

Zapototec Women

Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca



Lynn Stephen

SECOND EDITION *revised and updated*

Zapotec Women

LYNN STEPHEN

Zapotec Women

Gender, Class, and Ethnicity

in Globalized Oaxaca

SECOND EDITION

REVISED AND UPDATED

Duke University Press Durham & London

2005



© 2005 Duke University Press

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of

America on acid-free paper ∞

Designed by CH Westmoreland

Typeset in Monotype Garamond by

Tseng Information Systems, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-

Publication Data appear on the

last printed page of this book.



I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

to the people of Teotitlán del Valle;

to my sons, Gabriel and José Angel;

and to my partner, Ellen Herman

Contents

| | | |
|--------------|--|------|
| | <i>List of Maps, Illustrations, and Tables</i> | ix |
| | <i>Acknowledgments</i> | xiii |
| | <i>Introduction</i> | i |
| CHAPTER 1 | Ethnicity and Class in the Changing Lives of Zapotec Women | 15 |
| CHAPTER 2 | Kinship, Gender, and Economic Globalization | 46 |
| CHAPTER 3 | Six Women's Stories: <i>Julia, Cristina, Angela, Alicia, Imelda, and Isabel</i> | 63 |
| CHAPTER 4 | Setting the Scene: <i>The Zapotecs of Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca</i> | 92 |
| CHAPTER 5 | Contested Histories: <i>Women, Men, and the Relations of Production in Teotitlán, 1920–1950s</i> | 122 |
| CHAPTER 6 | Weaving as Heritage: <i>Folk Art, Aesthetics, and the Commercialization of Zapotec Textiles</i> | 152 |
| CHAPTER 7 | From Contract to Co-op: <i>Gender, Commercialization, and Neoliberalism in Teotitlán</i> | 200 |
| CHAPTER 8 | Changes in the Civil-Religious Hierarchy and Their Impact on Women | 231 |
| CHAPTER 9 | Fiesta: <i>The Gendered Dynamics of Ritual Participation</i> | 250 |
| CHAPTER 10 | Challenging Political Culture: <i>Women's Changing Political Participation in Teotitlán</i> | 282 |
| After Words: | <i>On Speaking and Being Heard</i> | 324 |
| | <i>Notes</i> | 333 |
| | <i>Glossary of Spanish and Zapotec Terms</i> | 339 |
| | <i>Bibliography</i> | 343 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 371 |

Maps, Illustrations, and Tables

MAPS

1. State of Oaxaca 3
2. Teotitlán and surrounding communities 3

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Town center, the market, and a sixteenth-century church 94
2. The textile market 94
3. A farmer with oxen 105
4. Arnulfo Mendoza, a weaver 179
5. A subcontracted weaver 183
6. A woman weaving 183
7. A weaver preparing dyed yarn and a woman finishing the ends of a completed textile 184
8. Aurora Contreras Lazo, the cofounder of the Gunah Ruinchi Laadti/Women Who Weave cooperative 217
9. The women of Teotitlán's first cooperative in Oaxaca, 1987 217
10. Two women of the Gunah Shagua/Women of Teotitlán cooperative 220
11. Francisca Ruiz García with her cooperative, Dgunaa Gulal Ni Ruin Laadti/Traditional Women Weavers 222
12. Four women of the second incarnation of Guna Ruinchi Laadti/Women Who Weave 222
13. Moisés Lazo, one of the founders of the Laadti Guede/Washed Blanket cooperative 225
14. A mayordomo lights candles in the local church 241
15. Food and candles are loaded into a truck for an engagement ceremony 254
16. A woman makes tortillas for a fiesta 262
17. A man engaged in ritual drinking 263
18. The poorest type of housing in Teotitlán 288
19. A newer two-story house 288
20. Aurora Bazán López in her garden 308
21. Josefina Jiménez and Lynn Stephen 313
22. Pastora Gutiérrez Reyes, president of the local DIF committee 320

TABLES


1. Population of Teotitlán, 1890–2000 99
2. Percentage of full-time farmers, Teotitlán, 1930–2000 103
3. Hectares of corn planted and harvested in Teotitlán, 1960–1983 104
4. Irrigated versus *temporal* corn yields for Teotitlán, 1960–1983 104

5. Percentage of household income yielded by five economic activities, Teotitlán, 1986 112
6. Number of male and female workers in eight occupational categories, District of Tlacolula, census of 1895 129
7. Most significant gendered occupational categories in 1900 census, Teotitlán del Valle 130
8. Gendered occupational categories for 1910 census, district of Tlacolula 130
9. Gendered occupational categories in 1921 national census 131
10. Gendered occupational categories for Teotitlán del Valle, 1930 and 1940 censuses 132
11. Literacy rates by gender and "race," State of Oaxaca, 1920 133
12. Numbers of merchants in Teotitlán del Valle, 1868–1986 144
13. Mexican national production of bland textile fibers, 1960–1976 154
14. Evolution of the Mexican market for polyester, 1969–1976 155
15. Mexican national consumption of bland fibers, 1976–1985 156
16. Male and female education levels in merchant households, 1986 213
17. Languages spoken by male and female heads of merchant households, 1986 213
18. Management of business finances reported in merchant households, by gender, 1986 214
19. Management of household money reported in weaver households, by gender, 1986 214
20. Cooperatives in Teotitlán, 1986–present 226
21. Age and sponsorship of godchildren, 1986 266
22. Animal production risks and investments 271
23. Percentages and days of adult labor invested in household/agricultural activities, weaving, community service, and ritual 274
24. Percentages of total adult labor time invested in ritual by merchants and weavers, March–December 1985 275
25. Primary decision makers for sponsoring fiestas, 1986, by gender 277
26. Cash outflow data for merchant and weaver households, March–December 1985 280
27. House types of merchant and weaver households, 1986 289
28. Land ownership of merchant and weaver households, 1986 289
29. Consumer goods owned in merchant and weaver households, 1986 290
30. Looms owned in merchant and weaver households, 1986 290
31. Merchant and weaver wealth compared, 1986 291
32. Average wealth rankings of merchant and weaver households by six participants in the 1980s 291
33. Men's attitudes toward women's attendance at municipio meetings in the 1980s 297

- 34. Men's opinions on women's ability to hold cargo posts in the 1980s 298
- 35. Women's perceptions of men's sharing of political information in the 1980s 299
- 36. Women's opinions about their own ability to attend municipio meetings and hold cargo posts in the 1980s 301
- 37. Linguistic skills of merchant and weaver women, 1986 302
- 38. Minimum literacy skills of merchant and weaver women, 1986 302

Acknowledgments

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, FIRST EDITION

 This book represents a seven-year period of my life beginning as a second-year graduate student at Brandeis University. In the seven years that I have dedicated to this project, family, friends, mentors, and colleagues both in the United States and in Mexico have contributed immensely and provided me with a rich and supportive context.

When I was a graduate student in the Anthropology Department at Brandeis University, Robert Hunt provided inspiration, support, and encouragement for this project from its very beginning until its completion as a book. The careful attention of Sutti Ortiz in the conceptualization and analysis of the larger effort this book represents was also invaluable. Judith Zeitlin was the first person to open the doors of ethnohistory to me and I thank her for her example and her encouragement in better integrating local and regional history into the project.

