

**SOCIAL NETWORKS IN SPACE:
UNDERSTANDING THE DAILY BEHAVIOUR OF
URBAN RESIDENTS IN *BARRIO MENA DEL HIERRO*,
QUITO, ECUADOR**

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the daily patterns of social and spatial behaviour in the *barrios* of Quito, Ecuador. Latin American *barrios* are low-income settlements which emerge illegally in the periphery of the cities, without basic infrastructure, and which are built progressively through the self-help efforts of owner-residents. *Barrios* are in quantitative and qualitative terms the most important phenomenon of Latin American urbanization. Between 25-50% of the residents of the cities live in such settlements. The social organization of *barrio* residents is rich, complex and distinct from other urban groups such as high-income sectors, which traditionally aspire to a North American or European way of life.

Despite the fact that *barrio* populations have specific patterns of daily social and spatial behaviour, urban planning by municipal authorities in Latin America has been tailored towards the lifestyle of high-income groups. The city of Quito, a capital of one million inhabitants, is no exception to this pattern. It is evident from the literature and from my own professional experience -as an educator in the *barrios* and later as a municipal planner- that the prevalent planning orientation towards high-income groups is partly due to a lack of common language between social scientists and planners. It is, however, also due to a lack of knowledge by planners and geographers of how the urban culture of *barrio* groups works.

Much research has been carried out to date in the *barrios* but it suffers from inadequate understanding of the spatial dimensions of daily social behaviour. The social geography of *barrios* is indeed poorly known. I argue here that the spatial analysis of daily social interaction is a crucial component in explaining the obvious differences in spatial behaviour between low-income and high-income groups and in communicating this understanding in a practical and tangible form to municipal planners. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to help fill this gap in knowledge through a geographical examination of daily patterns of social and spatial behaviour.

Approach

The thesis uses an approach which allows a holistic understanding of reality "as is", rather than being excessively conditioned by preconceived assumptions. This implied a flexible framework which allowed for discovery and which was progressively adapted as findings were made in the field. The methodology is tailored to understanding the sociospatial characteristics of daily life in the *barrios* "from the bottom-up". Participatory research is an essential element of the approach. The thesis is based on the premise that a true understanding of daily social interaction can be gained only through a ground-level study in which the researcher becomes integrated in the community and collaborates with local residents in the research process. The aim, thereby, is to conduct "socially responsible" research which contributes to local social empowerment. The degree of involvement and detailed data collection required by this approach favours small-scale case studies. Thus, the *barrio* Mena del Hierro was selected for this study as the result of discussion and collaboration with the grassroots organization involved in the improvement of the northwestern *barrios* of Quito.

Four variables were chosen for the study of daily social behaviour: 1) the public and private social networks of residents; 2) the spatial behaviour of residents for social activities; 3) the spatial preferences of residents for social activity and 4) the residents' personal images of their living environment. The methods used for this study are multidisciplinary and combine qualitative and quantitative techniques. They include participant observation, informal and structured interviews, and social cartography. Participatory research was carried out through a video and photography workshop set up with a group of local residents. This workshop was the doorway to integration in the community; to collaboration with the locals and to

contributing towards their social empowerment. The discussions and the videos produced by this workshop enabled local residents to reinforce their awareness of the quality of life they had developed and to express pride in their achievements.

Case study

The *barrio* Mena del Hierro is located on the northwestern periphery of Quito and is characterized by poor infrastructure. Having emerged in the 1970s through the illegal subdivision of a cattle-farming *hacienda*, the *barrio* now has 800 residents, many of whom are migrants from the countryside. These residents have a better economic status than the average resident of the *barrios* of Quito and are therefore, in principle, less restricted in their spatial mobility.

Research results

A large number of findings have emerged from this study. The creativity and self-initiative shown by the residents of Mena del Hierro in improving their environment and in organizing their daily social and economic lives makes them a remarkable group. Over years of self-help work, the residents have built a fresh water supply and distribution system which they administer independently of municipal authorities. This service has earned considerable revenues for the *barrio* and has financed further improvements to local infrastructure. The residents have also developed a wealth of informal economic activities in the *barrio*. Typically, private land plots are used for the multiple purposes of housing, production, and commerce. A notable feature of the *barrio* is its high degree of spontaneous social organization. More than 60 local networks have been developed through the residents' own initiative. These networks satisfy material and non-material needs, ranging from economic survival and *barrio* improvement to moral support and social respect. This social organization is based on the principles of neighbourliness, common interest, kinship and *paisanaje* (origin from the same region). Kinship is a central feature of the social system. It permeates all levels of community life from private to public. The density of kinship networks is astonishing, with more than 50% of households having immediate kinship ties with other households in the *barrio*. Kin groups live in spatial clusters which have developed in the majority of the *barrio's* lots over the years. Indeed, the large size of lots in Mena del Hierro has been a crucial factor which has allowed the current density of kinship networks to develop. Social networks in the *barrio* have "visible" and "invisible" dimensions. Visible networks operate at the public level and *barrio* men are their main protagonists. Invisible networks, in contrast, belong to the private realm of community life and their vitality results from the daily activities of *barrio* women.

Despite the complexity of social networks in the *barrio*, the social life of residents is not confined to the *barrio* borders. In fact, the regular social activity of residents has a threefold geographical configuration: the *barrio*, the vicinity within walking distance, and the countryside. As far as frequency of use is concerned, the *barrio* is without doubt the preferred location of residents for their social activity. In contrast, the city of Quito has marginal importance.

The spatial behaviour of *barrio* residents with regard to social activity is explained by the nature of their social networks. Residents confine their spatial movements to the places where their social networks operate. Besides the networks in the *barrio*, residents also have social ties with grassroots organizations in the neighbouring *barrios* of Mena del Hierro. Networks in this area offer residents, particularly young people, the possibility of public recognition and social mobility. Residents also sustain social links with countryside networks of kinship and commercial exchange. These urban-rural links are an important part of the economy of both urban and rural residents and involve mutually beneficial exchange of goods and services. Urban-rural links also enable network members to maintain and further develop traditional forms of religion and sports.

Despite the poor quality of the neighbourhood's infrastructure, the residents of Mena del Hierro describe their *barrio* as a "very nice place" which "plays a crucial role in their personal lives". Indeed, residents experience a sense of social and spatial belonging to their *barrio*, which can be characterized as sense of place. But this sense of place is not exclusively limited to *barrio* space. Like the patterns of social activity, it also encompasses the vicinity and the countryside. Belonging to this triangle of social worlds bestows a positive sense to the lives of residents and explains the social health that characterizes the *barrio*. Despite problems of irregular income and unemployment, especially among the youth, there is no evidence of major problems of drugs, violence or crime.

Conclusions

1. Conclusions on Geographical Approach. Traditional urban geography has used mainly economic models to explain patterns of spatial choice in the cities. Geographical studies of Latin American urbanization have also used a mainly economic approach. The findings of this thesis, however, argue against the dominance of economic factors as determinants of spatial behaviour and choice. The ultimate decisions of *barrio* residents regarding spatial choice are motivated dominantly by social considerations and less by economics. The improved economic situation of residents allows them to be spatially mobile within the city for social and shopping activities. Nevertheless, they choose nearby locations to conduct these activities because they value the quality of their social networks. Consequently, geographical models invoking the friction of distance and viewing the motives of spatial behaviour as purely economic require reevaluation in their application to *barrios*. This case study has thus shown that a social approach to the geographical study of Latin American urbanization is urgently needed.

Social geography studies which examine sense of place and social space in the cities have been very much influenced by semiotic, behavioural and routine activity approaches. The findings of this thesis have revealed three areas of shortcomings in these approaches. 1) Whereas semiotics postulates that urban residents develop a sense of identity with places in the city on the basis of the visual quality of the physical environment, this study shows that it is the quality of the social environment and not that of the physical environment which matters for the sense of place felt by residents. 2) Behavioural studies have approached the study of spatial behaviour by focusing on the individual and often by using a psychological framework of explanation. This approach is quite inadequate for the cultural context of *barrios*. Residents of the *barrio* are highly sociable people whose daily lives are spent in groups, not as individuals. The explanation for their spatial behaviour is principally sociological and not psychological. 3) Routine activity studies have seen high frequency of social interaction between individuals as the prerequisite for the emergence of social space. This study has shown that, although *barrio* residents do not have a high frequency of interaction with their relatives and friends in the countryside, this interaction constitutes a valuable social space in their personal lives. Obviously, the quality of social networks is what matters and not the frequency of interaction. Social geography therefore needs to give increased attention to the characteristics of urban residents' social networks as a crucial element in the study of sense of place and social space in the cities.

2. Methodological conclusions. The choice of a single, detailed case study has proven invaluable for the study of daily patterns of socio-spatial behaviour. Discovering the actual extent and characteristics of residents' social networks is possible only through a participant observation study. Whereas participatory research and participant observation are powerful methods in providing insight into daily patterns of social interaction, they are complex and lengthy undertakings. The quantitative method of social cartography is, in contrast, limited in providing research insight. Social cartography provides numerical support for facts and trends that are already qualitatively obvious to the researcher after having been immersed in the field,

but it does not allow for discoveries on the workings of social networks. It does, however, produce very useful statistics for planning recreational facilities according to the specific needs and cultural characteristics of individual social groups.

The "bottom-up" methodology developed in this study is of general applicability to studies of the sociospatial characteristics of daily life in Latin American *barrios*. Given the high social stakes in the evolving *barrio* environment, it is important that many more case studies be conducted along the lines of the present investigation – based on participant observation, interviews regarding the perceptions of locals and spatial analysis of social networks – in order to discern the overall patterns of sociospatial behaviour in the *barrios* of Quito, and elsewhere.

3. Planning conclusions. Segregation of land use has been a widespread aim of "zoning" efforts by Latin American municipal planners. Production and commercial activities are kept separate from housing. Furthermore, social and recreational facilities tend to be centralized in city sectors which usually are not within walking distance from residential neighbourhoods. As the results of this thesis show, such aims are at odds with the cultural practices and economic needs of *barrio* residents. The economic survival of *barrio* residents hinges on their capacity to mix housing, agriculture and economic businesses on the same properties, and the spatial concentration of these activities reinforces the social networks and hence communal stability. The practice of mixed land use needs to be encouraged rather than outlawed. The spatial movements of residents, during a large part of their daily urban activities, are confined to an area within a 1.5 km radius of their *barrio*, the area where their social networks operate. Thus, shopping, social and recreational facilities intended for *barrio* residents need to be planned at the micro-scale of neighbourhoods and not at the macro-scale of city sectors.

The residents of the *barrio* have demonstrated great management capacity in building and administering their own fresh water supply. However, the municipality has failed to recognize these abilities: its recent moves to install a new supply system were initiated without consulting the *barrio's* residents. Such interventions not only disregard the many years of self-help work in which the residents' invested their time and money, but it also undermines the social organization of the *barrio* by removing a crucial integrating mechanism and a focus of collective pride. Municipal authorities urgently need to implement collaborative means of managing urban resources; the future social stability of the *barrios* of Quito is at stake.

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The initial inspiration for this study stems from my work in the *barrios* of Bogota, from my experience as a city planner for the city of Bogota, from the anthropological studies of my sister Pilar Riaño in the *barrios* of Bogota, and from the social geography lectures by Vincent Berdoulay and Anne Buttmer at the Geography Department of the University of Ottawa.

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As in most research projects involving field work with human subjects and the use of multidisciplinary techniques, the process of research design and data collection for this thesis was a struggle. The fact that (for family reasons) data analysis and thesis writing had to be carried out in Berne, Switzerland, thousands of kilometres away from the field area and from the University in Ottawa, further complicated things. However, my husband, Larryn Diamond, provided me with vital moral support and encouragement to get through this journey. Further, he assisted me with technical problems of field methods, statistical analysis, computer software and drafting, and logical writing. Discussions with him have helped me clarify my ideas at all stages of this thesis. Fruitful discussions with Villia Jeffremovas and Pilar Riaño helped me gain insight into the data collected.

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INTRODUCTION

The social geography of *barrios populares*: a poorly known phenomenon

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Third World nations are becoming increasingly urban. Over the last three to four decades, growth in many Third World cities has been so rapid that the equivalent of an entire new city has appeared every ten to fifteen years (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). The dominant and certainly most problematic features of this urbanization are the vast illegal settlements built by low-income populations on the city peripheries. Typically the land which they occupy was invaded by their residents or subdivided in contravention of official planning regulations. As a consequence, housing is poor and infrastructure is non-existent or at best inadequate. The daily life of the inhabitants of these massive agglomerations consists of a perpetual struggle against poverty and social exclusion, often in extremely unhealthy environments. The magnitude of the problem faced by planners in attempting to improve this situation is staggering. It is estimated that between 30 and 60% of people in Third World cities live in illegal settlements (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). As such, the peripheral illegal settlement is the most important phenomenon on the Third World urban scene.

In Latin America, illegal urban settlements are no less problematic than in other regions of the "South". Commonly known as *barrios populares*, the peripheral settlements dramatically expanded in the 1960s and 1970s as rural immigrants flooded into the cities in search of new economic and social opportunities. The everyday problems faced by the inhabitants of the *barrios* are typical of the world-wide malaise: to those of poverty, social exclusion, and pollution listed above, political manipulation, lack of representation, and corruption may be added as characteristic of the Latin American situation. The illegal status of the settlements has forced many residents to resort to self-help in order to improve their living environments. However, many improvements also result from the actions of local politicians who exploit the material scarcity in the so-called "popular sector" to their own political benefit. This practice, known as *clientelismo*, consists of granting infrastructure "benefits" to residents of *barrios* in exchange for votes at election time. Illegality is not a permanent feature of these settlements. History shows that most *barrios* are legalized with time, usually when it becomes politically convenient for the city governing authorities.

Latin American *barrios* share many common features. The universal economic characteristic is a lack of stable income. Nevertheless, *barrios* are surprisingly diverse with respect to the socioeconomic status of their residents, the range spreading from desperately poor to almost middle-class. The universal social characteristic of *barrios populares* is their specific lifestyle. Their local social flavour distinguishes them markedly from other urban areas in the city, particularly from high-income neighbourhoods. Within high-income neighbourhoods, for example, residents lead individualistic lives and their social contact takes place mostly in distant and exclusive settings such as clubs. Residents of *barrios*, in contrast, lead a collective lifestyle based on neighbourhood-centred networks of mutual help and friendship (Riaño, Y., 1988a and b).

For years, city planners in Latin America have been attempting to improve the livability of *barrios populares*. However, despite the fact that high-income and low-income groups in Latin America use the city in different ways, traditional urban planning has been almost exclusively tailored towards the lifestyle of the high-income groups. Planning practices have been based on North American paradigms which suit the spatial practices of the wealthy. Such paradigms are arbitrarily imposed on residents of *barrios populares* from Tijuana to Cochabamba. This planning practice has arisen from two trends: on the one hand, the general aspiration of "modernizing" Latin America has been to copy the North American example; on the other hand, academics have not been successful in communicating to planners the social consequences of such inappropriate action, in part because of a lack of common language but also because academic analyses have failed to explain the phenomena adequately.

Pertinent research in *barrios populares* has covered a variety of fields including social, economic, political, cultural and infrastructural aspects (Riaño Y., 1989). The majority of studies have focused on self-help housing (e.g. Moser, 1982; Ward, 1982) and on the social cohesion of *barrio* residents as mechanisms of: (a) improving the infrastructure of the *barrios*; (b) coping with life in the cities, and (c) social change and democratic participation (e.g. Adler de Lomnitz, 1975; Logan, 1981; Lobo, 1982; Vargas, 1986; Gilbert and Ward, 1984a, 1984b; Pérez Saínz and Ribadeneira, 1987; Altamirano, 1988; Norris, 1988). Most of these studies, however, do not address the spatial component of *barrio* residents' daily social behaviour. Also, much of the information generated by these studies is perceived as too abstract and theoretical for planners to gain practical insight. Geographers working in Latin American cities have directed most of their effort to understanding the economic aspects of urbanization. Studies have involved city-wide analyses of the morphology of residential structure (e.g. Turner and Amato, in Burgess, 1981), the spatial structure of land use (e.g. Griffin and Ford, 1980), the spatial distribution of the informal sector of the economy (e.g. Vasconcelos, 1985) and the patterns of land-use segregation (Gilbert and Ward, 1988).

Collectively, the social and economic investigations have contributed greatly to the understanding of broad patterns of social organization and spatial economic distribution. Nevertheless, they fail to explain completely the origin and nature of the spatial dimension of daily social behaviour of city residents, especially in the *barrios*. The obvious differences in spatial behaviour between high- and low-income sectors have been explained from an economic viewpoint as resulting from the constraints on mobility which depend on income levels. However, there is much evidence which suggests that in reality these differences arise from contrasting patterns of social interaction, not from economic factors. For example, the simple fact that many *barrio* residents who become relatively wealthy choose to stay in their *barrio* instead of moving out to wealthy but socially sterile high-income neighbourhoods argues against the purely economic viewpoint (Riaño Y., 1988b).

Clearly, a geographical understanding of daily patterns of social interaction is crucial to comprehend and predict spatial behaviour and choice in Latin American cities. Indeed it is the practical nature of daily life, rather than the abstract nature of economic organization, that has become the preferred factor in explaining the social phenomena (Thrift, 1983; Agnew et al., 1984). Research questions regarding the spatial extent of social activity and the social reasons for spatial behaviour have not been addressed so far. Also, despite the internal socioeconomic variability of *barrios*, most sociological studies have focused on the lowest-level *barrios*. Little is known about the characteristics of social life in middle- and upper-level *barrios*. It is an appalling fact that the reality of daily life of between 25 and 50% of urban residents in Latin America is largely unknown to the planners responsible for improving their environment.

In attempting to redress this deficiency, the present thesis is based on the premise that the spatial element of daily social behaviour, essentially geographic in nature, is the missing link in explaining the urban phenomenon of *barrios populares*, and in communicating this understanding in a practically tangible form to urban planners. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to contribute to filling the gaps in knowledge outlined above, through a geographical examination of the daily social interaction patterns of *barrio* residents.

APPROACH OF STUDY

The task of collecting sufficient data to generalize on the geographical patterns of daily social interaction in *barrios populares* is enormous. On the one hand it requires the detailed observations of daily routines of specific social networks in individual *barrios* or parts of *barrios*; on the other hand it requires synthesising the common threads of spatial behaviour in *barrios* spread throughout individual cities and throughout Latin America. Of these two

extremes in scale of investigation the former is indispensable for any level of understanding of social behaviour in space. The starting point for investigation must be within individual *barrios* at the social level of circles of friends, kin groups, neighbours, and community groups, as advocated for urban geographic studies in general by Matore (1966), Bachelard (1966), Buttner (1972), Moles and Rohmer (1972), Samuels (1978), Knox (1982), Ley (1983), and Agnew et al. (1984). Until such detailed knowledge is available, broad investigations of entire cities will not be successful in understanding daily social interaction patterns of the residents of peripheral areas. As the literature on low-income settlements shows (e.g. Degregori et al., 1987), the city as a whole is often not even a socially meaningful unit for *barrio* residents.

Choice of Case Study

Given the paucity of studies that specifically address spatial behaviour in *barrios*, the choice of scale for the present thesis is obvious. In order to obtain the necessary detail, this thesis focuses almost exclusively on one case study of a low-income *barrio*. The choice of exactly which *barrio* to investigate was based on considerations of the field methods to be used (see below). Potentially the most difficult of these to apply effectively is participant observation, in which the researcher must gain access to resident behavioural patterns at a very familiar level. To improve my chances of becoming accepted in a *barrio* community, I considered as candidates only host cities in the Andean sphere, in which insight from my own practical experience and cultural background promised to be of advantage (Riaño Y., 1988a). Logistical considerations then reduced the choice to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, where support was available from the Centro de Investigaciones Urbanas (CIUDAD). Finally, the *barrio* of Mena del Hierro, in the northwest of Quito, was selected because permission to conduct a case study was granted by a local self-help organization (see details in Chapter I).

In the future, the elaboration of several studies similar to the one reported herein should permit generalizations at the city and national scales.

Variables of Study

Having defined the scope and location of the problem, attention is now turned to the choice of variables for observation which will permit elucidation of the geographical patterns of social interaction of Mena del Hierro's residents. Four variables have been chosen for this purpose: (1) the spatial behaviour of residents during daily social activity; (2) the public and private social networks of residents; (3) the spatial preferences of residents for social

activity and (4) the residents' personal images of their living environment. A discussion of individual variables is presented below including a review of pertinent literature.

(1) Spatial Behaviour during Social Activity

Patterns of social interaction will be examined herein through the observation of residents' spatial behaviour during daily social activity. For the practical purposes of this study, social activity is taken to include any activity in which the individual freely chooses to be in the company of others (e.g. meeting family or friends, playing sports, participating in religious services, etc.). Obligatory activities such as work and study are specifically excluded from this definition. Although shopping could be viewed as an obligatory activity it will be included in the study of social activities. In many societies, and particularly for women, shopping is not merely an obligation. It is commonly the only chance to make social contact with others outside the endless routine of housework.

(2) Social networks

The daily spatial behaviour of individuals in the city has received much attention from social geographers as part of the stream known as behavioural geography. Two main approaches have dominated this field: semiotics, the study of the individual's positive or negative perceptions of the built environment (Lynch, 1959) and proxemics, the study of personal distance between individuals (Hall, 1969). Other behavioural studies have been concerned with the cognitive processes by which individuals form a specific perception of their environment (Sitwell et al., 1986). Such studies have several shortcomings with respect to the present needs: they focus largely on the individual instead of on the social group. Much more attention is given to the perception of the built environment than to the perception of the social environment. Behavioural geography, with its emphasis on the individual, assigns too much importance to psychology as means of analysis, and essentially ignores the sociological dimension that is of prime importance here.

Although studies by sociologists on social life and spatial use have examined the group, rather than the individual (Gans, 1968; Jacobs, 1970), these studies lack a geographical analysis of spatial behaviour and so are inappropriate for the proposed investigation. However, recent approaches by geographers have added the sociological dimension to the study of spatial behaviour, leading to the emergence of the concept of social space (Buttimer, 1972). According to this geographical treatment, a spatial setting is initially void of any meaning for people but as a result of repeated social interaction it acquires a special meaning for its users and becomes a place of social reference, i.e. a social space. While the new study

of social space has certainly advanced the field of behavioural geography, it has so far given scant attention to the concept of social networks.

Social networks are the key to exploring the social interaction patterns of *barrio* residents. Studies on *barrios* elsewhere in Latin America have shown that social networks, comprising kin, neighbours and friends, are crucial for the adaptation of residents to the cities and for their material survival (Lomnitz, 1977; Logan, 1981; Lobo, 1982; Riaño-Alcalá P., 1986; Hardy, 1987; Pérez Saínz and Ribadeneira, 1987; Riaño Y., 1988a). In the present thesis the characteristics of residents' public and private social networks will be examined as a powerful means of understanding their daily patterns of social interaction and spatial behaviour.

(3) Spatial preferences for social activity

Locational choices and specific reasons for these choices have traditionally been a central concern of urban geography. This theme has been dominantly approached from an economic perspective. Thus, the main explanatory patterns of locational choices are geographical distance and accessibility, measured by cost of transportation (Beguin, 1984). Economic models, however, have been increasingly criticized for their exclusive reliance on a narrow set of factors to explain spatial preferences. For many geographers, sociocultural factors are emerging as the determining forces of locational choices. Social distance, social prestige, cultural values, quality of life and lifestyle similarities have been shown to be important in influencing spatial choices (Firey, 1945; Whyte, 1955; Jones, 1960; Cooper, 1971; Berry and Cohen, 1973; Abler, 1974; Ley, 1983).

Most economic models have concentrated on industrial location and have neglected the urban activities of residents of the city. However, some important exceptions to this trend include the studies by Anderson (1974), Chapin (1974), Hågerstrand (1974), Pred (1981), and Stutz (1976). Studies of social space have examined the spatial orbits of social and urban service activities of residents of the cities (Chombart de Lauwe, 1960; Buttimer, 1972). Whereas these studies have significantly advanced our understanding of daily urban activities, they still fall short from an interpretative point of view by not enquiring into the specific motivations behind the spatial behaviour and choice of individuals.

This thesis attempts to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of spatial choice in the city by documenting the spatial preferences of *barrio* residents for daily social activity. An effort will be made to establish the relative role of social and economic factors in influencing their spatial behaviour and choice.

(4) Personal images of the living environment

The personal images that individuals have of the environment in which they live have an influence on their spatial behaviour. Specific spaces in the cities are preferred or avoided according to the positive or negative perceptions that individuals have of such spaces. In this study, the personal images that residents have of their living environment will be examined as an additional factor influencing their spatial behaviour in the city.

In analytical terms, the phenomenon of the perceptions of individuals is intimately linked to the concepts of sense of community and sense of place. Definitions of these two concepts vary in the literature. Calhoun (in Thrift, 1983) defines sense of community as a "matter of long-term cooperation". Buttimer (1976:283) associates sense of place with "the coincidence of social and spatial identification within a region..". Further, Buttimer (1980:167) considers sense of place as a fundamental concept of enquiry when analysing the social and personal well-being of individuals: "people's sense of both personal and cultural identity is intimately bound up with place identity. Loss of home or 'losing one's place' may often trigger an identity crisis".

Few studies on Latin American *barrios* have explicitly studied how a sense of community and of place emerges among residents of *barrios populares*. This thesis will examine if such a sense exists, and what it consists of for the *barrio* residents. The initial hypothesis of this thesis is that social networks, social activity and the individual's perceptions of the living environment are crucial in explaining the presence or absence of a sense of place.

Demographic, Spatial and Temporal Foci of Study

With the variables of study defined above, the spatial, temporal and demographic limits for the examination of the patterns of social interaction of the *barrio* residents are now outlined. A discussion of each individual aspect is presented below including a review of the literature.

(1) Demographic groups of study

The spatial behaviour of individuals varies considerably according to their age and gender. For example, in many societies the presence of women in public space is practically prohibited. The needs and possibilities to socialize in public also change according to life cycles. Thus, attention will be devoted in this thesis to discriminating the specific spatial

patterns of social behaviour of six demographic groups in the *barrio* including male and female children, youths and adults.

(2) Spaces for study

The spatial focus of inquiry for the study of residents' spatial behaviour is not only within the *barrio* boundaries, but it also includes spaces elsewhere where residents are socially active. Within the *barrio*, both public and private spaces will be examined in order to understand the "visible" (public) and "invisible" (private) dimensions of the residents' social behaviour.

Outdoor space will be a major element in the study of residents' public social activity within the neighbourhood. In the *barrios* of Latin America, public outdoor space has been argued to be the main material support for the way of life of the residents (Ferreira dos Santos et al., 1981). Indeed for the populations in the *barrios*, public outdoor space seems to be a more important means of social identification than class or ethnicity (Riaño-Alcalá P., 1990). The present study will examine the relative importance of public outdoor space as specific urban setting for the social activities of the *barrio* residents.

(3) Temporal Definitions

This study endeavours to understand the daily patterns of sociospatial behaviour of *barrio* residents. Geographers have hitherto been interested mostly in routine activities (e.g. Chapin, 1974; Hågerstrand, 1974). Although their studies have contributed greatly to our understanding of the spatial and temporal characteristics of weekly routines, they lack a comprehensive analysis of the less frequent but still regular activities of urban populations. I argue here that the routine daily life of urban groups is made of a variety of activities which occur regularly on weekly, monthly, and yearly bases. Monthly and yearly activities, such as festivities, have been neglected by geographers studying urban populations. Festivities have been shown to carry particular social and existential significance for both the poor and wealthy in Latin America (Campaña, 1991). An approach to daily life studies which includes a comprehensive understanding of weekly, monthly and yearly activities is thus urgently needed.

For the purposes of this study, daily life will be defined as the practical and regular activities which a specific urban group carries out throughout the year. Regular activities are defined as: (a) the frequent activities which occur on a weekly basis (such as the usual working day and the usual weekend); and (b) the less frequent activities which occur on a monthly to a yearly basis (such as periodical days of celebration). These two types of

activities will be defined here as (a) "everyday" activities and as (b) "festive" activities. In this thesis, an examination will be made of the residents' daily social and spatial behaviour during both everyday and festive times of the year.

Methodological Approach

The following section outlines the conceptual and philosophical approaches which have been followed in the present study to gather field data. Practical details are given in Chapter I (Methodology).

Participatory Research

Traditional geographical methods of distant observation have been increasingly criticized in the literature for their inability to provide an "insider" understanding of the reality under observation. Ley (1983) maintains that it is necessary to use methods that examine the city close up – not from the distant perspective of maps, air photographs, and census data, but rather from the ground-level by sharing and observing the dynamics of everyday life. Furthermore, traditional academic research has been criticized lately for its lack of concrete commitment to the phenomena under study. The critics, especially numerous among Latin American scholars, emphasize a philosophical conviction to conduct "socially responsible" research which empowers the studied subjects rather than simply uses them as research objects (Coraggio and Torres, 1991). In this context, "empowerment" means reinforcing the studied group's awareness of the quality of social life they have developed and rendering them more able to take educated decisions on matters relating to themselves and to the self-management of their living environment.

"Participatory research", also called "action-research", has emerged as the approach which combines these dual concerns of achieving a deeper understanding of reality and of empowering the studied population. For the researcher, this approach requires becoming integrated in the community under study, and requires collaboration with locals in the research process. In this thesis project, participatory research has been the main method applied in the field. Participatory research was carried out through a video and photography workshop set with a group of youths in the *barrio*. This workshop was the doorway to integration in the community and to involvement of the locals in the research process. The discussions and videos produced by this workshop contributed towards their social empowerment as defined above.

Methods of Study

The methods used for this study are multidisciplinary and combine qualitative and quantitative techniques. They include participant observation, structured surveys, social cartography, mental maps, photography and videotaping.

As explained above, the social activity of *barrio* residents has "visible" (public) and "invisible" (private) dimensions. The visible dimension can be readily observed in public settings and can be recorded through traditional methods of distant observation such as maps, notes or photographs. The invisible activities, however, which are carried out in more or less private settings, must be documented through the ethnographic method of participant observation, i.e. by the physical presence of the researcher in the private as well as public settings and by participation in the activities that take place in such settings (Bernard, 1987). In this thesis, methods of distant observation, mental mapping and structured interviews have been combined with the method of participant observation in order to apprehend the dual visible and invisible dimensions of social life. Table 1 presents the principal methods used to collect data for each one of the variables examined. Although participant observation was not formally used in every case as the main method of data collection, it was used in all cases as a complementary method to obtain information and useful insight.

Table 1. Principal methods used for data collection

Variables of Study	Participant Observation	Structured Interviews	Social Cartography	Mental Maps	Video / Photography
(1) Social Activities					
"Visible" Activities		•	•		•
"Invisible" Activities	•				
(2) Social Networks					
"Visible" Networks	•		•	•	
"Invisible" Networks	•		•	•	
(3) Spatial Preferences		•			
(4) Personal Images		•		•	

While the above methods are clear in principle, it turns out that each application in the field requires specific tailoring to local conditions and research requirements. In the present case

study, considerable effort had to be invested in developing a practical implementation of these principles, especially with respect to participant observation and social cartography.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The foregoing discussion of problems in the urban social geography of *barrios populares*, and of the preferred investigative emphasis and approach, leads to the definition of the following set of general objectives for the present research project:

- 1) To develop and test a methodology that defines and explains, from the bottom-up, the geography of daily social interaction in the peripheral *barrios* of Quito
- 2) To provide an integrated understanding of social life in the *barrios* by using a multidisciplinary approach which combines qualitative and quantitative techniques of study
- 3) To empower residents through the development of this research.
- 4) To contribute to a dialogue between social scientists and planners on the problem of the livability of Quito's *barrios*

As a practical means to attain these general objectives, the following specific aims have been identified and realized in this study:

- 1) To define the characteristics of "visible" and "invisible" social networks of the *barrio* residents
- 2) To ascertain the geographical basis for the social activities of residents' networks and the relative importance of individual settings for these activities
- 3) To investigate the social behaviour of residents in public outdoor space of the *barrio* during everyday and festive times
- 4) To examine the characteristics of the residents' sense of community and sense of place
- 5) To motivate residents to participate in data collection and interpretation, and to provide them with a lasting product of their collaboration, in terms of true empowerment
- 6) To formulate planning recommendations for improving the livability of *barrios populares* in particular and of urban areas in general

Thus the results of this investigation are aimed at the academic community and at all parties involved in the urban management of *barrios*, from grassroots organizations to municipal planners.

THESIS CONTENTS

This thesis is organized into ten chapters. Chapter I describes the practical methods used in this investigation and assesses their effectiveness and limitations. Also, the results of a practical attempt to empower residents through participatory research are reported and evaluated.

Chapters II, III and IV provide a geographical context for the subsequent examination of social spatial behaviour. Chapter II places the case study of *barrio* Mena del Hierro into a city-wide context. It presents an historical overview of the development of peripheral *barrios* in Quito and of their socioeconomic and physical characteristics. The main aim of the chapter is to establish the representativeness of Mena del Hierro with respect to other *barrios* in the city.

Chapter III presents original data on the historical, spatial and sociodemographic characteristics of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. The chapter aims to ascertain to what extent the spatial and demographic structure of the *barrio* facilitates or hinders social contact between its residents.

Chapter IV introduces the economic characteristics of the *barrio's* residents. The object is to assess the likely influence of the residents' economic situation on the extent of their social contacts.

Chapter V deals with the social networks of the *barrio's* residents. Using the qualitative ethnographic method of participant observation, the chapter analyses the organization, activities and dynamics of the residents' "visible" and "invisible" social networks. The spatial structure of the residents' networks is displayed using the method of social cartography. The combined methods of participant observation, mental maps and social cartography has permitted to establish the social boundaries of the community *barrio* Mena del Hierro as opposed to the official administrative boundaries. Further, the emergence, characteristics, and stability of a sense of community and a sense of place among the residents of Mena del Hierro are examined.

Chapters VI, VII and VIII document the spatial behaviour of residents in the *barrio* and explore the role of outdoor space in public social activity. Chapter VI provides an historical description of the residents' struggle to be able to make use of public outdoor space for their social activity. The chapter shows the ability of residents to create and recreate public space in the *barrio* despite major constraints. Based on the method of social cartography, Chapter VII analyses the dynamics of appropriating public outdoor space by different age and gender groups. Chapter VIII examines the spatial behaviour of residents during times of

public festivities and analyzes the role of individual gender and age groups in their organization and performance.

Chapter IX draws on structured interviews with residents to explore their perceptions of their neighbourhood, their spatial preferences for social activities, their specific reasons for spatial choice, and the frequency of their activities.

Chapter X presents general conclusions for the specific themes presented in Chapters I-IX.

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CHAPTER I

FIELD METHODOLOGY

Reality and compromise in the participatory approach

INTRODUCTION

Field work for this thesis project was carried out in Quito over a period of eighteen months, between January-October 1991 and January-August 1992. The work was undertaken with the active collaboration of the *Centro de Investigaciones Urbanas, CIUDAD*¹, the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente de Quito*² (FBNQ), the S-20 youth group³, and the residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. The principal methodological approach used for the field work was participatory research (see discussion and justification in the preceding chapter). Data was collected using various methods from the disciplines of anthropology, geography, sociology and communication. These methods include participant observation, mental maps, social cartography, structured surveys, photography and videotaping.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, the details of field methods are described as a foundation for the following chapters in which the results are presented and interpreted; second, the methods of participatory approach and social cartography are evaluated on the basis of field experiences. This evaluation contributes to the development of a field methodology for urban social geography in *barrios populares*, and is set in terms of the stated objectives of this study (see preceding chapter), namely:

- 1) To develop and test a methodology that defines and explains, from the bottom-up, the geography of daily social interaction in the peripheral *barrios* of Quito
- 2) To gain an integrated understanding of daily patterns by combining qualitative and quantitative techniques of study.
- 3) To empower residents through the participatory approach
- 4) To contribute to a dialogue between social scientists and planners on the problem of the livability of *barrios* in Quito

The chapter concludes with a set of guidelines and recommendations for future researchers

¹ CIUDAD is a private Ecuadorian institution for urban research, based in Quito.

