acción Social, of necessity, was required to be very circumspect in terms of the political content of its message. After the golpe which toppled Stroessner, though, and taking advantage of a new window of opportunity for civic education, the organization was given permission to hold meetings in the municipal building. During the meetings, campesinos were advised

of their rights and opportunities for appeal in cases of coercion or extortion by government or party officials.

There are two other organizations, each supported at the national level, which have worked with the rural peoples of Tobatí, and in limited cases, achieved limited organization with specific social goals. The first, already mentioned in Chapter Five, was the Asunción-based Comité de Iglesias (Committee of Churches), a group which, although interdenominational, is heavily dependent upon the Catholic Church for resources. The Comité de Iglesias has had to be exceptionally cautious in the extent of its social work in rural areas because of its relatively high profile. However, there are a number of attorneys working with the Comité, some of whom assisted the campesinos in the *compañías* of Tobatí in the prosecution of land disputes. While the Comité de Iglesias does not operate through the formation of highly structured organizations, the office of the group in the capital does provide a focus around which campesinos with similar problems can meet with sympathetic activists. Immediately after the government takeover in 1989, the Comité de Iglesias became especially prominent in their documentation of crimes under the old government, and in their aggressive prosecution of land disputes which had long been pending.

The second group supposedly formed spontaneously in 1983, and within two years expanded to form the Centro de Promoción Campesina de la Cordillera (Center for the Promotion of Small Farmers of the [Department of] Cordillera), based in Caacupé. Despite a formidable sounding goal of "freeing ourselves from the grasp of the middlemen, the principle obstacle which daily impoverishes vast

sectors of the rural zones," the actual program of the group is less threatening (González et al. 1987: 55). The CPCC, at least on the surface, works from within the expressed goals of the government in regard to rural development, in organizing in order to obtain technical and methodological assistance, sources of credit, and juridical support in resolving land disputes (ibid.).

The group has succeeded in attracting some funding and assistance from international organizations, and has constructed and staffed a modest permanent facility in Caacupé for meetings and technical extension activities. While sources of credit have been limited, the CPCC has initiated projects in citrus cultivation and beekeeping, distributing trees and hives among members, and experimented with processing the ubiquitous coconut.

The CPCC has had its main impact in Tobatí in the area of 21 de Julio, where some of the original founders of the organization were from. Some of the community leaders in the area had originally organized in response to the land crisis outlined in Chapter Five, and had joined with other nuclei of campesinos in nearby towns. In spite of the more prosaic activities of the CPCC, the members from 21 de Julio maintain an intense interest in the final resolution of their land problems, and the larger organization has served mainly as a vehicle to further this particular goal. At the earliest safe opportunity after the 1989 golpe, this group persuaded other campesinos in the Tobatí area to demonstrate in the town plaza in order to make townspeople and the media more aware of their problems.

Unfortunately, the townspeople were dismayed by the spectacle of placard-carrying and speech-making peasants in their

plaza--an event which would have been unthinkable during the lifetimes of most townspeople--and virtually no one observed the demonstration except for a couple of young Colorado party members who, responding to years of training, took photographs. This demonstration, however, was only the beginning of a new period of activism which rapidly grew in response to the liberalization of the post-Stroessner government.

In summary, the rural people of Tobatí are no longer the insular and vulnerable group that they were four decades ago, although the pressures for economic and social change are undoubtedly much greater than they have ever been in the country's recent past. Paved roads and rapid communications have put the population of the rural areas in close contact with sympathetic groups in the capital which can muster logistical and material support in cases of particular need or crisis. Likewise, the campesino population has become familiar with concepts of organized political action, and sensitive to the different goals and strategies of the various organizations which claim to represent their interests. Even participation within the officialist party structure serves to bring rural people into close contact with politics at the national level. The net effect of these new structures for action has been to institutionalize the goals and ideologies of the rural sector, and offer new avenues for possible action in defense of their interests. Still, as has been demonstrated so often in the past, the success of any course of action will depend to a great extent on macro-level economic and social forces beyond the pure *voluntad*, or will, of the still least powerful sector of the society.

Notes

1 In the 1989 survey, families in which one spouse was deceased were counted as "complete" if the deceased spouse had been living within the household. The Services did not specify how many of their single heads of household were actually widowed as opposed to divorced or separated.

2 However, there was a very strong relationship between class and number of family members outside of the nuclear family living in the household. Bourgeois families sheltered 69 relatives (45 of which were grandchildren) while wage-laboring families sheltered 24 relatives, of which only five were grandchildren. The Chi-square statistic for this relationship was .007.

3 According to the 1989 survey, 48.8 percent of all fathers worked in brickmaking, while 53.8 percent of their adult sons worked in brickmaking.

4 It should be emphasized that the response of wage-laborers seems to be postponement of marriage rather than the abandonment of the institution. Statistically, the data showed no relationship between class and concubinage (Pearson's chi-square = 0.852).

5 This mass participatory aspect of the party is what made the Stroessner regime most characteristic of a totalitarian model (see Linz 1975: 192). Sondrol, however, argues that the regime was fundamentally non-totalitarian because it lacked the ideological base which characterizes such systems (1991: 617). In the next chapter, I will argue that the "principles" of the Colorado party were not coherent, or even recognizable. However, that is not the same as saying that the party lacked a pervasive ideology based on "some ultimate meaning, sense of historical purpose, and interpretation of social reality" (Linz 1975: 191; see especially Lewis 1980: 146-148).

6 One is unsure whether to speak in present or past tense in regard to these aspects of Colorado party politics. After the fall of Stroessner in 1989, the party was severely shaken, and many people were forced to question their assumptions concerning the place and role of the party. The administrative organization of the party, however, still stands although there will undoubtedly be great changes in the way people regard the authority of the party.

7 With political liberalization of post-Stroessner Paraguay, there is hope among both old and new opposition parties of winning control of the government. With such a scenario, one wonders how a new political majority would plan on supplanting these important social functions of the Seccionales in rural areas such as Tobatí.

8 The Paraguayan government may be particularly jealous of its control over grass-roots organization, but it is a rare government or society that remains neutral to any kind of social organization that does not advocate "working within the system." What distinguishes Paraguay, to a great degree, may only be the efficiency with which officialdom is able to monitor non-sanctioned behavior.

9 Urban Paraguayans, in retrospect, seemed almost naive in their dismay upon hearing of endemic violence in rural areas under the Stroessner government. Extreme acts of violence were always poorly kept secrets in the rural areas of the country, but townspeople, as did most Tobateños, tended to overlook such incidents with the explanation that the victims "must have done something wrong, or the authorities would not have behaved as they did"-- words which I heard many times in different towns.

CHAPTER 8 MODES OF LIVING AND WAYS OF THINKING

The events which caused the virtual demise of the peasant economy in Tobatí did not happen gradually over a period of time, at least in the way that one thinks of historical time. There was, of course, an incremental increase in population densities which greatly restricted access to lands in the central region, but those increases did not appear significant until a threshold was reached well after the middle of the century. However, the government's land reform program during the mid-1960s was coincidental with the availability of new agricultural techniques and technologies, and new sources of capital investment in infrastructural projects necessary to rural development. When change came to the central region in general, and to the Tobatí region in particular, it was very rapid and quite encompassing.

On the night of February 2-3, 1989, General Alfredo Stroessner, dean of American heads of state, was unceremoniously brought back to earth after 35 years of near-absolute power. Many young Paraguayans, quite literally, believed that the old man was immortal and most Paraguayans could not imagine their country without this strong figure at the helm. Both of these great changes, one social and economic, the other purely political, had much in common because as sudden as both events were (in a relative sense), so too were they

both inevitable and predictable. Both of these events were, at the same time, welcomed and feared, and both left the people of Paraguay more than a little ideologically jarred.

These circumstances contributed greatly to cultural and ideological change in the Paraguayan countryside. However, these events were linked with many other circumstances that also determined the forms that change would take, and by which groups of people at what rates. The following scenarios represent different examples in which cultural and ideological change have contributed to change in the lives of rural Paraguayans, as well as the inevitable conflicts at both the social and psychological levels which accompany shifts in traditional forms of belief and behavior.

The Formation of Classes and Class Consciousness

Chapters Five and Six outlined the relationship between the decline of peasant agriculture in the central region of the country and the formation of a new proletarian class of industrial workers in Tobatí. Taken together, this shift was associated with a historical process that was rooted in changing economic conditions at the national and international levels, combined with the availability of new technologies. These fundamental changes, in turn, were directly linked to patterns of migration and the way people organized their lives. The correlation between modes of production and forms of social organization are strong enough that causation at some level must be inferred.

However, proletarianization is even more profound in its consequences, for history concerns the "manifold and historically

changing connections between the development of the forces and relations of production and the evolution of the consciousness, emotions, and ideologies of men" (Baran and Hobsbawm 1961: 52). According to a materialist view of social change, ideas and ideologies do not emerge wholly formed and commanding in aspect from thin air. Instead, ideologies originate in the possibilities inherent in the material world, and mature through an interplay of thought "*within* the determinate compass of a mode of production" and are "deployed to render nature amenable to human use" (Wolf 1982: 388; my emphasis). Therefore, change in mode of production is likely to precede change in ideology, and where one occurs the other may be expected.