While I was teaching at MIT, Martin Diskin and James Howe provided intellectual and collegial support, spending many hours discussing various aspects of the book. They have remained important colleagues.

While working in Mexico during the past seven years, I have been fortunate to have shared my fieldwork, graduate school, and “new faculty” status with Jonathan Fox, who has provided unending support, encouragement, and intellectual inspiration, resulting in exciting collaborative research. Jeffrey Rubin has also been an invaluable Mexicanist colleague.

Since I began teaching at Northeastern University in 1987, my colleagues have shown tremendous support and encouragement. Christine Gailey, in particular, has provided me with inspiration, challenges, friendship, and critical feedback on several sections of this book. Debra Kaufman, Michael Blim, Alan Klein, Carol Owen, and Pat Golden have provided intellectual and collegial support for this project. My students have also provided challenges and encouragement. The Women’s Studies Program and its executive board members at Northeastern have also provided support.

Other scholars in the United States have provided encouragement, criticism, and inspiration, including Stefano Varese, Karen Sacks, and Art Murphy. June Nash has provided critical intellectual and editorial feedback and suggestions. Friends and colleagues who have proved invaluable in supporting this project include Carol Zabin, Sylvia Maxfield,

Nicole Sault, and Helen Clements. I would like to thank Judith Hellman, Fran Rothstein, Michael Kearney, and anonymous reviewers for the University of Arizona Press and the University of Texas Press for their careful comments and suggestions, which helped to make this a better book.

Funding for field research was provided by the Inter-American Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and the Damon Fellowship of Brandeis University. Time for additional research and writing was funded by the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego.

My six months at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies resulted in a wonderful intellectual experience in a superb physical and academic environment. I wish to thank Wayne Cornelius and my colleagues Teresa Korack, Neil Harvey, Maria Cook, Ilan Semo, and Enrique Semo for making this a particularly interesting and productive time.

In Mexico, I have many people to thank for their contributions to this work. In Oaxaca I would like to thank Cecil Welte, resident anthropologist and director of the Oficina de Estudios de Humanidad del Valle de Oaxaca for advice and use of his wonderful library. The Oaxaca office of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia was extremely generous in assisting me to secure permission to work in Oaxaca, particularly Lic. María de la Luz Topete, Dra. Alicia Barabas, and Dr. Miguel Bartolomé. Colleagues at GADE (Grupo al Apoyo del Desarrollo Etnico), including Gary Martin, Alejandro de Avila, Teresa Pardo, and Pedro Lewin, were particularly helpful. Jorge Hernández and Josefina Aranda of the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociológicas de la Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca provided great assistance in making resources and data available and offering opportunities for intellectual interchange with students. Dr. Manuel Esparza, director of the Archivo del Estado de Oaxaca, was very helpful in locating historical information. Kate Raisz provided critical support and encouragement during the longest stretch of fieldwork for this project.

In Oaxaca, my personal and intellectual friendships with Margaritas Dalton Paloma and Guadalupe Musalem have been invaluable. They were the first people to open their homes to me there. Michael Higgins, whom I associate more with Mexico than with the United States, has also been an important friend and colleague, as has Julia Barco.

My family has provided me with comfort, support, and inspiration throughout this project, often visiting me in the field and encouraging me through the more difficult parts of writing. Suzanne Brown, Bruce Stephen, and Rachel Goldman have backed me through the entire pro-

cess. Ellen Herman has provided unending daily support, encouragement, and critical intellectual feedback throughout the writing of this book and the dissertation that preceded it.

A special group of friends in Boston always made it a wonderful place to come back to after being in the field.

More than anyone, the people of Teotitlán are to be thanked for opening their homes, hearts, and minds to me for over seven years. I would like to thank the González family for sharing their home with me, my family, and friends for so many years, particularly Paco, who has served as one of my primary teachers, guides, and friends, along with Cristina. To Petra I owe many wonderful insights into local culture and history. María Chavez has also been a valuable friend and research assistant. Many other people in the community who prefer to remain unnamed have been important friends and collaborators in this research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, SECOND EDITION

Acknowledging my debts for the new edition of *Zapotec Women* is an occasion to think over the twenty years that I have been working in Teotitlán. The bulk of the fieldwork done for this edition was completed during the summers from 2001 to 2004. In 1998 my family moved from Boston to Eugene, Oregon, where I have been teaching since that time. I want to acknowledge the support of Terry O'Neill, Sandra Morgen, Madonna Moss, Jon Erlandson, Bill Ayres, Carol Silverman, and John Lukacs in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oregon. They have supported me as colleagues, some as critical readers, and as friends. I have been very happy at the University of Oregon and the Department of Anthropology has proved to be a stimulating, friendly place to work. I also want to thank and acknowledge the important work of María de la Torre, a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Oregon, who worked with me in Teotitlán during the summer of 2001. Jonathan Fox, a close friend and colleague, provided ongoing important intellectual exchange on the West Coast. I thank Analisa Taylor and William Warner Wood for their close readings of and excellent suggestions for Chapter 5. Jean Jackson and Kay Warren provided important support and conversations during the research and writing of this edition.

The University of Oregon has provided me with research support that allowed me to complete the fieldwork necessary for this book. I am

grateful to the Center for the Study of Women and Society for a research grant in 2002 and to the University of Oregon for a Summer Research Award for Faculty in 2001. In 2003 I was named a Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences at the University of Oregon, and I am grateful for the accompanying funds that furthered my research in 2003 and 2004.

Several new friends in Mexico City and elsewhere with passionate interest in questions of indigenous autonomy and indigenous women's organizing in Mexico have provided invaluable intellectual conversations and inspiration, among them Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo, Shannon Speed, and María Teresa Sierra.

Some of the lasting friendships I made in Oaxaca in the 1980s have been crucial in helping me to bring this work up to date. Margarita Dalton Paloma and Julia Barco have continued to be wonderful friends, comadres, and sources of knowledge and insight. Layla Musalem, Paola Sesia, Teresa Pardo, Stefano Varese, and Carlos Moreno all continued to be important local friends and intellectual colleagues in Oaxaca. The loss of my dear friend Guadalupe Musalem in 1995 is a sadness I never forget, but I still encounter her friendship and zest for life in many of the corners of Oaxaca I frequent. Lucero Topete, the first person who welcomed me to Oaxaca in 1983, continues to play an important role in the life of my family. As director of the Instituto Cultural de Oaxaca, she has provided warm friendship and a wonderful learning environment for my older son, Gabriel, as well as assistance in finding housing in Oaxaca. Juana Rodríguez Ramírez and her son, Gustavo, have been wonderful friends to my family during our summer visits to Oaxaca. Fidel Morales has also been an important family friend and support during our time in Oaxaca. Matt Gutmann—a longtime friend whom I now see more in Oaxaca than elsewhere—has been a valuable colleague in Oaxaca, a research site we now share.