² The Federation is a grassroots organization which represents the *barrios* in the northwest of Quito for the purposes of improving physical infrastructure and promoting social and cultural activities.

³ The S-20 group is an informal organization of youths in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro with the aims of promoting recreational and social activities for the community.

who consider using the participatory approach.

SELECTION OF A BARRIO FOR INVESTIGATION: ACADEMIC ASPIRATIONS VERSUS FIELD REALITIES

As in all projects involving field work, compromises must be made between well planned academic aims and the situation confronted in the field. This is especially true for participatory research. Participatory research should be viewed as something akin to a business contract; it requires give and take on both sides to yield results. In practice this often means modifying academic goals. Similarly to a business contract, participatory research also requires stating clearly at the outset the intent and expected profit of the research for both parties, and the contractual relationship must be observed carefully during its execution. In the process of learning these game rules I encountered many obstacles in my field work. These experiences are reported below as a preface to the description of methods employed.

At the beginning of my field campaign I intended to make a comparative study of social interaction patterns in two *barrios*, as a function of their different urban histories. Thus, I identified several candidate *barrios* in Quito which seemed to be appropriate for case studies. I subsequently ranked these potential cases in order of preference according to how much field data was already available in the literature or in unpublished reports. For obvious reasons, participatory research cannot be conducted without the acceptance of the residents of the subject *barrios*. I therefore proposed to the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente* to work in the *barrios* I had selected as ideal case studies. However, the academic criteria I had used to select the *barrios* did not include the willingness of residents to be object of "yet another study". The leaders of the Federation warned me that the residents of the *barrios* I had selected were particularly wary of outsiders doing research in their communities. The residents felt that, while much had been taken from them in the past by numerous researchers, little had been given in return.

As a result of these considerations, and of a good deal of heated bargaining involving members of CIUDAD as local arbitrators, the leaders of the Federation advised me to conduct my research in the *barrios* of Mena del Hierro and adjacent San Rafael, where practically no researchers had been previously active. Additionally, an active group of youths (S-20) existed in Mena del Hierro, who would most probably take part in a study such as I had proposed.

The choice of San Rafael and Mena del Hierro unfortunately meant that little socioeconomic and cartographic data was already available for the study and so it was necessary for me to collect essentially all the basic field data, including surveying for the field maps. Also, after

working for some time in the two *barrios* it became apparent that a participant observation study was not feasible in San Rafael, at least in the time available for my field work. The residents of San Rafael, largely Andean Indian ethnics, are by nature and by culture much more closed towards outsiders than the sociable *mestizo* immigrants from the countryside who populate neighbouring Mena del Hierro. After several months of field work I felt well accepted in Mena del Hierro but still far from becoming a participant observer in San Rafael. Despite the fact that I had collected much field data on San Rafael using distant observation methods (social- and land-use mapping), I eventually abandoned the idea of a comparative study with Mena del Hierro, since the methodological basis for comparison would not be equivalent. The results presented in the following chapters of this thesis thus pertain exclusively to Mena del Hierro.

FIELD METHODS

This section summarizes the various methods used to gather raw data in the *barrio* ("primary data") and to compile processed data in the literature and in unpublished reports ("secondary data").

Methods of Primary Data Collection

(1) Participatory research and participatory video production

Video production was chosen as the main means of participatory research. The developmental dimension of participatory videos has increasingly interested theorists, practitioners and grassroots organizations who see it as a suitable means "to empower the powerless" (Riaño-Alcalá P., 1990; Tomaselli, 1989). Community-made videos, for example, have proved to have several positive effects, including drawing the community together by strengthening community networks; fostering collective decision-making; recovering and documenting local histories; increasing the social and personal confidence of individuals; and serving as a means to communicate local needs to a wider public.

At the start of my field work I set up a small-format video and photography workshop with members of the S-20 youth group (Figs. 1-1 and 1-2). None of the group members had previously used single-lens reflex- or video-camera equipment. The workshop was intended to serve several purposes: (a) to assist my integration into the community; (b) to provide me with first-hand experience and personal understanding of the reality I wished to observe; (c) to allow collaborating with youths in the research process and (d) to serve as a developmental project with potential gains for the group members.



Figure 1-1 Members of the participatory video and photography workshop established for this research project in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. From left to right, and from top to bottom: Marta Quishpe, Laureano Nastul, Karina León, Wilson Solís, Oswaldo Gallegos, Marcelo Cargua, Carmita Rubio, Yvonne Riaño, and Raúl Solís. Group members are at the community sports field examining an album of the photos produced by the workshop. (Photo: Pablo Cañar, 1992)



Figure 1-2 Members of the video workshop filming (*above*: Pablo Cañar) and proudly posing for the camera (*below*: Pablo Cañar and William Rosales) during the *barrio*'s public celebration of Mothers' Day. (*Photos*: Yvonne Riaño, 1991)



(2) Participant Observation

The video workshop with the S-20 group was a gateway for me to develop friendships and contacts with many members of Mena del Hierro's community. With time I carried out dozens of informal conversations with residents on topics relevant to my research. I systematically memorized the main points of these conversations and later recorded them in a field notebook along with personal observations. Having become accepted by the community in this way I was also able to carry out several semi-structured, open-ended interviews with key people in the *barrio*, including two presidents, several pioneers residents, local doctors, leaders of local women's-, sports- and youth-organizations, promoters of local festivities, and a nephew of the former owner of the *hacienda* land on which the *barrio* was built. Some of these interviews were recorded on videotape.

(3) Field assistant from the studied community

A young male resident of Mena del Hierro (Laureano Nastul), who was employed part-time by the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente*, agreed to be my paid field assistant in the *barrio*. I chose a person from the local community for this task in order to complement my own observations as a participant, to ensure some effectiveness in producing videos in the workshop, and to gain direct insider knowledge of the internal dynamics of the community. Fortunately, Laureano Nastul proved to be an invaluable source of information, and a true friend.

(4) Collecting mental maps

This tool was used as a means of assessing the residents' perceptions of the social boundaries of the *barrio*, as opposed to the administrative boundaries visible on cadastral maps. These social boundaries were taken to define the area of study within Mena del Hierro (see discussion in Chapter III).

(5) Social cartography of spatial behaviour and social networks

Social cartography is the term given in this thesis to the technique of mapping the social behaviour of the *barrio*'s residents in outdoor space, and of mapping the spatial structure of social networks in the *barrio*. Mapping social behaviour consists of recording the location and activities of individual residents in a specific setting at a specific time. Individual residents are differentiated by sex and age. This technique was employed to produce a detailed record of the everyday behaviour of residents in public outdoor spaces. Ten field assistants were trained in the necessary observation and recording skills and tested in a half-day practice session. The assistants were then stationed at the key street areas and sports fields selected for cartography. Each assistant was given numerous duplicates of a

detailed base map of their particular site. The spatial location, sex, age, and activities of *barrio* residents were then recorded on these maps at ten-minute intervals. Continuous series of such "snap-shots" of the residents' spatial behaviour were recorded for several entire days, including work- and weekend-days. In total, approximately 4500 maps, equivalent to 450 hours observation time, were recorded for 10 public outdoor spaces in Mena del Hierro and San Rafael. The quantitative results of this study were entered into a computerized database.

Mapping social networks consisted of recording the place of residence of members of individual networks. The aim of mapping social networks was to understand their spatial organization and characteristics as well as to provide complementary information on the mental maps used to define social boundaries. The technique consisted of mapping the specific residences of individual members of social networks, then superimposing the various network maps to obtain the effective boundaries of the *barrio*.

(6) Structured survey

A structured survey was carried out of 13% of the population of Mena del Hierro. The survey covers the reasons for which residents choose particular public places for social activities (sports, religion, shopping, visiting friends, etc.), their frequency of use, and the symbolic meaning that the *barrio* has for its residents. It also provides general information on the socioeconomic characteristics of the population (demography, occupations, residential history, etc.).

Six groups were selected to sample the population: (1) female children, (2) female youths, (3) female adults, (4) male children, (5) male youths, and (6) male adults. The criteria to select the number of interviews were: (1) to assign equal weight to each sampling group, with a minimum sample size of 10%; (2) to conduct at least 10 interviews per sampling group; (3) to carry out as many interviews as possible in the restricted time available. Consequently, a total of 107 people were interviewed, each for approximately 15 minutes: 19 female children, 12 female youths, 22 female adults, 15 male children, 17 male youth, and 22 male adults.

The interviews were made with a team of paid field assistants from Quito, trained specifically for the task in a brief exercise. The interviewers were stationed in key public open spaces throughout the *barrio* at peak activity times, and they were instructed to select their candidates from the residents passing by. The results of the survey were recorded in the field on forms and later entered into a computerized database. The information was checked during the collection stage and prior to entering in the database. Overall, the 13% population coverage of the survey is considered to be sufficiently representative of the entire

population to satisfy the current research objectives.

(7) Mapping of physical features of the *barrio*

An up-to-date map of Mena del Hierro did not exist when field work was begun. The Municipality provided a 1985 map showing buildings traced off 1983 aerial photographs, official neighbourhood boundaries, and *planned* roads. Part of the field work in 1992 was therefore dedicated to creating an accurate map of the studied portion of the *barrio*. The segments of surveyed roads appearing in the 1983 map that exist in reality were used as a coordinate base for 1:1000 scale tape-and-compass mapping. The map records the 1992 distribution of roads and sidewalks, property boundaries and fences, buildings, land use (residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial), water supply, drains, vegetation, streams, and topography. Access was not gained to every walled yard in the *barrio*, and therefore some detail may be missing on parts of the map. The field version of the map was digitized in a computerized graphics programme and several copies were printed for planning authorities in Quito and the *barrio* residents. The physical evolution of Mena del Hierro and its surroundings were traced from aerial photographs taken by the Military Geographical Institute (IGM) in 1956, 1970 and 1983.

(8) Photography and videotaping

Conventional photography and videotaping were used to record the behaviour of residents in public outdoor spaces during social and religious festivities. During such occasions too many people were present in the outdoor spaces to permit accurate social cartography.

Methods of Secondary Data Collection

Information for the contextual study on the *barrios* of Quito was gathered in the Planning Department of the municipality of Quito, in the libraries of private research institutions (e.g. CIUDAD; Centro Andino de Acción Popular, CAAP) and in bookshops. To complement this information, interviews were also conducted with leaders of urban organizations and with local researchers.

Few statistics were readily available on demographic and occupational characteristics of Mena del Hierro. Although a national census was completed in 1990 (see Chapter II) the results were not yet published during the period of field work for this study. Moreover, the census data had been collected according to the geographic unit of "sectors", which lumps together parts of several neighbourhoods. Although the results are now available, there seems to be no way to extract valid statistics for a spatially restricted neighbourhood such as Mena del Hierro.

Some demographic and occupational data on Mena del Hierro were collected in 1990 by local doctors as part of the SAFI census, organized by the Ministry of Health to help identify health problems among residents of *barrios populares*. The census was conducted on the basis of household units, each identified on a schematic map of the neighbourhood. While the survey was carried out successfully, so far the raw data have neither been processed nor published because the Ministry changed its orientation and the *barrios* were no longer considered a priority. Hence for the present study, raw sociodemographic and occupational data pertaining to the studied portion of Mena del Hierro were retrieved from the original SAFI questionnaire forms and processed as required.

EVALUATION OF FIELD METHODS

The field methods employed are evaluated in the following section in the context of the study objectives. The successful applications of each method will be presented first, followed by a discussion of their respective limitations. This evaluation of effectiveness is intended to serve future researchers active in *barrios populares*.

Successful Applications of Field Methods

Participatory Research and Participant Observation

From the point of view of this thesis, participatory research and participant observation have proved to be the key to an "insider" study of the residents' patterns of social interaction. At the same time as integrating the locals in the process of investigation, the video workshop activities permitted me to become familiar with the residents and gain acceptance by them. Conducting video and photography workshops and being present in most of the local social and religious events, thanks to the excuse of filming the activities, allowed me to get acquainted with many residents of the *barrio*. Many informal conversations with residents during the months of field research gave me the desired "insider" perspective on the dynamics and social fabric of the *barrio*, as well as on the reasons behind particular patterns of spatial behaviour.

From the point of view of the locals, participatory research produced several concrete benefits:

(1) Video production

The "hands-on" video-production activities with the youths in Mena del Hierro helped them demystify technology and traditional mass media such as television. They were very excited

to see themselves appear on a television screen and this experience made them realize that they too had the technical expertise to produce media messages with their own contents. Video-production activities visibly increased the personal self-esteem of youths and made them socially more confident. The new technical skills they acquired in the workshops are not only useful for the community, but also for their own professional futures (youths are the social group in the *barrio* most affected by unemployment).

For example, Laureano Nastul, my field assistant and workshop participant, has now become one of the two people responsible for producing videos for the *Federación the Barrios del Noroccidente*. Before he took part in the video workshop he had long been frustrated by the lack of opportunities to acquire training in small-format video production. Most video courses require participants to have a video camera and to have previous knowledge of video production techniques. By the time I departed from the field the S-20 group had plans of using their video skills to earn money filming private social events. In order to ensure the continuity of the video activities I donated the video camera used for the workshop project to the youth group.

A collection of 10 videotapes were produced in the workshops with the S-20 group. These videotapes cover a variety of topics, which were partly suggested by me and partly by local residents⁴. One videotape, on the history of the *barrio* and the public social life of its residents, has been jointly edited by me and by two video workshop participants, with the professional collaboration of the *Centro de Educación Popular CEDEP*, based in Quito. This video is entitled *Una Parte de Mi Vida* (A part of my life) (attached to thesis) and has a duration of 20 minutes. The title of the video is taken from a sentence uttered by a local woman when asked what the *barrio* represents for her. The videos were shown to the assembled residents on several occasions, and copies of *Una Parte de Mi Vida* have been distributed to several organizations upon request: *Centro de Investigaciones Urbanas CIUDAD*; *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente*; *Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes*; *Centro de Educación Popular CEDEP*.

Last, it was obvious during the showing of the videos to the residents that the whole exercise had provided them with the less tangible, but no less valuable, benefit of heightened awareness of the quality of life they had developed, and a medium to express pride in their achievements. Seeing their friends, acquaintances and homes appear on a television screen was more than amusing for the residents; they were absolutely fascinated and impressed by

⁴ The themes of the individual videos include: (a) the history of how residents managed to obtain services and infrastructure; (b) a documentary of the everyday activities and socializing patterns of the various demographic groups in the *barrios* of Mena del Hierro and San Rafael; (c) several documentaries on special social events and religious festivities such as "Mingas", "Domingo de Ramos", "Viernes Santo", "Día de Difuntos", "Carnaval", "Día de la Madre", "Fiestas de Quito", and "Encuentros Culturales"; and (d) a documentary presenting interviews with *barrio* residents on the social problems caused by the scarcity of public outdoor spaces.

the somewhat detached perspective that video provides of familiar surroundings.

(2) Photography

With the help of the photography workshop the participants and I compiled a comprehensive record of approximately 1000 photographs of the *barrios* of San Rafael and Mena del Hierro. The photos document many aspects of the *barrios*: the natural environment, housing and infrastructure, land use, local practices of spatial use and management, daily activities of the residents, special local events and festivities, and finally a visual record of conflicts associated with the scarcity of public outdoor space. I donated a copy of this photographic material, organized by topics, to the community of Mena del Hierro. At the time of my departure the locals were planning to set up a "Fototeca" (Photo Library), which was intended to serve as the "social memory" of the community and as a repository of graphic information to support land-use management proposals presented by the residents to the local authorities. As in the case of the video workshop, I donated the camera used for the photography workshop to the S-20 group in order to allow continuity of the activities in the future.

Social Cartography

The maps of spatial behaviour produced by this method provide a comprehensive description of how *barrio* residents use public outdoor space. The ample database includes information on the following: types and frequencies of activities in public spaces, the total number of users of public spaces and their demography, and the spatial patterns of social organization and segregation. I expect that the statistics which have emerged from this study will make residents more able to take educated decisions on matters relating to the self-management of their living environment. These statistics will also be useful for the future planning and management of public outdoor space in the *barrios* of Quito and perhaps elsewhere. The director of Quito's Planning Agency has expressed great interest in obtaining these statistics. This is the first time that activities in public outdoor spaces have been mapped systematically over time in the *barrios* of Quito, and so far, very little data of this type are available for *barrios* in other cities of Latin America.

The maps of social networks produced by the combined methods of participant observation and social cartography are fascinating. They reveal the complexity of the spatial structure, density and extent of individual networks. These maps of social networks were further combined with mental maps elaborated by *barrio* residents to produce a final map displaying the actual social boundaries of the *barrio*. This methodology reveals the disparity between real communities and administrative boundaries. The social boundaries revealed by this method are quite different to the administrative boundaries used by the municipality of

Quito for the neighbourhood of Mena del Hierro. This method should thus be useful in the future to planners and geographers interested in identifying the actual geographical boundaries of social communities in the cities.

Limitations of Field Methods

(1) Participatory research and participant observation

Participatory research and participant observation may be powerful methods of acquiring a deep understanding of reality and of conducting socially responsible research but they are extremely complex and lengthy undertakings. Field work for this project was originally planned to be completed in nine months. However, 18 months of hectic work had passed by the time I had taken a course in video production (in order to subsequently train the locals), become integrated in the community, organized the youth group workshop and actually produced videos, trained field assistants, and finally collected the raw data for my study. Probably two years of field work would be a more realistic estimate of the time required for a study such as this.

The cultural characteristics of communities vary greatly and it is therefore impossible to know beforehand how long it will take to become fully accepted in a target community. For example, the *barrio* inhabitants I was working with appeared to sympathise with me very much at the beginning. They seemed to like my personality as well as the fact that I am Colombian (Colombians are known in Ecuador for being cheerful and good dancers; Peruvians, in contrast, are "war makers"). As the months passed, however, it became apparent that much more time had to be spent in the *barrio* to gain the real trust of community members.

Participatory research is also a lengthy process because it involves collaborating with locals with a wide range of interests and motivations for research. The young people working with me in the video and photography workshops, for example, understandably followed their own rhythm of work and perception of time – quite different from my academic schedule! Moreover, their normal social obligations and the unstable employment situation left them little regular time to participate in video activities. Often workshop meetings had to be postponed when participants found short-term employment. Because the video workshop participants were novices, the effort expended in editing and producing the final videotape to an acceptable level was much greater than initially envisaged. It can be concluded that, in general, participatory research is a style of investigation which cannot be constrained to a rigorous research schedule.

At a certain point my motives for this research project clashed with those of the *Federación*

de Barrios del Noroccidente and those of the youth group. My aims for participatory research were to obtain good scientific data and to empower the residents towards a more democratic society. The aims of the Federation, in contrast, were to make members of the S-20 group aware of the need to become politically involved towards revolutionary change. For the members of the youth group themselves, participating in video activities was simply another means of amusement and of improving their social standing within the community.

Transferring video skills to a specific group within the community also creates power conflicts. Training the youths accidentally meant empowering one community faction over another. Youths and adult male residents had long competed for control over the management of the *barrio's* social and economic resources. As soon as a conflict threatened between me and the adult male residents I took conciliatory action. Each time the men organized an activity for the community our video team turned up to film the event, and conducted interviews with the men regarding the long-term projects they had planned for the community.

Any evaluation of the participatory research approach raises questions as to the extent to which the community has actually "participated". In the present case, the involvement of locals in discussing the contents of my research was limited. The youth showed the most interest in participating in video-making when they had proposed the subject to film. This experience strongly suggests that active participation by the community can only be expected when the community itself proposes the research topic on the basis of a perceived need. Given the abstract nature of typical academic research questions, the chances of obtaining real participation from the community seem remote unless a compromise is struck.

Finally, participatory videos also raise the question of continuity. Video material is quite costly in Ecuador and financial limitations will certainly constrain the ability of the youth to produce videos for themselves and for the community. Also, if community-made videos are to achieve wider impact, several *barrio* organizations must cooperate. Such cooperation is certainly not easy in the real world of diverse political motives and interests.

(2) Social Cartography

The use of social cartography for mapping spatial behaviour posed a considerable problem at the outset, in that practically no field studies had been conducted previously in Latin America over an extended period of time to serve as a methodological guide for the present study. After an initial design period, I gradually implemented the methodology for social mapping in the field. Several tests were conducted before the final data collection. Despite the tests, many practical problems kept appearing during data recording.

For instance, social cartography of spatial behaviour was originally planned to be carried

out by students of the Department of Geography at the University of Ottawa, at no cost, since these exercises were meant to give students some field experience in the *barrios* of Quito. However, the fieldwork turned out to demand much more time and effort than some students were able to invest. As a consequence of this and of the practical difficulties that appeared during implementation, there were some gaps in the final data collected.

Similarly, problems appeared during initial analysis of the collected data. After discussing the results with Dr. Rolf Wesche, who was in the field with me at the time, it was decided that the gaps and inconsistencies in the data set warranted repeating the entire collection procedure. Thus the first collection programme provided a very useful basis to refine the methodology but the total period in the field had to be extended in order to complete data collection. Moreover, to ensure my labour force, I decided to pay the field mappers for the second campaign, on the condition that they produced complete, consistent data. Although this decision led to considerable extra costs, it finally resulted in the desired quality of data being collected.

As far as the utility of mapping spatial behaviour is concerned, it should be realized that while the method provides hard statistics, in essence it yields no more than numerical support for facts and trends that are already obvious to the researcher after having been immersed in the field for some time. One can almost guarantee that no qualitatively new results will emerge from social cartography. It is therefore important to consider carefully whether the time and money expended in obtaining the statistics is worth the actual information they provide. Social cartography of spatial behaviour provides a numerical description of a phenomenon observable in the field and as such it is useful in communicating results to others. However, it does not provide insight into the reasons for the social and spatial behaviour of residents in the way that participant observation does.

CONCLUSIONS

Field observation methods such as participant observation and participatory research are indispensable tools in the pursuit of "insider" understanding of the urban reality and in striving to produce concrete benefits for the studied population. However, the approach is a much more complex enterprise than traditional methods of distant observation. Some of the difficulties involved include:

From the point of view of the researcher:

- 1) the large amount of time required to complete a study (in the order of years, not months)
- 2) the often hostile attitude of residents towards "yet another researcher"
- 3) the local problems of power disputes, in which the researcher is inevitably involved

- 4) the problem of becoming too immersed in daily routines, to the point that perspective on the field area risks being lost
- 5) the problem of using an appropriate style of communication so that a dialogue ensues between the researcher and the local population
- 6) the conflict posed by the requirements of academic rigor, on the one hand, and the real possibilities in the field, on the other
- 7) the high work load in multiple roles (video producer, technical trainer, research leader, quality controller of data collectors, socializer, and motivator)

From the points of view of both the researcher and the participating population:

- 1) the diversity of political interests and motives among the various parties involved
- 2) the differences in perceptions of time between the researcher constrained by limited academic schedules, and the group of inhabitants who devote part of their free time to participatory research
- 3) the economic and scientific inequality between the researcher and the locals
- 4) the difficulty in establishing a working relationship on equal terms of exchange

There are no magic formulas for participatory research. Each case study has its specific requirements and the researcher must be creative and prepared to adapt the project to the local situation. Nevertheless, there are some general aspects that should be taken into account in order to improve the chances for success:

- 1) The purpose and expected results of the research for all parties must be stated clearly at the outset, and the contractual relationship must be carefully observed during its execution. Motives for involvement in research vary greatly between participants. For some, videos are a means to make participants aware of the need for social revolution; for others they are a means of increasing democracy or simply an opportunity for amusement. The diversity of interests must be made clear from the beginning in order to avoid misunderstandings at the time of evaluating the experience.
- 2) The initiative for the subject of research must come at least partly from the local population and not exclusively from the academic researcher. The traditional style of the academic having full control of research design does not suit the participatory approach. However, some aspects of purely scientific aims can usually be incorporated as the project progresses.
- 3) Local cultural, socioeconomic and political circumstances determine the facility to conduct a participatory project in a given community. Some cultural groups are more "open" to outsiders than others, and their income levels determine how much free time they have for activities other than mere survival.

- 4) Given the inherent complexity of the participatory research approach, the number of active participants should be kept to a minimum.
- 5) Last, but not least, it is worth emphasizing that the personality of the researcher is a deciding factor in any participatory approach. The method requires an ability for direct and indirect negotiation with the various parties involved (local NGOs, research funding agencies, members of the community, and field assistants), and a balanced and cheerful character that facilitates socializing with locals. In my experience during this thesis project, becoming good friends with the population and finding an excellent field assistant from within the studied community were the two most important factors in permitting successful acquisition of participant observation data.

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CHAPTER II

QUITO AND ITS PERIPHERAL *BARRIOS*

The urban context of Mena del Hierro

INTRODUCTION

Latin American countries have undergone a dramatic process of urbanization in the last three decades with the majority of their populations now living in urban centres. Much of this urbanization has occurred through the growth of illegal housing settlements on the city peripheries. Such low-income settlements, known as *barrios populares*, typically have little basic infrastructure yet they currently host between 25 and 50% of the continent's urban dwellers (Portes and Walton, 1981; Riaño, Y. and Wesche, 1992). The city of Quito is no exception to this pattern, with a fifth of its 1.1 million inhabitants living in *barrios* (Dirección de Planificación, 1992a).

This chapter describes the origin and expansion of peripheral *barrios* in Quito as well as their social, economic and spatial characteristics. The aim of this description is to provide an historical and urban framework for the case study of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. This contextual examination will permit at the end of this chapter an assessment of the representativeness of Mena del Hierro with respect to the *barrios* of Quito. Further, it will allow many of the specific features of Mena del Hierro, discussed in the succeeding chapters, to be compared and explained by reference to the wider urban environment.

QUITO AND THE EXPANSION OF ITS PERIPHERAL *BARRIOS*

Quito, the capital of Ecuador and the country's second largest city after Guayaquil, has a population of 1,100,000 (INEC, Censo de Población, 1990), a modest number compared to other South American capital cities. Quito has an impressive and well-preserved colonial centre as well as a superb geographical location. It is situated in a long, narrow valley at 2,840 m a.s.l., flanked on the western side by the dormant Pichincha volcano (Fig. 2-1). It has a temperate climate year-round with deep blue skies, and on a clear day, snow-capped volcanoes can be observed to the east.

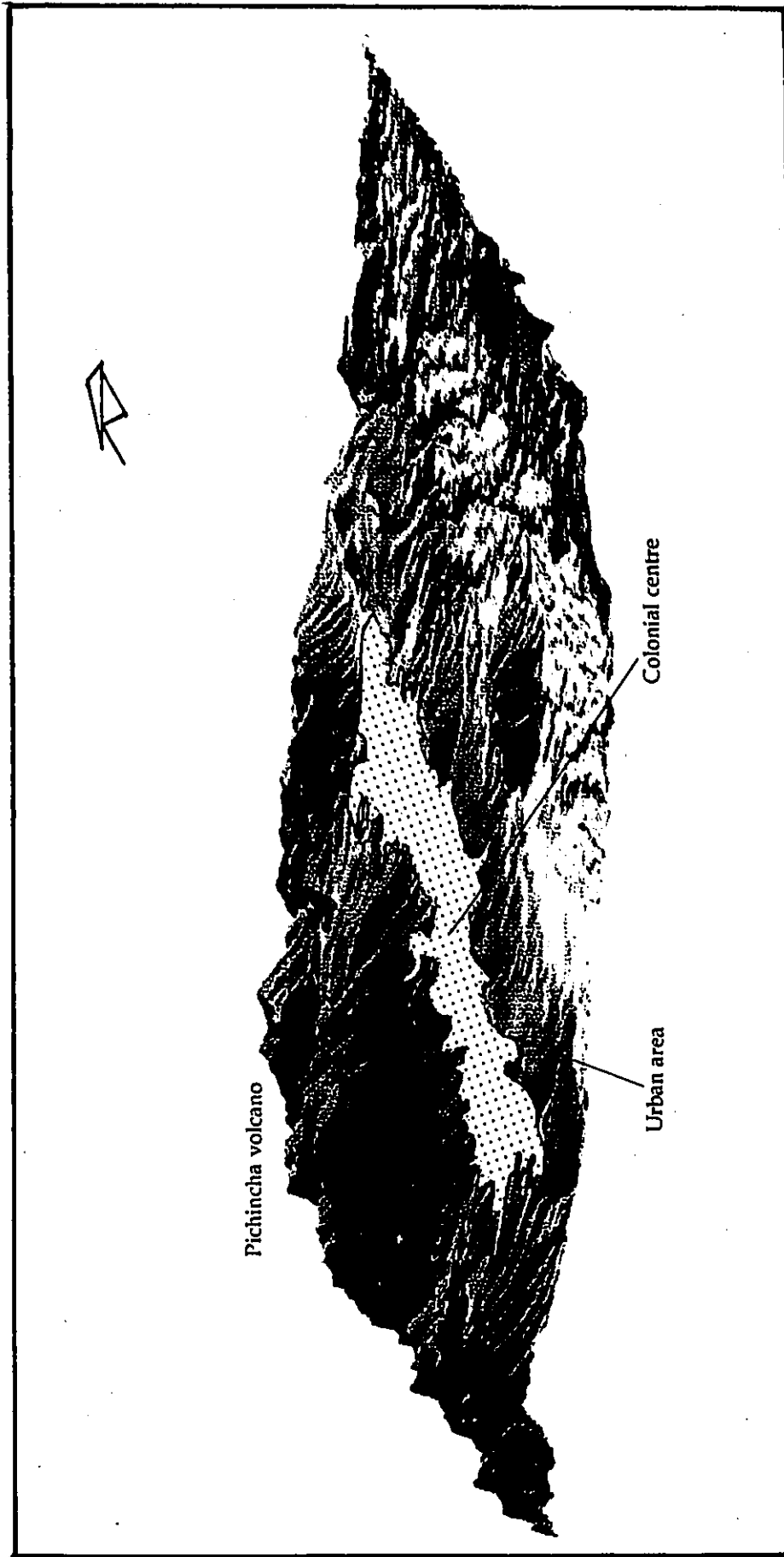


Figure 2.1 Three dimensional view of the topographic setting of Quito. The city occupies a valley at 2,840 m. a.s.l., flanked to the west by the Pichincha volcano. (Source: ORSTOM, 1992).

Quito is also a city of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. The population is dominated by *Mestizos* and Indians, but minorities of whites and blacks are also present. Several cultural worlds coexist in Quito. At the one extreme are populations which maintain Indian traditions, manifest in community-based social practices, collective property of land (*comunas*), style of living, dressing, eating, and celebrating. At the other extreme, "modern"-oriented populations model their way of life on the individualism predominant in North American societies (Figs. 2-2 and 2-3). Populations with Indian practices and an Indian appearance are generally found in the lower economic groups of the city.

The public celebration of religious and cultural traditions, especially of Spanish origin, plays a very important role in Quito, more so than in other large South American cities. Over the years, city administrations have consistently encouraged public celebrations such as the *Fiestas de Quito*, so as to foster personal identification of the residents with their city (Fig. 2-4). Whether they have succeeded or not is still subject to debate. However, casual conversations with people of various income groups reveal a strong sense of identification with Quito. Many experience it as "tranquila" (there is nothing to fear) and "bonita" (pretty). This is again in striking contrast to other Latin American capitals, such as Bogotá and Caracas, where most residents "hate" their cities.

From a demographic point of view, the population of Quito has undergone dramatic growth over the last forty years, increasing from 210,000 to 1,100,000 in the 1950-1990 period (INEC, *Census Nacionales*, in Carrión, F., 1986 and INEC, 1990). At the same time the structure of the city has substantially changed, especially since the oil-boom of the 1970s when large numbers of migrants came to the capital from the *sierra*, attracted by the newly created economic opportunities. The country's oil-boom strongly benefited Quito, as capital and main staging centre, and the sudden influx of foreign investment created many new jobs in the service, construction, commerce, and manufacturing sectors. In a desire to "modernize" the city, highways, sky-scrapers and shopping malls were constructed, while many traditional loci of social interaction, such as plazas, disappeared.

As a result of the enormous inflow of migrants in need of affordable housing, the peripheral areas of Quito started to expand. This produced the greatest period of emergence of *barrios populares*, the illegal neighbourhoods without basic services and infrastructure. The *barrios* were forgotten in Quito's modernization efforts and they were from the beginning spatially segregated, forming a ring of poverty around the city (Fig. 2-5). Quito continues to attract new migrants today at a high rate, but the numbers are difficult to quantify (Carrión, F., 1992).



Figure 2.2 Indians living in Quito maintain many aspects of their traditional lifestyle.



Figure 2.3 "Modern" inhabitants of Quito aspire to North American lifestyle.



Figure 2.4 Street activities during the *fiestas* of Quito are promoted by city administrators to foster pride in the capital. (Photo: Laureano Nastul, 1992).

The increasing importance of the periphery in recent years can be seen in some simple statistics. In 1962, peripheral areas with *barrios populares* housed only 2% of the total population of Quito whereas by the beginning of the eighties they housed 19% (CIUDAD, 1983). Nearly 80% of the *barrios populares* of Quito emerged in the 1970s and 1980s (Dirección de Planificación, 1992a) and are thus less than 25 years old – relatively young compared with *barrios* in other large cities, such as Guayaquil and elsewhere in Latin America, where large migrations took place in the 1950s and 1960s (Riaño, Y. and Wesche, 1992).

The comparatively recent appearance of *barrios populares* in Quito is explained by the capital's relatively minor role in the national economy until the mid-1960s. Until that time Ecuador's economy was based on primary products (cacao and banana) which were exported from Guayaquil. Guayaquil therefore attracted many migrants from the countryside, especially from the *sierra*, and hence the population of the port expanded rapidly. By 1960 it already had half a million inhabitants, in contrast to Quito's 350,000 (INEC, Censo Nacional, in Carrión, F., 1986), plus a significant area of peripheral low-income settlements (referred to as *suburbios* in Guayaquil rather than *barrios*). During the same period, urban growth in Quito was basically in response to the expansion of the State and its public administration, and to the role of the city as a business centre for agricultural landowners in the surrounding Andes.

It was only in the mid-1960s, when banana exports dramatically fell, that a national policy of import-substitution was implemented. The flow of *sierra* migrants, hitherto almost exclusively directed to Guayaquil, then started to change direction towards Quito. This trend in migration was reinforced by the oil boom of the 1970s, coupled with technological modernization of the agricultural/cattle sector and further development of import-substitution industries.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BARRIOS OF QUITO

Definition of Barrios

The *barrios* of Quito are neighbourhoods which have mostly emerged in peripheral areas of the city in infringement of official regulations. The city authorities originally planned these areas for agricultural production or for ecological reserves. Since the *barrios* developed beyond the official limits of urbanization, they were initially illegal and consequently had no rights to services provided by the municipality. While most *barrios* in Quito have now been legalized, and hence now officially form part of the city (Fig. 2-5), their state of infrastructure is often not what would be expected for their age.