Materialists in general, however, emphasize the back and forth nature of change at the basic level and assimilation and reformulation at the ideological level. This accounts for a constant tension which, according to Baran and Hobsbawm, is the engine of history. And the tension inherent in these parallel processes is due to the fact that ideologies tend to be conservative and "sticky," which creates a "lag" between the development of new modes of production and assimilative ideologies (Baran and Hobsbawm 1961). Harris attributes this lag to a "system-maintaining" characteristic of ideology, which acts as negative feedback to dampen the deviation introduced by innovation in order to "preserve the fundamental characteristics of the whole system" (1980: 71).

The fact, therefore, that "ideology-making is social in nature" and "takes place in historic time and under definable circumstances" (Wolf 1982: 388) implies that the "fit" between the material forces of

history and the ideologies that make those forces amenable to everyday social functions is time dependent. That is, if change at the more basic level is introduced gradually, there will be less conflict at the ideological level. Conversely, rapid changes will result in a poor "fit"--at least in the short term--between material reality and expectations based on beliefs generated from previous experience.

The case of Tobatí tends to validate these observations. However, ideologies are not easily subject to measurement, in spite of the popularity of "attitude surveys." It is at this slippery point where ethnographies tend to be weakest, for prevailing ideologies are difficult to pin down and are almost always based on relatively unchecked observation. This caveat is necessary as an introduction to the following material, because the expectation is that ideology associated with rapid infrastructural change must be in a particular state of flux and resistant to categorical definition. "The origin of the system" as Harris emphasizes (1980: 246) is not "determined by ... relationships observed in the present," so when "the system" is still undergoing rapid change the interplay between relationships may be particularly hard to define. However, some observations regarding ideologies and beliefs in contemporary Tobatí are particularly justified because of the pervasiveness with which they were expressed.

Young Tobateños working in the brick industry are only a generation away from the "essentially peasant society" described by the Services--and their mothers and fathers were the people that the Services knew and described. According to those authors (1954: 291) "the most basic traits that characterize the peasant's subculture

are functionally a part of his way of life and are most typically those which are related to agrarian self-sufficiency, as opposed to commercialism." The question to ask, then, is whether the present-day Tobateños are still well served by those traits which functioned to integrate them into an economy which has virtually disappeared during the last 25 years?

Many people undoubtedly view the loss of a certain kind of independence of the "yeoman farmer" for the security of wage labor as an even trade-off. When both farmer and factory worker are living at levels close to subsistence, there is probably no other way to view the exchange. And certainly, economists and development planners view growth in jobs and rising rates of employment as signs of a robust society. However, it is a myth that the classical campesino is "independent" any more than the industrial wage worker is secure with a weekly wage. Both of these people owe much of their standard of living to the relations maintained within the society at large,¹ and both people may have unique ways of maintaining those relationships to their best advantage.

An outsider is struck by the ambivalent relationship between the employers and the employed in the cerámicas of Tobatí. In the smaller brickyards, particularly, the employees may be relatives of the owner, or come "recommended" by relatives and personal friends. The worker may also attempt to cement the relationship with factory owner through the creation of ties of *compadrazgo*, or a fictive kinship relationship where the patron serves as godparent to one of the worker's children. On this level, the relationship between employer and employee may closely resemble the classic "many-

stranded" patron-client relationship (Wolf 1966) which describes an alliance of mutual (if unequal) advantage to both the patron and the client.

In the family-type brickyards, there may be pressure to "hire" an in-law or a cousin migrating into the town from the countryside. In each case, of course, a social bargain must be struck as to whether such a person is "family" or employee. If the former is the case, the person may live in the household with the owner's family, or conversely, may be encouraged to reside apart from the family. In any of these cases, the closer the social relationship outside of the brickyard, the more difficult it may be to maintain a necessary and comfortable distance between employer and wage worker. As Tilly emphasized (1981: 181), one of the noticeable effects of proletarianization is that it "[snaps] the links among marriage, inheritance, and reproduction" Kinship bonds--especially, it seems, affinal bonds--may be fundamentally incompatible with efficient social relations between the capitalist and laborer.

The problem with this relationship lies in the apparent truism that *"the interest of capital and the interests of wage-labour are diametrically opposed to each other"* (Marx 1976: 39; emphasis in the original). Marx further observes that this is true for the simple reason that "profits can grow rapidly only when the price of labour--the relative wages--decrease just as rapidly." In the small brickyards of Tobatí, the dilemma is clear: the closer that social relationships interfere with the opportunity for profits, the more uncomfortable the relationship between employer and employee. When labor cannot be freely manipulated, as in the case of family

members, the only way to reduce the cost of labor, is for the owner and the family to lower their own standard of living.

A patron-client relationship based on mutual obligations and expectations--often founded upon life-long relationships--is fundamentally incompatible with capitalist industry. Yet this type of relationship may be expected by recent entrants into the work force in Tobatí and, indeed, the owners of the brickyards may expect the same kind of relationship from their employees. There were cases in Tobatí where this problem discouraged would-be capitalists from expanding their own brick-works and taking on wage labor. The social pressure to employ family members and associates was not a condition easily accepted, and the alternative was to maintain the family-level operation with no outside employment.

As mentioned in Chapter Six, this sense of shared responsibility which characterized patron-client relationships in pre-capitalist Tobatí (as when, for example, landowners felt obliged to let peasant farmers settle unmolested on their lands in exchange for an offering of the crop) worked against the best interests of the employees as well as (at times) the employers. The specific case mentioned in Chapter Six was that of the obligation that workers felt toward the employers to minimize the impact of their absence during the cotton harvest by offering the labor of young brothers or sons to replace them. While it is clear that workers, by doing this, could be acting in their own self interest (by keeping their own jobs open during their absence), it is equally true that this relieves the owners of the threat of labor shortage and the pressure of offering a wage commensurate with that earned harvesting cotton.

Another lingering aspect of traditional behavior associated with pre-capitalist patron-client relationships is the role of children in general. The Services noted that "economic activity among children begins at about six or seven years of age, consisting of such simple tasks as running errands and taking messages" (1954: 84). In present-day Paraguay, throughout the rural areas, one of the most pervasive and cherished institutions is that of the "*mitái*," or little errand boy, who is favored by adults, serves their *tereré* and *maté*, delivers their messages, and runs their errands. Around an office or place of business, the boy is known as the *secre'í*, or "little secretary," and is viewed as an essential member of a team.

The *mitái*, or *secre'í*, is coddled by the adults, serves as the butt of their jokes, and is rewarded by little tips and favors. At the same time, it may be easy for the outsider to overlook the fact that the child serves an important function and often puts in a lengthy day. As a member of the family, the *mitái* is also sent to help grandfather, or help Aunt María, or lend a hand to his godfather whenever there is a need. A young boy is also expected to help the *patrón* with the chores during a busy time, and generally make himself useful. In fact, the traditional long-time "patron-client relationship" often has its origins in just such circumstances.

During interviews with workers in the *cerámicas* of Tobatí, it was surprising to hear how often a worker would proudly announce that his young son or sons worked with him in the brickyards, and at no wage. Almost always, there were two reasons given for this behavior. First, the child's labor was seen as essentially valueless, since the child had no expenses and would even eat off the father's

plate. Second, the worker usually expressed a feeling of indebtedness toward the employer--frequently for a loan extended during a particular family crisis. Although, presumably, loans were repaid, offering the free labor of the child was viewed as a material expression of gratitude on the part of the worker. However, there seemed little doubt that an offer of the child's services was also viewed by the worker as a ploy to increase job security by creating obligatory bonds that surpassed those of simple wages.

The fact that a child's labor is viewed as valueless has fairly profound implications because, from interviews with cerámica owners, it was clear that this view is strictly one-sided. The capitalist keeping track of debits and credits probably has a much clearer idea of the true value of child labor, which can be significant, indeed (see Harris 1989: 216). In the Brazilian land reform program, for example, a formula is used to calculate the labor power at a family's disposal, and a young child is figured as contributing half the labor power of a grown man to the overall farm operations (INCRA 1985).

The cerámica owner recognizes the value of child labor and it probably constitutes a significant part of the labor requirement of the factories of Tobatí, although an actual percentage is nearly incalculable due to the highly informal character of this labor. The factory owners do not hesitate to acknowledge the employment of children of eight or nine years old, referring to them collectively (see Chapter Six) as the "Regiment of the Mariscal," and individually as the "horse's ass" (*kavajú reví*) because they perform the tedious work of following the horse which operates the *tónel*, or mixing

mechanism. Otherwise, they perform the tasks of removing the bricks from the mold, stacking them, and moving them from place to place as they dry. A young child often returns from the brickyard covered from head to toe in mud, since the dirtiest tasks are often given to the young boys.