I continue to cherish my old friendships and relationships in Teotitlán. Paco González has continued to be a valuable research collaborator, friend, and compadre. Petra Bautista Vicente continues as a close friend, confidante, research collaborator, and comadre. My compadres Andrés Gutiérrez and Margarita Alavez opened their home and hearts to me and my family as always. Efraín Gutiérrez Alavez and Aurora Lazo González have become good friends and I thank them for sharing their home and good food with me and my family. I am particularly grateful to a group of women active in the cooperatives for their invitation to carry out this new project and for their enthusiasm and support. They include Aurora Bazán López, Aurora Contreras, Reina González Martínez,

Isabel Hernández, Pastora Gutiérrez Reyes, Josefina Jiménez, Guadalupe Ruiz Sosa, Francisca Ruiz García, and Violeta Vásquez Gutiérrez. Moisés Lazo González offered very helpful perspectives on his and other cooperatives' histories and challenges. Arnulfo Mendoza and Mary Jane Gagnier were particularly generous with their time and I enjoyed our developing friendship, discussions, and personal and intellectual passion in all things Teotitlán. With Francisco Sosa, who was *presidente municipal* (mayor) during three of my summers in Teotitlán, I enjoyed many delightful conversations. I thank him and the other *autoridades* for granting me permission to work in the community and to observe community assemblies.

Alejandro de Avila, father of my two sons, has provided boundless support, encouragement, and friendship throughout the time I researched the book. As a family member rooted in Oaxaca, he has helped us all to enjoy and cherish our time there. To my sons, Gabriel and José Angel, who accompanied me on my research trips, I thank you for your love and patience, and for the good times we enjoyed in Oaxaca. To Ellen Herman, my life partner, who shared time in Oaxaca and in the trials of writing and daily living and loving, I thank you for the gift of our family and life together.

Finally, I thank my Duke editor Valerie Millholland for her support and encouragement of this project. I gratefully acknowledge the permission of University of California Press Journals and the American Anthropological Association to reprint parts of "Negotiating Global, National, and Local 'Rights' in a Zapotec Community" in *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 28 (Spring 2005), copyright © 2005 by the American Anthropological Association. I also thank *Critique of Anthropology* for permission to reprint parts of "Women's Weaving Cooperatives in Oaxaca: An Indigenous Response to Neoliberalism," appearing in spring 2005. Thanks to the University of Texas Press for permission to base the two maps of Oaxaca included here on maps that appeared in the first edition.

Introduction

We really like speaking Zapotec. We speak it because it is our language—the language that our parents and their parents spoke.

Even though they teach us another language in school and other kinds of customs and traditions, we like being Zapotec. We can be modern and Zapotec at the same time. —Carlota, age 17



Zapotec Women was originally published in 1991, based on fieldwork carried out between 1983 and 1990. This updated edition contains several new chapters. The idea of publishing a new version came from the women of Teotitlán. A Spanish version of the first edition, *Mujeres zapotecas*, was published in Mexico in 1998 by the Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas. In August 1999 we followed the wonderful Mexican custom of holding a party and forum when a new book appears. When a book is launched in the United States, authors usually talk about their own works, but in Mexico colleagues of the author, experts, and persons who have a distinct perspective on the book's topic offer comments and analysis. At the launching of *Mujeres zapotecas* speakers included Margarita Dalton, a historian and philosopher who at that time was Oaxaca's minister of culture; Josefina Aranda, a rural sociologist and expert on indigenous movements and politics and gender; Francisco González, my compadre and research collaborator from Teotitlán; Isabel Hernández, one of the founding members of Teotitlán's first cooperative of women weavers and president of the Asociación de las Mujeres Antiguas de Teotitlán del Valle; and Juana Pérez González, a member of Mujeres Que Tejan, a continuation of the first women's cooperative.

The women from Teotitlán offered praise for the first Spanish edition of the book, saying it was interesting and accurate, but they had two critical comments as well. First, the woman pictured on the jacket had married into the community; she was not from Teotitlán, so how could she represent them? Apparently a photographer from the Oaxaca Ministry of Culture had been assigned to go and take a picture of a woman weaving and didn't think to ask who she was. For the women from the weaving cooperatives, this was a problem that needed to be corrected. Second, the book ended too soon; it said nothing about the developments of the 1990s, especially the flowering of women's weaving cooperatives in the community. Isabel, Juana, and other women from Teotitlán declared that

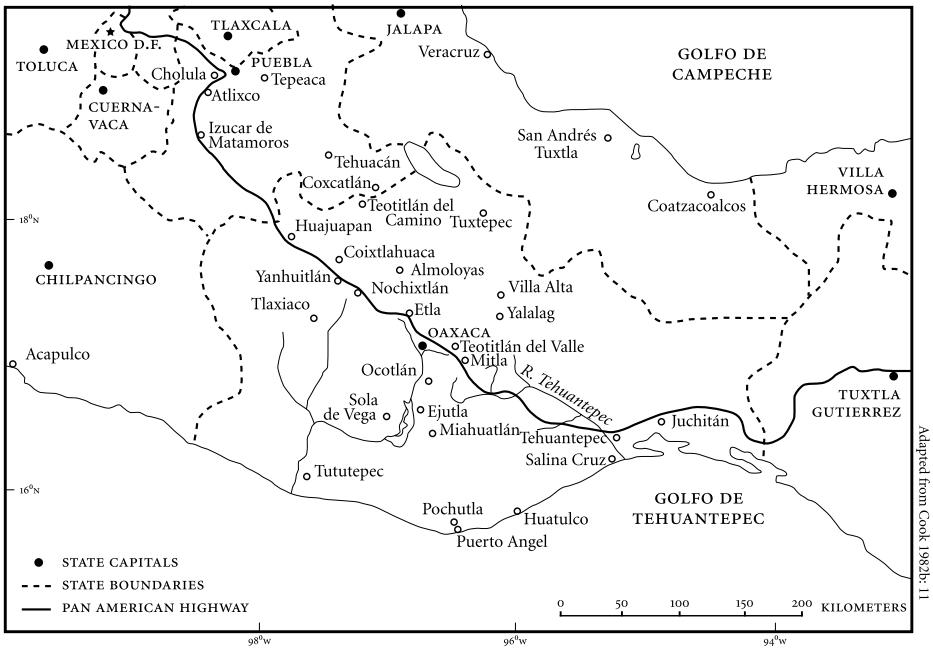
I needed to produce another book, one that would bring readers up to date on the women's cooperatives and women's increasing participation in local politics. I made a public promise to do just that. I hope that this new incarnation does justice to the accomplishments and aspirations of the multiple generations of women from Teotitlán who inspired it.

