

in Tijuana and the Mazahuas in Ciudad Juárez still live and work together, maintaining their traditional lifestyle as much as possible. Though they are not the cities' largest ethnic groups, their presence is more marked than others, owing to their ability to maintain tight social cohesiveness.

Breakup of migrant families affects not only close family members. The nuclear family is usually the most affected by the temporary or permanent loss of a key member (usually the head of the family) who crosses the border in search of work. Hence the existence of many families in which the wife and mother assumes the leading role. Both intact and broken migrant families often shelter relatives or friends who migrate alone, which explains large numbers of extended families.

But it is not only emigration across the border that brings about these changes in the family. In-bond industries have been a magnet for many women with or without families, as well as numerous unattended children.

In the first half of 1990, US authorities deported more than 300 minors to Ciudad Juárez (75 accused of delinquency) who were finally taken in by the Child Protection Attorney's Office.

Although middle-class family structure is less irregular, its members too face adaptive difficulties when separated from relatives, entering a new social environment or meeting new local customs.

Migration also causes anarchic and haphazard population growth, reflected by inefficient and inadequate public services. For example, a new settlement is believed to appear in Ciudad Juárez every eight months. In-bond industries, tourist and service related businesses tend to recruit these new arrivals.

Migration, itself, creates employment and fresh resources in both the formal and informal economies, i.e. hotels and clinics near the U.S Consulate; complete border crossing services (including exclusive arrangements between clandestine guides [called *coyotes*] and border hotels); itinerants selling traditional Mexican products not usually available at the border, such as sweet potatoes and sweet corn, from pushcarts. Others

bring with them cultural novelties, like herbal medicine which attracts many customers in the old municipal market of Tijuana.

Although the foregoing seem unrelated to the composition of the migrant family there are other social phenomena that reflect its dysfunctionality. Most evident among these are the gangs of *cholos*, rockers or cowboys, formed from unattended children and youths, who are frequently arrested for vagrancy, street-fighting, assault, and drugs. In a related phenomenon many young men and women are drawn into prostitution, family values being easier to transgress several thousand kilometers from their place of origin. Finally, the response from established residents of the two cities makes adaptation difficult for new settlers. Migrant groups are not considered part of the city, although many of them finally become permanent residents.



Women, in-bond industry workers.

Family and in-bond industry

Diverse forms of industrial development influence family environment in different ways. Historically, the early stages of industrialization brought about radical change: the productive and reproductive unit centered in the household was split between home and factory. This interfered with the sexual division of labor in a patriarchal society which assigned different spaces, social functions, schedules, tasks and skills to men and women.

Before the arrival of the in-bond industries, work patterns in the border cities were generally compatible with traditional patterns. But, from its inception, the in-bond industry favored the hiring of women for assembly jobs. Around 1980, the percentage of women workers in Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez was close to 80%. This figure recently dropped to 65% due to an industry boom which increased its export value by 300% in the last ten years, forcing companies to hire men. However, in absolute terms, a large number of women are still employed by the industry.

Family changes brought about by this type of employment are part of an on-going process now 25 years old. Though there may not be enough of them to evaluate final results, there are enough to indicate trends. The following are some of the problems that work in the in-bond industry has brought into family life.

Changes forcibly occur when women in a patriarchal society begin to work outside the home. These are multiplied in the Mexican border cities. Preference for women workers in the in-bond industry provides them with ready opportunity for steady employment in jobs with social security benefits.

Men, on the other hand, tend to be employed in small workshops, personal services, or as journeymen construction workers, plumbers, etc. Their income may be comparable to a woman's, but not as secure or steady, and without social security benefits.

This situation unquestionably affects relationships between partners and between generations. The man probably feels his traditional authority eroded, while the working wife will demand reciprocity in household chores from her companion. Working daughters enjoy a degree of independence previously denied them.

Factory shifts also disrupt family harmony. They are generally eight hours long, not including over-time. Women workers clock-in at six in the morning, which means leaving home at five and returning after four o'clock in the afternoon. If the husband's schedule differs (which is usually the case), the couple have little time together, and their situation worsens if there are children.

A survey indicates that 47% of women workers in Ciudad Juárez have at least one child. Children enter and leave school between eight in the morning and one in the afternoon, leaving them alone in the house thereafter, or else

in the care of their father (an unfamiliar task for him), a relative or neighbor.