The fact that child labor is pervasive in Tobatí does not make the town remarkable among capitalist societies--indeed, child labor has been a hallmark of the exploitation of labor under capitalist systems. The important point is that child labor in Tobatí is not predicated so much on the value of the child's wage as a supplement to the family's subsistence, but that the child's labor is viewed as valueless except as the fulfillment of an obligation on the part of the worker to the employer, as *patrón*. In this sense, child labor is an ideological remnant of pre-capitalist patron-client relations, and under a capitalist regime serves to depress wages, inhibit the formation of class consciousness, and increase the index of exploitation of labor in general.²

Finally, another area where a bad "fit" between changing modes of production and the evolution of ideology is manifested in Tobatí lies in the general horror with which labor organization, or unionization, is viewed. Factory owners, not surprisingly, dismiss the idea of unionization as unnecessary and against the interests of the "community," and quite frankly express a willingness to use their considerable power to prevent such "ideas" from taking root at any cost, including the use of force. Equally unsurprising is their view that any such ideas could only originate "from outside the community," since in Tobatí everything is *entre familia*--"within the

family." When considering such "outside ideas" as labor organization, the factory owners believe they are acting in solidarity with their workers, in maintaining the "family" as the locus of negotiation and problem solving and invoking mutualism as a common defense against the encroachment of "foreign influences."

The reaction on the part of workers is usually no less strong, except for a very few cases when young workers (who, not surprisingly, had worked outside of Tobatí before) spoke in guarded confidence. The main problem of unions, for the workers, is that they destroy the personal relationship that exists between workers and their employers, and place workers and employers in an adversarial position. What most workers, especially the older ones, do not realize is the extent to which their relationship to the owners is already profoundly adversarial.

Most workers do not hesitate to complain about their low salaries, and occasionally a worker will even point out the fact that employers do not comply with labor laws regarding mandatory health and retirement benefits under government social security programs. The women, who generally have to manage the resources of the family in regard to household expenses and the younger children, may complain much more bitterly than the men, and have a much more precise idea of how much cash the family is actually taking in. Regardless of how much working class men and women regard the factory owners as "unfair," however, they are still reluctant to view the relationship between the worker and employer as anything but a personal one.

There are some indications, however, that this situation is changing. Some of the younger workers who have grown up in the brickyards are more likely to view their own plight as a shared one with all members of their class. Perhaps a major reason for this change among the young is that, having grown up in the industry, they are more capable of objectifying their own position. Since they were not the ones who were forced to move into the city from their farms, they may never have had to feel the same sense of gratitude for their jobs. Also, the younger, unmarried workers tend to travel a great deal. Transportation in Paraguay is cheap and easy, and it is a rare adult who has never been to Argentina or Brazil, perhaps worked there for a time, and come into contact with unionized labor in those countries.

In spite of the systematic, often brutal, repression of the labor movement under the Stroessner government, a respectable amount of organization has occurred in and around the capital city area and the border cities of Encarnación (with Argentina) and Ciudad del Este (formerly Ciudad Presidente Stroessner, on the Brazilian border). In both the capital city area as well as in Encarnación there are loose organizations of ceramics workers in locales with brickyards. In early 1990 there were three strikes involving ceramics workers. In the towns of Villeta and Benjamín Aceval, both near Asunción, workers struck for higher wages and increased benefits. However, in both of those cases, union members were all employed by a single very large company, and involved with an in-house union.

In the city of Encarnación, however, a federation of ceramics workers (SITRACI) was formed and almost immediately declared a

strike against one large employer. The strike was settled amicably, and was at least partially successful. The brick workers in Encarnación were in a particularly powerful position, since construction was recently begun on the joint hydroelectric facility with Argentina, Yacyretá, another enormous project although not on as great a scale as Itaipú had been. The brickmakers of that city were in the same cycle of rapid expansion that the Tobateños had experienced ten years earlier with Itaipú construction, and they were understandably reluctant to risk a slowdown of business.

Encarnación is a regional metropolitan center in southern Paraguay, and directly across the river from the larger Argentine city of Posadas. Argentina, of course, has had a long history of labor organization and most of the Paraguayans of Encarnación were in constant contact with Argentine workers and had likely worked in Argentine factories. Labor organization, then, is not so surprising under those circumstances, but for the vast majority of the workers of Tobatí it is an alien concept and one fraught with feelings not only of fear, but of guilt and betrayal. However quick the workers in Tobatí may be to point out the "unfairness" of the employers with their low salaries, the solution for most workers to this problem is to try to strengthen the affective bonds between employer and worker and appeal to the owners' sense of "family" and fair play.

A strategy based on such an ideology is inimical to the creation of any kind of class consciousness among the workers of Tobatí. This situation will likely change with time, however, based on conversations with a few of the younger workers of the town who, at least, do not display open hostility to the idea of labor organization.

The population of the town is reaching a critical level to where it is no longer the village of neighbors that it traditionally has been, and there is more of a tendency for workers to be marginalized in terms of place of residence. Both of these phenomena may contribute to increasing the social distance between employers and the employed and encourage workers to consider their relationship with other workers as a class, and with separate interests that may even be antagonistic to those of the factory owners.

There is surprisingly little assistance from the national level organization from Asunción. Led mostly by intellectuals in the unions of professional workers, the national syndicalist movement was very quick to support groups of dissident campesinos that sprouted rapidly after the fall of the Stroessner government. On the other hand, they were much less likely to assist in the organization of labor in other areas such as Tobatí. This was likely a strategic move, since the situation of landless peasants was so much more immediate than the wage problems of employed labor. Also, the campesinos "illegally" occupying the lands of latifundistas were already radicalized to some degree, whereas organizers would likely have been met with a great deal of hostility even in a place like Tobatí, which had an extraordinarily proletarianized population for a rural town.

The Game of Politics

There is probably no area in everyday Paraguayan life where ideologies are more passionately expressed than in the field of politics. This is no less true in the rural village than in the metropolis. An anecdote may be particularly illuminating. On the very first night of my stay in Tobatí, I was anxious to begin poking around the town to see what I could see. It was utterly quiet in the town, but I suspected there might be some movement in the area around the municipal market.

For some reason, all of the lights were out that night, and I became disoriented in the dark. Crossing the church plaza, I stopped two high-school aged boys crossing my path and asked for directions to the center. Rather than simply pointing to my destination, both boys--recognizing me as an outsider--immediately commenced a passionate harangue concerning my luck at becoming lost in a town in Paraguay.

The whole point of their lengthy and quite earnest argument was that, thanks to the stern but vigilant care of the Colorado Party under President Stroessner, even a foreigner could walk the streets in a strange town in Paraguay on a dark night with no fear of harm. With some skill, they then elicited my response that, indeed, there was probably no other place on earth quite like Paraguay. After living a number of years in the country, I probably would not have been surprised at this incident, but after a lengthy absence, I was still taken back by the absolute commitment of the two boys to this belief. What they probably did not suspect, however, was that I knew that they would immediately report my presence to an

authority within the Colorado Party and make sure that I did not represent a threat to their security.³

On a practical level, the incident served to remind me that one of my first tasks the next morning should be to introduce myself to the "authorities." On another level, the incident more forcefully reminded me of just how pervasive the propaganda of government and Party in Paraguay had always been, and the degree to which security was linked to suspicion.

Young Paraguayans, in particular--those who never experienced the bitter internecine political warfare that divided the country during the pre-Stroessner years--are fervent in their patriotism and in their politics. They are vocal and strident, if they are Colorados, and they are stubborn and silent if they are not. Among the youth, however, non-Colorados are difficult to spot, for the propaganda apparatus in the hands of the Colorado party is so pervasive, and youth-oriented,⁴ that all but the most fervent dissidents find it "convenient" (*conveniente*) to recite a catechism that they have heard from their youngest years.

One cannot help but be impressed with the passion that grips the true believers among the party faithful, and the vigor with which the young people participate in party activities. Ideology had always been centered around the personality of Stroessner, but an affiliate is quick to recite the virtues of the "sacred principles" upon which the party is founded. Virtually every ranking party member has written at least a modest volume on the principles and founders of the party, and it is almost a prerequisite for aspiring party leaders to prove their loyalty by producing some tangible evidence of their beliefs.

Whether or not the Colorado party actually is based upon a body of coherent ideas is a subject of much debate among more serious analysts and pundits. The local faithful in Tobatí, however, are at a loss to enumerate any of the principles underpinning the party's philosophy, and a request to do so leads to confusion and ambivalence, but never to a real challenge to belief. The party still embodies an ideology of past glories and future promise (see Lewis 1980: 145-148). In the same vein, until the morning of February 3, 1989, an astonishing number of Tobateños expressed the belief that Stroessner, the man, was immortal, and even realists would grow visibly upset at any mention of the so-called *factor biológico*; the supremely euphemistic "biological factor," concerning the ageing man's mortality. In short, Paraguayans in general appeared to have invested an inordinate amount of ideological stock in what may seem to an outsider to have been a very ephemeral quantity.

The point of this description is not, however, to portray Paraguayans as particularly gullible or naive, or even "brainwashed" as the term is commonly understood. Rather, upon reflection, this belief, perhaps somewhat exaggerated in this case, is more likely one of the more universal aspects of the culture and is probably found to a great degree in every society. What is interesting, however, is to identify the sources of what may seem to be illogical belief which, presumably, would lead to illogical and self-defeating behavior.