SCENE 1

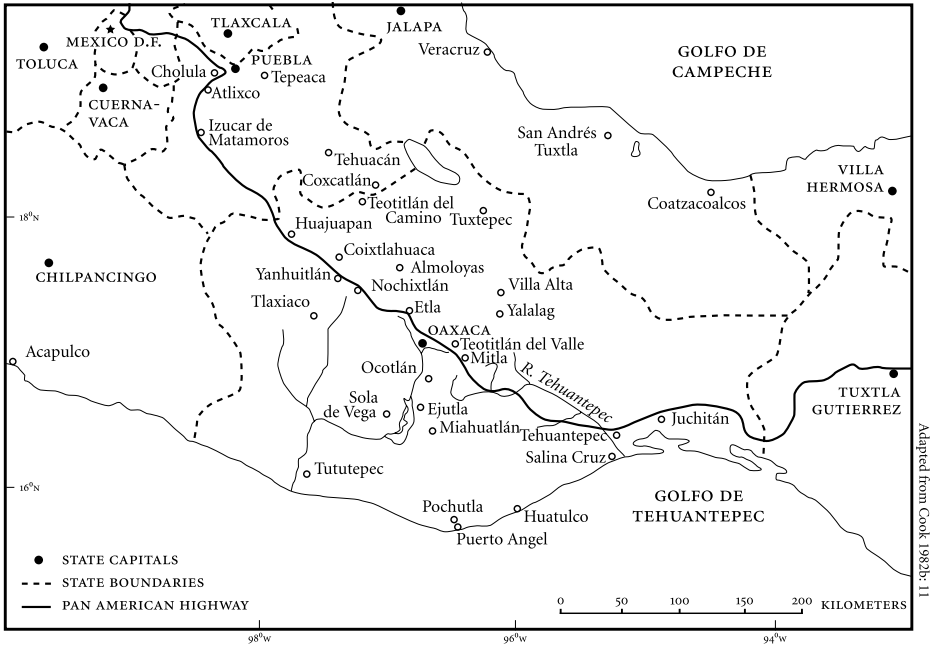
Soledad sits surrounded by the four oldest women at the wedding fiesta. Before them are the roasted carcasses of four pigs. The older women and Soledad work quickly to divide up the meat, putting large chunks into bowls to be served to the guests. They make sure that the largest portions are given to the most important people. This is the second meal of the day. A more elaborate meal will be served tomorrow to the two hundred men and women assembled in the courtyard. Outside, groups of younger women, some married with small children, are making tortillas. They comment on the recent improvements in Soledad's house. Soledad's family has six good-sized looms and a new pickup truck. A new wing has doubled the size of their house. And just in time for the wedding, they built a bathroom, complete with a flush toilet. Some of the women fantasize about adding rooms to their one-room homes. Others describe beds, refrigerators, and new dishes they hope to buy someday.

SCENE 2

Petra steps inside as her neighbor Gloria opens the door. Petra solemnly crosses to the altar at the center of the room. She kisses the altar, greeting the saints, and then turns to Gloria and her husband, Pedro, and explains that she and her family are going to sponsor a *posada*, a three-day celebration involving several large meals and drinking when the statue of the Christ child is brought from the church to their home just before Christmas. She requests that they return the turkey she lent them two years ago when their youngest son was married. Pedro and Gloria pull out a small blue notebook and find the entry recording the loan of Petra's turkey. They nod and agree to deliver a turkey of equal or greater weight one week before the Christmas *posada*.



Map 1. State of Oaxaca.



Map 2. Teotitlán and surrounding communities.

SCENE 3

Fourteen-year-old María is alone in the house. Her parents are across town, celebrating the baptism of the new son of their compadres. Outside, a white Nissan four-door sedan has pulled up in front of María's house. The driver gets out and knocks at the door. María opens it to admit Susan, an American who owns an importing business in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She has come to pick up an order of 200 weavings. She hopes they're ready, she says, because she's flying back to the United States in two days. Perplexed, María gives her a hot tortilla, explaining that her parents are not at home. She knows they haven't completed the order because of the invitation to the baptism. She also knows, however, that Susan is a very important client. She quickly sends her younger brother to give a message to her parents. Half an hour later, María's father arrives; her mother has remained at the compadre's house to help with the cooking.

These scenes represent common events in the Zapotec-speaking community of Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca, Mexico. Known internationally for its wool textiles, Teotitlán has become an economic success story in a state that is distinguished by having one of the lowest per capita gross domestic products in all Mexico. In conjunction with the successful weaving industry, people continue to devote a significant amount of time and energy to ritual activity. Looking at the impact of textile commercialization on Teotitlán, we might expect to find a community that was rapidly abandoning its links to the past and was completely absorbed into the global capitalist economy. We might also predict a rapid advancement of class differentiation and an increase in the status of women as they began to work as weavers and were paid at rates equal to those of men. These were the predictions I made during my first two months of fieldwork in the summer of 1983.

After investigating several Zapotec communities in the central valley of Oaxaca as possible field sites, I was attracted to Teotitlán by three factors. First, I discovered that, contrary to everything I had read about treadle loom weaving and about Teotitlán in particular, a significant number of the weavers were women. This seemed to signal an important change in the gendered division of labor, which could have major consequences for the status of women not only in production but in other areas as well. Second, it was abundantly clear that economic develop-

ment was taking place in the community, at least for some families. New homes were being constructed and everyone was busy producing or selling wool textiles. There were many signs written in English to attract tourists. During my first days, most of the people I met tried to sell me a serape or asked if I had an importing business in the United States. Yet despite the evidence of rapid economic development, a strain of traditionalism could be seen there. Everyone spoke Zapotec and every day someone somewhere was having a ritual ceremony that disrupted the rhythm of weaving production. I decided to stay in Teotitlán precisely because what I saw happening was not what was predicted. It seemed to be a place caught between a rapidly advancing future in export production and a long-entrenched past of ethnic uniqueness anchored in ongoing institutions.

Most of my first two-month fieldwork stint was spent trying to understand the basic social structure of the community, the daily routine of households, the agricultural cycle, and the gendered division of labor. Because I knew very few people, like most anthropologists I became expert in initiating conversations on any pretext. One of my most successful techniques was to inquire about fine-looking cows, pigs, and chickens. Most women and men were interested in talking about animal production—when I was able to communicate with them.

While well prepared to speak Spanish, I soon discovered that much of life in Teotitlán was carried on exclusively in Zapotec. Because my first place of residence was with a largely monolingual Zapotec-speaking family, my first efforts at conversation were painful, but I pressed on out of necessity. My first friends turned out to be either monolingual elderly Zapotec women or younger married men who were interested in talking about agriculture and politics. Because I wanted to include gender as a major category of my research, it became clear that my monolingual elderly female friends were critical in helping me to gain an understanding of women's lives in Teotitlán. I credit them with providing many of the insights I gained as time went on.

Another way of learning Zapotec was to exchange Zapotec lessons for lessons in English appropriate for selling textiles. I finally got so many requests for English terms for color, size, design, counting, and descriptions of the basics of making a sale that I produced a small document that I gave to people as a study aid. Eventually I also began to work consistently with one young man, who became my Zapotec tutor and most consistent research collaborator. Later several young women in the community also began to work with me.

My longest stint of fieldwork began in November 1984 and ended in January 1986. I lived the entire time with an extended family, an experience that proved to be critical in teaching me about the basics of life as well as providing emotional and intellectual support for my work. I spent many evenings reflecting with them on what I had seen or discussed during the day. As I began to participate in the heavy ritual cycle of the community, they trained me in appropriate behavior and ritual speech and incorporated me into their cycle of ceremonial participation.

During 1985, 1986, the summer of 1987, and shorter visits in 1988 and 1989, I began to see my initial ideas about gender and economic development challenged by the complexity of recent history in Teotitlán. As my knowledge of Zapotec improved and I began to delve into twentieth-century community and regional history through exploring local archives and carrying out oral history interviews with the eldest members of the community, my ideas changed. My thoughts about the logical trajectory of economic development were challenged by the contradictory and dialectical consequences of the gradual commercialization of treadle loom weaving in Teotitlán and surrounding communities during the twentieth century.