For the 76% of working mothers with children under five years of age, the situation is further complicated by the fact that Social Security Institute nurseries can accommodate only 8% of their children. More often, these children are looked after by relatives or baby-sitters, resulting in sub-standard child care, worried mothers and grumbling fathers.

Families of women workers in Ciudad Juárez, in fact, reflect an atypical structure. A survey revealed that only 46% of families consisted of father, mother, and children; in 32%, the working mother's companion was absent; 16% of families were composed of friends and relatives, and the remaining 5% were domestic groups with no family ties. To complete this picture, 19% of women workers were heads of family and 15% were single mothers.

Tourism and the family

Tourism is an important source of foreign exchange and employment for the inhabitants of the border cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez. Foreigners coming for a taste of Mexico are provided with a condensed and inaccurate summary of the nation i.e. mariachis; snapshots with a donkey; restaurants reminiscent of rustic Pedro Infante films, decorated with pre-Hispanic motifs or shaped like sombreros. Tijuana and, to a lesser degree, Ciudad Juárez' sleazy reputations were not created by this class of tourist, but by those who come for nightlife, gambling, strong drink and women.

Although 1920s and 1930s Prohibition, which fathered the world's longest bar, is long gone, lower prices for alcohol on this side of the border continue to support such flourishing watering places as The Manhattan, or Rafa's in Juárez, or the Bol Corona in Tijuana. While the US strictly controls the sale of alcohol to minors, college students coming to Mexico get two drinks for the price of one, on presentation of a student i.d., and women students are not questioned at all, out of deference to their sex.

Betting parlors have now been added to dog and horse race tracks, allowing gamblers to bet on a wide range of games broadcast by satellite from all over the world.

Prostitution is widespread around the old town centers, close to the border, which have become tolerated red-light zones in both Juárez and Tijuana. They are thoroughly modern, catering to all tastes, inclinations and pockets: the Salon Sonora in Juárez is a traditional brothel with a red light bulb over the entrance; the Noche y Día is frequently closed down because of the thirteen to eighteen-year old girls that are its specialty; the staff at El 88 serve the gay and lesbian community, and the Chicago in Tijuana caters mainly to Vietnamese customers. Other cheaper brothels employ elderly prostitutes.



Migrants waiting at the Río Bravo.

How does this underworld affect family life on the border? Although many customers are foreigners, including GI's from Fort Bliss, sailors from San Diego and ordinary US citizens, according to prostitutes at Juárez, their most frequent visitors are local married men and middle-class youths.

Night life and love for sale are to a large extent just another facet of urban reality, a dark world that sometimes spills into the sunlight, as when a prostitute from a notorious Nuevo Laredo brothel was married in a religious ceremony.

The wedding took place at exactly 11 o'clock in the up-town district of Longoria, at an hour when wealthy families from the Lions' and Rotary clubs gather at the church. The madame acted as mother of the bride and the elegant bridesmaids, all prostitutes, candidly greeted and smiled at their numerous embarrassed clients, who tried vainly to feign indifference.

Prostitution often seeps silently into society, drawing into its ranks women workers, peasant women and middle-class housewives. Factory uniforms and caps are often to be seen hanging from dressing-room coat racks at dance halls in Juárez. Women workers begin to arrive around four o'clock, change clothes and work until midnight, often earning three times their salary for an eight-hour shift at

the factory. Duties involve dancing on a small platform and drinking with the customers, for each one of whom they earn a token worth a dollar. Their income increases if they come to an arrangement with a customer.

Motives in such cases are not always financial. Summer temperatures in the area go up to 47 degrees Celsius and often drop below zero in winter. Such work offers many young women the opportunity to spend the afternoon in an air-conditioned environment, chatting with friends and listening to music rather than going home. Why then do these women stick to their factory jobs? Mainly because they provide a steady income, social security benefits and social acceptability.

Recent accusations by peasants also reveal that of the 5,000 prostitutes in Tijuana, almost half were tricked into the business by wily procurers. Prostitution among housewives is on a rather different basis, usually being contracted temporarily when investors, or high factory officials visit the city. The hospitality offered these privileged visitors includes the female company of their choice.

Curiously, the proper citizens of Tijuana tend to minimize this aspect of their reality, and when confronted with it insist that it is for tourists or foreigners; as always putting the blame on others **M**