In spite of the too frequent assertion--explicit or otherwise--that Paraguayans are somehow conditioned to live with dictatorial governments because of their "heritage," the history of the country outlined in Chapters Three and Four shows that Paraguayans were

seldom reluctant to react against repression in all of its forms, but only when repression was linked to a general reduction in standard of living. On the other hand, the population has tended to fanatically support governments that fostered the material advancement of the popular classes, as in the cases of Francia and the elder López, and later during the populist Febrerista movement. During most of the country's history, however, there was general indifference during times of economic equilibrium when governments were content with perpetuating the status quo.⁵

By any objective standard, the modern period of the country's history has been one of remarkably rapid change accompanied by a perceived increase in the standard of living for the great majority of people. Within the space of a single generation, the majority of the population of the country was introduced to paved roads, modern forms of communication, cheap and rapid transportation, rural health care programs, increased opportunities in education and exponential growth in markets that held out the promise, at least, of economic advancement. At the same time, opportunities for migration and steady economic growth, in combination with a small population, meant that an increasingly dispossessed peasant population was generally accommodated without the creation of widespread homelessness and abject poverty characteristic of other countries in the region.

Even so, the period beginning in the 1960s was one of general social upheaval in rural areas. A very large proportion of campesinos were not as impressed with the trappings of modernization as they were troubled by the loss of their lands and

the futility of competing in a market economy. While many thousands migrated to the new frontier regions, or to the metropolises of Asunción and Buenos Aires there was, to be sure, a level of pervasive resistance punctuated by instances of open rebellion in the rural areas (see Fogel 1986). The instances that have occurred in the district of Tobatí, summarized in Chapter Five, were characteristic of the period, rather than exceptions. And, the revelations still coming to light after the overthrow of the old government, in the form of secret documents and clandestine graves, are showing an often shocked population just how widespread overt resistance to the government actually was (Nickson, in press).

Still, the great majority of the population under the government of Stroessner felt a great sense of relief at the cessation of years of governmental instability and political intrigue at the same time that their own living conditions changed dramatically and, by general consensus, for the better. At the same time, the Colorado party created a political structure that was open and inviting to the participation of the entire population. And all of this was capped by a relentless propaganda program that reached into the schools, the home, the workplace, and the entire structure of the government. Those who participated in and supported the system were consistently rewarded while those who were passive seldom advanced. Under such a regime, active resistance was seldom a reasonable option except for the most desperate sectors of the population who did, indeed, actively resist. And under these conditions, the ideological commitment of most of the people to the government in power was hardly a quasi-pathological remnant of

their heritage, but an entirely reasonable response to the options open to them as individuals.

The overthrow of the old regime in 1989 was not hailed by such a large proportion of the urban middle class population of the country because of a sudden awakening to the notions of freedom and democracy. After all, Paraguay's most venerable intellectuals and political leaders had been extolling the virtues of democratic government since the end of the Triple Alliance War. Rather, the same people who had so fervently supported the old man a decade earlier during a period of unprecedented economic expansion were quite frustrated that growth in the economy came to a virtual halt during the 1980s. Incomes were suddenly stagnant or shrinking against inflation at the same time that increased activity in smuggling of luxury goods made the country the bargain basement of the continent for items that the local population could little afford. A large urban middle class blamed a new ruling cadre in the Colorado party for their declining expectations at the same time that they held Stroessner, himself, essentially blameless, assuring themselves that the ageing dictator was merely being manipulated by an ambitious group of parvenus.

Still, the *golpe* came as a severe shock to the majority of the population who did believe in the invincibility of the system, and the shouted claims of their leaders that the party "rules and will rule for a long time yet" ("*ñamanda, ha ña manda aréta gueteri*") (*Diario Noticias* 12/11/89), in what they described as "a divine country" (*un país divino*) (*Hoy* 12/13/89)--famous last words that would be often repeated in the most ironic of tones only two months later. One

of the most popular phrases of the old guard Colorados, especially during the final years of the dictatorship, was that they would never abandon Stroessner, and would stay with him "*hasta las últimas consecuencias*" ("until the final consequences") meaning, of course, to the death. When the end finally did come in February of 1989 the undying faith and support of the party leaders simply evaporated, while the rank and file among the popular classes was stunned, confused and, often, utterly demoralized.

Within hours of the golpe de estado, the officials of the Seccional in Tobatí virtually disappeared from view, and the mayor (intendente) had been advised from Asunción that he probably no longer had any authority. Even so, these same officials immediately sent telegrams to the capital congratulating the new President and proclaiming their adherence to the new government. While the vacated positions of both party and government were filled surprisingly rapidly, there was confusion in the town for months afterward as different *políticos* weighed the possible risks and benefits of most vigorously denouncing the old regime. Rumors flew at the same time that denunciatory pamphlets circulated, in every case authored by "The People." The political class in Tobatí had been forced to jettison the ideological principles that had always oriented and sustained them, and the general opinion was that positions of power were essentially up for grabs until a person or group could accurately gauge the intentions of the new central government, as well as assess the probabilities that the new government would survive and prosper.

The Modern Christmas

Alex Inkeles popularized the notion that modern ideas were a necessary accompaniment to economic and political modernization. The source of such ideas, in a modernizing society, included "the media of mass communication; newspapers, radio, movies, and perhaps even television." At the same time, there will be the great "impact of schooling ... for him, then for his children, who may carry the influence of school into the home" (Inkeles 1966: 139). However, the adoption of modern ideas, in turn, is contingent upon psychological factors inherent in a "national character" which either encouraged or discouraged the acceptance of modern standards of living (see also Inkeles 1961). Modern ideas, Inkeles argues, accompanied by certain personality traits, are causative of more fundamental economic changes, since proclivity must precede behavior.

Inkeles' point might have been much stronger if he had linked the acceptance of such "modern ideas" to other than a psychological matrix inherent in a particular population. A certain ideological commitment on the part of a population will no doubt ease the progress of economic and political trends, but the source of that commitment is no doubt external to the individual, and prompted by the same forces that underlie those trends.

One particularly salient example observed in Tobatí may illustrate this interplay between the processes of economic and ideological change. In recent years in Paraguay there has been a proliferation of so-called "*cursillos de Navidad*," or "Christmas courses." In Paraguay, as most Latin American countries, Christmas

has traditionally been a holiday of great religious significance. The more profane aspects of the holiday season, associated principally with gift-giving, have always applied to children only, and were celebrated on January 6, the "Day of the Three Kings."

Facilitated by the spread of television and the popular print media, there has been a rapidly growing campaign by an alliance of metropolitan retailers and the media to "educate" the public about how to celebrate a "modern" Christmas. Accompanied by massive advertising campaigns lasting about two months, media personalities fan out in the barrios of Asunción and major towns in the country holding free educational classes for great crowds of housewives. During these structured courses, media personalities give lessons on the recognition and history of Santa Claus, the construction and proper decoration of artificial Christmas trees (since there are no conifers in the country), baking cookies and other "traditional" holiday treats, house decoration and, most importantly, gift selection and artful wrapping. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of choosing the correct gifts as a way of cultivating friendships and enhancing a husband's career. Masses of people are attracted to these courses by the promise of entertainment, refreshments and door prizes, and the courses are always accompanied by blanket community publicity.

These courses are broadcast during the daytime and early evening hours to the lesser towns of the interior. In Tobatí, they are viewed by more affluent women with television in the home, but mostly by children who flock to television sets at local bars and at the homes of friends every day after school. Spurred by this

programming, a few enterprising local women go to Argentina to bring back cheap miniature artificial trees and decorations more popular in that country to sell door to door in the town.⁶ In the schools, children discuss the meaning of a secular Christmas, and make cards and small gifts in art classes. There is, to be sure, a great deal of conscious resistance to much of this new publicity among many townspeople, but almost everyone is attracted to at least some aspect of the new holiday, and most feel that it is trendy to participate in at least nominal gift giving.

A more cynical aspect to this campaign, however, follows immediately after Christmas has passed. For two more weeks there is equally intensive publicity with respect to the importance of a "traditional Paraguayan holiday" and the custom of regaling children with presents on January 6. The idea of Santa Claus, or "Papa Noel," is immediately downplayed in favor of the figures of the Three Kings, although there is a great deal of patriotic argument that a mythical cigar-smoking Paraguayan woman on the back of a burro represents a more authentic, "traditional" Paraguayan gift-giving figure.

There are more astute journalists and public figures who do comment on the cynical features of these campaigns, calling them a "*doble zoquete*" ("double whammy") against the interests of the people. Their voices are small, however, in comparison to the great space afforded to the agents of change, and the Christmas season deluge is now joined by other new campaigns in favor of Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and a couple of uniquely Paraguayan days, Friendship Day (Día de la Amistad) and Young People's Day (Día de la Juventud).