Because I chose to focus on women, I began to see the varied consequences of textile production for export first in the category of gender. What I came to see as a basic contradiction between a kin-based ideology of community solidarity linked to local Zapotec ethnic identity and a class-based ideology emphasizing wealth and employer status in the relations of production alerted me to potential differences among women. The consequences of textile commercialization could not be generalized to all women in Teotitlán. To understand how changes in textile production affected women, I also had to explore how class and ethnic identity have changed over time. This investigation allowed me to see how women are differentiated in the process of commercialization regardless of gender and shed light on the consequences they share precisely because of gender. The primary lesson I learned from working in Teotitlán in the mid-1980s was that indigenous communities are not homogeneous.

I returned to Teotitlán in the summers of 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 to do in-depth fieldwork again after more than a decade of more sporadic contact limited to annual visits with friends, compadres, and my goddaughters and godsons. My Zapotec was rusty at first, but by the end of the summer of 2002 I was speaking reasonably well again and had entered that wonderful space of being able to feel the world differ-

ently because of the language in which it is captured. As I told friends in Oaxaca, “I can joke with the old women again. I think that means I am back on track with my Zapotec.” Indeed, being able to have meaningful conversations with older monolingual Zapotec speakers in Teotitlán was the one of the most important and pleasurable parts of my research in the 1980s and again in the twenty-first century. The beauty and meaning of a place reside in language and conversation, and I felt blessed to be able to enter that world again.

In contrast to the more general ethnographic work I carried out in the 1980s, my fieldwork from 2001 to 2004 was focused on the histories of the women’s cooperatives while at the same time I tried to understand the broader context out of which the cooperatives had emerged. The larger context that affected the emergence of the cooperatives is tied to several key factors: the intensification of competition between local merchants and the lowering of prices paid to pieceworkers by larger exporting merchants, whose exporting activities were facilitated by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994; active encouragement of cooperatives by both nongovernmental organizations and various branches of the Mexican government; and increasing migration of women out of Teotitlán into circumstances where they came to see themselves as more independent.

I greatly enjoyed carrying out this new research, especially since I was doing it at the request of women of the community. I spent much of my time talking with women, individually and collectively, and with the few men who had joined the cooperatives that had formed, their families, and others linked to them. I also caught up with many old friends. Migration emerged as a major theme in the lives of some of the key players in the formation of the cooperatives and of others as well. In appearance the community had changed significantly. Many more people were bilingual in Spanish and Zapotec, new houses were going up everywhere, and people’s level of consumption seemed to have accelerated.

At the same time, the community was unchanged in many ways. Rituals went on in much the same way, weddings were just as grandiose as before, and community assemblies continued in Zapotec, with the one difference that they were now attended by some women as well as men. The class stratification between merchants and weavers seemed more fixed and exaggerated than before, yet the cooperative movement and the members’ efforts to link directly to consumers suggested an alternative kind of economic model for the production and marketing of Teotitlán’s beautiful textiles.

This updated and significantly revised version of *Zapotec Women* was written first and foremost for the women weavers who requested it as well as for the many other readers who enjoyed the first edition of the book and have taken an ongoing interest in the community. It offers readers the chance to view one community over a span of twenty years through the eyes of one anthropologist. The anthropologist has changed as well as the community.

The first edition of this book, based in part on my doctoral dissertation, was punctuated by the need to show “I know the literature,” was objective, and was steeped in both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation; now I no longer feel the need to prove myself along many dimensions. While I still appreciate and value quantitative and qualitative methods and efforts to understand problems and stories from their many sides, I am also interested in meaning, interpretation, and the ways in which individual experience through time can collectively alter local institutions and human relationships, producing multiple layers of identities.

During the past fifteen years my work came to be strongly informed by cultural studies as well as work on cultural politics (see Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998; Babb 2001), social movements (see Escobar and Alvarez 1992), studies of nationalism and transnational communities (see Kearney 1995b, 1996b; Levitt 2001), flexible citizenship (Ong 1999), and cultural citizenship (Flores and Benmayor 1997; Rosaldo 1997). Scholarship on women and social movements in Latin America has also been influential in my thinking (Alvarez forthcoming; Eber and Kovich 2003; Montoya, Frazier, and Hurtig 2002; Molyneux 2003), as has the proliferation of excellent research on gender in Mexico (see, for example, Gutmann 1996; Hernández-Castillo 1997, 2001a; Rodríguez 1998, 2003). In other words, the themes of culture and politics have come to occupy a central place along with my analysis of gender and political economy.

Because I have been working in Teotitlán for so many years, I have a strong historical and broad-based general understanding on which to build my more recent research. For that reason I was able to concentrate my recent research on the specific circumstances that contributed to the rise of the cooperatives and to women’s challenges and gains in that process. Being known and invited back to work in the community made most of my conversations relaxed and fun.

A final difference between this version of *Zapotec Women* and the first is the nature of the relationship between me and the women who worked with me in Teotitlán. This was a much more collaborative project than my

earlier research. The process of updating and revising this book involved discussions and interviews with the members of each weaving cooperative, the submission of transcripts to people whose interviews I had tape-recorded, the giving of photographs to each group, and in some cases the creation of bilingual (Spanish–English) brochures or other pieces of literature for the cooperatives. I was able to connect other groups with people who could help them create Web pages. Finally, I translated most of the new material in this book from English to Spanish (and occasionally to Zapotec) so that I could discuss and debate it with the women’s cooperatives. Their suggestions have been incorporated in the final draft.

I offer one more scene to illustrate the differences among women as well as some of the roles they share. The rest of the book elaborates on this theme, focusing on gender relations in ritual, weaving production and marketing, local politics, and families.

SCENE 4

Ritual space is segregated by gender: men eat, drink, lounge, and sit apart from women. Within this segregated space a ritual order of respect and prestige is evident, based on ritual experience and age. Those men and women with the most ritual experience have leadership roles. In this context an elderly woman, Gloria, discusses how the dance should be structured with the male host, the *mayordomo*. Later she instructs a young merchant woman to serve shots of mescal to all the women present.

The next week Gloria visits the young merchant woman’s house to pick up yarn for several rugs she has agreed to weave on a piecework basis. The young woman, who is probably repeating her husband’s specifications, tells Gloria what size to make the weavings, what colors to use, what design to copy, and when they should be ready. Gloria will be paid when she delivers the weavings.

That evening Gloria is at home finishing up a day of weaving. She talks with her husband, who is preparing to go to the town hall for a community assembly. Gloria gives her opinion on how difficult negotiations with the state-run yarn factory have been and urges him to push for community control. When he leaves, she continues to weave. Gloria does not go to community meetings because, she says, it is not the custom for women of her age to attend.

When her husband arrives at the community assembly, however, he finds eight women sitting together, the youngest 18, the eldest 50. They

are from one of the women's weaving cooperatives in Teotitlán. They vote in the assembly and one of them offers her opinion. He makes a note to tell Gloria about the women at the assembly. She probably won't approve of their presence here, he thinks.