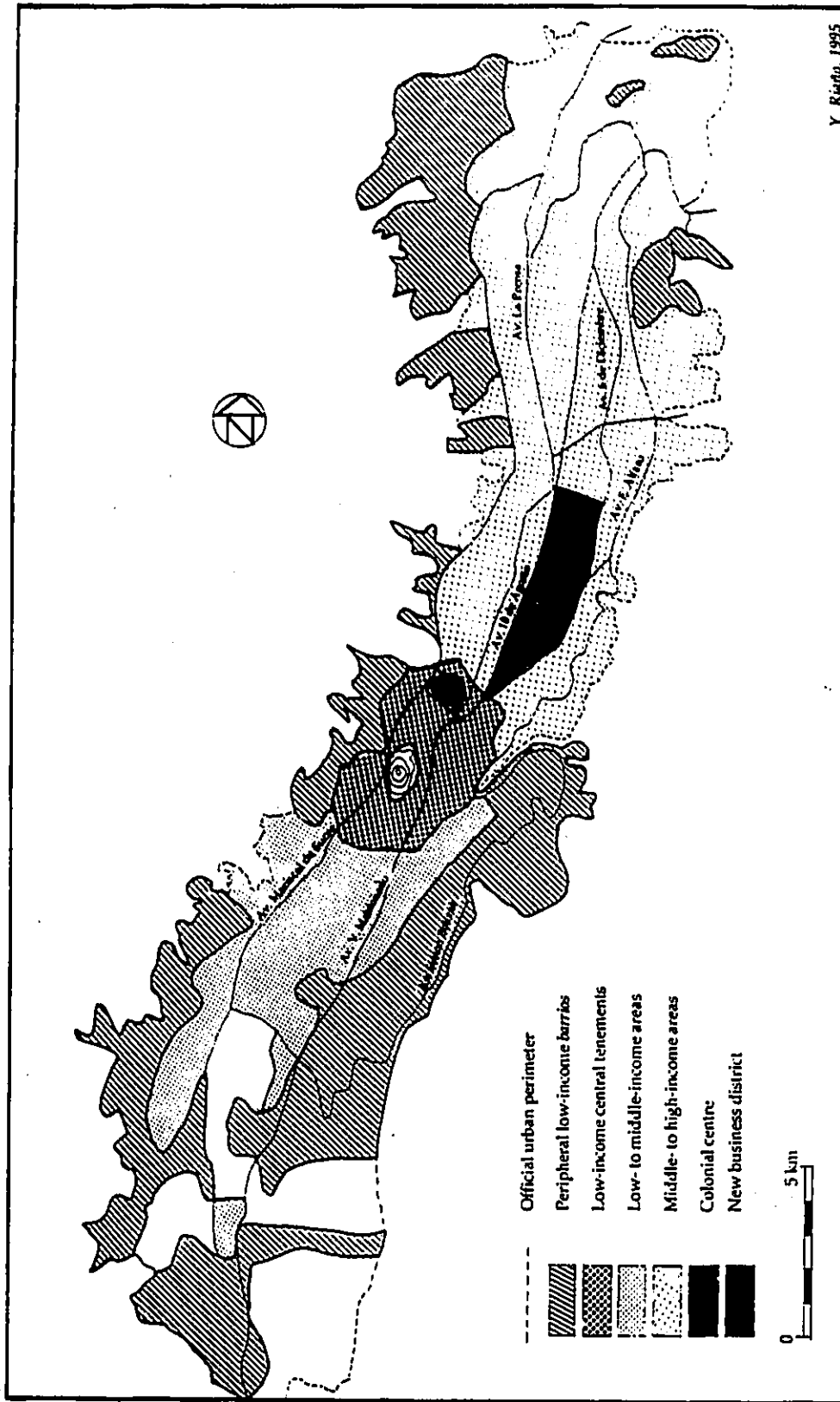


Figure 2.5 Socioeconomic segregation of residential areas in Quito. (Based on: Dirección de Planificación, vols. 6 and 23, 1992; CRUDAD, 1983; and field work for this study).

Most *barrios* have arisen in land which is difficult to reach, typically in steep topography on the lower slopes and foothills of the Pichincha Volcano where roads are lacking, far from the developed parts of the city (Figs. 2-6 and 2-7). They are situated above the elevation to which the municipality provides fresh water. Hence the boundary between areas with municipal water and those without it represents the *de facto* boundary between the "formal" and "informal" sectors of the city.

The determinant of the low price of land is not only peripheral location but also lack of basic urban infrastructure and services such as water, surfaced roads and sewerage. *Barrios* evolve through time, however, and infrastructure and services are progressively obtained through the residents' self-help efforts and through *clientelismo* deals with local politicians searching for votes. Self-help strategies are also important in improving housing. Over time, some *barrios* end up being difficult to distinguish from conventional middle-class neighbourhoods that were planned and serviced from the outset.

In contrast to many other Third World cities, the large majority of *barrios* in Quito are not the result of collective initiatives by people to invade land owned by government or private individuals¹. They are largely the result of an illegal (informal) private market that caters to individuals who cannot afford conventional low-income housing, or who find more financial flexibility in the system of buying land in the *barrios*.

Physical and Demographic Characteristics of Quito's *Barrios*

The Planning Department of the municipality of Quito estimates that approximately 200,000 people live in peripheral *barrios*, representing nearly 20% of the city's total population (Dirección de Planificación, 1992a). According to a survey carried out by the same department in 1991, there are 202 *barrios* which occupy nearly a quarter of the total urban area of the city. As seen in Figure 2-8 the *barrios* ring the city. The large majority (70%) are located in the south, traditionally the less desirable area for residential purposes because of the large concentration of industry and its attendant poor environmental conditions.

¹There are three exceptions to this: the *barrios* of Lucha de los Pobres (1971), Pisulí (1983) and Atucucho (1990). In the first two, private land was initially invaded by groups of residents organized in a housing cooperative. After some time, however, the land was legally acquired from the owner. In the case of Atucucho, the youngest *barrio*, the residents are still in the process of buying land from the legal owner. Thus, in all three cases, invasion is a form of pressure on the owner to sell the land, rather than true squatting as is typical in cities like Lima, Peru.



Figure 2.6 The *barrio* San Enrique de Velasco situated on the slopes of the Pichincha volcano at 2,900 m. a.s.l., northwest Quito. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).



Figure 2.7 The *barrio* Inticucho situated on the slopes of the Pichincha volcano at 3,100 m. a.s.l., northwest Quito. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

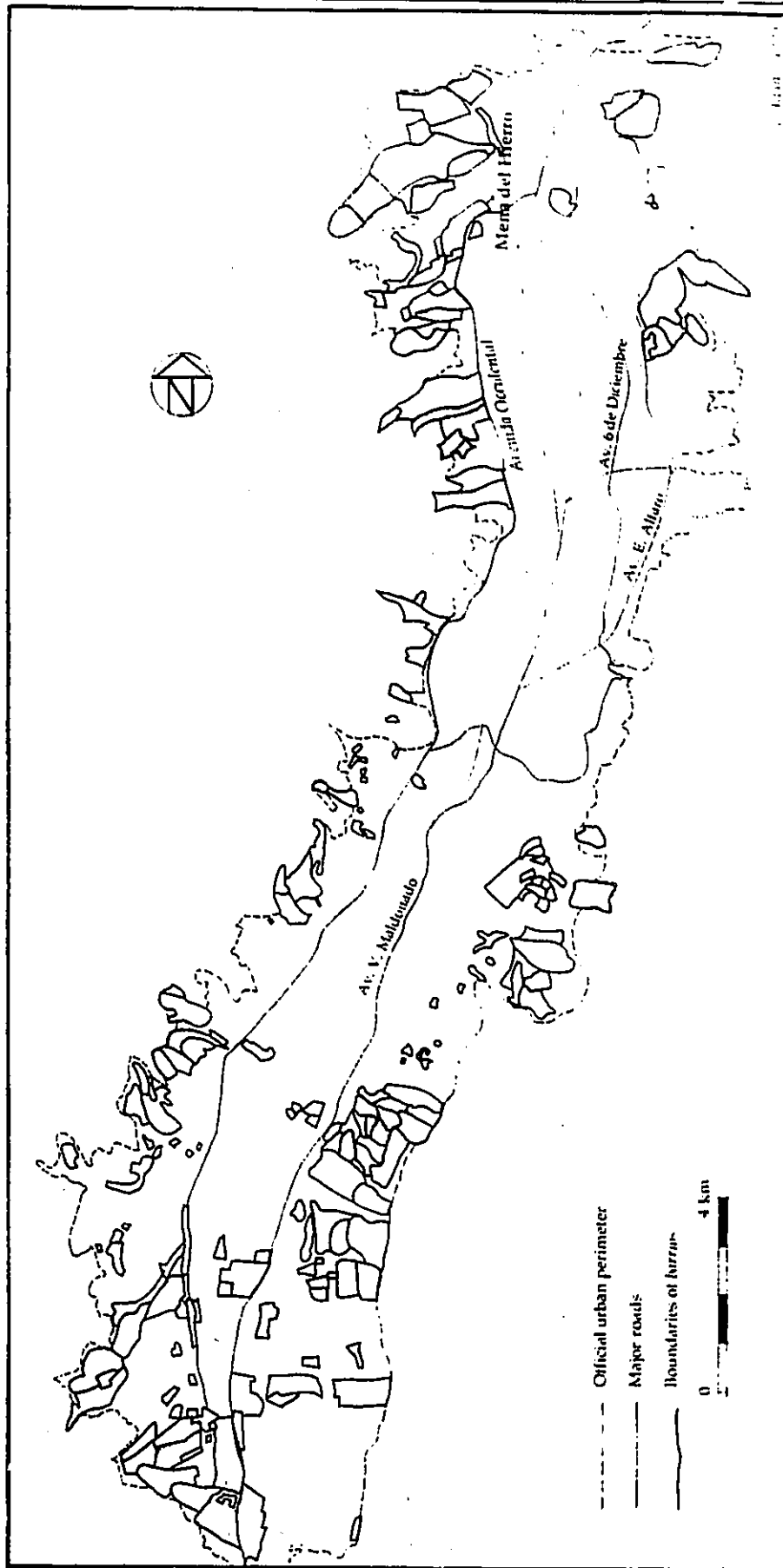


Figure 2.8 The barrios of Quito. Most of the barrios are situated on the periphery of the city
(Source: Dirección de Planificación, vol. 6, 1992)

The *barrios* of Quito have several characteristics in common but they are also heterogeneous in several respects, particularly regarding location and levels of physical and economic development. Of the common characteristics, the most problematic is the general lack of access to drinking water. According to CIUDAD (1985), only 5% of *barrios* in 1983 had fresh water regularly supplied to individual homes. Most *barrio* residents therefore must buy water from tankers, a service provided by privately-owned enterprises. The cost of this water is well above that supplied elsewhere by the municipality.

Other characteristics common to most *barrios* are the lack of public transport and sewerage connections. Only 20% of the *barrios* had a complete sewerage service in 1983 (CIUDAD, 1985). Similarly, a lack of road surfacing is another widespread problem which seems to have a significant negative impact on the lives of residents. According to a survey carried out in the *barrios* by CIUDAD (1985), a large number of residents found the lack of road surfacing to be one of their greatest problems because of the remarkable amounts of dust that accumulate in the air, especially during the dry season. This results not only in poor living conditions but also in respiratory and lung problems for the residents, especially children.

The lack of communal facilities, particularly of sports fields and green areas, is also a feature common to most *barrios*. Since the interest of illegal urbanizers lies in profit-making, normally little land is set aside for sports fields, squares, or communal services. This will be one of the most difficult problems to solve in the future as literally no public land is now available.

The low level of social security is another difficulty that most *barrio* residents are faced with. Over two thirds of the population living in peripheral *barrios* have no access to social security whatsoever. The remaining third has access to some form of social security but only for a restricted period of time, usually five to fifteen years, according to the duration of employment (ORSTOM, 1987). Residents of *barrios* also have a very low level of education. Between 60% and 80% have at most primary education and the majority of this group has not completed primary school (Dirección de Planificación, 1983; ORSTOM, 1987).

Despite all these negative features, the *barrios* of Quito in general, and those of the northwest in particular, do not have the striking appearance of poverty which characterizes peripheral settlements in other Ecuadorian and Latin American cities, particularly Guayaquil, Lima, Bogotá, Caracas, and Rio de Janeiro. In contrast to the squalid bamboo shantytowns of Guayaquil, for example, practically all the houses in Quito's *barrios* are built from permanent materials (cement and clay bricks) as required in the cool, high altitude climate (Figs. 2-9 and 2-10).

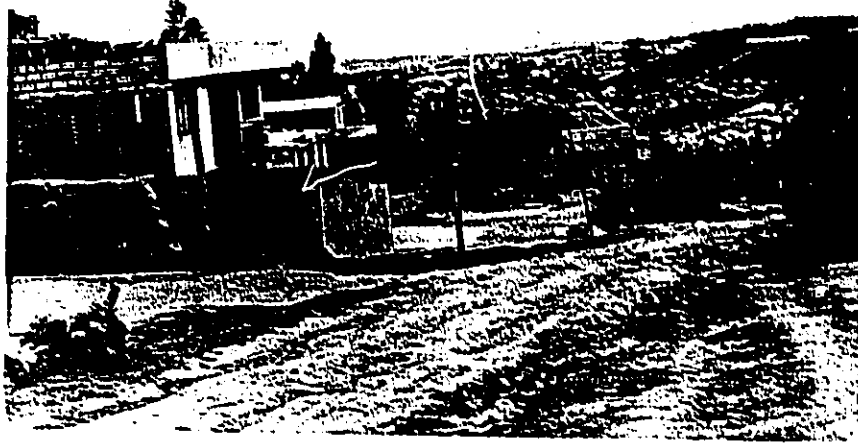


Figure 2.9 *Barrio Sta. Isabel*, northwest Quito. Most houses in Quito's *barrios* are built from permanent materials (cement and clay bricks). (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

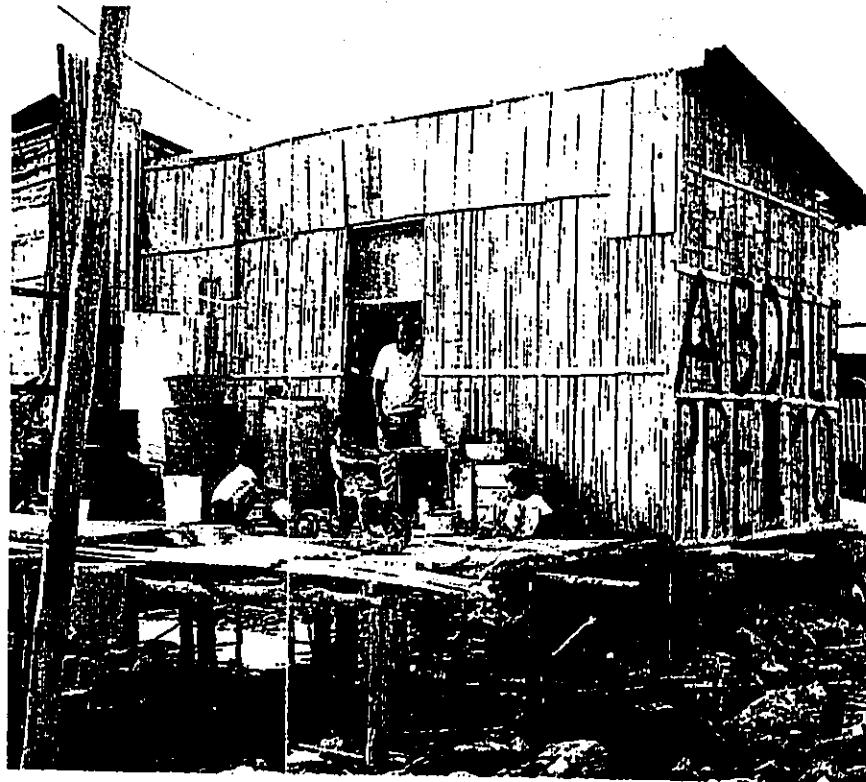


Figure 2.10 A *suburbio* in Guayaquil. Building materials are temporary and conditions are squalid by comparison with the *barrios* of Quito.

The *barrios* of Quito differ in their percentages of migrants from outside the capital but migrants are generally in the minority. During the 1980s, approximately two thirds of the residents of the *barrios* were born in Quito (Dirección de Planificación, 1983, ORSTOM, 1987). The relative youth of the majority of the *barrio* population is the main explanation for this phenomenon. Over 50% of *barrio* residents are less than twenty years old, a much higher percentage than the average for the city of Quito (ORSTOM, 1987). *Barrios* are mostly populated by young couples with children. These make up 56% of the total population (ORSTOM, 1987). Degree of house ownership is another characteristic that varies between *barrios*. Overall, more than half of household-heads in the *barrios* declare themselves as house owners, but only half of these actually have legal title of ownership (Dirección de Planificación, 1992a).

The economic characteristics of individual residents is one of the aspects of the *barrios* which show the greatest heterogeneity. The occupations and incomes of residents vary from low-income unskilled labourers, such as construction workers, to "petite bourgeoisie" occupations, such as lower-level civil servants and owners of small businesses. However, the dominant occupation is construction workers (approximately 40% of all occupations; Dirección de Planificación, 1983, ORSTOM, 1987). The remaining occupations in decreasing order of importance are: industrial workers, artisans, nurses, drivers, policemen, soldiers and civil servants with low income levels (CIUDAD, 1983).

Two thirds of *barrio* residents earning an income are employees and the rest are self-employed (ORSTOM, 1987). Self-employed residents are engaged in a variety of informal activities, such as street vending, domestic service, knife sharpening, shoe repair, shoe shining, and gardening. Other self-employed residents own small businesses which are usually located in their place of residence. These include commercial shops, small industries, agricultural and transportation enterprises (CIUDAD, 1983). Unemployment among *barrio* residents is difficult to estimate. Statistics are inconsistent as they vary from 4% (ORSTOM, 1987) to nearly 50% of the economically active population (Dirección de Planificación, 1983). The discrepancy in these estimates probably arises from different methods of counting. The ORSTOM value presumably does not include the many unemployed people who temporarily dedicate themselves to homemaking, study, and activities in the informal economy while they continue to search for employment.

The attitude of Quito's authorities towards the *barrios* has changed over the years from initial rejection to acceptance. Today, most *barrios* have been legalized and officially form part of the City. The present administration is particularly concerned with its *barrios* and is taking part in efforts to improve roads and water supplies, to complete legalization, to promote public social activities, and to provide urban facilities (especially sports amenities) in the

southern area of the city where the concentration of manual workers and low-income employees is highest.

The *Barrios* of Northwest Quito: The Immediate Context of Mena del Hierro

Neighbourhoods in the northwest of Quito, where Mena del Hierro is located, are socioeconomically heterogeneous, ranging from the low-income *barrio* of Inticucho, where no basic infrastructure is available, to high-income El Condado, one of the most exclusive residential areas in the city (Figs. 2-11 to 2-13).

The area has 37 *barrios*, nearly half of which emerged in the 1970s (Fig. 2-14). The diversity of housing within individual *barrios* is remarkable, varying from small one-floor constructions with tin roofs to large three-floor concrete buildings (Fig. 2-15), according to the income of their inhabitants. The extreme range in income levels, from low- to middle-class, makes the economic characterization of individual *barrios* in the northwest a difficult undertaking.

The average population density of the northwestern *barrios* is 27 persons per ha, two to three times lower than that of other *barrios* in Quito and ten times lower than that of the tenements in the old town centre (CIUDAD, 1983). The low density of *barrios* in the northwest is explained by their relative youth and by their origin as subdivisions with very large lots (for details see section below on typology of *barrios*).

Because of their youth, the level of commercial and industrial activity in the *barrios* of the area is also quite low, especially compared to other Latin American low-income settlements, where in some cases virtually every plot hosts a business. Much of the land within the northwestern *barrios* is dedicated to agricultural activities, thereby lending them a semi-rural appearance.

BARRIO TYPOLOGIES

As stated in the introduction, this investigation uses Mena del Hierro as a case study of Quito's *barrios*. The aim of the following section is to ascertain how typical Mena del Hierro is of *barrios* in the City. Since Quito's low-income settlements are socially and physically heterogeneous, a typology of *barrios* must be established before comparisons can be made with Mena del Hierro. Variables for comparison must be chosen from among the many characteristics of *barrios*, such as age, level of development, geographical location, spatial structure, income of residents, etc. Which are the most appropriate variables?



Figure 2.11 The *barrio* Inticucho in the northwest of Quito. No basic infrastructure is available. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

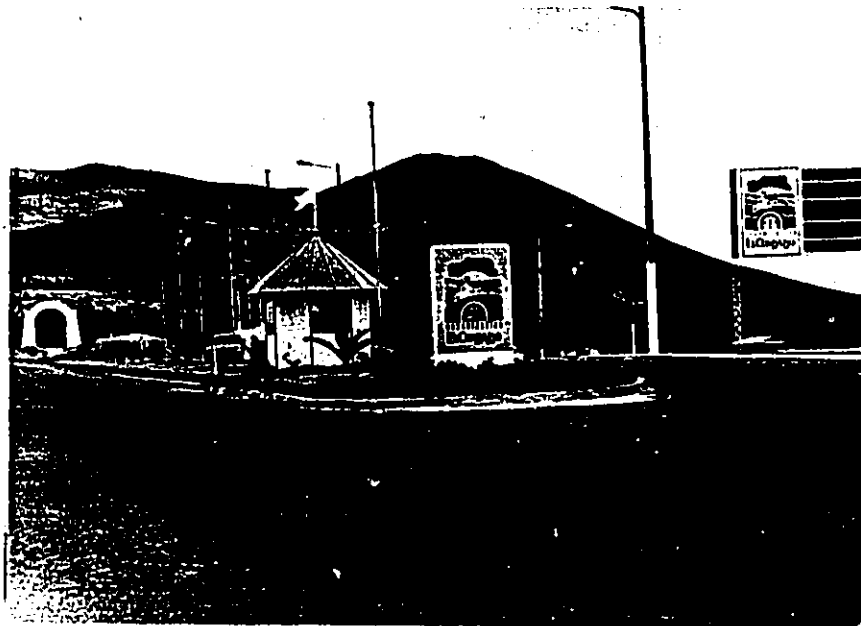


Figure 2.12 The Condado neighbourhood is situated in the same area of Quito as the *barrio* Inticucho (Fig. 2.11). This is one of the most exclusive neighbourhoods where infrastructure is complete. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

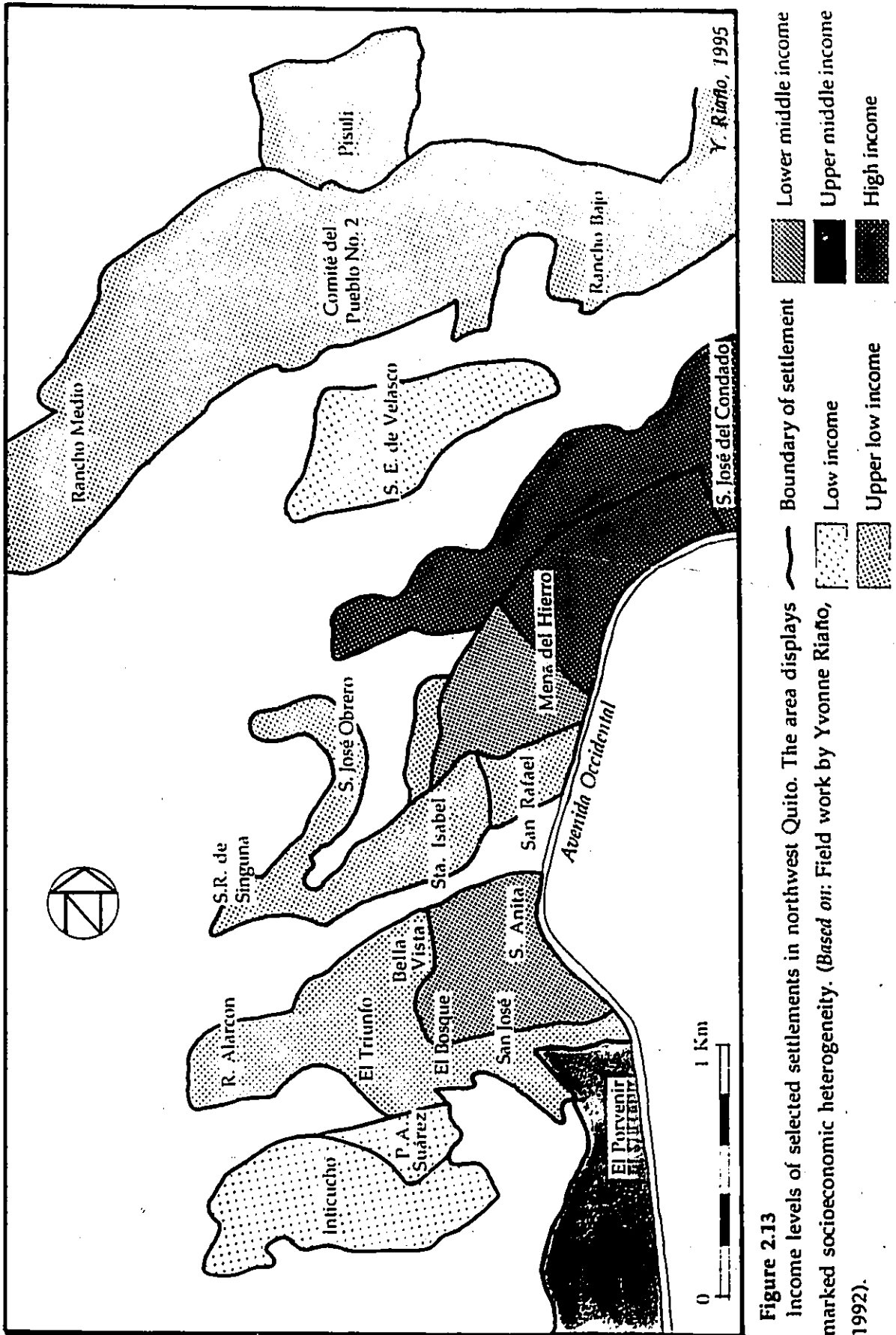


Figure 2.13

Income levels of selected settlements in northwest Quito. The area displays marked socioeconomic heterogeneity. (Based on: Field work by Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

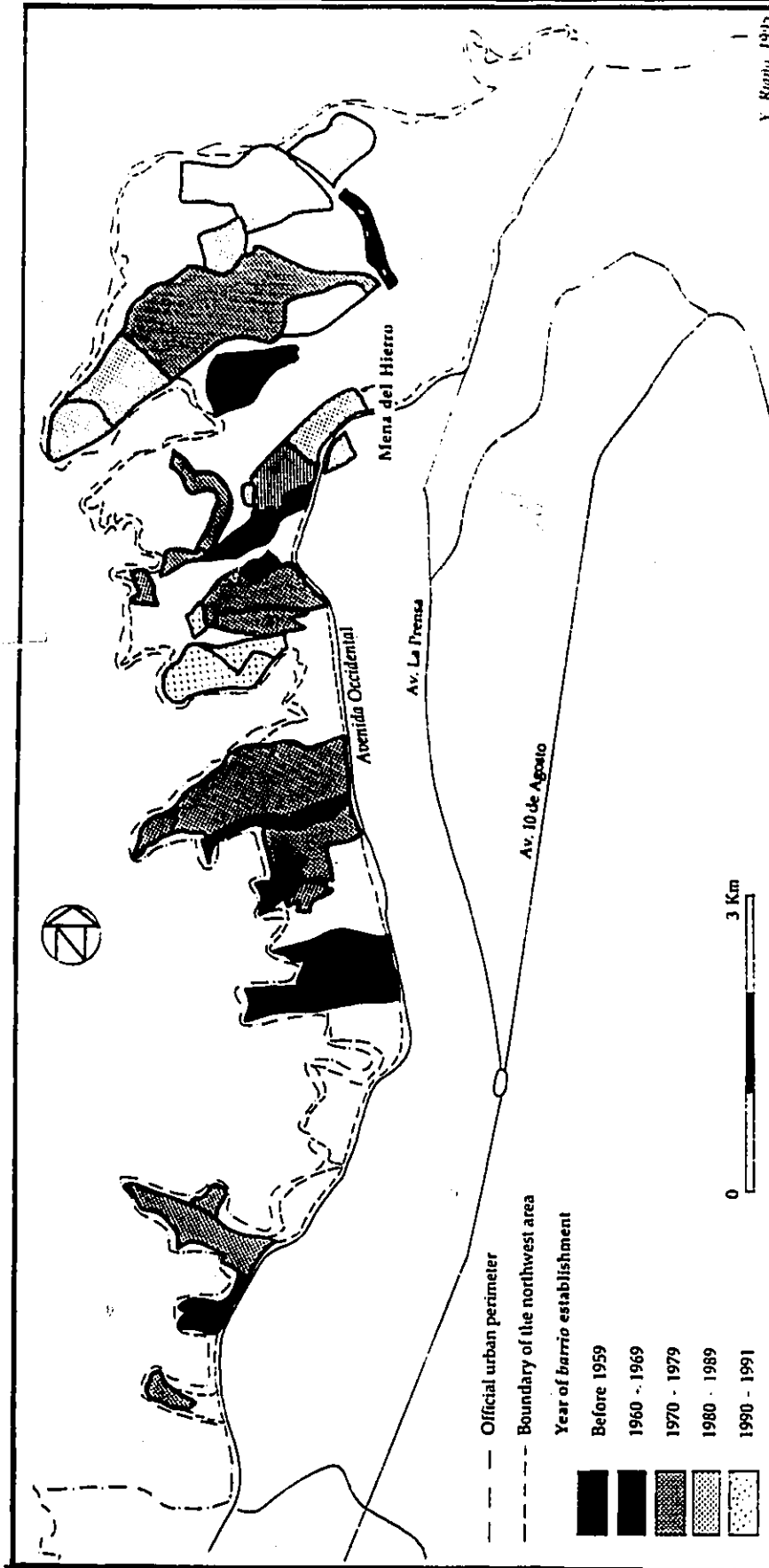


Figure 2.14 The barrios of northwest Quito according to their age: Half of the barrios emerged in the 1970s. (Source: Dirección de Planificación, vol. 6, 1992).



Figure 2.15 The quality of housing in the *barrios* of northwest Quito is heterogeneous, ranging from small one-floor houses (above) to large concrete buildings (below) (Photos: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).



Barrio Typologies for Latin America

Classifying *barrios* is a complex task given the variety of possible viewpoints and purposes for the exercise. In recent years, two main approaches have been taken to classify low-income housing in Latin American cities:

- (1) *Barrio typologies which are based on the processes by which barrios emerge.* Two principle classification criteria have been used: the legal status of *barrios* (Azuela de la Cueva, 1987; Leeds, 1981; Burgess, 1985), and the mechanism by which low-income groups gain access to housing land (e.g. direct occupation via land invasion; indirect occupation of land via an illegal land developer). The latter criterion has been used extensively by Latin American researchers during the 1980s (IIED, 1988)
- (2) *Barrio typologies which are based on the physical characteristics of low-income settlements as they exist today.* Criteria for classification include the quality of housing (Riofrio and Driant, 1987), the level at which basic services are provided (Peterson, 1985), the level of consolidation (Anzellini and García-Reyes, 1984; Driant, 1985; Godard, 1985), *barrio* age, size, and population density (Tata and Campbell, 1985).

While these approaches are clear in principle, classification of *barrios* is extremely problematic in reality. The informal housing market is a very complex phenomenon to characterize because the distinction between legality and illegality is generally debatable, and because *barrios* often evolve at a much faster rate than field data can be collected. Thus a characteristic that is valid today may not be valid tomorrow. Consequently, the typologies which have been drawn up in the past are often ambiguous. The general practice has been to examine a few *barrios* in a city and then erect a typology based on this small sample. In many cases the characteristics of the remaining *barrios* are not known and therefore it has been impossible to present typologies in map form at the scale of a city.

Barrio Typologies for Quito

Both of the above approaches have been used by various groups in classifying Quito's *barrios*, with similar limitations to elsewhere in Latin America. The Planning Department of the Municipality of Quito has constructed a typology which reflects how the City's *barrios* have emerged (Dirección de Planificación, 1992a). The main criterion for classification is the legality of the process of land subdivision with respect to official regulations. The study distinguishes three types of *barrios*:

- (1) *Barrios arising from originally legal subdivision of agricultural land.* In this scenario, rural land has been initially subdivided legally but subdivided again illegally later on. There are two subtypes of interest. In the first, *hacienda* owners received official authorization to subdivide their land into *huertos familiares* lots (family vegetable gardens). Permits were issued on the condition that the land would be put to agricultural use, and that the lots would have a minimum size of 2,500 m². In practice, however, the lots were later subdivided into smaller sections which were used for housing, and thus *barrios* without any infrastructure or services emerged. In the second subtype, *hacienda* owners were obliged to give their workers land plots of 5,000 - 10,000 m² for agricultural purposes. These plots, known as *huasipungos*, were granted as part of the agrarian reform policy implemented in Ecuador in the 1960s. Over the years, however, many *huasipungueros* subdivided their land into smaller sections and sold them to third parties.
- (2) *Barrios arising from illegal subdivision of agricultural land.* *Hacienda* land has been subdivided into construction plots by the *hacendados* or by independent land developers, and sold to individual families without permission from official authorities. Later, "Housing Cooperatives" were artificially created by the developers to obtain legal rights and basic infrastructure from municipal authorities. The "new" housing cooperatives of Comité del Pueblo, Lucha de los Pobres and Pisulí are exceptions to this type. All three cooperatives formed on the initiative of groups in need of housing, before the *barrios* which now carry their names actually emerged. The size of construction plots in this type of *barrio* ranges from 150 to 300 m².
- (3) *Barrios arising from illegal subdivision of land in rural villages peripheral to Quito.* Land in the cores and on the outskirts of rural villages has been illegally subdivided by private individuals for urban housing. As these villages have been unable to provide adequate services and infrastructure for their rapidly increased populations, *barrio*-like settlements have emerged. The area of subdivided lots is comparable to that of type 2.

An examination of this classification shows that land has been illegally subdivided in all three types. Nevertheless, the classification system is useful because it provides specific information on the initial size of lots and on the preexistence of urban settlements.

Typologies which are based on the present-day characteristics of *barrios* and central tenements in Quito have used the following classification criteria:

- (1) *Urban mobility* (relative facility to move from the place of residence to the downtown city area). The study by CIUDAD (1985) includes all low-income settlements in Quito (i.e. *barrios* and central tenements). Mobility is measured on the combined basis of distance to downtown, availability of public transport, and quality of road infrastructure (CIUDAD,

1985). Four geographical types of low-income settlements result from this classification, ranging from those closest to downtown (e.g. central tenements) to those in semi-rural areas.

- (2) *Location*. The peripheral *barrios* of Quito are grouped into seven sectors with common geographical characteristics (location, slope, and distance to downtown; Ruiz, 1981). The result of this classification is a map showing the seven sectors, accompanied by a text describing the characteristics of each sector.