New ways of celebrating all of these occasions have already become "customary" for many people in the capital. These new ideologies are less quick to take hold in the more rural areas, but this is probably contingent upon two conditions. First may be the extent that there is exposure to the mass media. As television receivers and popular newspapers become more ubiquitous in those areas, there is little doubt that these innovations will take hold more firmly as well. But more important, it is likely that acceptance of these innovations is directly related to the extent that people hold wage-paying jobs, affording them a regular, even if very small, cash income. The expectation of cash payment at the anticipated times makes it more difficult to resist the temptation and perceived obligations introduced by these new media campaigns.

This relationship between consumer purchasing habits and changing modes of production almost certainly underlies the recent exponential increase in businesses in the capital which sell household goods (mostly furniture and appliances) by *cuota*, or monthly payments. While the wealthy can easily purchase such goods outright, the only feasible way for working class people to acquire such items is by paying a small amount per month. This arrangement, in turn, is only possible--for both buyer and seller--with the assurance of the monthly paycheck which accompanies wage work. Furthermore, the difference between the cash purchase price of a product and the total price paid over time is so great that there is little doubt that the major profit to the seller is in the form of interest on the nominal price of the product. Essentially, the merchant provides material goods which serve more as a premium

for borrowing money. The merchants prosper to the extent that workers perceive a need for new products, which actually translates into a need for money which the merchants provide in the form of goods.

The "modern Christmas" and the drive to purchase sophisticated material goods illustrates the complex relationships between economic growth, modes of production, and a consumer ideology fostered by efficient and aggressive communications media. Inkeles errs, however, in supposing that such an ideology is linked to a particular national or ethnic psychological base. Instead, the essential precondition for the widespread adoption of such an ideology is the expectation that it can be realized. Intense publicity and propaganda promoting this kind of consumerism is wholly contingent upon the existence of a proletarianized society earning predictable wages at orderly intervals. While wage laborers on a fixed income may, in fact, live much closer to the margin than a subsistence agriculturalist, the wage laborer may be a much more reliable consumer. Basic economic change must precede changes in behavior, which in turn may feed back into the economy in the form of increasing circulation of money and a growth in both manufacturing and the total supply of money.

The Sweetness of Salt: Traces of Tobatí Tuyá

The Services became notorious in Paraguay for their work because they postulated, and purported to demonstrate, that there were "virtually no Guaraní culture traits surviving, other than language" (1954: 283). The polemic which this observation raised

among Paraguayans was unfortunate, since this negative conclusion was largely unprovable. In order to support their argument, the Services relied only upon evidence of the tenuous survival of certain material aspects of a previous culture, or specific behaviors that could be positively identified as indigenous. They did, in fact, find very few such traits, and Paraguayan scholars who were eager to challenge the Services were often little more successful. However, Paraguayans feel justified in their claims that cultural remnants of their Guaraní heritage are manifested in non-material, and non-observable ways, in the form of shared ideologies or belief systems.

Paraguayans have a peculiar way of expressing their affection for another person in describing them as *juky*, which is to say "salt," or "salty." While the term literally does refer to common salt, when it describes a person it can only roughly be glossed in Spanish as *simpático*, a term which, itself, is difficult to express perfectly in English (the gloss "congenial" hardly does it justice). *Juky* is a term which is not used unthinkingly, and it seems that women use it more to describe men, although any person could refer to anyone else as being *juky*, or "salty."

When pressed further (as I have several times done) people will often respond that it also seems to mean "sweet" (*dulce*, in Spanish). Curiously, however, while they say that it can convey the meaning of the word *dulce* in Spanish, it most definitely does not convey the meaning expressed by the Guaraní word for sweet (*he~e*). As an expression, it is virtually untranslatable, and it is definable only in its own terms.

Anyone who speaks another language could most likely think of other, similar, examples of virtually untranslatable terms. Likewise, Paraguayans are certainly not unique in attaching a great deal of importance to the links they perceive between their language and their culture--all the more so, since it is a minority language which is usually thought of by outsiders as being an anomalous trait of the people. Therefore, when a Paraguayan uses a term such as *juky*, and finds that there is no acceptable term in another language to express the same concept, this is regarded as an expression of a cultural trait, rather than as a simple linguistic artifact. Because of their unique history and heritage (biological as well as cultural), most Paraguayans believe very strongly that they are the modern bearers of certain elements of a truly indigenous culture.

Apart from the unmeasurable and unobservable, however, Paraguayans were in some measure justified in criticizing the Services for overlooking some of the more overt traits that they might have perceived with more detailed observation. While the Services' inventory of pre-Colombian articles still used in Paraguay was exceedingly short (the hammock, wooden mortar and pestle, the poncho, etc.), they attached more importance to such elements as the complete lack of native, Guaraní names which had survived to the modern period.

Taking a complete census and inventory of names from the town of Tobatí, itself one of the few remaining "Indian towns" in the country, the Services recorded only one surname, Arepocó, which could be deduced with certainty as being Guaraní in origin. They did record the existence of the surname Areco, which could have been

Guaraní, but they felt that this was, instead, a local variant of the Spanish surname Orrego, also a common name in the town (Service and Service 1954: 171; 302).

Odin Toness, suspicious of these observations because of the work he himself had done in the community of Yaguarón, went to Tobatí briefly and concluded that the Services had erred in only recording the names of townspeople, to the exclusion of the country folk. Toness inspected church records in Tobatí dating from 1899, and besides Arepocó, found the names Abicayé and Guairaré mentioned among the marriage documents. Inspecting baptismal records, Toness found an additional nine surnames of undisputed Guaraní origin (Toness 1969).⁷

Because of the high rates of rural-urban migration in the years since even Toness visited Tobatí, the incidence of Guaraní-surnamed Tobateños was much higher by 1989, although it was clear that bearing a Guaraní surname in no way associated a person with any other aspect of the indigenous culture. Indeed, in 1989, Areco, Arepocó, Guairaré and Pitta were common surnames in the pueblo. It was the unanimous consensus of townspeople that Areco was, in fact, an indigenous name, and inspection of census records from the early nineteenth century indicated, as people also claimed, that Pitta was the modern variant of another indigenous name in the area, of Pitá (e.g., ANA-NE 3282).

A perusal of older documents from a number of sources showed that, with the exception of Pitta (or Pitá), these names could be traced to the area of 21 de Julio. Furthermore, these same documents showed a large number of other indigenous surnames,

also from the area of 21 de Julio. Apparently, there was a concentration of these kinds of surnames from a particular area, only a few kilometers from the town, which suggested that the Services may have missed something.

Church records from the local Casa Parroquial, showed that there were 142 baptisms performed in Tobatí in the years immediately following the end of the Triple Alliance War. Most of the baptized children were actually born during the war years, but were only baptized when the renowned Paí Fidel Maíz, who had served as a judge for López during the infamous wartime *tribunales de sangre* (tribunals of blood), returned to the area to serve as priest after the end of the war.

Of the 142 baptisms performed between 1872 and 1876, 22 (over fifteen percent) were of Indian-surnamed children, of eleven different last names.⁸ A striking fact was that 21 out of these 22 children were represented at the baptism only by single mothers--a father was registered for only one child. Upon reflection, this would not seem so extraordinary, considering the very high death rate of fighting-aged men during the war, as recounted in Chapter Four. The results of this tragedy are also apparent by the fact that another nineteen of the 142 children (over thirteen percent) were baptised as orphans, and sponsored in every case but one by a married couple of different last name from the child.

These data, combined with other, better known, aspects of the country's history, lead to two new hypotheses concerning the demise of Indian surnames in Paraguay and the recent cultural evolution of the rural population. Rather than the almost universally accepted

conclusion that Indian surnames were simply legislated out of existence by the elder López in 1848 (see Chapter Four), it appears that they may have been literally liquidated during the war as a result of the extinction of the male line of so many families. Second, it may be that the demographic and social consequences of the devastating war were more responsible for the disappearance of more traditional cultural attributes of the population than the emancipation of the Indians before the war.

The first hypothesis is based principally on the straightforward observation that there were still a great many native surnames in the area during and immediately after the war, but most had disappeared in the two or three generations following the war.⁹ The hypothesis is supported by the Services' observation that "the people are surprisingly unconscious of surnames" (1954: 170) and the fact that among the "*gente*," or common people, the surname of the mother, contrary to traditional Spanish custom, is of much less importance than the father's surname. Along with the depreciation of the mother's surname, the Services noted that the frequency of unstable, common-law marriages led to a "proliferation of surnames" within a single family which has the inevitable result of "subdividing and dispersing a family line" (ibid.: 171). And it is certain that there was unusual instability among couples in the first generations following the war, simply as a result of the severe sexual imbalance of the population.

The second hypothesis is probably more conjectural, but deserves serious consideration. An anonymous historian wrote in a special cultural supplement to a local newspaper of the formation of

demographic enclaves during the war (*Hoy Dominical* 1/14/90 : 18; see also Villagra Marsal 1989: 15). Because of the extreme horrors of the war, small populations of refugees banded together in geographically isolated "islands" (*bolsònes*) in the Paraguayan countryside. A large component of the population of these enclaves consisted of "mothers who lost their children in the confusion of the retreat" as well as "children who had become orphans." The small populations inhabiting these enclaves became "clans" united by an "instinct of self-preservation" and they continued to live in fear and isolation during the extremely confusing time following the end of the war.