As this example indicates, an elderly woman who holds the highest authority in a ritual event may have little or no control over the style, color, or dimensions of what she weaves. In contrast, a young merchant woman who has little authority in a ritual event has some authority in production relations, particularly in comparison with women who are working for her and her husband. Women like Gloria structure their political participation through discussions with other women in the market, at ritual events, and at community water sites, through subtle protest actions, and through efforts to influence their husbands, who do attend community assemblies. Other women, however, are beginning to attend community assemblies themselves. Some of their toughest critics may be other women, but they feel they have a right to equal participation with men.

The shifting dynamics of ethnicity and class frame and define the daily world of women in Teotitlán and other indigenous communities, as well as their possibilities for changing it. For this reason, gender does not function as a separate analytical category. Rather than simply being about women as differentiated from men, this book attempts to clarify the way in which gender takes on specific meaning in relation to particular economic and cultural arrangements—in this case, in relation to global capitalism, the class system it engenders, and formulations of ethnic identity influenced by local aspects of indigenous Zapotec culture and state-promoted images of “Mexican Indians.” In contesting the idea that world markets alone determine local social and economic relations, this book shows that the changing positions of women in Teotitlán are not simply the products of increased demand for woven goods. Rather, the lives of Zapotec women have been shaped by the intersection of regional, national, and international markets with education, changes in the local and national gender ideology, migration, changes in the local and national political systems, and local, national, and international processes of ethnic labeling and identity construction.

The chapters that follow emphasize the multiple representations of gender, class, and ethnicity and how they are used, particularly by women, to achieve goals and agendas.

Chapters 1 and 2 discuss key concepts used in the book (culture, ethnicity, class, and kin-based institutions of solidarity and exchange such

as ritual kinship and reciprocal goods and labor exchanges) and outline how these institutions function in relation to the social reproduction of laborers and social actors. The concept of social reproduction is discussed as an alternative framework to the public/private model of gender relations, but is also critically reexamined in relation to how globalization, transnationalism, and migration have significantly altered the terrain on which social reproduction occurs.

Chapter 3 explores the arenas of weaving production, ritual, and politics through the life histories of six Zapotec women—merchants and weavers, young and old. These life histories provide concrete illustrations of many of the analytical and descriptive points made in the book.

Chapter 4 introduces the Zapotecs and the community of Teotitlán, offering current and historical information on agriculture, the division of agricultural labor, occupations, land distribution, economy, migration, geography and climate, political ties, markets, religious institutions, education, and health.

Chapter 5 documents Teotitlán's transition from a community of subsistence farmers and part-time weavers laboring under a system of mercantile capitalism to a town of artisans producing for export under a system of commercial capitalism. It contrasts local constructions of economic history to those of the state, focusing on women's roles in the labor force, state constructions of indigenous women, and the impact on women of the large-scale migration of men to the United States during the *bracero* program and afterward.

Chapter 6 continues this discussion, describing the commercialization of Zapotec textiles in relation to several local, national, and global processes, including the disappearance of local and regional markets for hand-woven blankets; the promotion of *arte popular*, or folk art, as a part of Mexican nationalism beginning in the 1920s; government promotion of tourism; development programs to improve the quality of craft production and distribution; and Teotitecos' own efforts to gain control over the marketing and distribution of their products. The chapter includes a discussion of the debates about political economy and intellectual property rights in relation to Zapotec and Navajo designs. Finally, the chapter highlights the creation of Teotitlán's community museum as a local strategy for reclaiming Teotiteco Zapotec history and culture as a counterweight to external constructions of Teotitecos and their textiles by the government, exporters, and tourists.

Chapter 7 explores how class differentiation distinguished between merchant and weaver women in the arenas of weaving production and

marketing and politics in the mid-1980s and how the emergence of women's weaving cooperatives in the late 1980s and 1990s has partially challenged the economic marginalization of women weavers, often with significant roadblocks to their participation in the cooperatives thrown up by male and female family members.

Chapter 8 lays the historical basis for a discussion of women's changing participation in ritual and political life in Teotitlán. Focusing on the divorce of civil from religious offices in local government beginning in the 1930s and the gradual phasing out of most sponsorships of ceremonial activities, this chapter examines the changing structural conditions that decreased women's roles in formal politics until the late 1980s.

Chapter 9 documents how the content and form of religious ceremonies have been transferred to life-cycle rituals and how women use these rituals and the traditional idea of respect to continue to influence the community.

Chapter 10 explores the varied dimensions of women's political participation during two distinct time periods. It first documents how women were shut out of most formal political institutions and how their age and class status influenced their ideas about themselves as political actors and their strategies for political participation in the mid-1980s. Then it shifts to the 1990s, when both internal and external factors led to an increase in women's participation in the formal political system. The emergence of the movement for indigenous autonomy in the wake of the Zapatista rebellion of 1994 was a significant factor in developments in Teotitlán and other indigenous communities (see Stephen 2002). Both the Mexican government and a wide range of nongovernmental organizations developed programs emphasizing the importance of women's political participation. A national indigenous women's network was created for the first time in 1997. The National Indigenous Women's Council/Coordinadora (CNMI) was founded in Oaxaca. Changes in Oaxaca's constitution and state laws that confirmed the right of indigenous communities to elect officials according to their own customs and traditions sparked debate on the role of indigenous women in local and statewide politics. The emergence of more than a dozen weaving cooperatives (eight of them women's) and their formal incorporation into Teotitlán's political structure increased women's participation in community assemblies and led to leadership roles for a few both inside and outside the community.

In "After Words" I look at the implications of this historical and ethnographic material for the political, economic, and cultural participation

and creativity of other indigenous women in contemporary Mexico, particularly under the policy of economic neoliberalism, which has characterized Mexico and much of the world since the 1990s. Mexico's entrance into a neoliberal model began in the mid-1980s and was consolidated under NAFTA. Most people in Mexico lost ground in the 1990s, particularly the rural poor—a significant part of the indigenous population. The emergence of women's cooperatives in Teotitlán and other organizational efforts to improve the standard of living of the poorest parts of Mexico are important to document. Such movements to improve the lot of persons disenfranchised by the neoliberalism of the 1990s can offer concrete insights into alternative ways of earning a living, working, and participating in community and national life that offer dignity, respect, and recognition for cultural distinctiveness and artistic skill. Finally, the chapter suggests that indigenous women's organizing is providing a new model for incorporating ethnic and gender rights into Mexican society.


Unless I have indicated otherwise, all translations are my own.