It is clear from the above review that no comprehensive typology exists for Quito's *barrios* which integrates social criteria with the physical variables. On the one hand this is understandable, since each researcher who constructs a typology has specific applications and hence emphasizes certain characteristics. On the other hand it is surprising, since a large team of French geographers with access to up-to-date data, modern computers and personnel, has recently compiled an "infographic" atlas of Quito². Presumably the *barrio* phenomenon was of no interest to them or was too complex to be tackled without extensive contacts in the field. However, even if a comprehensive classification had been attempted, further limitations would have been encountered because the statistics used for the "infographic" atlas, provided by the 1990 National Census on Population and Housing, are based on the geographic unit of "sectors" and not of individual neighbourhoods (see Chapter I for details).

Mena del Hierro: A Typical *Barrio*?

Since this study focuses on the socializing patterns of *barrio* residents, none of the above typologies of *barrios* is suited to its needs. The question of whether Mena del Hierro is a typical *barrio* will therefore have to be answered by first tailoring a classification of Quito's *barrios* to the present research aims. Unfortunately, detailed information comparable to that gathered in this study is not available for any other *barrio* in Quito, hence comparisons cannot be made on a consistent basis of purely social characteristics. Of all the variables discussed in this chapter which describe the city's *barrios*, only two appear suitable for a social typology:

- (1) *Original size of lots*. Although physical in nature, this variable is considered important because it shapes the social organization of the ensuing *barrio*. For example, large lots open the possibility for extended social structures such as kin-groups, whereas this

²Financed by the Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement et la Coopération (ORSTOM) and supported by the Instituto Geográfico Militar in Quito (IGM) and the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, Sección Ecuador (IPGH).

possibility is reduced on small lots (see Chapter V for details). Information on the original size of lots was extracted for this typology from the database compiled by the Municipality in 1992 (Dirección de Planificación, 1992a). Their coverage of 80% of the 202 *barrios* in Quito shows that there were essentially two sizes of lots: the large *huerto familiar* and *huasipungo* plots (2,500-10,000 m²) and the small lots typical of all other illegal subdivisions (150-300 m²).

- (2) *Social organization prior to the barrio's emergence.* As discussed above, many *barrios* evolved from subdivisions made by illegal land developers, but others originated from land searches by self-help organizations (e.g. the "new" housing cooperatives of Comité del Pueblo, Lucha de los Pobres, and Pisuli) or from rural villages which were engulfed by the expanding city. The pre-existing social structures in the latter two cases are important because they serve as frameworks for the social structures of the future *barrios*. For example, the literature on Latin America shows that *barrios* that emerge from collective organizations of low-income populations tend to be more active and successful in later self-help projects to improve their neighbourhoods – at least in the initial stages – than *barrios* where individual families buy lots from illegal urbanizers (Riaño Y, 1988). Information regarding pre-existing social organizations was compiled from Garcia (1985) and from interviews conducted for this study with leaders of the various *barrio* Federations. Altogether, roughly 80% of the city's *barrios* could be classified according to this variable, a similar coverage to that of original lot size.

These two selected variables have been combined in Table 2-1 to yield three types of *barrios*:

- (1) *Barrios with small lots and a preexisting form of social organization.* This type (12% of all *barrios*) includes the rural villages in the periphery of Quito that were subdivided and transformed into *barrios*, and the "new" housing cooperatives that were created in order to form *barrios*.
- (2) *Barrios with small lots and no preexisting form of social organization.* This type (60% of all *barrios*) includes the settlements which have arisen from illegal land developers selling small lots of rural land to individual families for housing.
- (3) *Barrios with large lots but no preexisting form of social organization.* In this type (28% of all *barrios*) are the subdivisions of rural land by individual owners for *huertos familiares* and *huasipungos*.

The geographical distribution of the three types of *barrios* is presented in Figure 2-16. Types 1 and 3 are found in all *barrio* areas except for the historical centre of Quito. Their absence from the centre is due to the fact that these types mostly grew out of subdivisions of former villages in the periphery of Quito or from subdivision of *haciendas*, which were for obvious

reasons located outside the historical urban centre. Type 2 *barrios*, in contrast, are found in all areas of the city, including the historical centre.

Table 2-1 Social typology of *barrios* in Quito

SIZE OF ORIGINAL LOTS	PRE-BARRIO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION	TYPE	FRACTION OF ALL <i>BARRIOS</i>
Small (150-300 m ²)	Yes	1	12%
Small (150-300 m ²)	No	2	60%
Large (2500-10,000 m ²)	No	3	28%

Mena del Hierro may be classified as Type 3, i.e. one of the *barrios* with large lots and no apparent form of previous social organization. This style of emergence is most prevalent in the northwestern part of Quito, where Mena del Hierro is located: 49% of the *barrios* in this area have evolved from *huasipungo* or *huerto familiar* subdivisions. Therefore, as far as it is possible to judge from available data on factors that initially influence socializing patterns, Mena del Hierro is typical of just over a quarter of all *barrios* in Quito.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has presented the urban context of the case study of Mena del Hierro by describing the evolution of peripheral *barrios* in Quito, as well as their social, economic and spatial characteristics. This chapter has also provided a new typology of *barrios* in Quito based on two variables that influence the future socializing patterns of *barrio* residents: the original size of lots, and the existence of social organization prior to the *barrio's* emergence. The choice of these variables was determined largely by the availability of pertinent data on Quito's 200 *barrios*.

The *barrios* of Quito have several distinctive features. They are relatively young compared with their counterparts in other large Latin American cities. The main period of expansion of peripheral *barrios* in Quito was in the 1970s, whereas expansion began in most other large cities in the 1950s and 1960s. The *barrios* of Quito are thus still evolving.

Further salient characteristics of the *barrios* of Quito are the absence of land invasions, their relatively "well-off" appearance, their serious lack of access to drinking water, and the economic heterogeneity of their residents, which vary from low-income labourers to middle-class business owners.

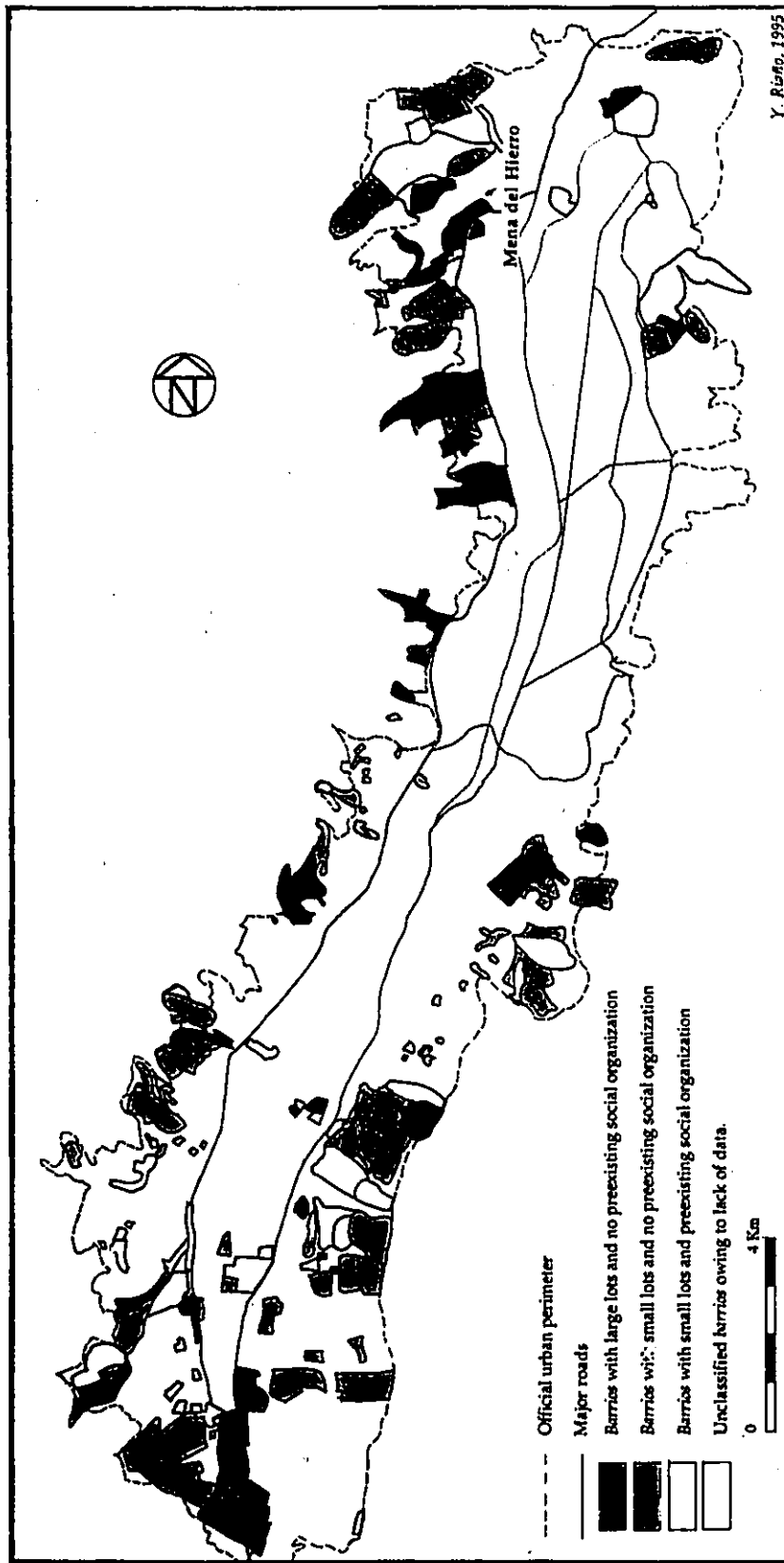


Figure 2.16 Social typology of barrios in Quito proposed for this study. (Based on: Dirección de Planificación, vol. 6, 1992; García, J., 1985; and barrio leaders).

Barrios in the northwest of Quito, where Mena del Hierro is located, are characterized by the striking diversity of their housing. Low-income to upper- middle class housing spatially coexists within individual settlements. This makes *barrios* in the northwest difficult to characterize from an economic point of view.

The northwestern *barrios* have much lower population densities than other *barrios* in Quito and elsewhere. Therefore there is still much room for urban expansion. Residential and agricultural activities dominate, whereas commerce and industry are subordinate. These patterns of density and land use are presumably explained by the original large size of lots in nearly half of the *barrios* and by their relatively young age.

A social typology of *barrios* has been established in this chapter based on factors which initially influence socializing patterns (original lot size and pre-*barrio* social organization). According to this, Mena del Hierro is typical of over a quarter of all *barrios* in Quito. Therefore we may assume that the results obtained in this case study have some validity for at least this fraction of the city's *barrios*.

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CHAPTER III

HISTORY, SOCIODEMOGRAPHY AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MENA DEL HIERRO

Setting the scene for social interaction

INTRODUCTION

The degree to which the social and spatial organization of a group facilitates or constrains communication between its members has been a subject of scholarly debate for several decades. The discussion is of primary interest in the present study, as one of the main aims is to elucidate the social interaction patterns of Mena del Hierro's residents. Some of the principal arguments of the debate are presented below.

The influence of physical setting on social communication and spatial behaviour has interested a spectrum of disciplines, including architecture, planning, psychology, geography, sociology and anthropology (Proshansky et al., 1970). A review of pertinent literature by Antipas (1982) shows that interpretations have varied from belief in the absolute influence of spatial organization on people's lives and behaviour, to refusal to attribute any importance to it at all. The latter is often favoured by authors who take a political stance in arguing that society must be changed fundamentally, and that the variable of spatial organization is "non-essential" in this process.

Less radical authors like Rapoport (1988) argue that the built environment does not determine behaviour but is either "inhibiting or supportive". There is a consensus in the literature that the built environment only plays a role when social conditions allow it to. For Keller (1968) for example, the built environment may play a significant role when group members are socially and personally compatible. Festinger et al. (1963) postulate that the spatial organization of housing can be a major determinant in the development of friendships when group members are socially homogeneous with respect to certain factors. These include economic activity, social status, and residential permanency. In such a case spatial as well as functional proximity will strongly influence the development of friendships.

Further conditions of social homogeneity thought to be necessary by other authors: age, gender, social class, type of social activities, size of group, the need for mutual assistance (Gans, 1968), available time (Keller, 1968), and the attitude of group members regarding relations with neighbours (Kuper, 1970). This latter is of importance for Michelson (1970), who points out that people with a cosmopolitan way of life often desire to be separated from their neighbours and hence give less importance to geographical proximity than do people with local interests. These two types of residents are defined by Buttimer (1972) as "urbanites" and "localites".

In summary, social and spatial organization play a joint role in favouring or restraining social communication. Several questions may therefore be posed for the case of Mena del Hierro: What are the characteristics of its social and spatial organization? Do the factors cited in previous studies influence the nature of communication between residents?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a field-based description of (1) the emergence of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro, (2) the sociodemographic characteristics of its residents, and (3) the main features of the built environment. The immediate aim of this description is to provide a foundation for analyses in later chapters which identify the relative influence of the *barrio's* history, sociodemography, and spatial organization, on the social relations of residents and on their behaviour in public spaces. The wider aim of this description is to contribute to the limited literature on field studies of the social and physical environments of *barrios*. Much of the general literature has placed more emphasis on the processes of how illegal settlements emerge than on the characteristics of the urban environments themselves (Rapoport, 1988 p.52). This is also true for literature Quito and for Latin America as a whole (IIED, 1987). Hitherto, little field work has been carried out which attempts to integrate the social and spatial aspects of *barrios*, and basic maps and up-to-date statistics are scarce.

LOCATION AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MENA DEL HIERRO

Mena del Hierro is located on the northwestern edge of Quito above the Avenida Occidental, the ring road which connects the area with the downtown business centre to the south, and which has the most fluid traffic in the city (Figs. 2-8 and 3-1). Mena del Hierro occupies sloping land on the foothills of the Pichincha volcano at an elevation of 2900 m, high above the level of the city's water-supply reservoirs (Fig. 3-2).

The neighbourhood defined by the Municipality as Mena del Hierro is actually composed of two socially distinct sectors with contrasting socioeconomic levels. The present study focuses on the lower-income sector on the southwestern side of Mena del Hierro. A discussion of

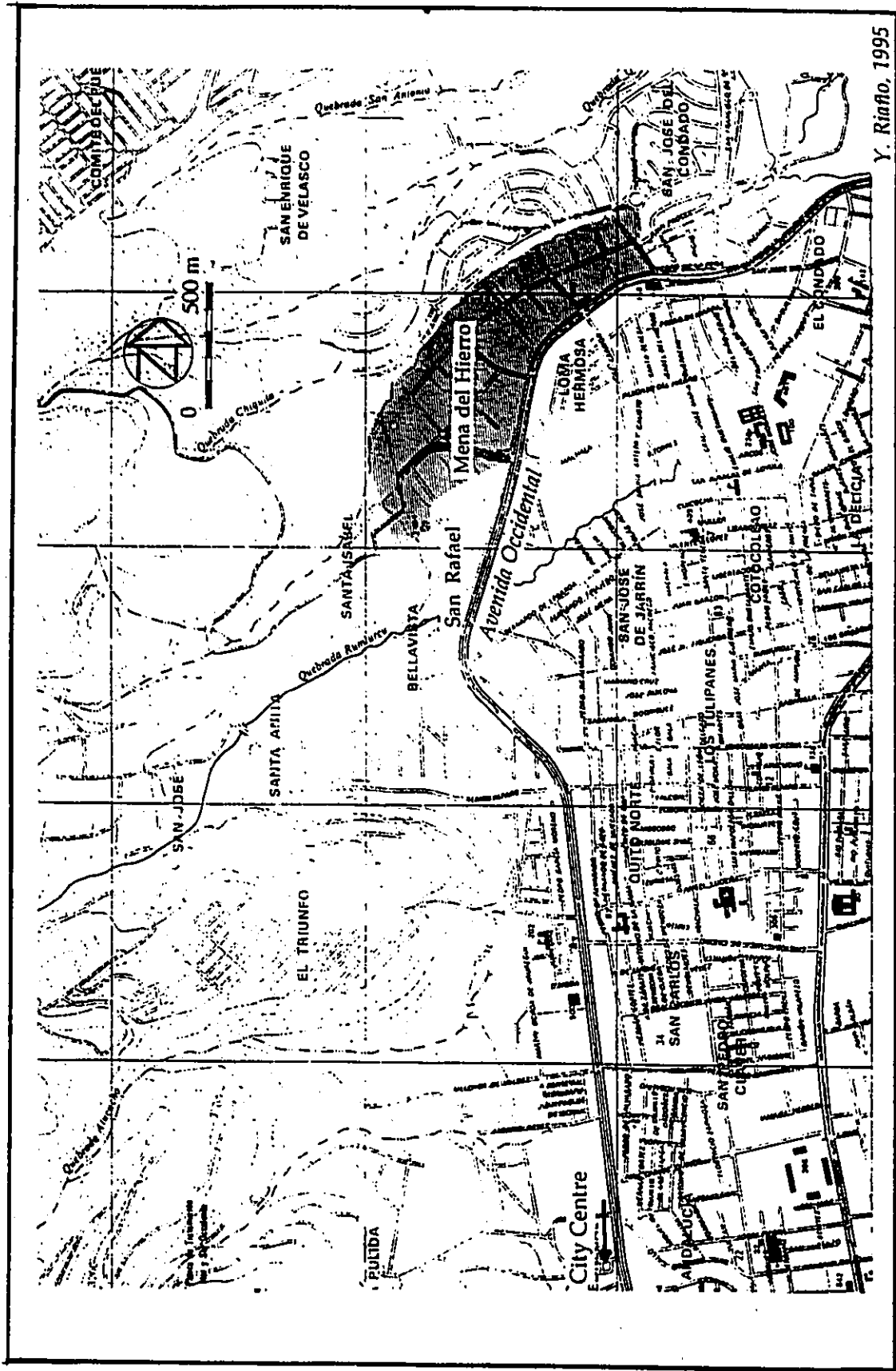


Figure 3-1. The location of Mena del Hierro in the northwest of Quito. (Source: Map of Quito, IGM).



Figure 3-2. The location of Mena del Hierro at the foothills of the Pichincha volcano (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

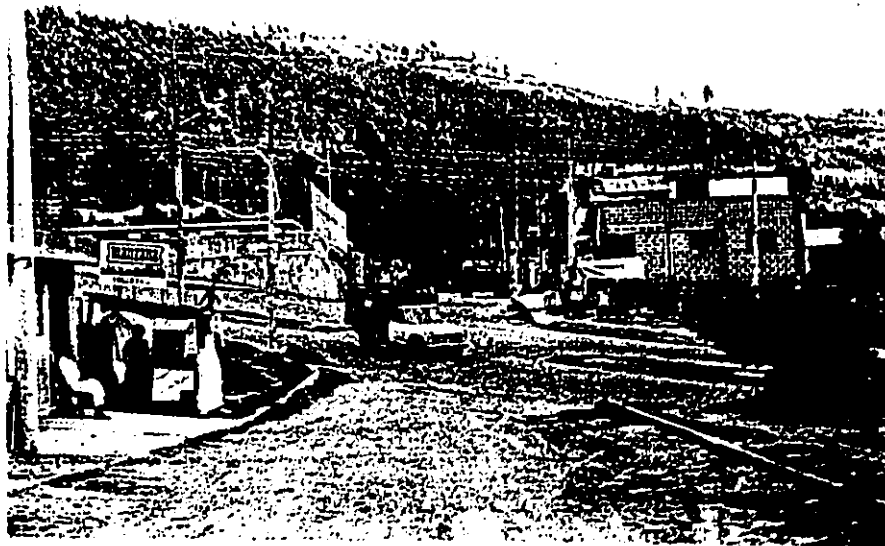


Figure 3-3. The housing and infrastructure of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

exactly how the boundaries between the two sectors are recognized, and exactly where the boundaries run, is deferred to another section of this chapter (Definition of the Area of Study). To make the distinction between the sectors clear in the following text, the lower-income area is henceforth referred to as "popular Mena del Hierro" or simply "*barrio* Mena del Hierro." The entire urban area defined by the Municipality is referred to as "administrative Mena del Hierro".

There is no public transport to popular Mena del Hierro, sewerage, water and street lighting are only partially installed, streets are steep and unsurfaced¹, and unpleasant amounts of dust accumulate in the air, particularly in the dry season. However, Mena del Hierro is not a *barrio* of despair. Despite its poor infrastructure, houses in the *barrio* are of very good quality: they are relatively large and have a modern appearance, they are all connected to Quito's electrical supply, and they are situated on very large sections of land (Fig. 3-3).

From an environmental point of view, the location of Mena del Hierro is exceptional. The *barrio* overlooks the spectacular and varied topography of Ecuador's highland volcanic belt, dominated by the peak of Cayambe (Fig. 3-4). The slope of Pichincha mountain behind the *barrio* (Fig. 3-5) is green and rich in groundwater, and its soils of fine volcanic ash are suitable for agriculture and clay brickworks. The area is free of industrial pollution but threatened by natural hazards. The entire northeastern flank of the Pichincha volcano, including Mena del Hierro and many other *barrios*, has been officially identified as being at risk from mud-slides caused by volcanic eruptions (Fig. 3-6).

The neighbourhoods that immediately surround Mena del Hierro are examples of the spatial coexistence of socially heterogeneous areas which typify the northwestern part of Quito. San Rafael (Fig. 3-7) and Santa Isabel (Fig. 3-8), on the south side of Mena del Hierro, correspond to the lowest socioeconomic level of *barrios*, whereas San José del Condado, on the north side, represents the most exclusive level of high-income neighbourhoods in Quito. Popular Mena del Hierro itself is classified in the lower-middle socioeconomic level.

The closest commercial centre to Mena del Hierro is Cotocollao (Fig. 3-9) at a distance of fifteen minutes by foot. As a middle-class area, Cotocollao provides an adequate supply of goods and services for its residents. Cotocollao has a long-standing tradition as a commercial and religious centre, even before Inca times² (Fine, 1991). This tradition continues today for populations of diverse ethnic and regional origin. For example, Cotocollao has one of the largest grocery markets in Quito where goods from all over the country are traded. Spanish,

1 Some streets were surfaced after field work was completed. Recent changes will be described below in the section on infrastructure and services.

2 The historical importance of Cotocollao has been recognized by the Municipality of Quito by being officially designated a cultural heritage zone deserving protection of its architecture and cultural traditions.

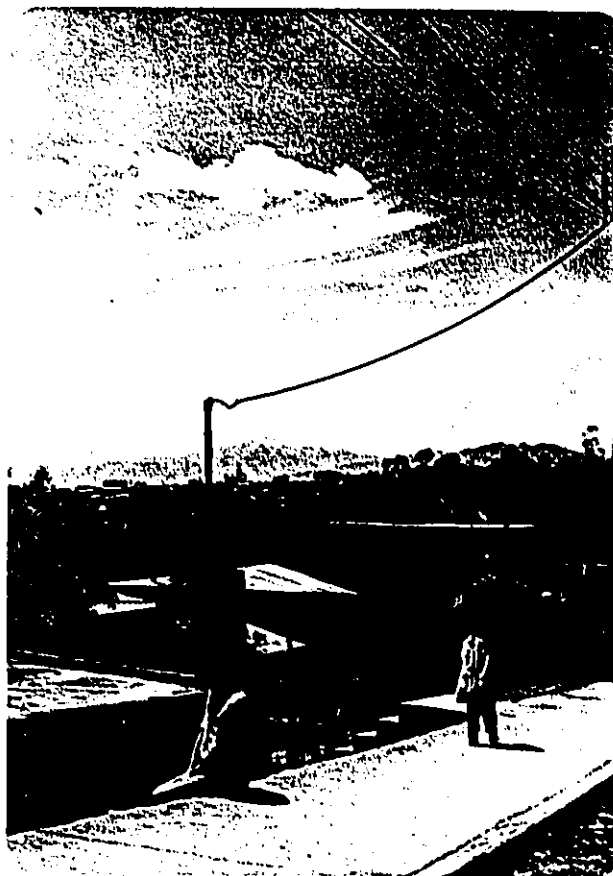


Figure 3-4. View of the Cayambe volcano from the *barrio* Mena del Hierro (northeast).
(Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).



Figure 3-5 View of the Pichincha volcano from the *barrio* Mena del Hierro (northwest).
(Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

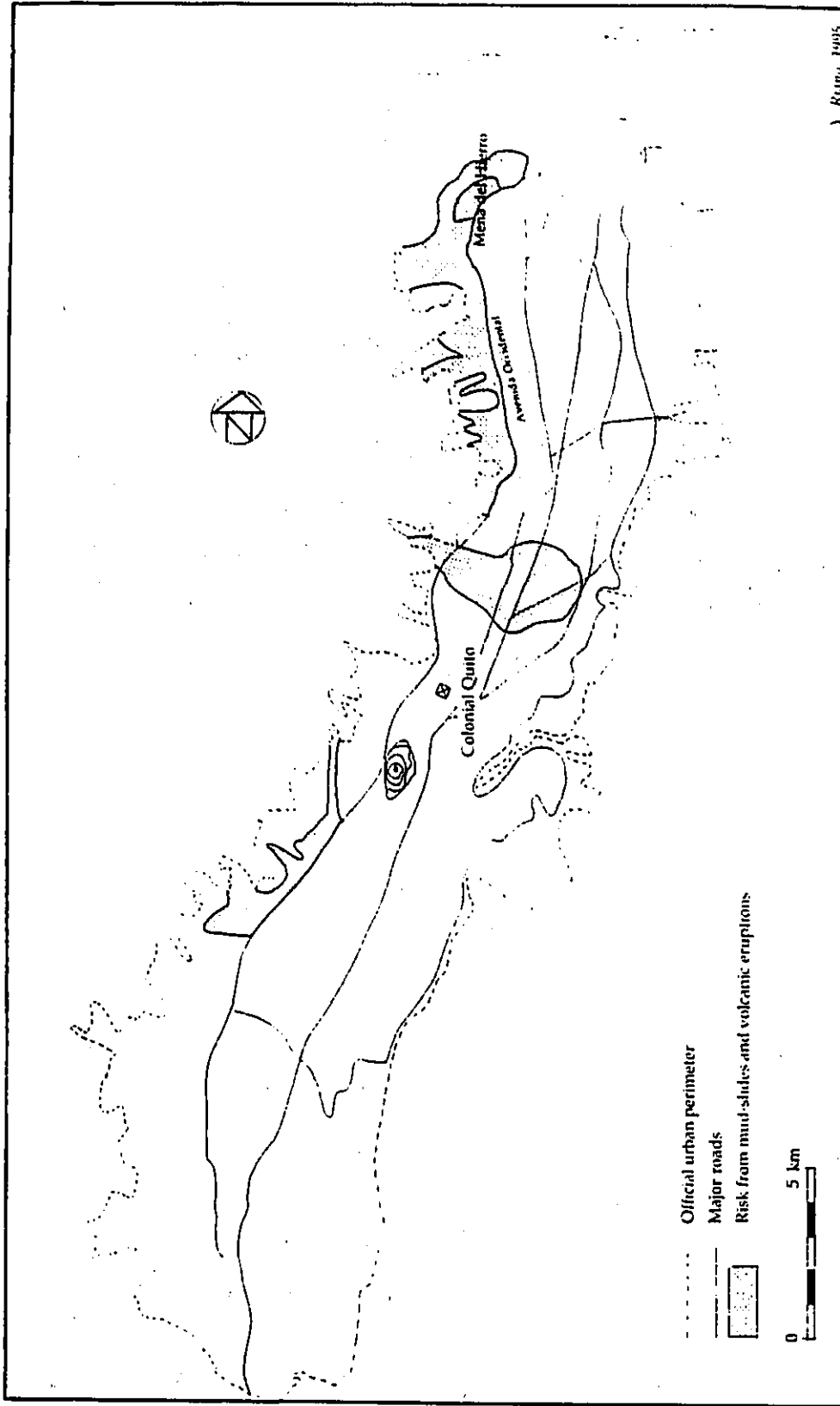


Figure 3-6. The location of Mena del Hierro in an area of natural risk from mud-slides and volcanic eruptions (Source: Dirección de Planificación, Municipality of Quito, vol. 23, 1992)



Figure 3-7. The neighbouring low-income *barrio* of San Rafael (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 3-8. The neighbouring low-income *barrio* of Santa Isabel (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

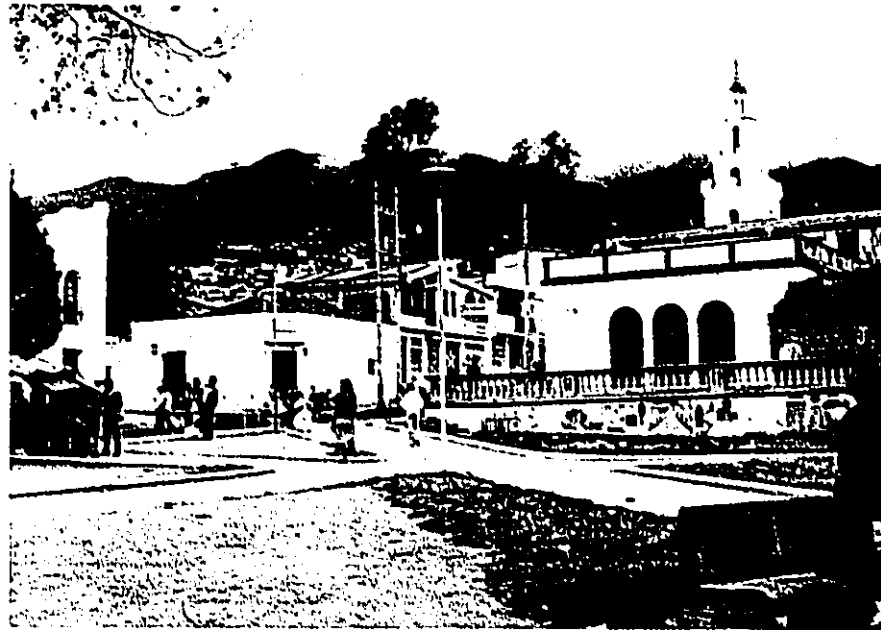


Figure 3-9. The commercial and religious centre of Cotacollao. The northwestern *barrios* are in the background (above). (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).



Indian and ethnic ceremonies (e.g. Easter celebrations, the masked dances of the *yumbos* and the *negritos*) are celebrated in the public spaces of Cotocollao as testimony of the symbolic importance that Cotocollao has held for various populations over the years.

THE HACIENDAS AND THE EMERGENCE OF BARRIO MENA DEL HIERRO

Mena del Hierro evolved from the parcelling of the *Hacienda La Concepción*, a 250 hectare farm holding³ formerly devoted to forestry and dairy pasture. Its milk production was commercialized directly through dairy retailers (*lecherías*) of Quito⁴. As can be seen in Figure 3-10, the setting of the *Hacienda* was strictly rural at the end of the 1950s. Cotocollao provided food supplies for the *Hacienda* and served as commercial, religious and industrial⁵ centre.

The village of San Rafael, which according to old residents has existed for nearly eighty years, was of some economic importance as a stopover point for travellers on the road to Nono and the northwestern part of Pichincha Province, and ultimately to the Pacific coast. Residents of San Rafael combined agriculture with the sale of home-made alcohol and *tortillas* for travellers. Several labourers of *La Concepción* lived in San Rafael⁶, whereas others lived in the *Hacienda* itself, under the old feudal system of right to use a portion of land for living and cultivating in exchange for labour⁷.

The administrative, physical and economic changes that started taking place in the 1960s, however, transformed this state of affairs. Cotocollao, formerly a village on the outskirts of Quito, became part of the capital city by the early 1960s. The National Programme of

3 Information on the *hacienda* La Concepción was obtained from an interview with Fabián del Hierro, a nephew of the *hacienda* owners and inheritor of the *hacienda's* residence. This residence is situated in the lower part of Mena del Hierro and is inhabited today by Fabián del Hierro's family. The owners of La Concepción are the siblings Alfonso del Hierro Portilla and Isabel del Hierro de Mena (the latter is the wife of Alberto Mena Caamaño, a prominent figure in the aristocratic society of Quito and founder of the Alberto Mena Caamaño art museum). This family also owned another *hacienda* in the area of Nono, approximately 1 hour away by road.

4 The *haciendas* in the northern part of Quito originated in colonial times. The Spanish Crown awarded the land in the area of Cotocollao to "citizens of importance" (certainly not the Indians), because the land was good for agriculture and relatively close to Quito. By the 19th century most of the area was subdivided into large *haciendas*. By the beginning of the 20th century several prominent families, such as that of the President of the Republic, had holiday properties in the area (Fine, 1991, p. 96).

5 Cotocollao was also a centre of pottery production (Fine, 1991). The facility to carry out this activity is probably also explained by the presence of a soil rich in fine volcanic ash. This kind of soil is known as *chocoto*, a word of Indian origin.

6 Information on life in San Rafael was provided by Rosario Quilapa de la Cruz, an elderly resident of San Rafael and daughter of a former labourer of the *Hacienda*.

7 Labourers on the *Hacienda* were mostly Indians. According to Fabián del Hierro, traditional Indian celebrations were still practiced in the *Hacienda* around the 1930s. An example is the *Jekchigua* celebration dedicated to the sun God in gratefulness for the harvest.

Agrarian Reform forced *Hacienda* owners to give portions of their land to their labourers and thus in the late 1960s part of *La Concepción* was subdivided into small holdings. By the beginning of the 1970s the route of the regional road to Nono had changed. The old steep stretch of road through San Rafael was bypassed completely by a new road which looped up through the *Hacienda's* land, following the original farm tracks (Fig. 3-11). This rerouting of the *Via a Nono* suddenly raised the economic value of the *Hacienda*.

During the same period Quito's population grew to 400,000 (Carrión, 1986) and the city started to expand towards the north, approaching the *Hacienda La Concepción* (Fig. 3-12). The increase in revenues created by Ecuador's oil boom of the 1970s led to the decision by municipal authorities to build the *Avenida Occidental*. This was to be the highway connecting the northwest of Quito with downtown and it was planned to cut right through the lower part of *La Concepción*, linking with *Via a Nono* along the way. The improved connection to Quito increased the economic value of the *Hacienda* land yet again.

The owners of the *Hacienda* were now in a dilemma. Dairy farming had become less profitable owing to relatively low prices for milk and to increased costs of production, in response to a new trend to mechanized farming. The *Hacienda* was short on capital for investment in machinery, and it was also short of irrigation water. Against the backdrop of these changes in land prices and farming profitability, the only option open to the owners was to change the use of their land from rural to urban. However, developing the *Hacienda* for urban purposes, such as the high-earning formal housing market, was not immediately feasible. On the one hand, municipal regulations did not permit urbanization because the *Hacienda* lay outside the official urban perimeter of Quito. This precluded the necessary drinking water for such a housing project from being supplied by the municipality. On the other hand, urbanizing the steep *Hacienda* land was extremely costly.

By this time there was much demand for low-income housing from migrants who had come to Quito during the oil boom in search of economic opportunities. These populations were prepared to move to an area without any infrastructure as long as they could buy land cheaper than in the formal housing market. The *Hacienda* owners were surely aware of this situation and they found the solution to their dilemma in the municipality's allowance of subdivision into *huertos familiares*, or family vegetable gardens, without any requirements of infrastructure or provision of services. The owners obtained an official land-use permit from the municipality on the condition that the subdivision would continue to be used for agricultural purposes (i.e. vegetable gardens) and that the minimum size of lots would be kept to 2,500 m². Thus in 1972 the *Hacienda* was parcelled out into *huertos familiares*, and the new subdivision was named the *Lotización La Concepción*⁸.