Within the Colonia of 21 de Julio, there is a particularly inaccessible region know as Pa'í Kokué, on the heights of a plateau known as Cerro Domingo Guairaré (see map, p. 213). The person after whom the plateau was named was a quasi-legendary figure, either a priest (Pa'í) or considered to be a priest by the local population. The name Pa'í Kokué, in turn, means "field (farm) of the priest." At the highest point of this region, overlooking the town of Tobatí, still stands the inviolate adobe-wattled house of a shaman-like figure, long dead, who may or may not have been the original pa'í. The whole region of Pa'í Kokué is physically impoverished. Its thin and rocky soils permit only a hard-scrabble existence, yet have protected the people from the processes that led to the alienation of more valuable lands in the lower areas of 21 de Julio closer to the town (see Chapter Five).

From the time of my arrival in Tobatí I had been warned by townspeople to be wary of straying into the area of Pa'í Kokué,

because the people there were "different ... scary ... not like us ... Indian ... dangerous." I was more intrigued when, on June 25 (the popular festival of San Juan) I was surprised by the late-night appearance in the town of a very rare *Banda Para'í*, or "Banda Peteke" that had come in from 21 de Julio. These rustic bands, now almost unknown even in the countryside of Paraguay, consist of rustic reed flutes and wooden drums (see Gomez-Perasso and Szaran 1978). A quartet of players played to a generally intoxicated crowd, and the insistent, rhythmic beat of drum and flute was like no other kind of Paraguayan music I had ever heard, apparently a synthesis of indigenous music that originated during the early colonial period (ibid.: 42).

From another source, I had heard that 21 de Julio was also one of the very last places in the country where there were people who still carved and donned the wooden masks of animals, and performed ritualistic dances and games thought to have originated during the colonial period with the assimilation of certain indigenous customs (Colombino 1986). I questioned many townspeople about this and was assured by everyone that there were no such customs or rituals in 21 de Julio, and reports of them were no doubt due to the active imaginations of "romantic intellectuals" in the capital. When I pressed my inquiry, a few people even became indignant at the idea that they, "natives of the town," would not know if something like that was going on under their very noses.

Finally, on a dare and a wager, I convinced a group of friends, one of whom owned a four-wheel drive jeep, to accompany me to the colony on a day (February 3, the feast of San Blás) when such games

were supposedly practiced. As we drove further into the colony, I had a hard time convincing my friends to continue, as the road deteriorated. After arriving nearly at the top of the plateau in the area of Pa'í Kokué, we rounded a bend and abruptly came upon the spectacle of a group of masked and caped *campesinos* shooting at a target with bows and arrows. My friends were as stunned as I was pleased, and initially insisted that it was an aberration of some sort. We continued to drive and eventually came upon three more such groups, all costumed, and all expertly practicing with home-made wooden bows and arrows, which most of my friends from the town had never seen before.

We talked with the participants of these games, and were invited to a feast in progress at one of the nearby farmhouses. As people casually ate and drank, others gathered in front of a table regaled with the carved image of San Blás, candles, flowers, and small glasses of rum, while the elder men kneeled and prayed, reciting out of a very worn hand-written kind of prayer-book. My friends pointed out to me what I had already noticed; that as a group, the people seemed to be quite different in appearance from most Tobateños, and bore many of the overt features associated with native Guaraní Indian groups residing in the eastern forests of Paraguay.

When gathered from the game of targets, the men were all costumed, although the masks had greatly deteriorated in kind from the more elaborately carved masks of the *timbó* and *yvú* woods preserved in private collections in the capital (see Colombino 1986). Instead, the masks were made of old cardboard cartons or painted

pieces of burlap, and held onto the face under a hat tied under the chin. They explained that these were the masks they made for the lesser festivals, and only during "special years" did they all carve the wooden anthropomorphic masks. However, the men were obviously quite expert with the small bows, and were usually successful at hitting the target of a small palm or banana trunk at about 25 meters.

Unfortunately, this discovery occurred at the end of my stay in Tobatí, and it was impossible to follow up on what had merely been a tourist-type excursion for myself and, I hope, an eye-opener for my Tobateño friends. However, it did confirm a suspicion that I had formulated over a period of time; that Pa'í Kokué and a few other places like it were actually the remnants of geographically and demographically isolated enclaves that were virtually closed off to the outside after the end of the Triple Alliance War. Relatively quarantined against the economic and social changes which had shaped the rural Paraguayan culture during the last century, such places might still offer rare glimpses into a socio-cultural milieu that may have been common in colonial and early post-colonial rural Paraguay.

If this is so, then the importance of such groups would be more than just for the antiquarianist's interest in cultural relics, but as a real opportunity to reconstruct the very cloudy and confusing history of popular Paraguayan history in the post-War era. It should help refine the accepted notion that the indigenous Paraguayan country folk were merely legislated out of existence, and introduce the view that real culture change is the result of much more profound and

complex forces, more in the realm of changing modes of production and, perhaps, mass exterminations.

Summary

Given the limitations in formulating a complete picture of cultural and ideological change in modern Paraguayan history, the previous material was introduced as a series of vignettes to illustrate some of the more obvious ways that a) the traditional is transformed into the modern, as well as b) the clash between traditional and modern that is a part of everyday life in trying to cope with changing material circumstances in rural Paraguay. The evolution of ideology may seem to be the result of unconscious responses to the changing material circumstances of people's lives, or more conscious attempts to adjust the terms of the acceptable and unacceptable in order to secure new advantages from novel circumstances.

In all of these cases, a common theme seems to be changes in traditional forms of thought which tend to vary in relation to the degree which different forms of production have affected the lives of the people involved. Another picture emerges of the way that ideologies, both traditional and modern, can be manipulated by the more powerful sectors of society to serve their own best interests. In the case of political ideologies, certain effects of changes may have been unanticipated and unplanned, but encouraged by the powerful to the degree to which their interests were served. In the case of the "modern Christmas," it is obvious that there has been deliberate manipulation of the mass media in a more cynical attempt to implant new ideological norms that favor the immediate interests of the

powerful urban bourgeoisie. Finally, in terms of the most traditional sectors of the society--those people most removed, both literally and figuratively from the most recent changes in the economic infrastructure--there remains a great deal of work to be done to ascertain the degree to which traditional modes of thought and behavior may still be present, and the extent to which those behaviors may conflict with the processes of modernization and change.

Notes

1 As Dore emphasizes (1983: 363), "a defining characteristic of the peasantry is that it must pay a rent or a tribute to maintain its possession of the land." Through such mechanisms as rents, tribute, or debt the peasant is inextricably bonded to the dominant sectors in the larger society. The relative prosperity, if not survival, of the peasant is therefore dependent on maintaining strictly encoded social relationships which severely undercut the supposed "independence" of the yeoman.

2 Workers, however, are unanimous in their criticism of certain employers who have connections with the military and use young recruits--*soldaditos*-- as occasional workers in their *cerámicas*. In this case, workers have no problem seeing the connection between the unpaid labor of the soldiers and their own low salaries and, accordingly, they view the soldiers as a threat.

3 In Paraguay, virtually anyone could be regarded as belonging to the pervasive network of Colorado Party spies, known as *pyragué*, or "hairfeet," supposedly from the Guaraní custom of wearing furs over the feet to cover tracks. While the party did employ regulars who served as *pyragué*, almost anyone, hoping to curry favor or win a reward, could serve the same function informally.

4 Among the party faithful, the "youth" (*juventud*) includes everyone under about 45 years old; that is, all who have grown to adulthood without knowing a government other than Stroessner's.

5 Lipset (1960: 47) explained passivity under these circumstances by observing that "stable poverty in a situation in which individuals are not exposed to the possibilities of change breeds, if anything, conservatism."

6 Paraguayans enjoy constructing elaborately decorated *pesebres*, or crèches depicting the manger scene during the Christmas season. The more "modern" of the younger people are already abandoning the *pesebre* for the artificial tree which is more inviting to the custom of giving gifts to be placed around the base of the *arbol de Navidad*.

7 These additional names, as recorded by Toness, were Curahí, Cumba'y, Eybebé, Garacay, Maegui, Taguarí, Torivé, Yarabay, and Yaguareté.

8 The names recorded were: Taquarí (also spelled Taguarí), Areco, Eybebé (Eibebé), Curaí, Guayraré, Sarcá, Pita, Guaracay, Yarabay, Arepocó, and Yaguareté. The records accessible to myself in Tobatí were apparently different from those perused by Toness, and probably earlier.

9 Other indigenous surnames recorded among marriage records of Tobatí before the turn of the century included: Paraná, Taní, Mandayé, Chirife, Cuyé, Cumbay, Jaré (?), Layabé, and Guatarí.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

The village of Tobatí acquired a certain fame among Paraguayanists during the last fifty years because it was chosen as the quintessential Paraguayan town in a landmark study published by Elman and Helen Service. There is an inescapable irony, then, that the present study portrays Tobatí as being quite unique among Paraguayan towns, as the only thoroughly proletarianized rural society in the country.