Ethnicity and Class in the Changing Lives of Zapotec Women

We are all united here. This is a very quiet town where no one causes any problems. We aren't like other towns where people are divided. We are all just one community. No one is better than anyone else. — Jorge, age 50

Of course some women have more status than others. The ones who are older, who have given a lot of fiestas, they are always the most distinguished. — Marina, age 26

There are some really big merchants here in the community. There are five or six families that make all of the money. So the rest of the families are just workers for these people. — Angela, age 48

 In the course of the twentieth century the economic base of Teotitlán del Valle went from mercantile to commercial capital to full incorporation in a global economy. Within this economy, women and men came to occupy an ever-shifting and globally competitive niche associated with the production of folk art, crafts, and high art that required the commoditization of Zapotec ethnicity and put the weavers of Teotitlán in direct competition with other indigenous producers of ethnically identified products. By 2004, a wide range of production arrangements could be found in the community. While it is tempting to label both the relations of textile production and the dynamics of identity formation as parts of one type of system—for example, post-Fordist capitalism, characterized by outsourcing and subcontracting around the world in efforts to find the cheapest and most efficient source of labor, which then subsumes all other aspects of identity—this is not the case. For most of the twentieth century, textile production in Teotitlán involved multiple markets and types of relations of production. Thus it is important to recognize the changing and continued complexity of systems of textile production and the different kinds of labor, kin, ethnic, and gender relationships that crosscut them. As Fran Rothstein observed in respect

to rural women workers, “differences need to be the starting point, not the end point of our analyses” (1999, 579).

Workers in Teotitlán’s textile industry employ a variety of strategies and systems of production:

- a. Piecework production for local merchants who resell in other parts of Mexico and the United States.
- b. Increased direct control over production and distribution by businesses in the Southwestern United States that market Zapotec and knockoff textiles from Mexico and around the world (Wood 2000a).
- c. Weaving cooperatives that produce primarily for the tourist market in Oaxaca.
- d. Establishment of households and small businesses in Oaxaca, on the U.S.-Mexico border, and in the United States by independent merchant and producer families struggling to maintain control over family businesses (somewhat similar to the “flexible citizenship” strategies described by Ong 1999; see Wood 2000b).
- e. Subcontracting of weaving in Teotitlán and surrounding communities by several powerful local merchant households, who deal also in a wide range of other folk art and ethnic crafts.

While U.S. textile designers, importers, and entrepreneurs have been important forces in shaping the relations of work in the age of neoliberalism, kin networks also continue to be crucial in helping people to “access material and cultural resources and labor within and beyond the household,” as Teotitecos struggle to improve their lives (see Rothstein 1999, 587).

As in much of the world, being part of a global economy has reinforced tension between economic stratification and ethnic identity, which has evolved to accommodate Mexico’s focus on the self-determination of its indigenous peoples and the search for ways of maintaining cultural difference in an interconnected world. The tension between class differentiation and ethnic identity formation and reformation often works to create differences among women as well as among households. Differences among women must be related to the structural dynamics of economic neoliberalism, which affected women not only in Teotitlán but elsewhere in Mexico as well.

CULTURE AND THE CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY

In an ongoing battle to determine the analytical primacy of class or ethnicity as the major motor of social relations in rural communities from the 1960s through the 1980s, both Mexican and U.S. anthropologists often reduced ethnicity to class or class to ethnicity without really looking at the ways in which the two intersected. This strategy reflects a larger problem that emerges in anthropology and other social sciences when a static concept of culture is used to analyze social class formation and transition, usually in the guise of acculturation. When culture is defined as a set of shared values or rules for organizing social life, and thus is assumed to be equally shared by all, understood the same way by all members of the group that “shares” the culture, and passed on intact from one generation to the next, it is unlikely to be used in analyses of change. Culture either becomes derivative, “an attachment of more basic political-economic processes,” or becomes “independent of the realities of social class” (Sider 1986, 5). If a more flexible definition is used, culture can be helpful and indeed essential in discussing social and economic change. Sally Engle Merry argues that in more recent years, anthropology has developed a complex way of understanding culture by focusing on its “historical production, its porosity to outside influences and pressures, and its incorporation of competing repertoires of meaning and action” (2003a, 4). Her reading of Jean and John L. Comaroff’s *Of Revelation and Revolution* bolsters her optimistic assessment of the value of the culture concept for understanding rapid change, colonization and decolonization, human rights, and other more contemporary phenomena. She writes:

Anthropology is now struggling to think of culture in more flexible ways, as unbounded, changing, contested, and as rooted in practices and habits as well as ideas and values. Not only are there always flows of new ideas, perspectives, and practices, but there are also, within any group, contests over meanings and action. Those in power may use claims of cultural authenticity to force their ideas on others. Subordinated groups may seize other cultural arguments to contest those claims — arguments derived either from contradictions within a society or provided by newcomers or those who have traveled elsewhere. Such processes of reformulation, argumentation, and change are fundamental to any social group, although the rate and extent of contestation may vary. (Merry 2003b, 466)

If culture is not shared and is unbounded, what is it? How does it function and where is it located? The Comaroffs (1992, 21) define culture as “the space of signifying practice, the semantic ground on which human beings seek to construct and represent themselves and others—and hence, society and history.” It is located in individual consciousness as well as in the ways historical change promotes new relations of power that are contested, accepted, and taken for granted (Merry 2003b, 466). Thus culture is in everyone’s head, but not in all heads in the same way or even necessarily always in the same head in the same way through time. As individual consciousness, interpretations, and ideas change, so can one individual’s interpretation of culture. One way to think about culture (as in any kind of group identity formation process such as ethnicity, gender, nationalism) is: What are the key contested areas or questions that appear in a particular site or group of linked sites? In other words, what specific pieces of contested representation are being debated, by whom, and for what purpose?

Anthropologists’ past attempts to define ethnicity or specific ethnic groups have often suffered from some of the same problems as models of culture. All too often ethnic identities were assumed to be constituted in the same way for all who held them and to be identifiable according to a set of objective characteristics. Historically, anthropologists often divided people into discrete units—cultures, tribes, ethnic groups—based on the fact that they spoke a particular language, shared common ceremonies and material artifacts, and lived in similar areas. This time-honored approach was taken up by anthropologists in Mexico in relation to particular ethnic groups as well as by the government census office, where it continues to this day. Multilingualism and migration, among other things, have led most anthropologists to conclude that ethnic groups cannot necessarily be distinguished by objective empirical traits such as the language they speak or the territory they occupy. Instead, ethnicity is seen as a subjective, dynamic concept through which groups of people determine their own distinct identities by creating boundaries between themselves and other groups through interaction (Adams 1988; Barth 1969). The cultural theorist Stuart Hall writes that identities (including ethnicity) are constructed through difference—through the relation to what is not, to what is lacking, to what has been called “the other” or the “constitutive outside.” Identities “can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render ‘outside,’ abjected” (Hall 1996, 5; Butler 1993).

The form of unity, of closure that they exhibit is constructed and discursive—and, as the Comaroffs argue, contested.

While Barth's (1969) discussion of ethnicity is situationalist, in that he views ethnicity as constructed in relation to a particular situation and contingency, his discussion does not directly take on situations of conflict or the larger political context in which ethnicity is asserted. More recent theorists such as Brackette Williams (1989) insist that ethnicity be conceptualized as a category of identity within the political unit of the nation-state. My view coincides with hers: ethnic groups often are competing not only among themselves but also in relation to the state as they seek political recognition, which may bring access to resources. (Velasco Ortiz 2002 offers further discussion of this point.)

Ethnicity is a concept used by a group of people in particular situations where they are trying to assert their status vis-à-vis another group of people, often for political, economic, or social reasons. A self-chosen ethnic identity is usually based on a claim to historical autonomy and perceived cultural or physical traits that are emphasized as a primary source of identity and recognized internally as well as externally (Stephen and Dow 1990). Ethnic identities are articulated and mobilized not only in response to the need to stake political and economic claims in relation to states, but also in relation to the global economy.