⁸ The subdivision of *Lotización La Concepción* was officially carried out by the Foundation Mena Caamaño del Hierro Portilla. According to Fabián del Hierro, the motive of his family to subdivide

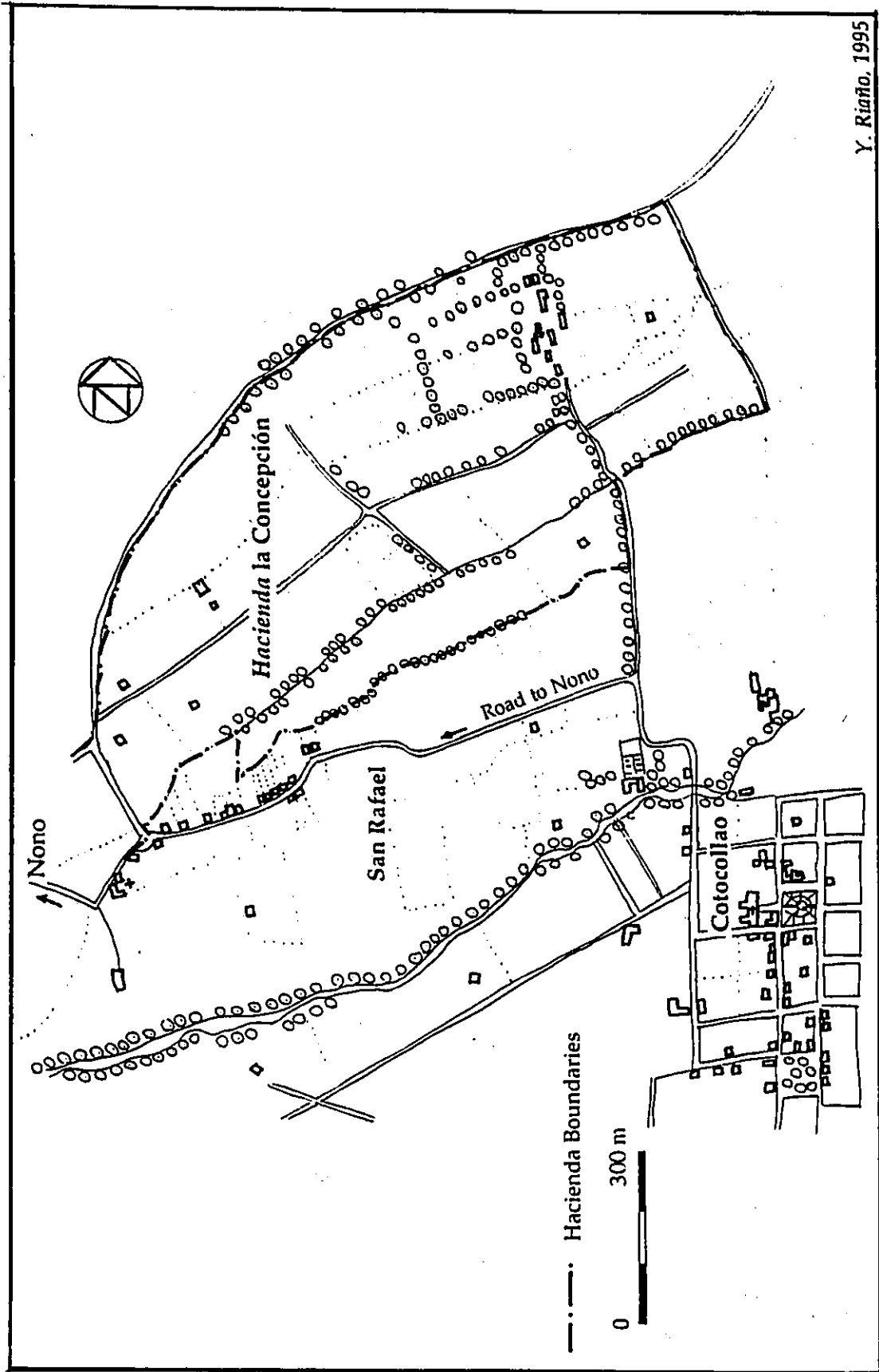


Figure 3-10. The area of the Hacienda La Concepción in 1956. Note the village of San Rafael, the regional road to Nono, and the religious and commercial centre of Cotocollao. (Source: Aerial Photograph Hycon 15: 05, IGM).

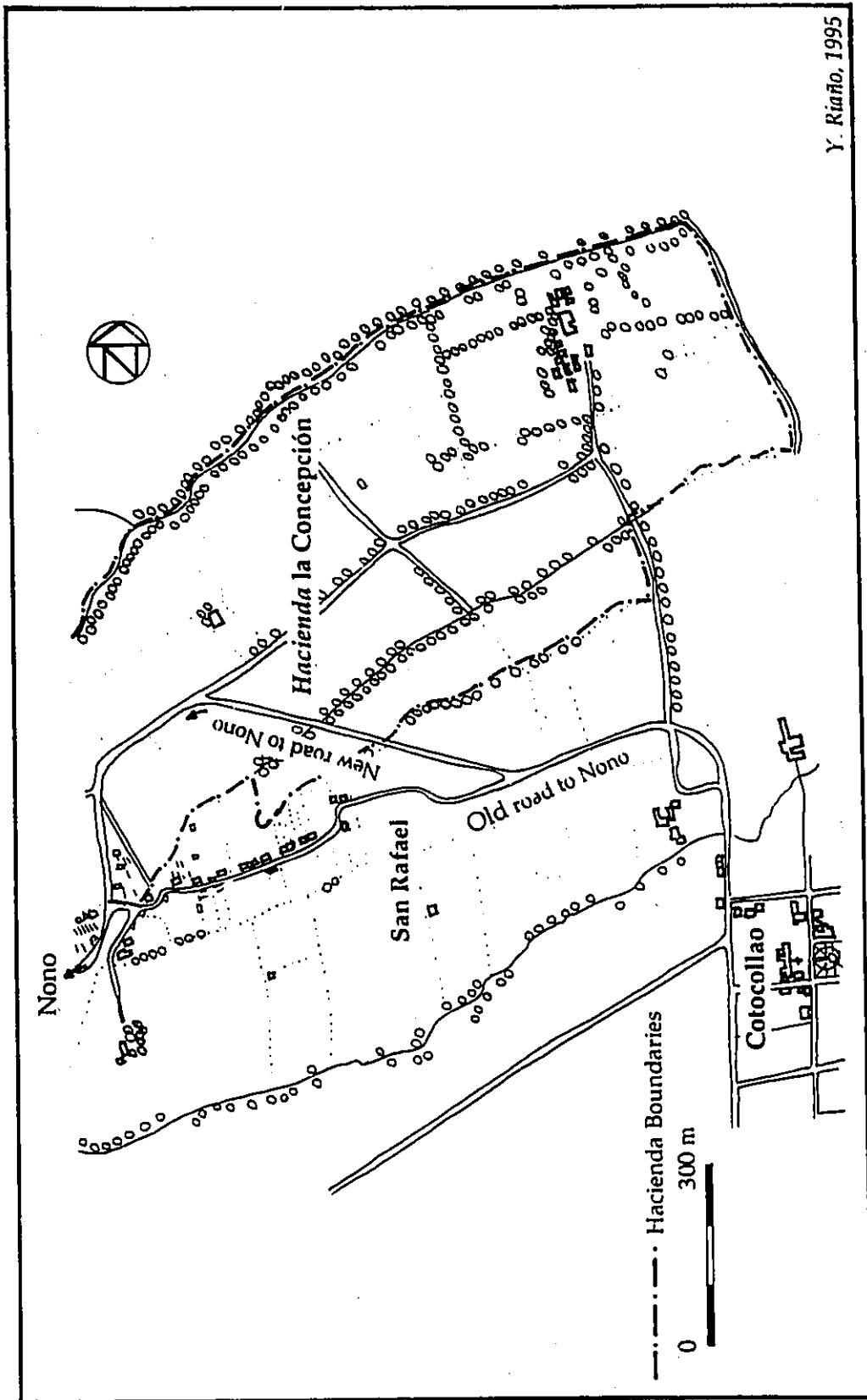
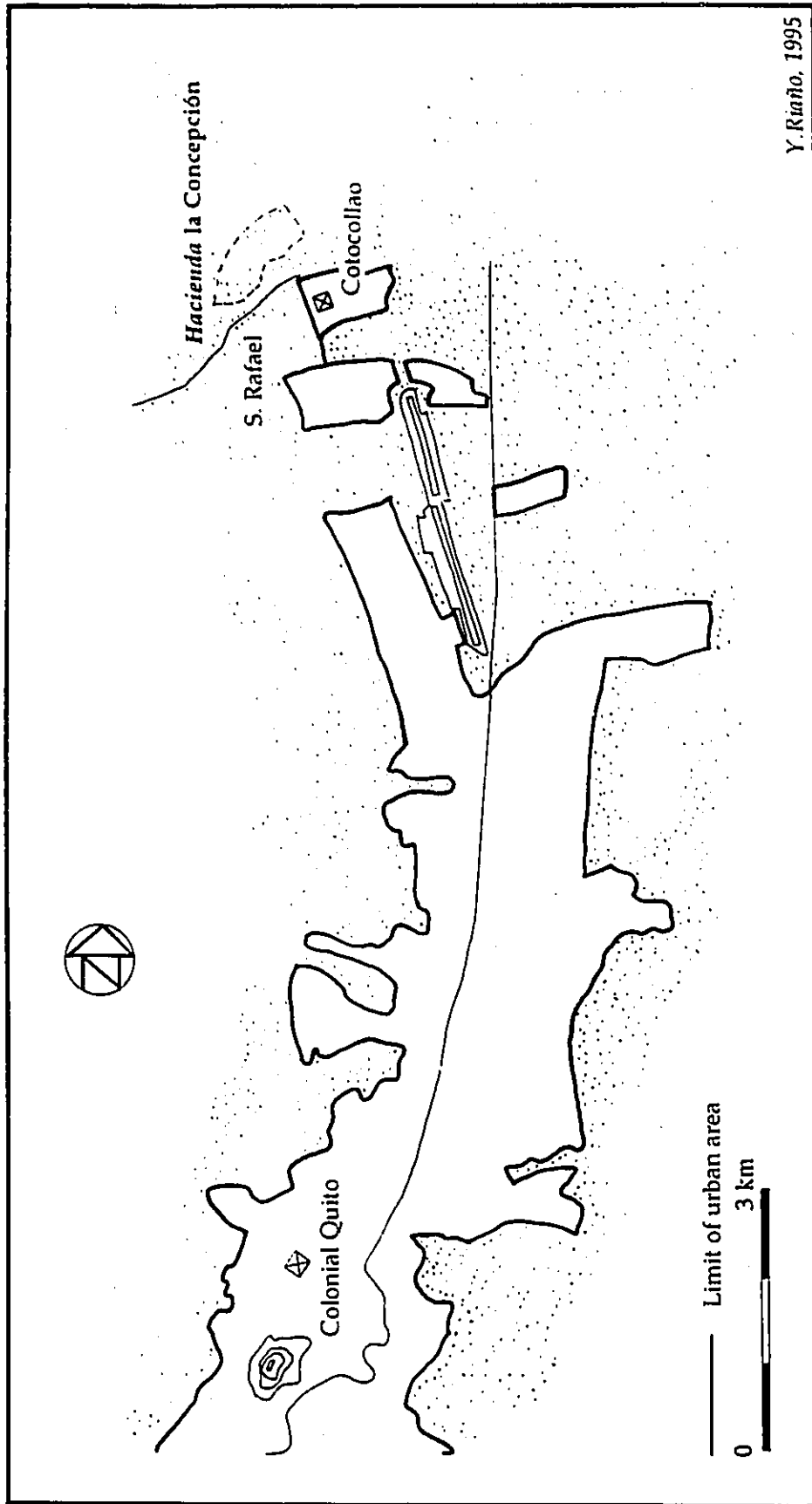


Figure 3-11. The area of the hacienda La Concepción in 1970. Note the change of course of the regional road to Nono away from San Rafael. (Source: Aerial Photographs 102-129 and 102-042, IGM).



Y. Riarño, 1995

Figure 3-12. The 1970 urban expansion of Quito approaches the limits of the Hacienda La Concepción. (Source: Lozano, 1991 (Plano 13) and Aerial Photographs 102-129 and 102-042, IGM).

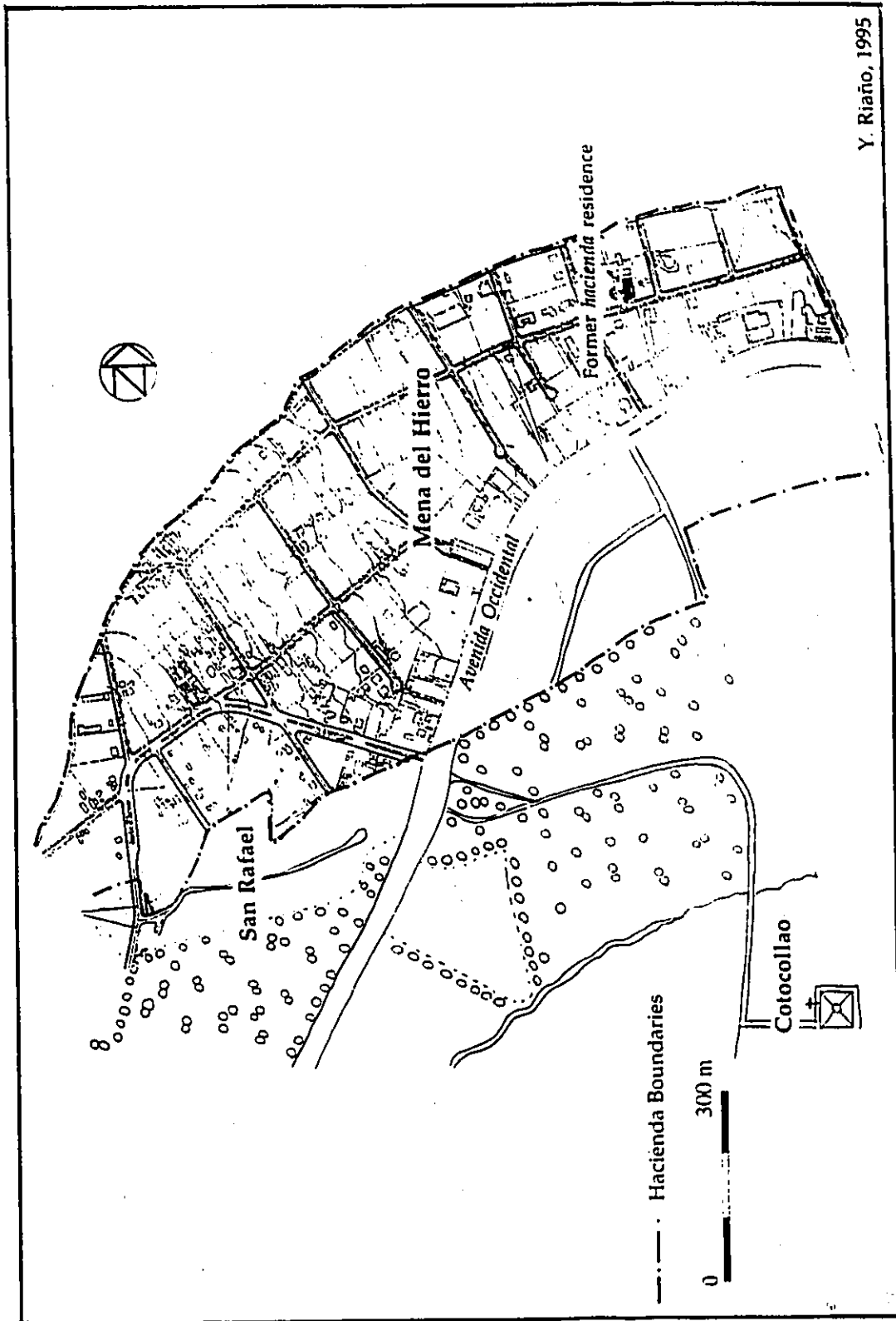


Figure 3-13. The neighbourhood of Mena del Hierro in the former area of the Hacienda La Concepción 1985. Note that the roads in this map appear only as planned, not as they actually existed. (Source: Municipio de Quito, Dirección de Planificación).

In practice, however, soon after the plots were acquired, the new owners started subdividing them and using them for urban housing. In the majority of cases, related migrant families formed groups to buy *huertos familiares* lots collectively and then subdivided them between themselves. In other cases, informal land developers bought lots for later illegal subdivision and resale at a considerable profit.

The name *Lotización La Concepción* soon was replaced by *Mena del Hierro*, after the *Hacienda* foundation (Mena Caamaño del Hierro Portilla) which implemented the subdivision. Thus within a few years the originally legal *Lotización La Concepción* yielded the illegal settlement of Mena del Hierro, where no infrastructure or services other than dirt roads were present (Fig. 3-13). Today, the entire area around the former *Hacienda* has been absorbed by the urban expansion of Quito (Fig. 3-14). The only traces of its rural past are the complex of buildings including the *Hacienda's* residence and the village of San Rafael, transformed today into a *barrio* of Quito.

SOCIAL AND SPATIAL CONSEQUENCES OF SUBDIVIDING HACIENDA LA CONCEPCION

The subdivision of *Hacienda La Concepción* has had social and spatial consequences for the local area, and together with the subdivisions of other *haciendas* in the northwest, it has also affected Quito as a whole. Coupled with the change in route of the road to Nono and the construction of the Avenida Occidental, the subdivision of the *Hacienda* changed the lives of the residents of San Rafael forever. The village lost its economic importance as a stopping point along the road to Nono, and the value of its land fell. The cessation of dairy farming on the *Hacienda* left many residents of San Rafael, who were labourers in the *Hacienda*, without a source of income.

Moreover, the construction of the Avenida Occidental permanently isolated San Rafael. Its spatial link with Cotacollao was completely severed, and the village was left perched on a high ridge, accessible from the Avenida Occidental only by climbing a steep, two-storey staircase (Fig. 3-15). Subsequent urbanization in the area transformed San Rafael into a *barrio* of Quito and brought new populations which have little in common with the old. Thus, the city of Quito "arrived" at the village of San Rafael and transformed it against the will of its inhabitants. The lack of participation of the residents in any of these urban processes has turned the residents into an apathetic group who live with a feeling of failure and abandonment by the rest of the world (see attached video "*Una parte de mi vida*") (Fig. 3-16). Today San Rafael has one of the lowest income levels of all the *barrios* in the area, and it still lacks most infrastructure, despite the fact that it has existed for nearly a century.

The subdivision of *La Concepción* into an illegal development is not an isolated case, but rather is typical of the northwestern part of Quito. Practically all the *barrios* in the northwest have resulted from illegal subdivisions of *Haciendas*, either indirectly via *huertos familiares*, or directly (Fig. 2-16, Chapter II). This process of subdivision, which started in the 1970s, altered Quito's traditional spatial pattern of residential segregation. Up until then, low-income populations had been living in the south, the least desirable area for housing, and upper-middle and high-income populations had dominated the north, the area with the most favourable environmental conditions.

The future expansion of low-income populations in the northwest is limited, however. The changes that have been taking place since the 1980s have improved the economic value of the area. The completion of the Avenida Occidental, the rise of high-income developments, and the construction of the large and exclusive commercial mall *El Bosque* have made the area attractive for high-income populations. For these reasons, the northwest of Quito is now economically heterogeneous (Fig. 2-13, Chapter II). The consequent displacement of low-income populations in the northwest has already started, especially along the northern flanks of the Avenida Occidental. Low-income populations are presently being pushed to the steeper parts of the northwest, away from the Avenida. Thus, the spatial patterns of residential segregation in Quito are not static but are constantly evolving in response to a combination of formal and informal forces.

DEFINITION OF THE AREA OF STUDY: PERCEIVED VERSUS ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

The illegal housing produced by the *Lotización La Concepción* in 1972 was legalized in 1985 and officially accepted as part of Quito. Two administrative units have emerged from the original parcelling of the *Hacienda*: Mena del Hierro and Loma Hermosa. The reasons for this division are the following. The original *huertos familiares* subdivision of *La Concepción* comprised 239 lots, the majority of which (177) were located to the west of the planned Avenida Occidental and the remaining 62 to the east. At the time of the original subdivision (1972) the Avenida Occidental was under construction.

The completion of the Avenida Occidental in the late 1970s split the *Lotización La Concepción* into two fractions, each of which acquired a different name: Mena del Hierro (the larger part of approximately 40 ha, located west of the Occidental) and Loma Hermosa⁹ (the smaller part east of the Occidental). The Avenida is a high speed, 4-lane highway and where it

⁹ Information from an interview with Jorge Novoa and Raul Solís, pioneer residents of Mena del Hierro.

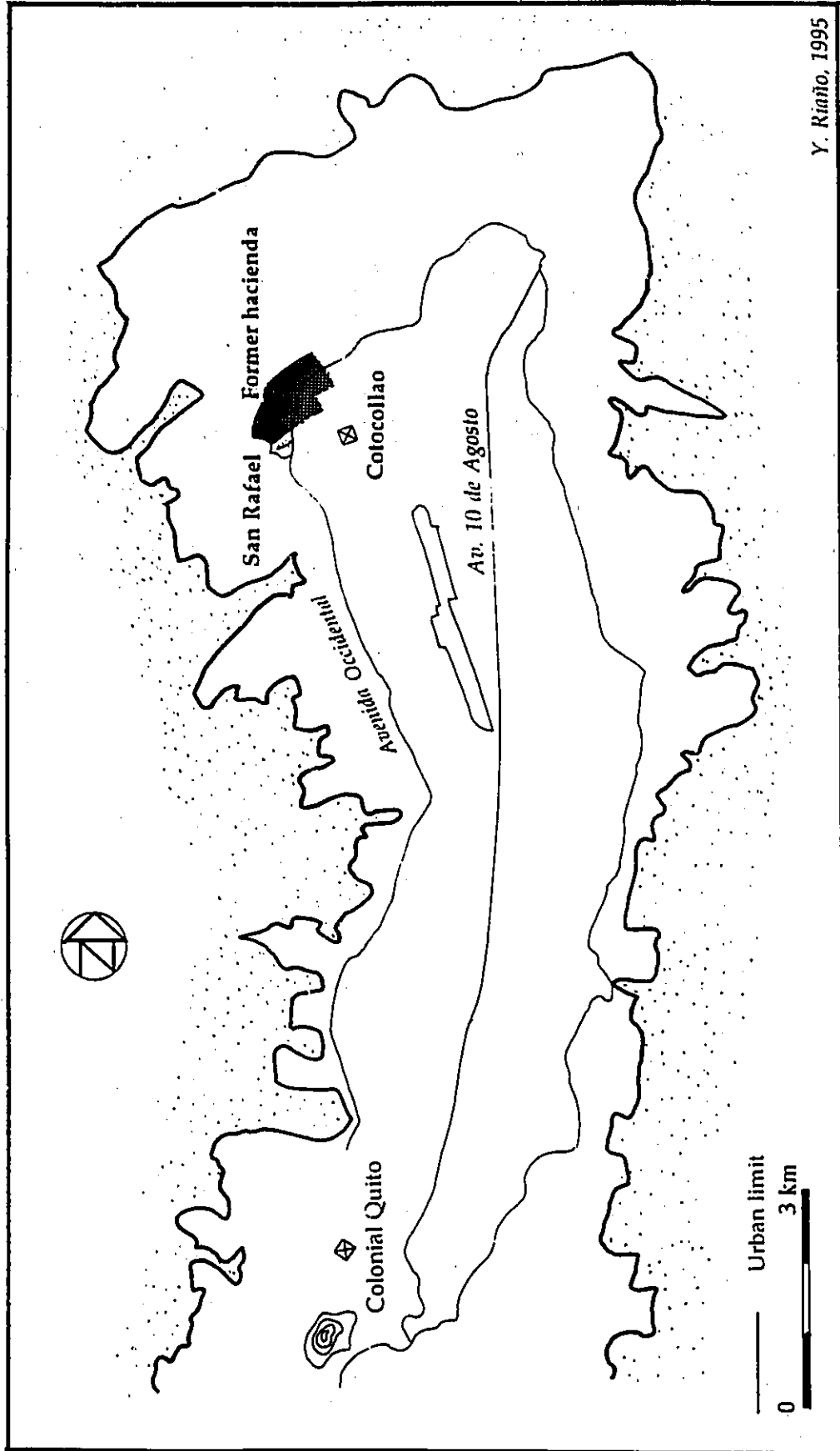


Figure 3-14. The former hacienda La Concepción has been absorbed by the urban expansion of Quito and transformed into the urban settlement of Mena del Hierro, 1992. (Source: Dirección de Planificación, Map 02, Vol. 23).



Figure 3-15. The geographical isolation of the former village of San Rafael by the construction of the Avenida Occidental. The spatial link with the centre of Cotocollao has been severed. Access to San Rafael is only possible through a staircase (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

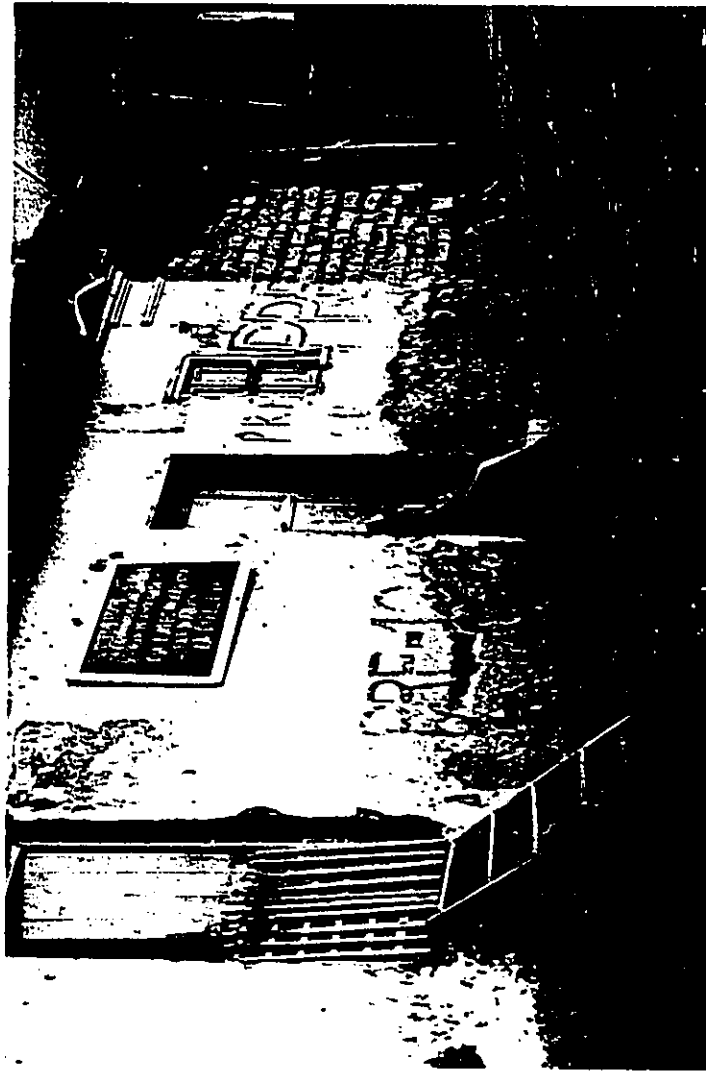


Figure 3-16. The transformation of the village of San Rafael into a *barrio* of Quito (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

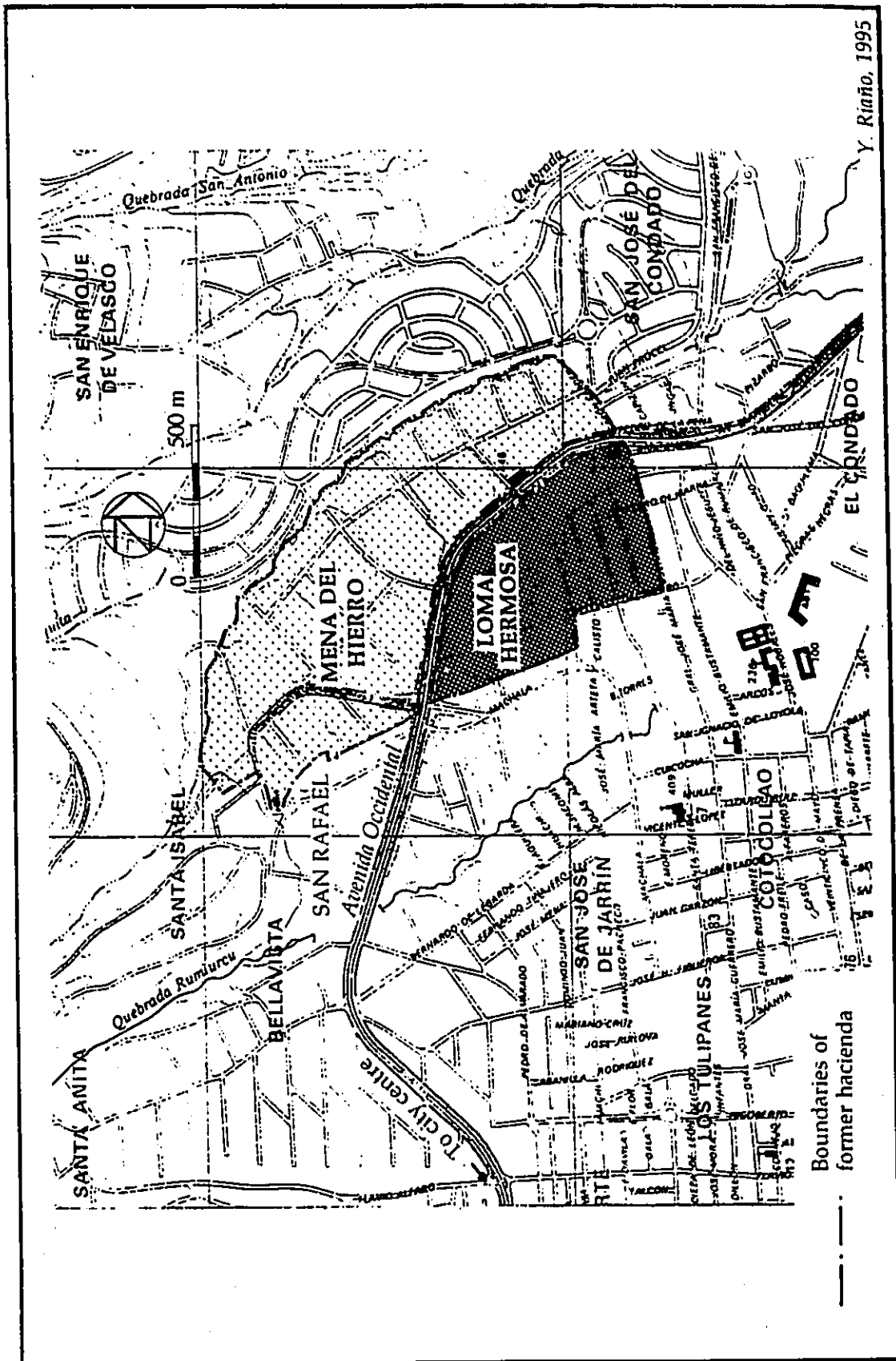


Figure 3-17. The administrative urban units of Mena del Hierro and Loma Hermosa in the former area of the hacienda La Concepción, 1991. (Source: Map of Quito, IGM).

passes between Mena del Hierro and Loma Hermosa there are neither foot bridges nor pedestrian crossings. Hence from the moment the highway was built, social communication ceased between the two fractions, and they have developed since as quite distinct *barrios*. Figure 3-17 shows the former limits of the *Hacienda*, the administrative areas of Mena del Hierro (1983) and Loma Hermosa, the *barrio* San Rafael and the centre of Cotocollao.

The administrative area of Mena del Hierro is not socially homogeneous, despite its clear official boundaries. There are two socially distinct areas within this administrative unit. The socioeconomic level of residents and the characteristics of housing in the southern, steeper part of Mena del Hierro (of approximately 40 *huertos familiares* lots) is much lower than that of the northern, lower part (approx. 140 lots), where high-income populations inhabit expensive residences set in very large lots (Figs. 3-18 and 3-19). In fact there is an invisible boundary between these two areas across which there is no social contact between residents.

The reasons for these marked differences are historical. *Huertos familiares* lots were sold in two stages. Those in the southern, steeper part were sold in an initial phase in the early 1970s. Lots located in the northern lower part, in contrast, near the *Hacienda's* residence and the exclusive *El Condado* Golf Club, were sold approximately ten years later. As there was no basic infrastructure available during the initial phase, the lots were sold at low prices and thus were acquired by low-income families, many of whom had migrated from the hinterland northwest of Quito.

By the time the second group of lots was sold the *Avenida Occidental* had been completed and several facilities were available, including the drinking water supply set up by the collective self-help organization of the pioneer residents. These improved lots were mostly acquired by high-income populations. Today, not only is there no social contact between these two distinct populations, but the residents of the lower-income Mena del Hierro also perceive that the "*ricachos*" (derogatory word for the rich in northern Mena del Hierro) have taken advantage of their self-help efforts to acquire basic infrastructure. I chose for my study the lower-income part of Mena del Hierro.

In order to verify my original observation of the existence of two distinct social areas within the administrative unit of Mena del Hierro, I asked a key informant (Pablo Cañar, a young man who was born in the lower-income part of Mena del Hierro and who worked with me in the video workshop) to draw me a map of "his neighbourhood". He produced a fascinating map which confirmed the existence of two separate social areas in Mena del Hierro (Fig. 3-20). For this young resident, "his neighbourhood" consisted exclusively of the southern part of Mena del Hierro, the lower-income area. These perceived limits were the obvious result of his having lived in an area where he knew practically every house and every family.