This study documented the evolution of a changed community, not only bringing the original work up to date but at the same time outlining the processes that led to change. Tobatí is an interesting case because of the depth of change which has occurred, but it is probably more interesting because of the universality of a number aspects of its recent history. In general, the material conditions which were largely responsible for the trajectory of Tobatí's history since 1950 have operated at all levels throughout the country during that time, and can also be accounted for in describing great changes in the country as a whole. Probably the only real circumstance that made Tobatí different from a hundred other towns in the area was that Tobatí had plenty of good clay and a modest tradition as a ceramics manufacturing place. While these factors determined the particular direction that Tobatí took as the country modernized, the processes which led to the

alienation of common lands, the eclipse of the peasantry, and the formation of an urban-based proletariat operate throughout the Paraguayan countryside, even in the most "traditional" of Paraguayan towns.

It made a great deal of sense for the community studies in Anthropology done in the earlier part of this century to draw a distinction between "town" and "country." In most communities in the so-called "Third World" there were often essential differences between the urban and rural cultures, as well as relationships of economics and power that demanded analysis and explanation. This study, however, as so many others which have focused on processes of modernization and development, views the town-country distinction as secondary in importance to new class relationships which emerge in developing societies. Economic change is associated with the destruction of traditional modes of production, sweeping proletarianization of labor, and waves of migration that break down the traditional cultures of both town and country to be replaced more and more by a pan-global culture of mass production and consumption.

Therefore, an assumption with the present study was that the most fruitful hypotheses regarding change at the social level in developing societies are apt to be those based on correlations with emergent modes of production and class structures. In line with this thinking, data from the 1989 survey was analyzed with a view principally toward discovering the differences between sectors of the population by means of subsistence--principally peasant producers, owners of business and industry, and those who worked in wage labor. The most stable features of the society may not show significant

changes associated with new class structures, although given the rapidity of change in modern Paraguay, it is possible that such changes have not yet surfaced in a way that can be easily observed.

The rapid economic changes which occurred in Paraguay during the 35 years of the Stroessner regime, as well as in the town of Tobatí, were undoubtedly "good for business." These changes brought increasing opportunities for many individuals, as well, who were able to replace or at least join the traditional landed elites as the dominant economic players in the town and country. Likewise, the abandonment of peasant farms and migration into the towns and cities enabled a whole new class of people to enjoy resources in education and health that were previously beyond their reach. Many of these families undoubtedly prospered economically, as well, as their children entered new niches created by an expanding economy.

The social and psychological costs of these changes may not be so easy to calculate, however. The great majority of Tobateños who work for wages in the brick factories of the town are receiving an uncertain wage at a bare subsistence level, and they no longer have the security of their modest farms and tools in case of always-threatening disaster. Proletarianization on a massive scale in Tobatí has accompanied the reconfiguration of the family, as parents migrate in search of work, while leaving their children with relatives. Nearly half of the children of Tobatí have to leave their families if they are not satisfied with the meager chances for material and social advancement afforded in the community.

The environmental costs of rapid development are also proving to be very high, as mechanized farming methods strip the land at

astonishing rates. While agro-industry typical of many areas in Paraguay is not a characteristic of Tobatí's recent history, the energy and material costs of the brick and ceramics industry have had an incalculable effect on the environment of the community as well as on the entire country.

The harsh reality of extractive industry is that it may well destroy the base upon which it initially thrives. In the case of Tobatí's ceramics industry, it not only destroys the land of the town, but contributes significantly to the rapid depletion of the most valuable natural resources of the country. However, this most straightforward of facts regarding extractive industry means that it is relatively easy to calculate the probable future of an economy based on it. When the health of an economy is based almost totally on basic non-renewable resources, one can estimate the rates of depletion of those resources and say much about the future of the people who derive a living from the economy.

This would seem to strike a pessimistic note for the future of Tobatí, were it not for the promising resources of Paraguay and the vitality of the people. In 1954, the Services were dismayed at the "garden subsistence" level of the economy and the dependence of the country as a whole, even though "the majority of the Paraguayan people, as individuals, are economically independent" (1954: 297). They even saw little hope for the political survival of the country, which apparently had no chance to become self-sufficient in a developing region.

While the problems of the country and of Tobatí are just as challenging as they were fifty years ago, I see no reason to share the

Service's pessimism. The majority of the people in Tobatí literally have been economically and socially uprooted during their lifetimes, but as individuals they have sought solutions to the problems of making a living in a changing world. The terms of adaptation may be harsh, but there are opportunities for each individual which were undreamed of fifty years ago, and there are undoubtedly unsuspected opportunities which will be revealed as the country changes even further. The soils and climate of the country have proved to be amenable to new technologies of production, the tapping of new sources of energy has infused the country with a certain vitality, and the vast expanse of the Chaco will no doubt be opened to settlement and production with the introduction of new irrigation systems. These are only the most obvious of circumstances which give a new generation of young Paraguayans hope for the future.

Furthermore, the recent changes in the political climate of the country, resulting from the February 1989 *San Blasazo* which overthrew the Stroessner dictatorship, bring a new sense of vitality and optimism to the Paraguayan people at a very challenging moment in their history. However, the demise of old social structures--even those viewed as the most anti-democratic--is sure to bring difficult problems as well as opportunities. As the power of the old-guard Colorado Party wanes, for example, what will replace the function of the old seccionales as sources of general assistance to the party faithful and the poor? Also, what new forms of social dialogue are apt to replace years of enforced consensus based on the rigid structure of the old political party system? Surely, there will be reasonable

alternatives to the old system, but many people will no doubt look back at the stability of the "good old days" with a sense of longing.

Finally, the Services were probably somewhat premature in announcing the passing of a traditional Paraguayan culture which may have emerged as much from indigenous elements in the country's history as from purely Hispanic elements. An examination of data which would have been available to the Services themselves in 1948 showed that some of their conclusions regarding the survival of certain native social artifacts to be false. There are still surviving aspects of an almost legendary Paraguayan cultural history that need to be documented. However, belief systems which inform cultural behavior do seem to be fragile when confronted with a rapidly changing economic and social systems, and in Tobatí there seems to be a direct correlation between the survival of traditional beliefs and behaviors and the geographical and social proximity to change at more fundamental levels.

Many Tobateños are completely unaware of the extent that traditional elements of an earlier folk culture still exist within their midst. Furthermore, there is no indication that many of these elements are thriving--indeed there seems to have been a precipitous abandonment of traditional folkways, just during the last generation. As a mass culture introduced by new forms of communication, and a new ethos in education based on rapidly changing economic and social developments, reaches more and more people, those aspects of a traditional culture which the Services pronounced moribund fifty years ago will indeed become lost to a new generation of Paraguayans.

The material remains of an earlier culture are disappearing just as quickly, as documents lie unexamined and uncared for in dozens of communities of old Paraguay. Because of the rapidity of change in the country, there is a new urgency for scholars to plunge into the rural areas and recover those aspects of traditional Paraguay which the people still treasure and respect so much.

APPENDIX A

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE (IN SPANISH)

CUESTIONARIO TOBATI

CONFIDENCIAL

MANZANA _____

BARRIO _____

NO. _____

CUESTIONARIO TOBATI

I. Estructura Doméstica

1. Cuantas personas componen su familia? _____
2. Cuantos viven aquí en casa? _____
3. viven algunos en el lote o en casa al lado? _____
4. Viven algunos en otra casa en Tobatí? _____
5. Hay personas no parientes que viven en casa? _____

II. Actividades de los miembros de la familia.

Sexo	Edad	Relación con Jefe de Fam.	Lugar de Nacimiento	Lugar de Res. Act.	Ocupación (Actividad Principal)	Aportan algo a la Canasta Fam.?
Padre						
Madre						
Otros						
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						

III. Migraciones

- 1.1 El Sr. nació en _____ en el año de _____?
 - 1.2 Nació en la zona urbana _____ o rural _____?
 - 1.3 Donde fue criado (de los 5 a los 15 años de edad)? _____?
 - 1.4 Si no nació en este lugar, a cuantos años llegó? _____?
 - 1.5 Porqué se mudó para aquí? _____?
-
- 2.1 La Sra. nació en _____ en el año de _____?
 - 2.2 Nació en zona urbana _____ o rural _____?
 - 2.3 Donde fue criada (de los 5 a 15 años de edad)? _____?
 - 2.4 Si no nació aquí, a cuantos años llegó? _____?
 - 2.5 Porqué se mudó para aquí? _____?
-
- 3.1 Miembros de la familia que salieron 6 meses o más para volver después (Sexo, edad cuando se fué, donde, cuanto tiempo, actividad principal) :

IV. Historia familiar:

	Padre	Madre
1. Donde nacieron los padres del Sr.?	_____	_____
2. Zona rural o urbana?	_____	_____
3. Trabajo o actividad principal?	_____	_____
4. Están vivos actualmente?	_____	_____
5. Donde viven ahora, o donde vivieron cuando fallecieron?	_____	_____
6. Donde nacieron los padres de la Sra.?	_____	_____
7. Zona rural o urbana?	_____	_____
8. Trabajo o actividad principal?	_____	_____
9. Están vivos actualmente?	_____	_____
10. Donde viven ahora, o donde vivieron cuando fallecieron?	_____	_____

V. Producción y Consumo.

1. Realiza algún negocio en la casa familiar (despensa, almacén, comercio, industria, artesanía, etc.)?
2. Su negocio requiere empleados, y cuantos serían?
3. Tiene algún terreno?