Steve Stern (1987, 15–16) has pointed out that presumed physical and cultural traits draw social boundaries that may or may not coincide with economic class boundaries. Depending on the context in which a specific ethnic identity is used, by whom, and to what end, ethnicity may be used to link classes together in opposition to a perceived common threat or to reinforce the dominance of one class over another. When mobilized in a global economic context, ethnic identities are linked to both international and national political and economic structures and situations.

The above discussion is meant to clarify the way in which ethnicity can be understood as an analytical concept, which is distinct from the particular way in which Teotitecos and other groups culturally construct ethnicity for themselves. I argue below that Teotitecos' construction of ethnicity has two dimensions: an ethnic identity for outside consumption, which emphasizes community solidarity and a common claim to being the originators of treadle loom weaving in the Oaxaca Valley, and an internal version of ethnic identity, which, although it emphasizes common language, participation in local social and cultural institutions, and weaving production, also allows the contradictions of class differ-

entiation, age, and gender to slip through in subtle ways. It is here that the key questions and debates of ethnic identity are manifested: What is at the core of local Zapotecness? Who has a claim to it? How do differences of power and prestige that are rooted in economic strength push back at local ideas of respect, kin obligations, and reciprocity? These dimensions are part of the same cultural construction, but demonstrate the ways in which indigenous peoples have consciously built ethnic identities to serve their needs in a variety of contexts.

Scholars point out that socially constructed categories such as race and ethnicity can become perceived as impassible symbolic boundaries that become fixed and take on the appearance of an autonomous force capable of determining the course of social and economic life (Appadurai 1996, 15; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, 60; Hall 1988, 2). That is why it is necessary to closely examine their construction through time, the ways they are contested, and how they change. The specific construction of Teotitlán ethnic identity also has important historical and processual aspects. Rather than proposing that the specific content of Teotiteco ethnic identity be characterized as a protective defense of “traditional” local institutions against outside intervention, I try to demonstrate that Teotitecos, particularly merchants, have been actively engaged with the discourses of state officials on “Indian tradition” and “folk art” and for quite some time have incorporated pieces of hegemonic national culture in their own construction of what it means to be from Teotitlán. William Roseberry (1989, 75–76), following Raymond Williams (1977), notes that tradition is selective. People create alternative, oppositional cultural forms out of the dominant culture, as Teotiteco merchants have done with official versions of Mexican “Indian tradition.” Because the process of Teotiteco ethnic identity construction takes place within a community that is neither homogeneous nor egalitarian, differentiation that has existed within the community (according to wealth, gender, and relative ritual and economic status) is reflected in the ways in which ethnic identity is formulated and expressed within Teotitlán as well as in the tales told to outsiders (see Wood 2001). As increasing numbers of Teotitecos have migrated to the U.S.-Mexican border, the Los Angeles area, Chicago, and elsewhere, the context in which Teotiteco ethnic identity is displayed and reformulated has also broadened and shifted.

ETHNICITY, RESISTANCE, AND HEGEMONIES
IN THE FORGING OF INDIGENOUS IDENTITIES IN
POSTREVOLUTIONARY MEXICO

A critical discussion of the idea of resistance is also in order here if we are to understand how Teotiteco ethnic identity has been constructed and manifested. As many Gramscian scholars have suggested (see Field 1999, Mallon 1995, R. Williams 1994), resistance does not imply complete isolation from and rejection of the dominant culture. Teotitecos addressed postrevolutionary ideology by emphasizing the creation of a national subject incorporating both Spanish and "Indian" heritage as *la raza cósmica* (Vasconcelos 1979). Resistance to cultural domination is an incomplete and dialectical project in which ongoing local processes of identity creation along several dimensions (class and gender in particular) produce alternatives to hegemonic ideology precisely because of their local specificity and content. For example, the fact that Teotiteco weavers have continued to produce textiles in an economic system that included reciprocal exchanges of labor and goods, as well as commoditized labor, has affected the way in which they have formulated their identity as indigenous craft producers. They have not simply absorbed outside designations of themselves as weavers unchanged by time, using the technology of their ancestors, but have developed an identity commensurate with their place in both global capitalism and local reciprocal exchange.

The Zapotecs of Teotitlán have created their own locally defined ethnic identity in partial opposition to, but also incorporating elements of, the commoditized Indian identity promoted first by the postrevolutionary Mexican state and later by U.S. and Mexican textile entrepreneurs. The incorporation and reinterpretation of elements of imposed culture is raised in Edward Sapir's (1956) idea of genuine and spurious culture. Sapir distinguishes between the creation of an oppositional, internally generated culture that may exist within the confines of larger oppressive social relations and an external or spurious culture that does not "build itself out of the central interests and desires of its bearers" (93; see also Jackson 1995 and Gailey 1987b, 36–37). Stanley Diamond (1951) points out that genuine culture includes the creation of new cultural forms that combine the structure and content of older forms with new social and political reality—an insightful perspective in the 1950s.

Gerald Sider's later work, incorporating the Gramscian concept of

hegemony and the problematic concept of culture, provides further insight into the larger processes at work in the forging of indigenous ethnic identities in postrevolutionary Mexico. His work in Newfoundland emphasizes the possibility of creating an assertive and autonomous life for one class out of the cultural hegemony of another (1986, 119). As used by Sider, William Roseberry (1989), Stefano Varese (1988), Raymond Williams (1977), and others, the concepts of hegemony and counterhegemony suggest that cultural and economic patterns of expression and consumption involve a dialectical dynamic in which the marginalized sectors of a national population absorb and rework material conditions, ideology, and culture imposed on them by dominant classes. "Hegemony, I suggest, is not opposed by protesting elite values in the abstract—simply as values—but by opposing the conjunction of these values with appropriations. . . . Rather, opposition to hegemonic domination advances values that are, or become, rooted in the ties people have to one another in daily life and in production. The fragmentation of these ties in Newfoundland shaped both the hegemonic assertions and the capacity of fisherfolk to resist" (Sider 1986, 122).

The dominant culture that is reworked by marginalized groups in the routines of daily life and through social reproduction can emanate from the state as well as from dominant economic classes. While Antonio Gramsci initially separated the state from civil society, he later argued that the two were inseparable (D. Harvey 1989). Power is expressed by the state as government and carried out through coercive means. But power is also diffused through state ideology in institutions linked to civil society, meaning that the state is integrated with and not separate from civil society (Nagengast 1990). Gramsci (1971, 242) identified the characteristic institutions of civil society as newspapers, schools, public buildings and spaces, national symbols, and churches.¹ It is through these institutions that the state and the dominant classes deliver their cultural messages. Such institutions serve the state's educational interests by helping to create new types of civilization that link the national productive system to a shared sense of morality.

Yet these same symbols can also be redefined and recast from below by movements that seek to change the state and alter power relations; consider the appropriation of the figure of Emiliano Zapata by the Zapatista movement in the 1990s after decades during which he had been an icon of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Mexico's ruling political party until 2000 (Stephen 2002). Such hegemonies may be called unstable and are not absolute, as Williams writes; they are lived processes