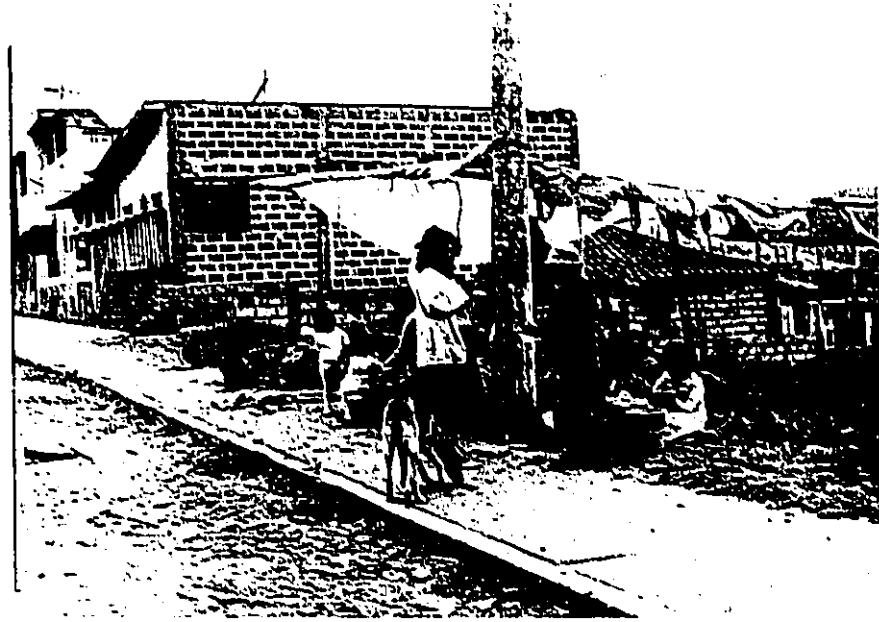


Figure 3-18. The lower income part of Mena del Hierro (south side) (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

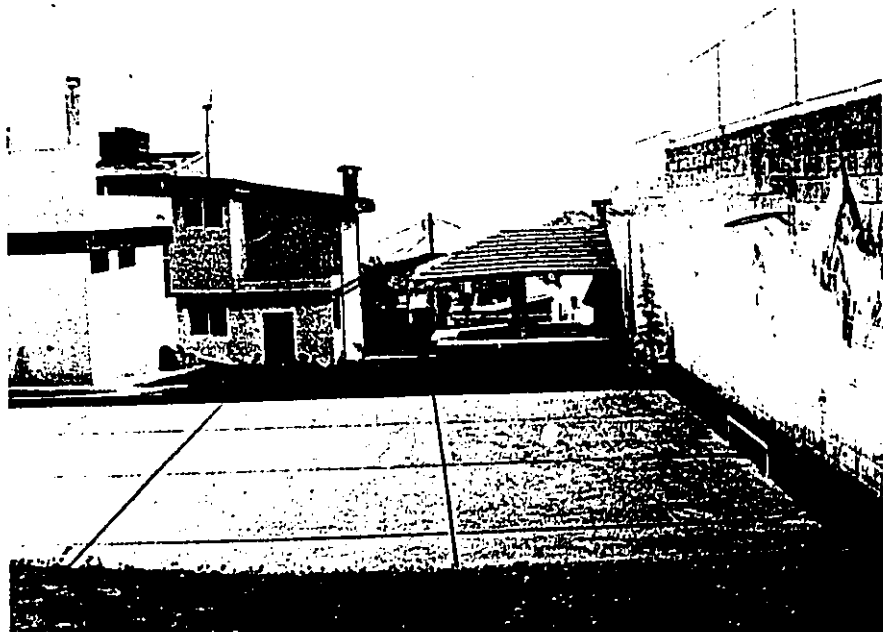
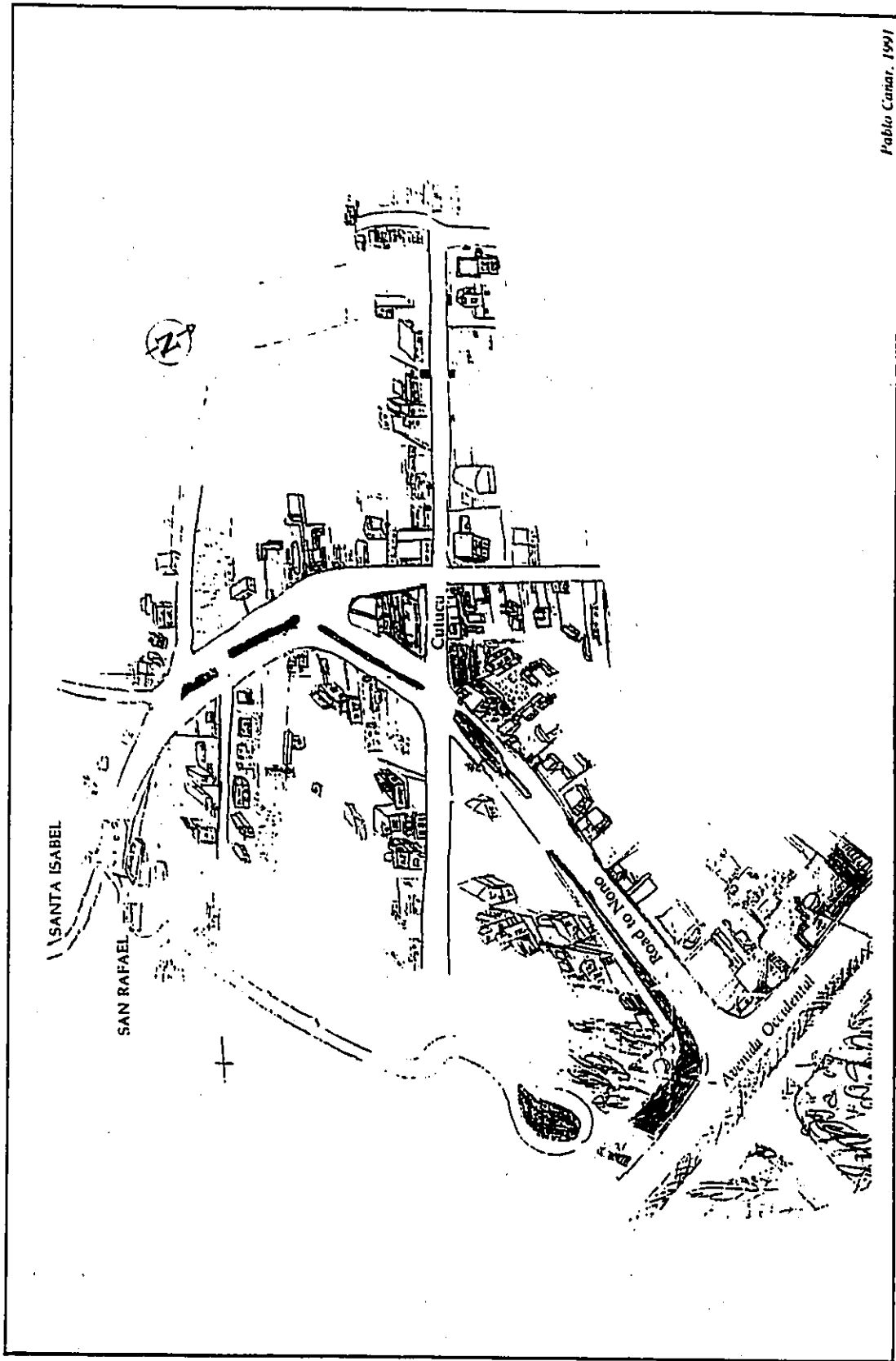


Figure 3-19. The higher income part of Mena del Hierro (north side) (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).



Pablo Caniar, 1991

Figure 3-20. Mental map of Mena del Hierro by a young male resident. His map includes only the lower-income part of Mena del Hierro.

As seen in Figure 3-20, the young informant's knowledge of his residential area is indeed outstanding. However, his familiarity faded in the northern part of his map (which annoyed him) where high-income Mena del Hierro begins. This ignorance is the expression of the concrete existence of a social border between the two areas of Mena del Hierro. This mental map was discussed with other residents of low-income Mena del Hierro. As there was general agreement that the map represented "their neighbourhood", I decided to base my area of study largely on the limits of the young resident's mental map. The precise area of study (i.e. "popular Mena del Hierro") is shown in Figure 3-21.

SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BARRIO RESIDENTS

Demographic and occupational data on the official administrative area of Mena del Hierro were collected in 1990 by local doctors as part of the SAFI census. The basic socioeconomic unit chosen for the census was the "household", defined by SAFI to include any group of people living together in the same house, or any individual living alone. As described in Chapter 1 (Methodology), each household covered by the SAFI census could be identified on a map of Mena del Hierro, hence the subset of data pertaining to popular Mena del Hierro was extracted and analysed for the present study.

Popular Mena del Hierro has approximately 800 inhabitants (Table 3-1). Of these, 39% are children 15 years old or younger, 10% are youth between 16 and 25 years old, and the remaining 51% are adults over 26 years of age. Females (53%) slightly outnumber males overall, and in most age groups.

Table 3-1 Demography of popular Mena del Hierro by age and sex

AGE GROUP	CHILDREN (0-15 years old)		YOUTHS (16-25 years old)		ADULTS (Older than 26)		TOTAL	
	FEMALE	171		40		210		421
MALE	134		40		198		372	47%
TOTAL	305	39%	80	10%	408	51%	793 ¹	100%

Source: SAFI Census (1990)

¹ No information available for additional 2% of residents

The total number of households is 209 (Table 3-2) and the average number of persons per household is 4, compared to an average of 4.5 for all *barrios* in northwest Quito (CIUDAD, 1992), and 4.3 for Quito as a whole (INEC, 1990). As evident from the predominance of children and adults in the *barrio*, the most common household structure is the two-parent family with young children. The number of single-parent households (only 3%) is well

below the 10% average for the surrounding *barrios* in northwest Quito (CIUDAD, 1992). Couple-based households are exclusively headed by men, whereas the single parents are all women (Table 3-3). The study by CIUDAD (1992) in the surrounding *barrios* found that single-parent households are mostly headed by women over 45 years of age, who are economically dependent on their children.

Table 3-2 Structure of households in popular Mena del Hierro, by household heads

COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS		SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS		ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS		TOTAL	
185	89%	7	3%	17	8%	209 ¹	100%

Source: SAFI Census (1990)

¹ Average number of persons per household = 4 (excepting single-person households)

Table 3-3 Gender of household heads and spouses in popular Mena del Hierro

		COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS		SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS		ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS		TOTAL	
HOUSEHOLD HEADS	Female	-		7	100%	10	59%		17
	Male	185	50%	-		7	41%		192
SPOUSES	Female	185	50%	-		-			185
	Male	-		-		-			
TOTAL		370	100%	7	100%	17	100%		394

Source: SAFI Census (1990)

Education

Data on the level of education of Mena del Hierro's residents is available only for female spouses and single mothers (24% of all residents; SAFI, 1990). As seen in Table 3-4, the level is rather low: around two thirds of the women have not studied beyond primary school, and almost 20% are illiterate.

Table 3-4 Education level of adult females in popular Mena del Hierro

Secondary Education	22%
Primary Education	59%
Illiterate	19%
TOTAL (210 Females)	100%

Source: SAFI Census (1990)

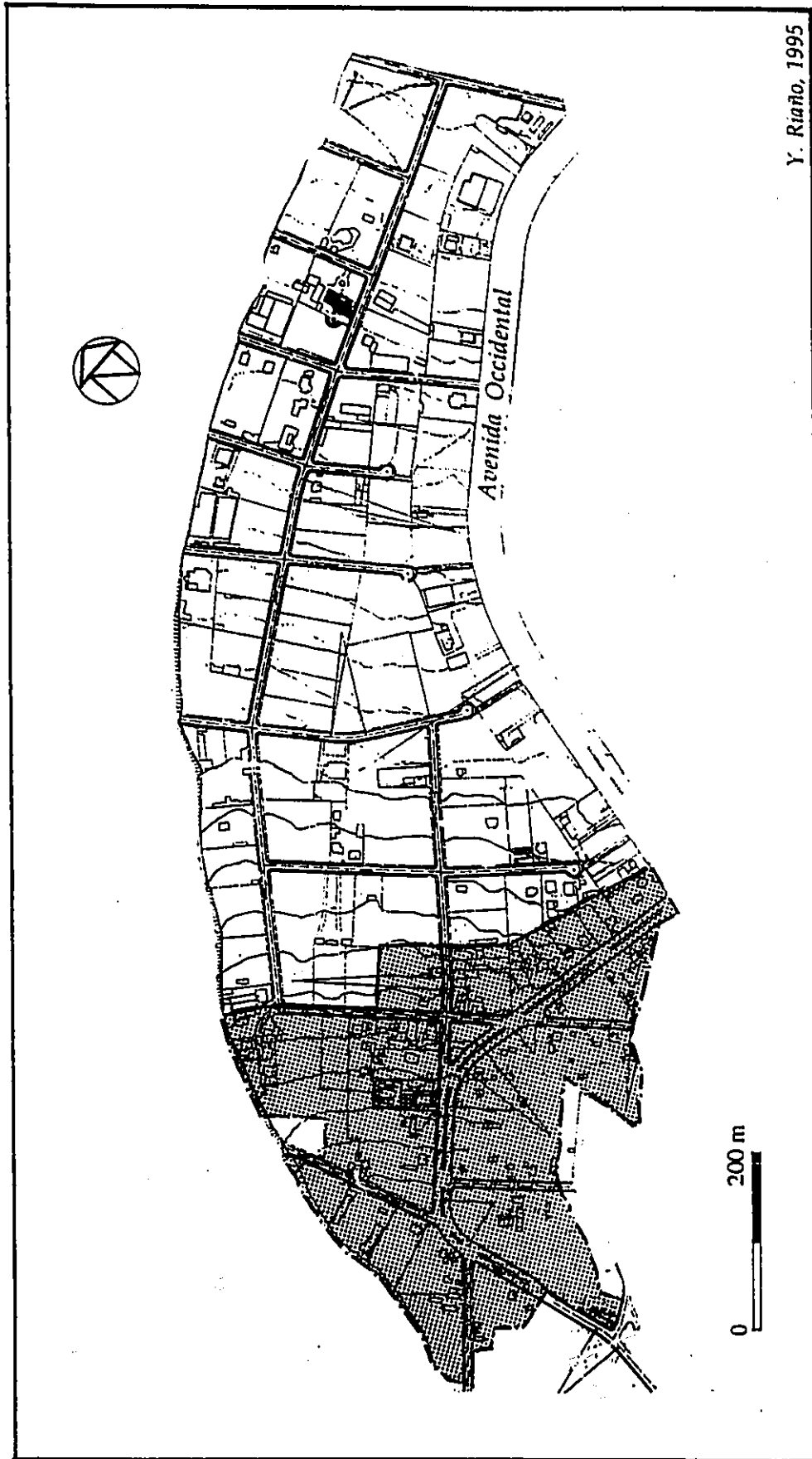


Figure 3-21. Limits of the area selected for study (lower-income area) within the administrative unit of Mena del Hierro.

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure in the *barrio* is of three types (Table 3-5): (1) house ownership; (2) conventional renting to a landlord, and (3) rent-free tenure under the *servicios* system. Nearly 40% of residents are house owners thus representing the largest group in the *barrio*. The *servicios* system is traditionally applied in Ecuador to caretakers of buildings or land. In Mena del Hierro, however, as is common elsewhere in Latin America, the *servicios* system refers to members of kin groups who live on their relatives' properties. This is usually a very stable arrangement between kin members who routinely exchange a wide variety of favours without monetary compensation (Chapter 4). Similar to house owners, *servicios* tenants can be considered as stable residents. Thus 70% of the residents of Mena del Hierro can be characterised as relatively permanent.

Table 3-5 Housing tenure in popular Mena del Hierro, by households

House owners	37% ⁷⁷
"Servicios"	33% ⁷⁰
Renters	30% ⁶²
TOTAL	100% ²⁰⁹

Source: SAFI Census (1990)

MIGRATION PATTERNS OF RESIDENTS

The socioeconomic survey carried out as part of this study in 1992 shows that the majority of adults in Mena del Hierro were born outside Quito (Table 3-6). In contrast, the majority of children and young residents were born in the capital. The migrants originated in 12 of Ecuador's 20 mainland provinces, mostly *sierra* areas of the Andes (mountains and intermontane basins), similar to the setting of Quito itself. While male residents tend to have migrated somewhat greater distances than women (Table 3-7), by far the majority of migrants came to Quito from the immediately adjacent province of Pichincha (Table 3-8). It is thus evident that migration to Quito follows the principle of geographical proximity (Fig. 3-22).

Table 3-6 Birthplaces of residents of popular Mena del Hierro, by age group

	CHILDREN	YOUTHS	ADULTS
Quito	24 78%	17 65%	8 19%
Provinces	7 22%	9 35%	35 81%
TOTAL	31 100%	26 100%	43 100%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

Table 3-7 Birthplaces of residents of popular Mena del Hierro, by gender

	FEMALE	MALE
Quito and Pichincha	84%	72%
Other provinces	16%	28%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

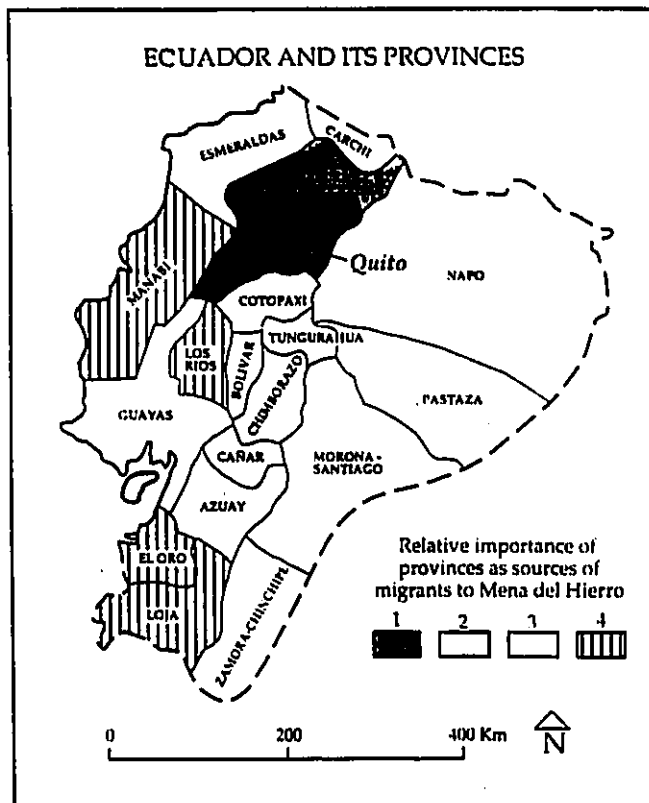


Figure 3-22. The provinces where migrants to popular Mena del Hierro were born.

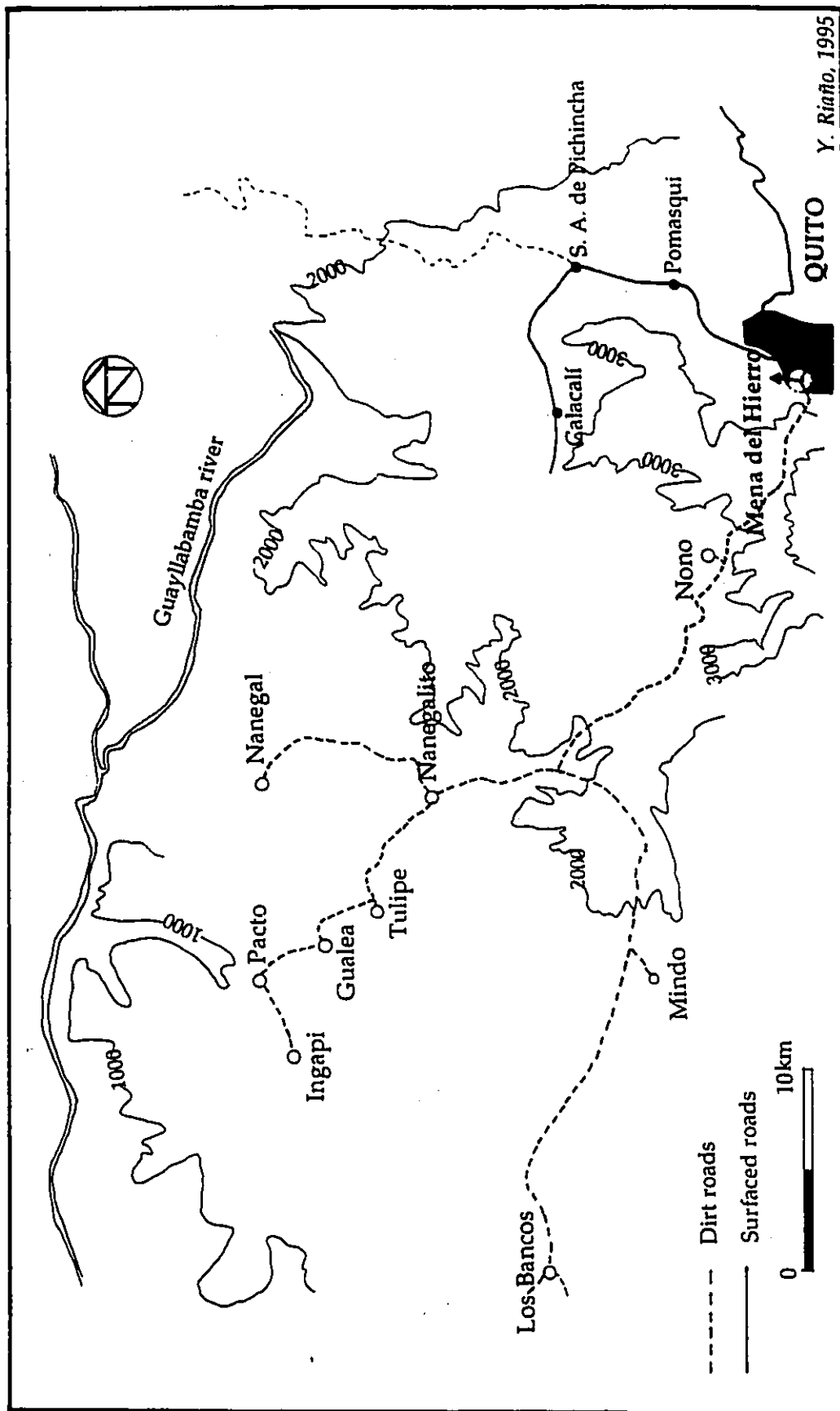


Figure 3-23. Geographical location of the rural hinterland northwest of Quito. Access to Quito from the northwest is through the main road of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. (Source: Map of the Province of Pichincha, IGM).

Table 3-8 Birthplaces of residents of popular Mena del Hierro who were born outside Quito

Pichincha	57%
Imbabura	10%
Cotopaxi	4%
Tungurahua	4%
Chimborazo	5%
Cañar	4%
Azuay	4%
Loja	2%
Los Rios	2%
Manabí	2%
El Oro	2%
Outside Ecuador	4%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

The migrant residents of Mena del Hierro can be divided into 4 groups according to their provinces of origin: (1) Province of Pichincha; (2) Province of Imbabura, which borders Pichincha; (3) the *sierra* provinces of Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Cañar, and Azuay; (4) the partly coastal, partly Andean provinces of Los Ríos, Manabí, El Oro, and Loja. A small group of residents also originates from abroad, mostly from neighbouring Colombia.

Within the Province of Pichincha, the large majority of migrants come from the hinterland northwest of Quito (Table 3-9). Access from this rural area to Quito is by one main road (*Via a Nono*, or *Machala*) which passes right through the *barrio* (Fig. 3-23). Thus for the rural northwest, Mena del Hierro is the gateway to the capital. As seen in Table 3-10 and Figure 3-24, the majority of house owners in the *barrio* are migrants from the rural northwest.

Table 3-9 Birthplaces of residents of popular Mena del Hierro who were born in the province of Pichincha

Hinterland NW of Quito	80%
Sangolquí	5%
Cayambe	5%
Pifo	5%
Santo Domingo	5%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

Table 3-10 Birthplaces of household heads owning a house in popular Mena del Hierro

Hinterland NW of Quito	49%
Sangolqui, Pichincha	4%
Biblián, Cañar	8%
Pujili, Cotopaxi	5%
Urcuqui, Imbabura	5%
Ambato, Tungurahua	4%
Quito	2%
No data	23%

Source: SAFI Census, 1990 and direct information from residents, Y. Riaño, 1992

RESIDENTIAL HISTORIES OF MENA DEL HIERRO'S INHABITANTS

The inhabitants of Mena del Hierro can be divided into four groups according to their history of migration and urban residence (Table 3-11 and Fig. 3-25): (1) direct rural-urban migrants; (2) indirect rural-urban migrants who first lived elsewhere in greater Quito before moving to the *barrio*; (3) intra-urban migrants; and (4) natives born and raised in Mena del Hierro. Almost a fifth of adults in the *barrio* immigrated directly from the northwest hinterland of Quito, but the majority followed an indirect path of migration, living for some years elsewhere in the city before settling in Mena del Hierro. As a consequence, most children and young adults in the *barrio* have histories of intra-urban migration, having been born to migrant parents in Quito, and then relocated with their families to Mena del Hierro. Thus the majority of residents have lived in an urban environment before arriving at the *barrio*, and their decision to resettle in Mena del Hierro, is the conscious result of the knowledge, personal contacts, and capital acquired during this experience. According to the literature (e.g. Adler de Lomnitz, 1975), such indirect rural-urban migration by adults is the most common pattern of residential history in Latin America's *barrios*. The group of residents who migrated directly from the countryside to Mena del Hierro is nevertheless significant in number, and is dominated by adults from the countryside northwest of Quito. Two factors, kinship ties with early settlers of the *barrio*, and geographical proximity to their places of origin, explain why this group chose Mena del Hierro as their first destination in the city. Since the *barrio* is only ca. 20 years old, the group of native residents born and raised on-site is composed exclusively of children and young people.

Table 3-11 Residential history of residents of popular Mena del Hierro, by age group

RESIDENTIAL HISTORY	CHILDREN	YOUTHS	ADULTS
1. Direct rural-urban migration	3 10%	3 10%	8 19%
2. Indirect rural-urban migration	3 10%	7 23%	25 58%
3. Intra-urban migration	15 45%	15 50%	6 14%
4. Native: born and raised in the <i>barrio</i>	5 15%	2 7%	-
No data	7 20%	3 10%	4 9%
TOTAL	33 100%	30 100%	43 100%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

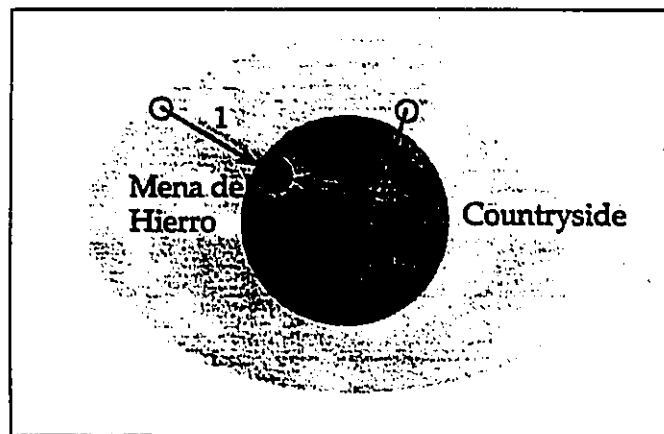


Figure 3-25. Patterns of migration to popular Mena del Hierro. (1) Direct rural-urban; (2) Indirect rural-urban; (3) Intra-urban

The nature of intra-urban migration

Traditional models of intra-urban migration in Latin America postulate that rural migrants first concentrate in central tenements and then later move to peripheral *barrios* (Turner and Mangin, 1968). The extent to which this centre-periphery model applies to Mena del Hierro is now assessed by examining the geography of its intra-urban migration in detail.

Four patterns of intra-urban migration are recognised in the histories of Mena del Hierro's residents (Fig. 3-26): (1) migration from the south of Quito, across the entire length of the city; (2) migration from the centre of Quito; (3) migration from the urban north, the area closest to the *barrio*, and (4) migration from the semi-urban area in the far north of the city. When the relative numbers of migrants following each of these patterns is considered (Table

3-12), it is obvious that intra-urban migration to the *barrio* is best explained by the principle of geographical proximity, just as in the case of rural-urban migration. Thus, of the residents who lived in Quito before settling in Mena del Hierro, the large majority stem from the northern part of the city, dominantly from the area north of the airport and adjacent to Mena del Hierro (Table 3-13). Central tenements turn out to be a minor source of migrants.

Table 3-12 Former residences of inhabitants of popular Mena del Hierro: all Quito

South Quito	6	8%
City Centre	11	15%
North Quito	54	74%
Semi-urban area north of North-Quito	2	3%
TOTAL	73	100%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

Table 3-13 Former residences of inhabitants of popular Mena del Hierro: Northern Quito

Southern North-Quito (Av. Patria - "Bosque")	8	15%
Central North-Quito ("Bosque" - Airport)	6	11%
Northern North-Quito (North of Airport, "Cotocollao")	40	74%
TOTAL	54	100%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

The collective results of structured and informal interviews with rural migrants in the *barrio* suggest that the north of urban Quito has been a preferred initial residential site because of long-standing kinship and business ties with the adjacent countryside, and because it has always served as a religious centre for the hinterland. For example, Cotocollao, the closest old urbanisation to Mena del Hierro, has traditionally been the marketplace for agricultural produce from the northwestern hinterland, and it is known to have been a regional religious centre since pre-Hispanic times. It is principally the migrants from the most distant rural provinces who first lived in the centre of Quito before moving to Mena del Hierro. In conclusion, intra-urban migration is essentially limited to the geographic realm which is traditionally familiar to the rural migrant, and the classic centre-periphery model does not represent the case of Mena del Hierro, a *barrio* where most migrants come from the immediate rural hinterland.

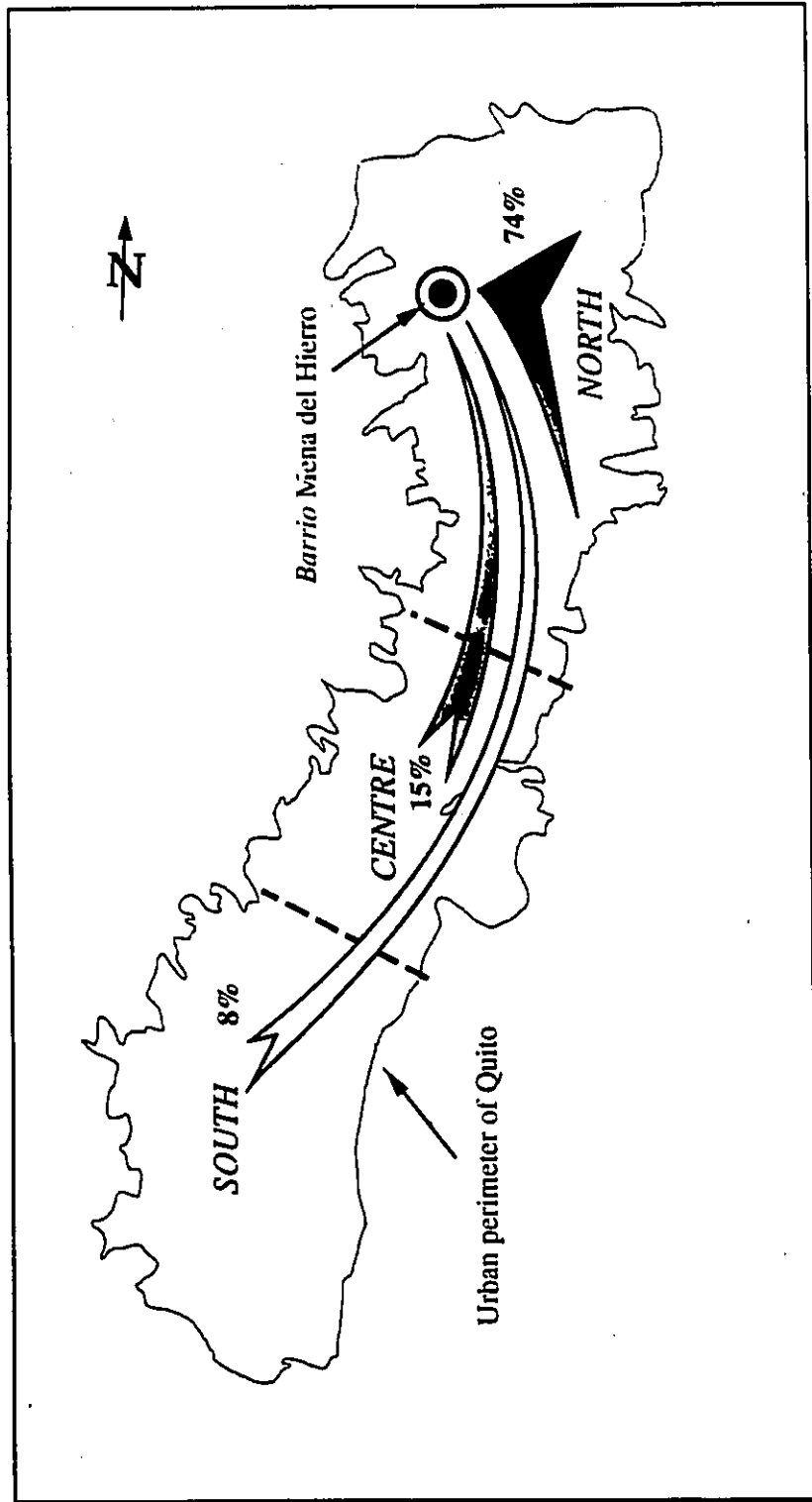


Figure 3-26. Patterns of intra-urban migration of the residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro. Most residents (74%) lived in the north of Quito before moving to Mena del Hierro.

Urban experience in Quito and in Mena del Hierro

It was emphasized above that the majority of residents of Mena del Hierro previously lived for some period elsewhere in Quito before settling in the *barrio*. As an important prelude to the evaluation of social networks and the adaptation of these migrants (Chapter V), the nature of their urban experience will now be discussed.

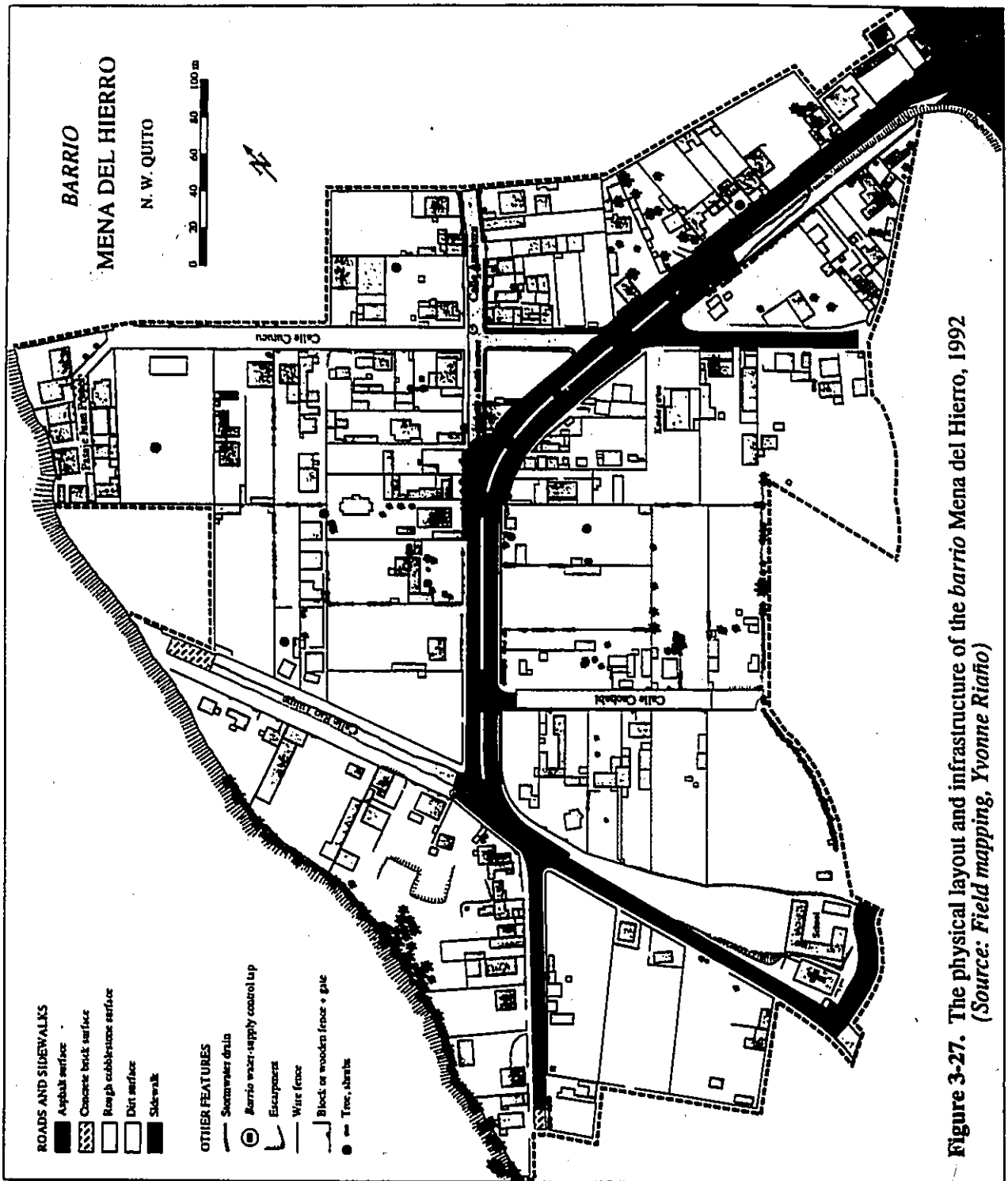
More than half of the residents in the *barrio* have spent more than half of their lives in Quito: (Table 3-14): 74% of children over 5 have lived between 6-15 years in the Capital, i.e. a period corresponding to between half and the whole of their lifetime; similarly, 79% of youths have lived between 6-15 years, and 56% of adults have spent between 15-47 years in Quito, a period representing more than half their lifespans. Migrants to the *barrio* have thus had as much experience in urban environments as they have had in countryside environments.