Tipo (lote rural, estancia, otro)	Localidad	Tamaño	Año de Adquirir	Tipo de Titulación
A.				
B.				
C.				
4. Actividades principales del terreno?

5. Hay algunas otras personas que usan la tierra?
6. En qué condiciones (alquilado, prestado, etc.)?
7. Contratan empleados en el trabajo del terreno, y cuantos?
8. Hay épocas picos de trabajo, y para qué actividades?
9. Destino de la producción (consumo familiar, mercadeo, etc.)?

APPENDIX B

ENCUESTA DE OLERIA Y CERAMICA (IN SPANISH)

TOBATI
1989

1. Se define como cerámica o olería?
2. Local: Urbano _____, Rural _____
3. Cuantos empleados familiares _____ y no familiares _____
4. Cuantos hornos _____
5. Capacidad de cada horno, y número de boquillas:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
6. Aproximadamente con qué frecuencia se hace quema?
Invierno _____
Verano _____
7. Qué maquinaria se utiliza?
8. Qué materiales se produce?
Ladrillos _____
Tejas _____
Tejuclas _____

Tejuelones_____

Pisos_____

Otros:

9. Procedencia de materia prima (arcilla?)_____
10. Costo de materia prima_____
11. Hay tendencia de subir el precio?_____
12. Cuanto (en metros) de arcilla se utiliza/quema?_____
13. Procedencia de leña_____
14. Costo de leña_____
15. Hay tendencia de subir del precio?_____
16. Cuanto (en metros) de leña se utiliza/quema_____
17. Fuente de energía (eléctrica/combustible)_____
18. Fuente de agua_____
19. Donde se realiza la venta de materiales?
20. Cuanto de la producción se pierde (se rompe) en la quema?
21. Cuanto (%) de la producción bruta sale de segunda?
22. Notas/observaciones:

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY FOR TOBATI

<u>Date</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(Other information)</u>
1556	Plá 1972:11		(320 encomiendas/20,000 Indians ¹ in the entire colony)
1558-1560			Epidemic ²
1589			Epidemic ³
1592-1594			Epidemic
1606-1612			Epidemic
1628-1632			Epidemic
1635-1636			Epidemic
1651	Garavaglia 1983:221	427	(11 encomiendas @ 39 each)
1651	Garavaglia 1983:184		(38 Indians "foráneos")
1650-1654			Epidemic
1682	Velazquez 1972:146	310	(96 families)
	Necker 1990:248	310	Almas
1688	Saeger 1981:66 (Azara)	414	Indians
1688	Aguirre 1948: 453 (T. II, pt. 2)	360 ⁴	(7 encomiendas with 72 tributs.)
1690-1702			Epidemic
1694	Susnik 1965: 96	474	(260 men, 135 women) (8 encomiendas @ 6-124 c/u)
1696-1712	(Susnik 1965: 103) (Mora Mérida 1974:65)		(Generalized emigration out of the colony toward the south. Tobateños migrate to the restructured pueblo of Altos.)
1720-1724			Epidemic (Plague)

1726	Garavaglia 1983:224	407	(197 men, 86 women) (8 encomiendas @ 46 c/u)
1750	Necker 1990:249	569	
1750	Gutierrez 1983: 282	569	(6 encomiendas)
1761	Maeder 1975:67	683	
1761	Garavaglia 1983:225	683	
1774	Saeger 1981:79	812	Mitario
1778	Saeger 1981:79	758	Mitario
1778	Velazquez 1982:157		(7 encomiendas)
1782	Maeder 1975:67	799	
	Aguirre 1948: 437 (T.II, pt.1)	799	
1784	Saeger 1981:79	875	Mitario
	Susnik 1965: 120	878	Mitario ⁵ (250 men, 200 women) (7 encomiendas @ 2-51 c/u)
1785	Maeder 1975:67	818	
	Kostianovsky 1970: 215	818	Mitario (382 men, 436 women)
1790	Saeger 1981:79	959	Mitario
1792	Aguirre 1948: 438 (T.II, pt.1)	932	
1792	Maeder 1975:67	932	
1793	Saeger 1981 (Azara)	932	Indians
	Necker 1990:251	932	Habitantes
	Maeder 1975:67	932	
	Azara 1943:217	932	(not counting Sp?)
1799	Maeder 1975:76	<u>982</u>	
		625	Spaniards
		41	meztisos
		65	Indians
		168	Pardos
		83	slaves
1802	Saeger 1981:79	1102	Mitario
1843	Plá 1972: 42	428	slaves ⁶
1845	Kostianovsky 1970: 221	2581	(1217 Adults, 1364 Children)
1846	Kostianovsky 1970: 222	2747	
1846	Williams 1976: 429	1760 ⁷	(293 Households) 165 Slaves 18 Libertos 30 Free Pardos

1852	Plá 1972: 42	371 slaves
1864	Reber 1988: 300	3330 ⁸ (555 households)
1866	Reber 1988: 300	3132 (522 households)
1867a	Reber 1988: 300	2061 ⁹ (451 households)
1867b	Reber 1988: 300	1912 (425 households)
1886	Kostianovsky 1970: 233	1802
1899	Kostianovsky 1970: 233	3066

¹ Institution of the *encomienda*. "320 españoles reciben en *encomienda* 20.000 indios."

² Epidemics striking Asunción, according to Garavaglia 1983: 218.

³ Epidemics according to Kostianovsky (1970: 210) 1589, 1600, 1618, 1620, 1623.

⁴ Aguirre estimates that there are 5 "almas" for each *tributario* in the *pueblos*, giving a rough population estimate for Tobatí of 360 Indians.

⁵ Susnik gives the total population of Tobatí as 1168, but addition of her columns, and textual information, gives a figure of 878, which corresponds much more closely with Saeger. Quite possibly, the discrepancy of 290 people is the number of Spanish creoles living in the town.

⁶ This number of slaves, as that for 1852, is highly speculative. Plá found that in 1843, there were 15 *libertos* born in Tobatí. These were the children born freed of slave parents under the new "Free Womb" law (*Ley de Libertad de Vientres*) of 1842, and, also by law, were baptized free. Plá hypothesizes a birth rate of 3.5% (35 births per 1000 population), giving a figure of 428 total slaves giving birth to 15 *libertos*. The number of *libertos* born in 1852 was 13.

⁷ Williams faults the figures used by Kostianovsky for the same year, claiming that "She accepted the census-takers figures (which this author calculates as incorrect in sixty-four of eighty-five cases), miscopied, duplicated figures, and used data for other years without correction (Williams 1976: 436). Also, considering the methodology used by Williams, and the doubts that Plá had about her own numbers, the figure for slaves and free people of color is probably more accurate in the 1846 figures cited by Williams.

⁸ Reber's data from 1864-1867 are given in terms of households, only. To extrapolate total population figures, I have used Williams' (1976: 429) estimate of 6.0 persons per household in Tobatí for 1846.

⁹ In calculating population size from numbers of households for 1867 a and b (1st semester 1867 and 2nd semester 1867) I used a multiplier of 4.5, since at least 25 percent of the population (or 1.5 from each household which previously averaged 6.0 persons) were undoubtedly away by this time in military service.

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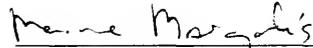
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

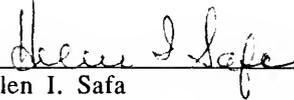
James Eston (Diego) Hay was born in Fort Collins, Colorado, on December 23, 1946. He grew up in Colorado, graduating from high school in Fort Morgan, Colorado in 1965. He studied English and drama at the University of Colorado until 1970. After an extended period of travel and work in Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Paraguay, he returned to the University of Colorado and graduated with a B.A. in English in 1982. He completed an M.A. in Latin American studies at the University of Kansas in 1984, after returning to Paraguay with a fellowship from the Inter-American Foundation for a research project in the eastern border region of that country. In 1984, he entered the Ph.D. program in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Florida, Gainesville. In 1986 he did fieldwork in both Paraguay and the state of Acre, Brazil. He lived in the town of Tobatí, in central Paraguay, from October, 1989 to February, 1991, doing dissertation research.

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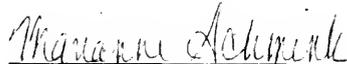
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Professor of Anthropology

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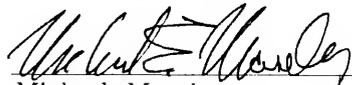
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Professor of Anthropology

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Marianne Schminck
Professor of Anthropology

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