Table 3-14 Years of residence in Quito, by age group

PERIOD OF RESIDENCE (Years)	CHILDREN < 15 years old	YOUTHS 15-25 years old	ADULTS > 26 years old
< 5	13%	7%	9%
6 - 10	35%	-	7%
11 - 15	39%	32%	21%
16 - 20		18%	19%
21 - 25		29%	16%
26 - 30			-
31 - 35			5%
36 - 40			
41 - 45			14%
46 - 47			2%
No data	13%	14%	7%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

The question now arises as to how many of these years of urban experience have been spent in Mena del Hierro. Are the majority of residents newcomers, or have they lived long enough in the *barrio* to become relatively stable? Table 3-15 shows that Mena del Hierro is not a *barrio* of newcomers. Over two thirds of residents of all ages have lived 5 - 20 years in the *barrio*: 58% of the children have lived for 5 - 15 years, i.e. a period somewhere between



one third and their entire lives; 69% of youths have lived 5-20 years, i.e. between one fifth and their entire lives; and 71% of adults have spent 5-20 years in the *barrio*. The majority of residents can thus be viewed as relatively stable.

Table 3-15 Years of residence in popular Mena del Hierro, by age group

PERIOD OF RESIDENCE (Years)	CHILDREN	YOUTHS	ADULTS
< 1	-	5 17%	1 2%
1 - 2	3 9%	2 7%	1 2%
3 - 4	6 18%	2 7%	9 21%
5 - 10	14 43%	8 28%	11 25%
11 - 15	5 15%	7 24%	12 28%
16 - 20	-	5 17%	8 18%
No data	5 15%	-	2 4%
TOTAL	33 100%	29 100%	44 100%

Source: Y. Riaño, 1992 Survey

THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BARRIO: 1972-1992

The physical structure of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro consists of a simple layout of roads containing nine blocks distributed in an area of less than 20 hectares (Figs. 3-27 and 3-28). These blocks contain a total of 103 land sections and 273 buildings, most of which are dwellings. The size of dwellings is, on average, large by the standards of low-income urban settlements. Housing styles vary from "traditional" to "modern" depending on architectural design and construction materials (Figs. 3-29 and 3-30). The physical structure of the *barrio* has changed much over the last twenty years as a result of the residents' self-help efforts to acquire services and infrastructure as well as efforts by the municipality. Figure 3-31 presents the chronology of the physical development of popular Mena del Hierro. In the following sections the physical evolution of the *barrio* will be described in detail from the time the *Hacienda* was subdivided into *huertos familiares* in 1972. Five aspects of the evolution of the *barrio* will be examined here: (1) land subdivision, (2) dwelling construction, (3) infrastructure, (4) public outdoor space, and (5) land use.

The evolution of land subdivision: 1972-1992

As explained earlier, the owners of the *Hacienda La Concepción* obtained official permission in 1972 to subdivide and sell their land under the condition that the lots would have a minimum area of 2500 m² and would be used exclusively for rural purposes as *huertos familiares* (family vegetable gardens). As seen in Figure 3-32 a total of 44 lots, ranging from 2500 m² to 5000 m², were formed within the portion of Mena del Hierro studied here. However, official regulations on land use and lot area started to be ignored soon after official approval of the subdivisions.

As the *Hacienda* owners probably expected, the land they sold was bought by people who intended to use it for urban housing rather than for family vegetable gardens. The large size of the lots allowed several families to be accommodated simultaneously and so further subdivision into even smaller sections of land rapidly began¹⁰. In many cases, related families formed groups to buy the land collectively and then subdivided it among themselves (e.g. lot 153 in Fig. 3-32). In other cases, informal land developers bought lots for later subdivision and resale at a considerable profit (e.g. lot 212 in Fig. 3-32). Thus the urban *barrio* of Mena del Hierro emerged.

The extent of subdivision of original lots in the *barrio* has been examined on the basis of visible land boundaries (fences and walls, etc.). This field criterion actually yields only the minimum number of subdivisions, because property owners do not always fence off their land. Thus in 1992, 103 land sections could be distinguished in the *barrio* (Fig. 3-33). This represents a at least 2.5 times more subdivisions than the number originally authorised. Despite this significant increase, however, only 56% of the original lots have been subdivided into smaller sections. The lower part of the *barrio*, the closest to Avenida Occidental, is the area where the majority of land subdivisions have occurred. The upper part of the *barrio*, the furthest away from the main road, remains largely undivided. The relative age of initial acquisition of the lots does not appear to have been a factor in determining this pattern. Rather, given the lack of public transport and the poor quality of roads in the *barrio*, these differences in spatial patterns of land subdivision are most obviously explained by geographical proximity to the Avenida Occidental, which connects the *barrio* to the rest of the city.

¹⁰ In this text the term "lot" denotes an original *huerto familiar* (Fig. 3-32). The term "section" denotes an individual area of land resulting from subdivision of the *huerto familiar* lot (Fig. 3-33).



Figure 3-28. An overview of lower income (right) and higher income (left) Mena del Hierro from the foothills of the Pichincha volcano. On the far right, the school and the church serving Mena del Hierro as well as neighbouring San Rafael and Santa Isabel (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

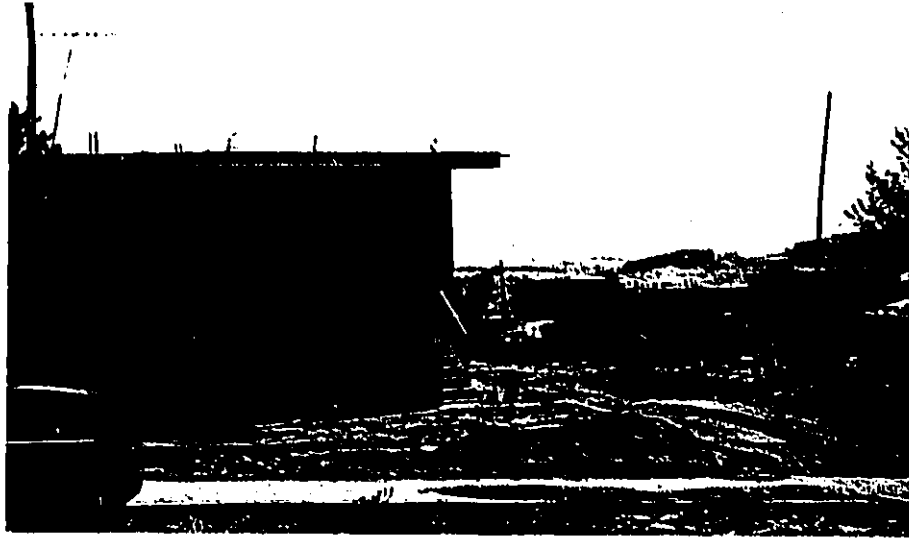


Figure 3-29. "Modern" (foreground) and "traditional" (background) styles of housing in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. The "modern" features include: concrete and cement as dominant construction materials and flat roof for further expansion. The "traditional" style, in contrast, is characterised by *bahareque* walls and a sloping roof of clay tiles (Photos: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

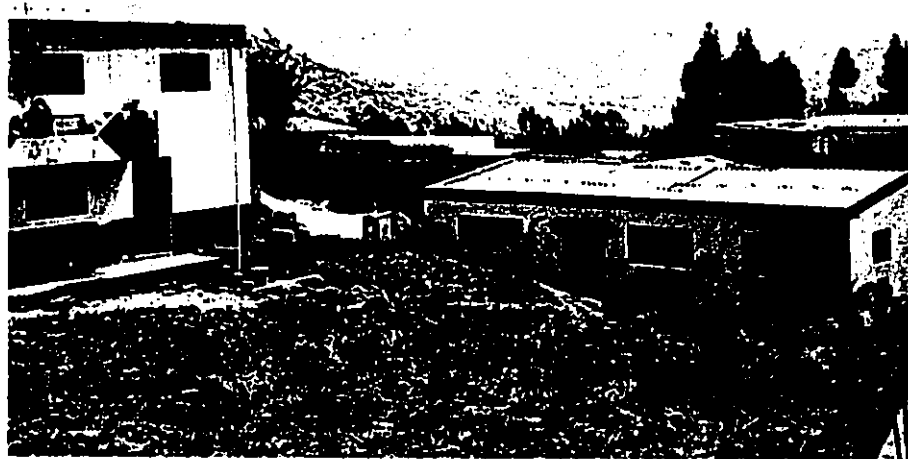


Figure 3-30. "Semi-traditional" style of housing: cement walls, decoration motifs on the facade and a sloping tin roof (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

YEAR	EVENT
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the <i>Hacienda La Concepción</i> are sold to the public • The church <i>Jesús del Gran Poder</i> is built in the upper part of the <i>Hacienda</i> to replace the dilapidated church of San Rafael
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Hacienda La Concepción</i> is officially parcelled out and sold to the public as <i>huertos familiares</i> lots • No infrastructure is available at the time of parcelling • The buyers of <i>huertos familiares</i> lots begin using their new land for urban housing • An illegal <i>barrio</i> emerges
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Avenida Occidental</i> is built • 6-8 families inhabit the <i>barrio</i>
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents begin constructing cobble-stone roads as a self-help project
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents install their own water-supply system as a self-help project • The Municipality installs an electrical supply system and partial street lighting
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>barrio</i> is officially legalized by the Municipality as a neighbourhood of Quito • Residents install a partial sewerage system as a self-help project • Residents build part of a community centre as a self-help project • Residents construct some sidewalks as a self-help project • The construction of dwellings and enterprises booms
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents build a primary school with the assistance of the Municipality • Residents build a health centre with the assistance of the Municipality • Residents construct a basketball court and complete the community centre with the assistance of the Municipality
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two telephone lines for private individuals are installed
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main roads (<i>Avenida Machala</i> and part of <i>Calle Cutucu</i>) are surfaced with asphalt by the Municipality
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A private company begins operating a public bus service to the <i>barrio</i> • 209 families inhabit the <i>barrio</i>
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The municipality begins connecting the <i>barrio</i> to the city water supply system

Figure 3-31. Chronology of the physical development of Mena del Hierro: 1972-1994

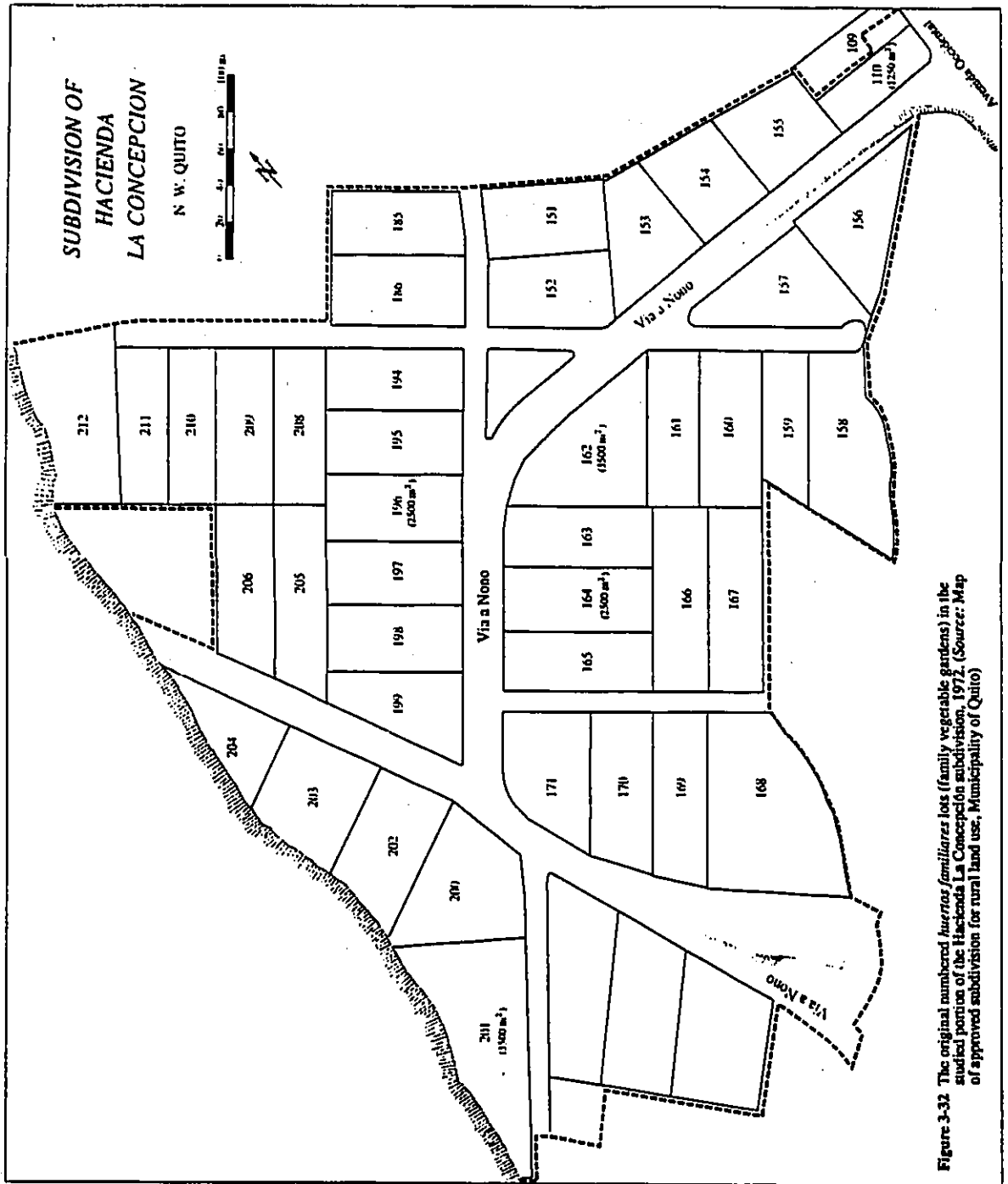


Figure 3-32 The original numbered *huertas familiares* lots (family vegetable gardens) in the studied portion of the Hacienda La Concepción subdivision, 1972. (Source: Map of approved subdivision for rural land use, Municipality of Quito)

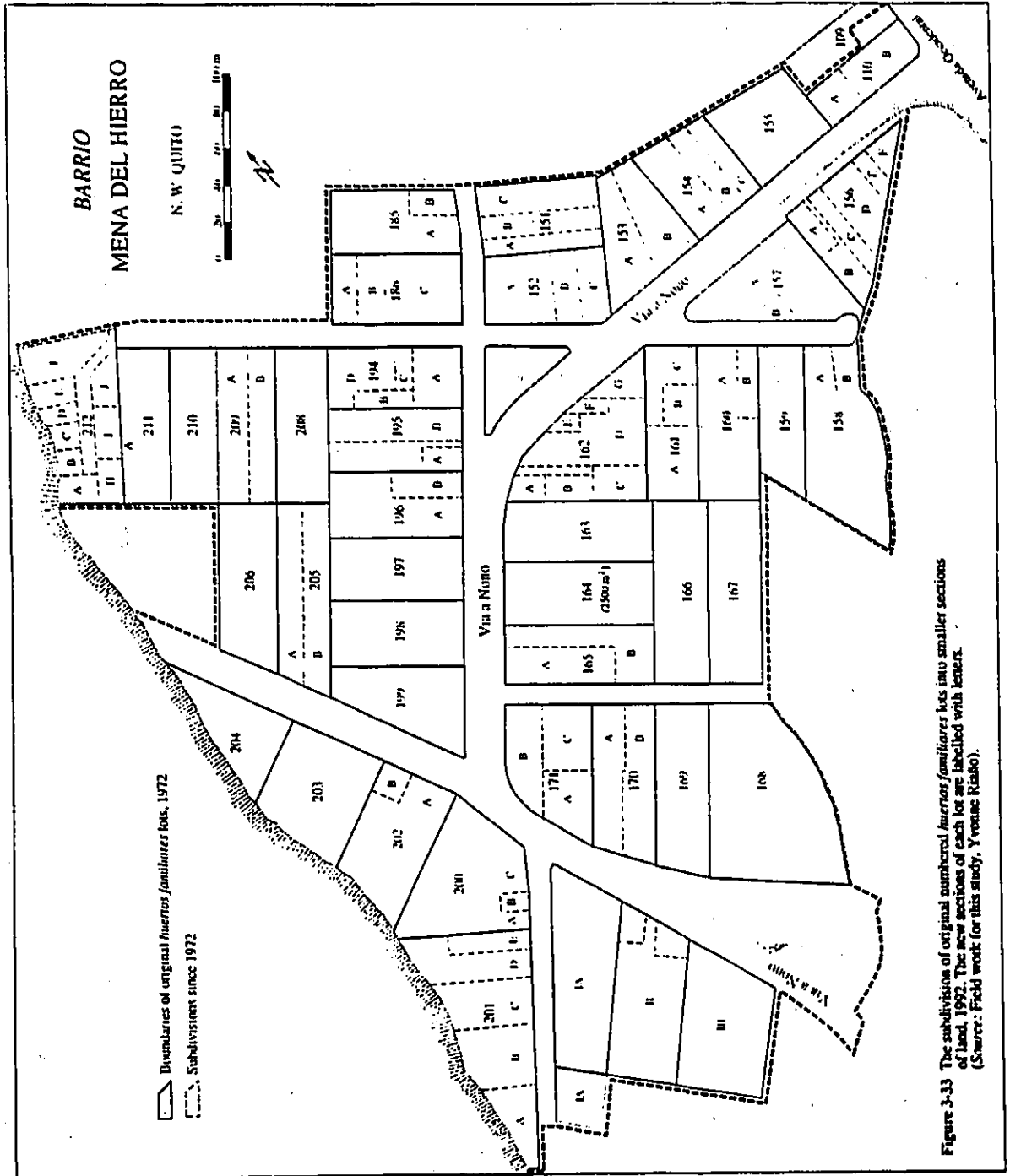


Figure 3-33 The subdivisions of original numbered *huertos familiares* lots into smaller sections of land, 1992. The new sections of each lot are labelled with letters. (Source: Field work for this study, Yvonne Rizabo).

Where subdivisions were made, the number of sections that have been derived from individual lots varies from two to ten. As seen in Table 3-16 the large majority of subdivided lots have been partitioned into two or three sections with average areas of 1250 m² and 850 m² respectively. The present sizes of individual sections range from 200 to 1500 m².

Table 3-16 Number of sections resulting from subdivision of *huertos familiares* in Mena del Hierro

Number of sections per lot	2	3	5	6	7	10	TOTAL = 82
Percentage of all lots (number)	46% (12)	38% (10)	4% (1)	4% (1)	4% (1)	4% (1)	TOTAL = 100% (26)

Considering that the new Master Plan for Quito (Dirección de Planificación, 1992) now permits sections as small as 200 m² in Mena del Hierro, it can be seen that there is still room for much more subdivision in the future. Progressive subdivision will be encouraged by the current (1995) process of connecting Mena del Hierro to Quito's water system. Water taxes for the new service will be calculated according to the area of land sections. Since the sections are still large by normal standards for low- or middle-income housing, water taxes could be quite high. Thus, landowners in the *barrio* will be forced to subdivide their property into even smaller sections. Further land subdivision may have significant effects on the social fabric of the *barrio* if many of the new sections are rapidly sold to outsiders who have no ties to the present residents.

As mentioned above, the number of individual sections in the *barrio* has been determined in this study on the basis of observable physical limits such as fences or walls. It is not clear, however, if the actual property limits correspond to these observable boundaries. The main reason behind this doubt is that often several dwellings – in some cases up to ten – cluster on an individual land section. The question is whether there is just one owner of the land and all the dwellings, or whether several owners coexist within one physically delimited section.

A detailed examination of land sections within nine original lots each containing several dwellings shows that the latter is the case. Why then are there no physical boundaries between the individual properties, as is the traditional practice in middle- and high-income neighbourhoods? Two factors explain this behaviour: kinship and tenancy. Kinship is the more important. Individual owner-families who live in separate dwellings but share the same section are generally related through an extended family system (to be explained in detail in Chapter V). Physical boundaries therefore appear to be unnecessary.

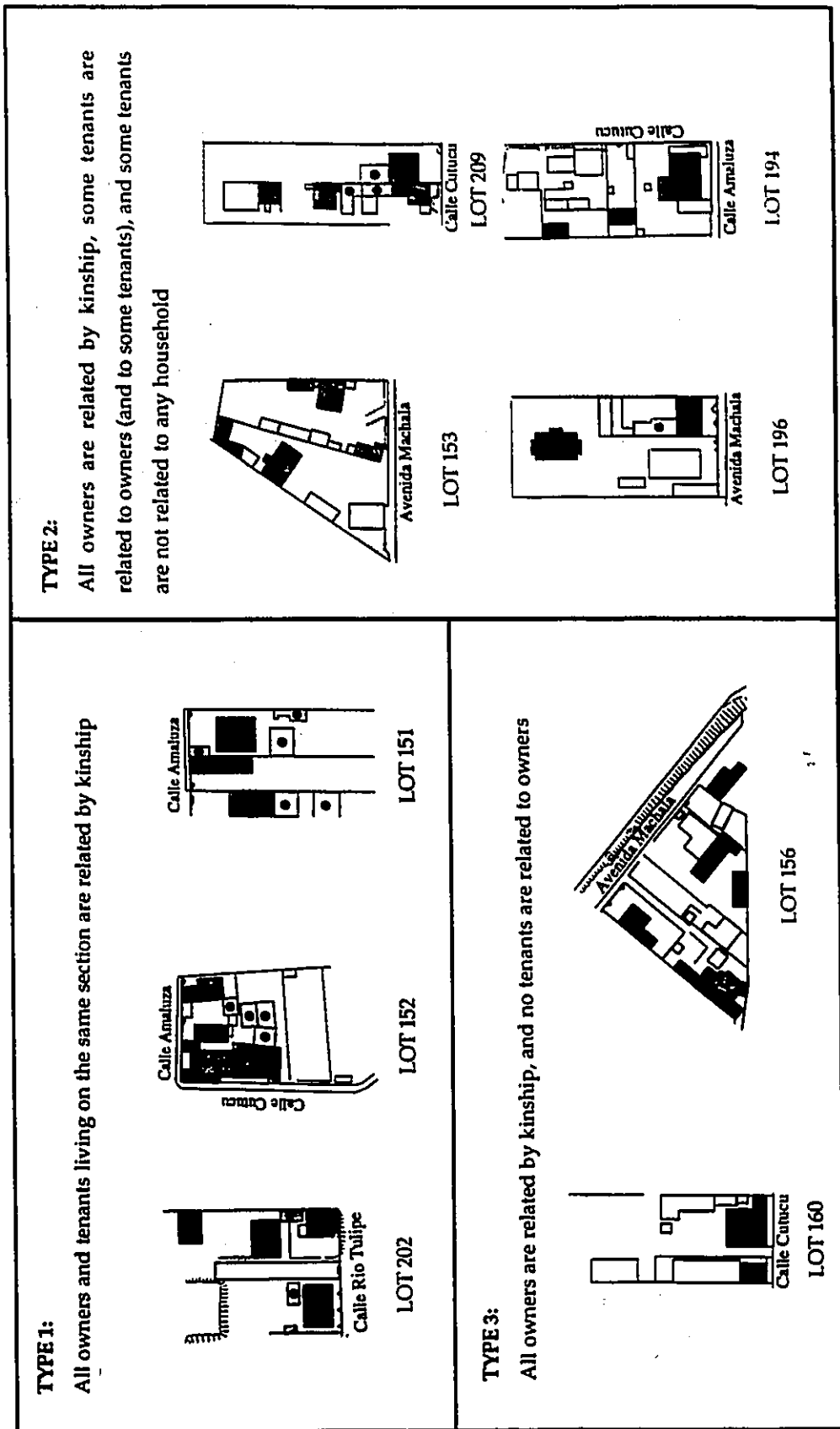


Figure 3-34. Patterns of land boundaries, house ownership and kinship relations in land sections which display a cluster configuration of dwellings.

In most cases, however, not all householders living in clusters are relatives or owners. The differences in relationships between householders can be classified into three types (Fig. 3-34): (1) all cluster members, i.e. owners and tenants, are related by kinship (Fig. 3-35); (2) owners are related by kinship, some tenants are related to owners by kinship, and other tenants are not related to any cluster member (Fig. 3-36); and (3) the owners are related to each other but the tenants are not related to any cluster member (Fig. 3-37).

The evolution of dwelling construction: 1973-1992

Figure 3-38 shows the increases in numbers of buildings in the *barrio* from 1983 to 1992. As seen in Table 3-17, the number of dwellings more than doubled during this period, a rate much higher than the increase in number of land sections. By 1992 there were twice as many dwellings as physically delimited sections. The increase of number of dwellings in the *barrio* is thus high, with an average annual rate of 9% between 1983 and 1992.

Table 3-17 The evolution of dwellings in popular Mena del Hierro: 1973-1992

USE OF BUILDINGS	NUMBER OF BUILDINGS		
	1973 ¹	1983 ²	1992 ³
Housing	7	113	224
Other use	1	14	52
Total	8	127	276

¹ Information from personal interviews with pioneer residents, this study.

² Information from analysis of the 1983 aerial photograph taken by the Instituto Geográfico Militar, Quito

³ Information from 1992 *barrio* map, made during this study.

The area of the *barrio* where the largest increase of number of dwellings has occurred, and hence the highest degree of densification, is along the lower part of the Machala Road (Via a Nono) between the community centre and the Avenida Occidental. The upper part of the *barrio*, by comparison, has densified little over the past nine years. Proximity to the best surfaced road in the *barrio* and to the Avenida Occidental best explains these contrasting patterns of densification, just as was concluded above for the intensity of land subdivision.

Despite the large increase in number of dwellings over the past ten years there is still much scope for densification in Mena del Hierro. Of all the original *huertos familiares*, only around a third have been intensively built up so far (i.e. dwellings cover more than two thirds of the lot). It is interesting at this point to speculate on how much capacity the *barrio* has for more

dwellings and population. In Table 3-18 the hypothetical maximum density of the *barrio* has been calculated by assuming the following average parameters: (a) land sections of 200 m² (this is the minimum currently allowed by the municipality of Quito¹¹ and it is also the smallest current subdivision in the *barrio*), (b) two dwellings per section, (c) one household per dwelling, and (d) 4 people per household (where values b-d are the actual 1992 averages for the *barrio*). The estimated capacity of Mena del Hierro is thus six times the current number of sections, dwellings and people. The resulting net average density of 400 people per hectare (p./ha) is slightly below the maximum of 460 p./ha allowed by the municipality's regulations. It is also less than that of some existing sections in the *barrio* (sections 156B1 and 162A), which currently have a density of 476 p./ha. The calculated maximum density is conservative, in that it is slightly lower than the value allowed by the municipality and below what some current trends in the field would predict.

Table 3-18 Hypothetical maximum density of popular Mena del Hierro

Parameters used in calculation	Values of parameters in 1992	Hypothetical maximum values
Total area of plots in <i>barrio</i>	12 ha	12 ha
Size of sections	200 - 2500 m ²	200 m ²
Number of sections	103	600
Number of dwellings	224 (average 2 /section)	1200 (assumed 2 / section)
Number of households	209 (average 2 /section)	1200 (assumed 2 / section)
Number of residents	793	4800
Net density ¹	average 66 persons/ha	400
Increase in density compared to 1992	-	6 times

¹ Net density refers to the number of people per total area of plots in the *barrio*, exclusive of roads, green areas, etc.

A six-fold increase in the present density undoubtedly poses a challenge for the future provision of infrastructure and service and it raises questions regarding its effects on the social fabric of the *barrio*. Who will take the initiative to provide infrastructure? Will an

¹¹ The 1992 "Reglamento Urbano de Quito" classifies Mena del Hierro as a "B 203" area, a code which establishes the regulations for its physical development (density, land use, and architectural regulations).

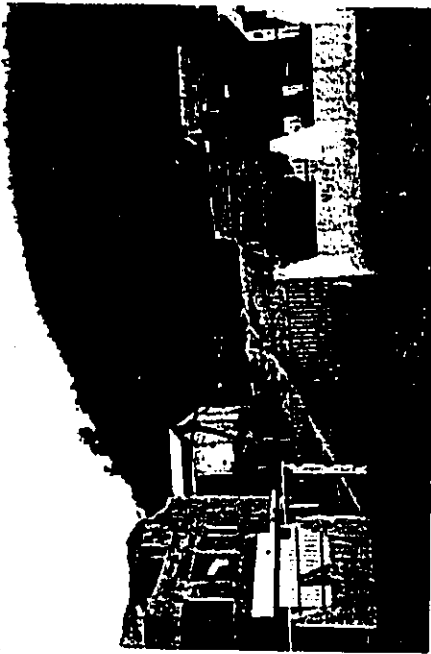


Figure 3-35. A cluster configuration of dwellings in which all owner and tenant households living on the same section are related by kinship (pattern 1; section 202) (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 3-36. A cluster configuration of dwellings in which a) all owner households living in the same section are related; b) some tenants are related to owners; c) some tenants are not related to any other household (pattern 2; section 153B) (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

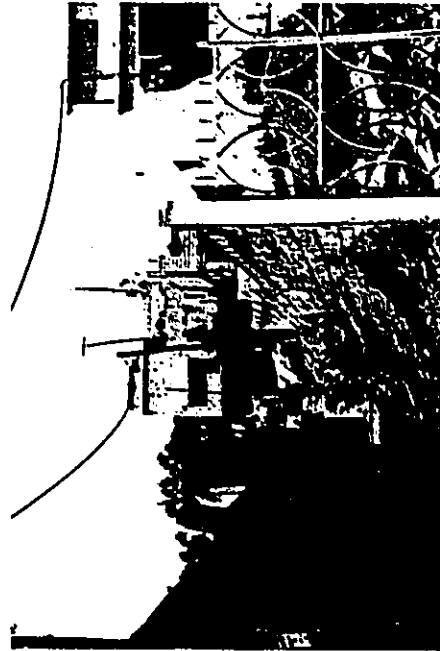


Figure 3-37. A cluster configuration of dwellings in which a) all owner households living in the same section are related; b) no tenants are related to any other households (pattern 3; section 156B) (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

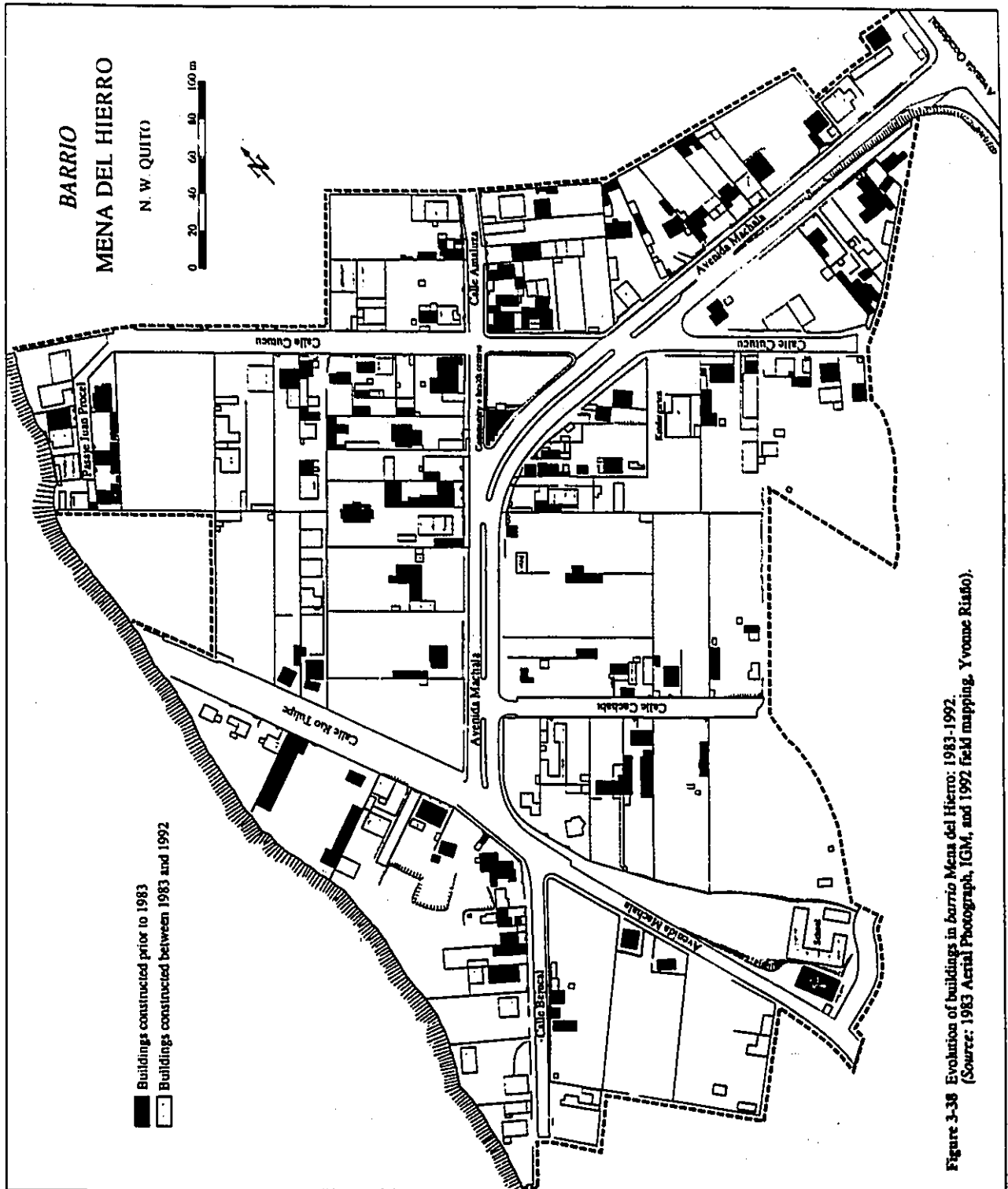


Figure 3-38 Evolution of buildings in barrio Mena del Hierro: 1983-1992. (Source: 1983 Aerial Photograph, IGM, and 1992 field mapping. Yvonne Riasso).

eventual scarcity of urban resources create conflicts between residents? Will the new residents integrate with the established population? The difficulties will of course depend on the pace at which densification occurs. How long, then, would it take for Mena del Hierro to reach an average density of 400 p./ha from a current average of 66 p./ha? If we assume that the number of dwellings continues to increase at the current 9% average annual growth rate (see above), it would take 17 years for the *barrio* to reach the saturation level of 1200 dwellings. It should be recalled that these calculations are only hypothetical and many factors could reorient the *barrio's* future development in another direction. For example, the calculations do not take into account multi-storey constructions, which would lead to higher densities. Also, the installation of a municipal water supply in the *barrio* (currently in progress) could increase the annual rate so that saturation may be reached within a decade. Nevertheless, the calculations show the importance of densification and its possibly unsettling effects on the physical and social "equilibrium" of the *barrio*.

The Evolution of Infrastructure and Services: 1972-1995

As explained above, no basic infrastructure or services were available in 1972 when pioneer settlers arrived at the *barrio*. As Mena del Hierro was "illegal" in the eyes of the Municipality of Quito, the residents had no right to official assistance in acquiring infrastructure. Thus, until the *barrio* was officially recognized by municipal authorities in 1985, the residents had to rely on their own efforts to obtain infrastructure. Using the system of *mingas* (Fig. 3-39), wherein residents collaborate by offering their unpaid, free-time labour for collective projects, impressive advances in infrastructure were made between 1972 and 1988 (Fig. 3-40). The most important of these was the construction of a piped drinking water supply tapping a source high above the *barrio*. This system was installed by the residents exclusively on their own initiative and with their own physical and financial efforts (see details in Chapter V). There is not enough water for continued daily provision to every house in the *barrio*, however, and therefore water is rationed. The *barrio* has been divided into several sectors for rotating supply, and each sector receives water for a three-hour period at different times of the day.

Thirteen years after the *barrio's* beginning the Municipality legalized it as an urban settlement forming part of Quito and three years later began providing aid to upgrade infrastructure. Several improvements, mostly in services, were then achieved by the end of the 1980s through the joint efforts of the residents' self-help and the Municipality's support. Much of this official support came about as a result of *clientelismo* deals (favour swapping). The surfacing of the main road of the *barrio* in 1992, as witnessed at the end of field work for the present study, is a prime example of this style of municipal politics. Elections for the city

mayor were to due to take place in mid-1992 and the incumbent mayor's party was interested in their new candidate taking over the position. Thus, the Municipality decided to surface all the major roads in the *barrios* of the northwest in an effort to attract votes. The dynamics that this decision set into place in Mena del Hierro were interesting to observe. Residents who lived by the main *barrio* road quickly organized themselves into a *minga* to clean up the road and to later help the Municipality's workers with the surfacing works. Some of the residents who lived on secondary roads came to watch the events. Others, in contrast, (those living on the southern side of the Cutucu road) quickly started negotiations with their political contacts to extend the planned surfacing of the main road to include their road as well. On a "blitz" visit of the *barrio* by the city mayor and other government officials, this group of residents cheered him as "el Rey" (the King).

The final results of the process described above were: (1) instead of a proper pavement, the main road of the *barrio* was given a "make-up" surfacing. A light layer of asphalt was spread over the irregular cobble-stones of the road without the necessary reinforcement for the surfacing to last more than a few months of normal traffic (Figs. 3-41 and 3-42). Obviously, the aim of the city mayor was to improve the image of his political party, rather than to improve the quality of living of the *barrio's* residents; (2) the southern side of the Cutucu road, where the residents who had been negotiating with their political contacts lived, also was "surfaced" in the same way as the main road (Fig. 3-43); (3) the rest of the *barrio's* roads were not surfaced at all (Fig. 3-44).

In 1993 (after field work for the present study had been completed) another major improvement took place. Two bus companies began providing public transport for the *barrio's* residents. Hitherto, informal collective taxis had been transporting residents in small, unroofed and crowded trucks at a cost which was lower than that of regular taxis but much higher than that of a regular bus service (Fig. 3-45).

Although much progress has taken place in the 20 years since the *barrio* began, especially as compared to older neighbouring *barrios* such as San Rafael, several needs still remain. The streets of Mena del Hierro are only partly paved, sewerage and public lighting are incomplete, and water is provided only several hours a day. Self-help is a system which can undoubtedly produce impressive results but which also has a very high cost for residents. Residents invest their free-time, their financial and physical resources, and have to put up with a low quality of living for many years. Even in the best of cases, such as Mena del Hierro, it takes over a generation of urban residence to achieve basic infrastructure and services. Some of the residents' investments are also lost. The Municipality of Quito is



Figure 3-39. Barrio residents working together in a *minga* to improve the main road (Photos: Laureano Nastul, 1993).



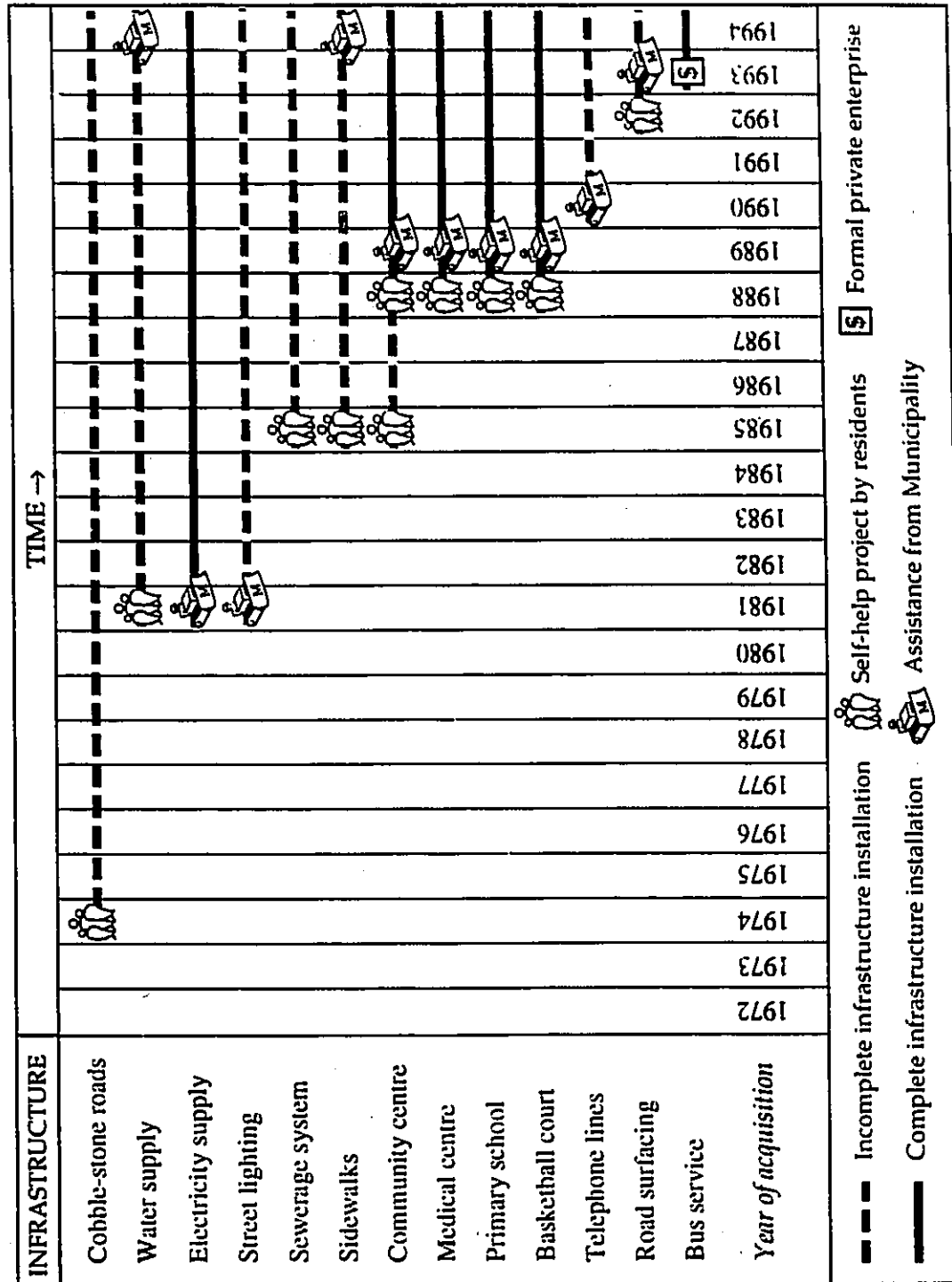


Figure 3-40. Chronology of infrastructure and service acquisition in Mena del Hierro, 1972-1995; Participants in process



Figure 3-41. The lower section of the *barrio's* main road before (1990) and after surfacing (1992). (Photo: Yvonne Riaño)





Figure 3-42. The upper section of the *barrio's* main road before (1991) and after surfacing (1992) (Photos: Yvonne Riaño).



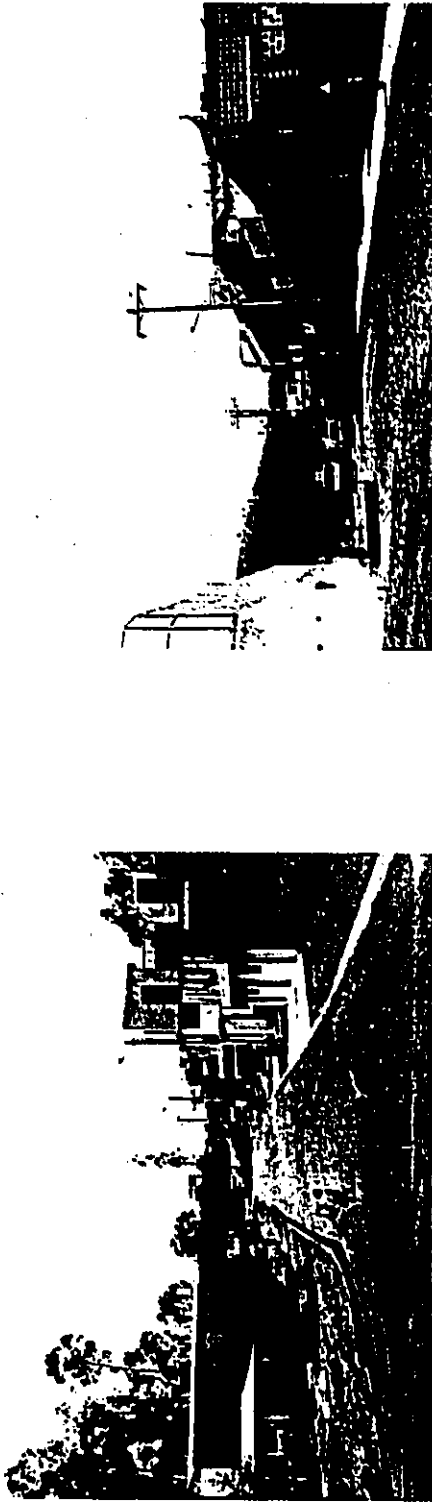


Figure 3-43. Physical evidence of *clientelismo* politics: the southern part of the Cutucu road is surfaced by the Municipality; the northern part is not (1992) (Photos: Yvonne Riaño).



Figure 3-44. Physical evidence of *clientelismo* politics: road surfacing by the Municipality stops right at the entrance of the Cañabaj road (1992) (Photos: Yvonne Riaño)



Figure 3-45. "Informal" (1992) and "formal" (1993) systems of public transport in the *barrio* (Photos: Yvonne Riaño and Laureano Nastul).



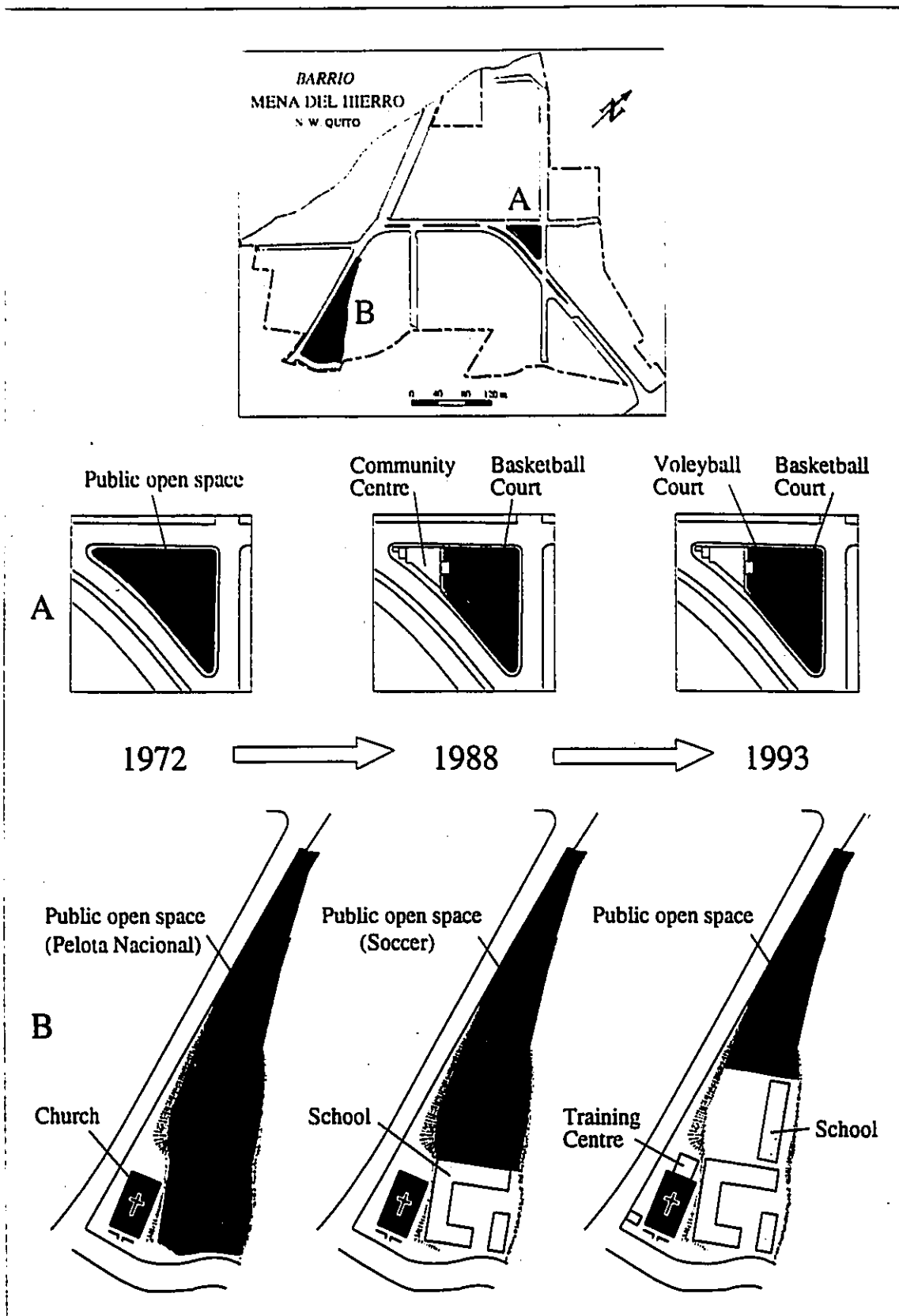


Figure 3-46. Evolution of public open spaces in *barrio* Mena del Hierro: 1972 - 1993.
(Source: IGM aerial photographs and field work for this study, Yvonne Riaño)

currently (1995) building installations to connect the *barrio* to Quito's network of fresh water. Although this brings the obvious advantages of unlimited provision of treated water, it also means the loss of financial and personal investments made by the residents over years of self-help work.

The Evolution of Public Outdoor Space: 1972-1993

As will be explained in Chapter V, public outdoor spaces are crucial for Mena del Hierro because so much of its social activity is centred there. When the *Hacienda* land was parcelled out and sold as individual lots, no public spaces for parks, squares, or sports fields were set aside because the subdivision was officially for agricultural use. Nevertheless, two triangle-shaped pieces of land remained as leftovers from the subdivision into *huertos familiares*. One is situated at the southwestern extreme of the *barrio*, next to the *Jesus del Gran Poder* church, and the other is in the middle of the neighbourhood, at the intersection of Machala and Cutucu Roads.

At the time of the parcelling, the steep land near the church was rented out for mud brick-making (Fig. 3-11). As a result of the extraction for earth for brick-making the land was levelled and thus became suitable for public use by the *barrio's* residents. However, a conflict of interests for the use of this precious piece of free land rapidly emerged. Not only was land scarce for parks and sports fields, but also no land had been set aside for community services (e.g. community centre, medical and schooling facilities). *Barrios* such as Mena del Hierro, and surrounding San Rafael and Santa Isabel, are particularly in need of such services since their connection to remote facilities by public transport is poor. The residents were therefore torn between the options of using this land for a school or for sports fields. In the end a school was constructed to serve not only Mena del Hierro but also San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Figure 3-46 shows the evolution of land use between 1972 and 1993. School facilities have progressively expanded and hence the initially available public outdoor space has been reduced to about a third of its original size. It is unusable now for the sports activities preferred by residents (*pelota nacional*, soccer, basketball and volleyball).

The second available public outdoor space, at the intersection of Machala and Cutucu, has also been significantly reduced over the years. Similar to the process described above, the construction of community and medical centres has reduced its original size to about two thirds. However, a sports field has been constructed by residents in the remaining area. As will be explained in Chapter V, this is the only stable area in the *barrio* for public outdoor use.

The Evolution of Land Use: 1972-1992

General trends of land use

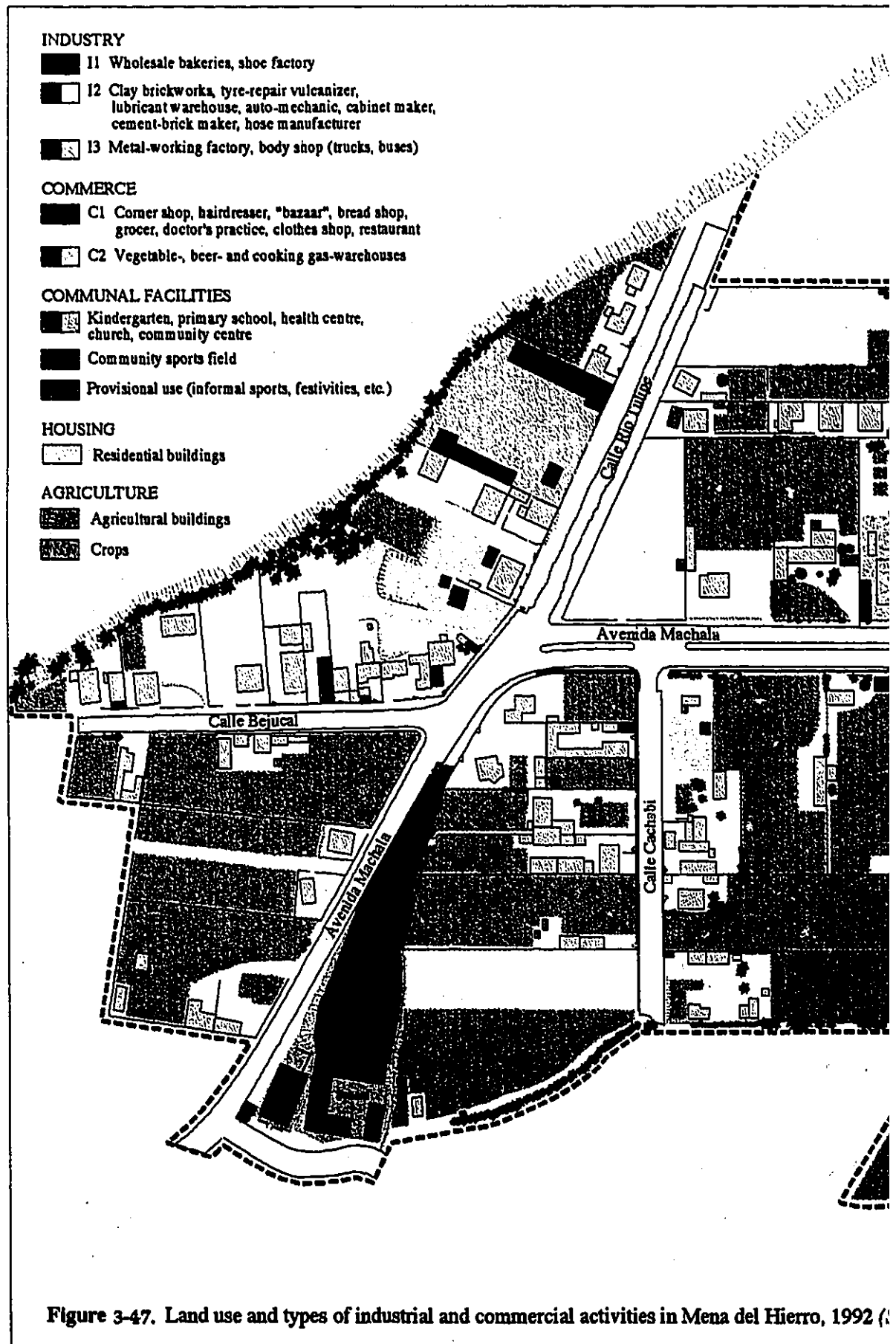
There is no high quality aerial photographic information on land use in the *barrio* during the 1972-1983 period. From personal interviews with *barrio* pioneers, however, it can be deduced that housing, agriculture and clay brickworks were the main activities. These three activities were not spatially separated but were pursued concurrently on the same lots where residents lived. Wherever there were houses there were also family crops. Wherever there were brickworks there were also houses and crops. It is not clear exactly how many houses or brickwork industries existed but available evidence shows that at least six different families were involved in brick-making. These industries were spread throughout most of the *barrio* (Fig. 3-32, lots 153, 160, 163, 200, 202, 212).

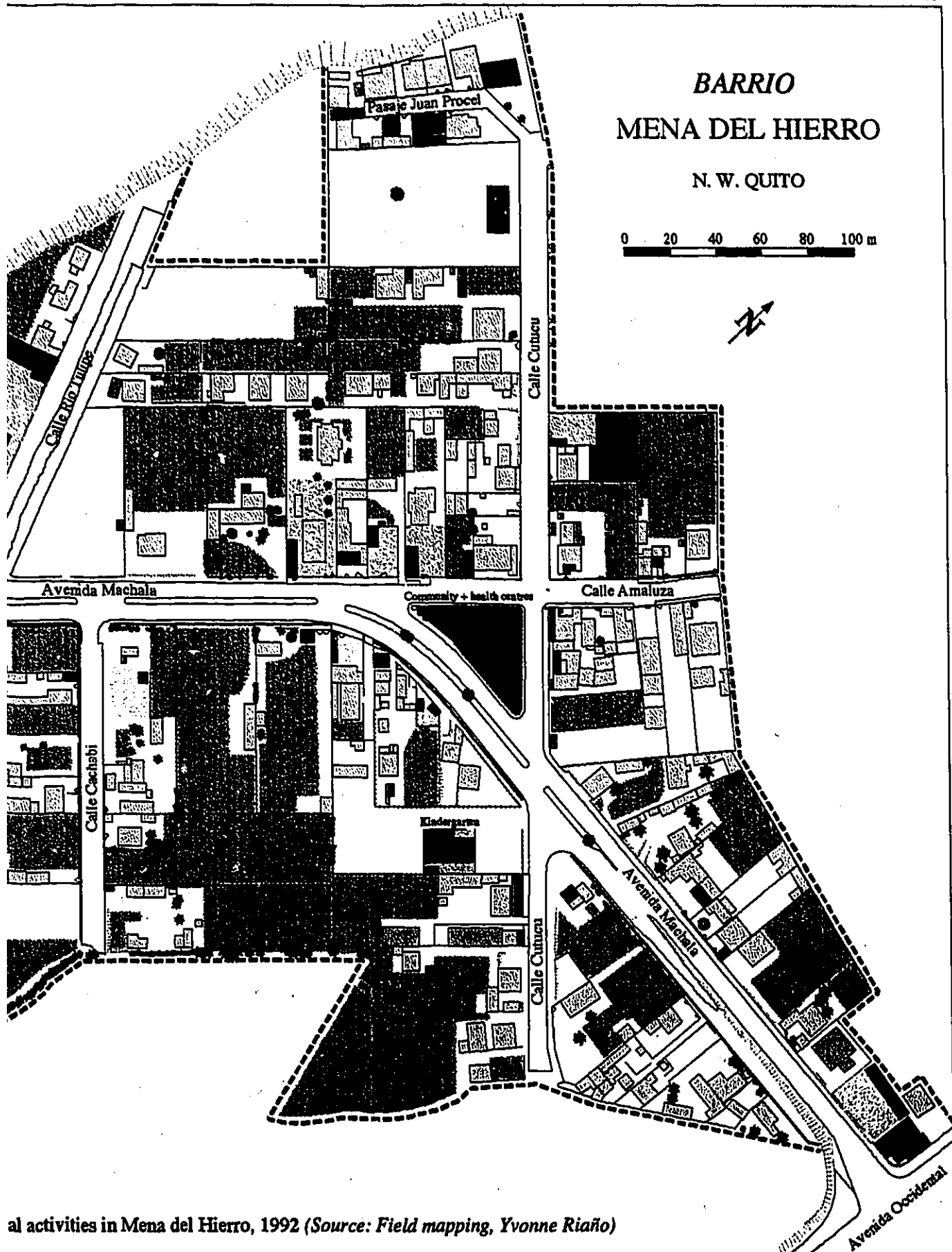
According to aerial photographic analysis and personal interviews with pioneer residents, by 1983, brick-making started to lose economic importance and give way to the construction of new dwellings for rent or for housing kinspeople. Brick-making was clearly an essential start-up economic activity which allowed certain families to accumulate capital for later investment in house construction or taxis (e.g. L. Ron in lot 160; D. Hidrovo in lot 153). Only two brick-making industries continued to exist by 1983, and one of these had been transformed to manufacture cement blocks rather than clay bricks (lot 212 at the intersection of Cutucu and Juan Procel). The other change with respect to years prior to 1983 was the emergence of a secondary-sector industry (metal working) in the northwestern part of the *barrio*, on Rio Tuliipe road (lot 203). Some shops and the school Fernando Daquilema had also been constructed. The land-use pattern of mixed housing and crops remained dominant, however.

In 1992, two land use trends could be recognized (Fig. 3-47). The primary-sector activities such as agriculture and brick-making were decreasing or stagnating in importance (Fig. 3-48), while housing, secondary-sector industry, commerce and communal facilities were increasing (Table 3-19).

Table 3-19 The evolution of land use in popular Mena del Hierro: 1983-1992

	1983	1992
Brick-making industries	2	2
Secondary sector industries	1	11
Commercial installations	5	24
Dwellings	113	224
Communal facilities	4	7





al activities in Mena del Hierro, 1992 (Source: Field mapping, Yvonne Riaño)



Figure 3-48. Brick-kiln located at the north-western side of the Machala and Rio Tulipe intersection. The brick making industry in the *barrio* is stagnating (*Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992*).



Figure 3-49. Corn crops at the south-eastern side of the Machala and Cutucu intersection. Most of the area of the *barrio* is used for corn crops (*Photo: Natasha Brideau, 1991*).

The area previously used for crops has been drastically reduced, to the advantage of dwellings, which over the 1983-1992 period have doubled in number. Agriculture continues to various extents in 80% of the original lots, and the area in crops (mostly corn) is still by far the largest of the various land uses. Thus agriculture dominates land-use in the *barrio* even after twenty years of existence (Fig. 3-49).

Crop- and animal-raising are traditional practices of many residents of Mena del Hierro who grew up in rural environments. Corn, an item of utmost importance in the diet of most Ecuadorians, particularly of the popular sectors, is the main crop in the *barrio*. Animals, especially pigs, rabbits and chickens, are also raised in the backyards of lots. Interestingly, practically no land is cultivated with vegetables, again reflecting the traditional nature of the popular diet.

By area, housing is the second most important land use in the *barrio*. Commerce and industry follow far behind, occupying less than 10% of the total neighbourhood. The main spatial pattern of land use is characterized by the location of most industry and commerce along the sides of the main *barrio* road, or in its immediate vicinity. The obvious advantages of accessibility explain this pattern. Some minor industry is nevertheless found in the "interior" of the neighbourhood, such as the bread-making and brick-making in the Juan Procel alleyway. The location of these industries is not the result of a distant-cost choice. Once *barrio* residents have some land of their own, they generally try to earn as much as they can from it, regardless of where it is located.

The multifunctional use of residential sections

Another interesting feature of land use in popular Mena del Hierro is the multifunctionality of individual land sections (Fig. 3-47). Approximately a quarter of the *barrio's* sections are used simultaneously for various combinations of housing (whether owned or rented), commerce (shops, grocery and beer stores), agriculture, industry (brick-making, bread-making, car repair services), and sports fields (Figs. 3-50 and 3-51). These sections thus fulfil not only the function of places of living but also of economic, social and recreational activities. Mixtures of uses within living quarters is very typical of *barríos populares* in Latin American cities. In the prevailing context of economic instability, land is the most precious capital that low-income populations have and hence it is intensively exploited. In Mena del Hierro, the percentage of residential sections with mixed uses is only modest compared to other more consolidated *barríos* in Quito or elsewhere, where often almost every plot is used for several purposes regardless of their size. In view of the continuing economic instability in Ecuador it seems likely that the pattern of multifunctional use of individual land sections in Mena del Hierro will very likely increase in the future.



Figure 3-50. Examples of the multiple use of sections (212A; 212I; 212H) in the Juan procel alleyway: housing, storage of agricultural produce (being unloaded from the truck) and bread-making (*Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992*).

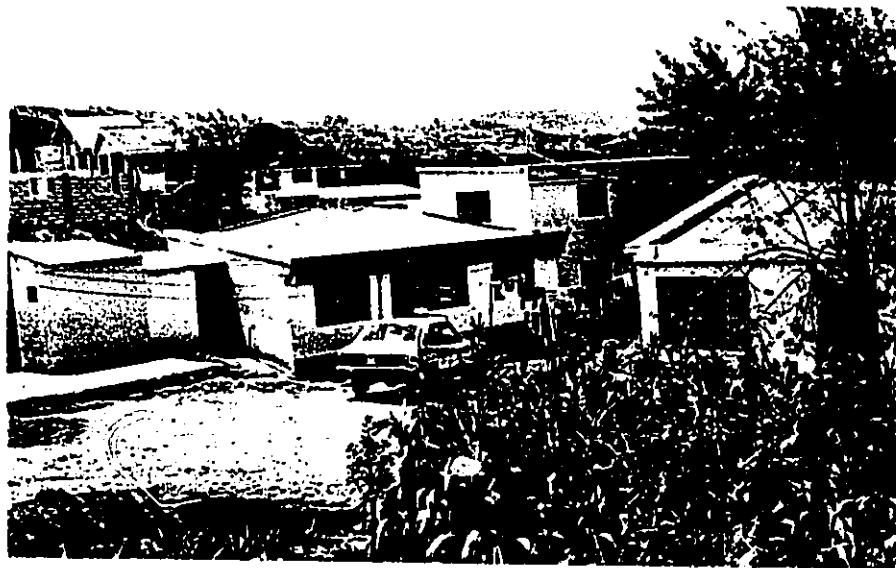


Figure 3-51. An example of the multiple use of a section (153B): housing (living and renting), taxi parking, corn crops and corner shop (not seen in picture) (*Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992*).



Figure 3-52. The largest commercial "complex" of the *barrio* on Machala (two-storey building behind the tree). It comprises a mini market; a "bazaar" and a medical practice. Also note the community- and health-centre on the far right (*Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992*).

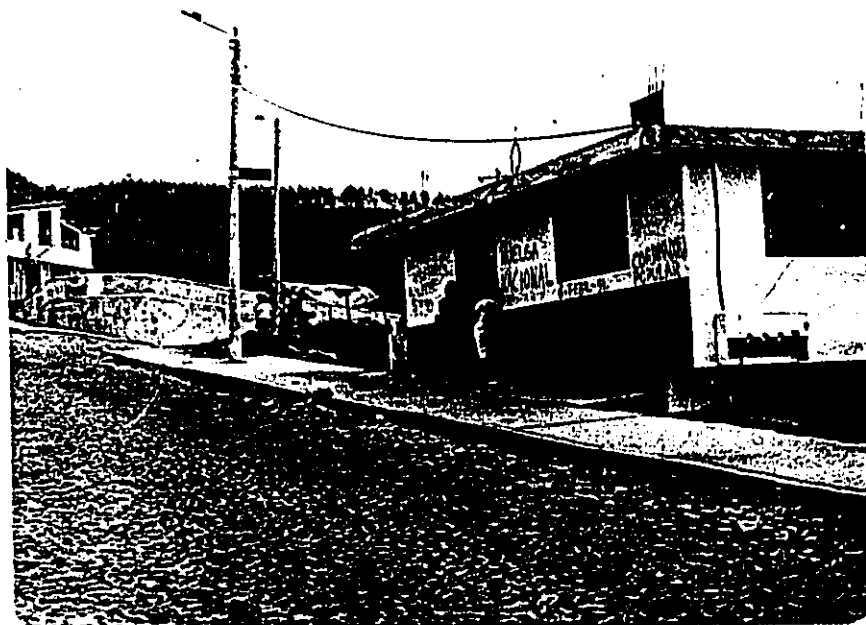


Figure 3-53. A corner-shop at the north-western side of the Machala and Cutucu intersection. Note customers waiting for the shop attendant behind the barrier (*Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991*).

Types of commerce and industry and planning regulations

Several types of commerce and industry are found in Mena del Hierro. They vary in size, in the level of demand they satisfy, the extractive or processing nature of industry, the place of residence of their owners, their degree of compatibility with the residential use, and their degree of environmental impact. For purposes of comparison with municipal regulations on land use, the last two classification criteria, which are used by the Municipality to grant land-use permits in neighbourhoods of Quito (Dirección de Planificación, 1992), will be used to establish types of commerce and industry in Mena del Hierro.

The resulting classification can be seen in Figure 3-47. Two different types of commerce are found: (1) commercial establishments catering to the local neighbourhood demand ("C1"; e.g. corner shops)¹² (Figs. 3-52 and 3-53) and (2) those addressing a wider demand, at sectorial level ("C2" e.g. wholesale grocery warehouses)¹³. Both of these are considered by the Municipality as "compatible" with residential use in Mena del Hierro¹⁴. This means that the establishments should occupy only part of a land section while the rest is used for living, thereby ensuring that residential use prevails in the *barrio*.

Three types of industry (according to the municipal code) are found in Mena del Hierro: (1) low-impact industry ("I1"; Fig. 3-54) such as wholesale bakeries; (2) medium-impact industry such as auto-mechanics and warehouses for lubricants ("I2"); and (3) high-impact industry ("I3"), or industries such as metal-working and body-shop factories (Fig. 3-55). The Municipality allows low-impact industries in Mena del Hierro ("compatible"); restricts medium-impact industries (a special study is necessary before a land permit is granted); and prohibits high-impact industries.

In summary, existing wholesale bakeries and shoe factories in the *barrio* will have no conflict in the future with official regulations since they are allowed. In contrast, vulcanizers, clay and cement brick-works, auto-mechanics, cabinet-makers, warehouses and hose manufacturers will encounter resistance from the Municipality when operating permits need to be granted. According to Municipality laws, the existing metal-working and body-shop factories have no possibility of being granted operating licenses. As practice in most Latin American *barrios* shows, however, contravention of official regulations is not an impediment to the existence of informal businesses. Some concrete obstacles on the part of the Municipality, such as the granting of loans or providing fresh water, may nevertheless constrain the further development of medium-impact and high-impact industries.

¹² The land use code assigned by the Municipality of Quito for this group is "CV" or "*comercio vecinal*"

¹³ The land use code for this group is "CS" or "*comercio sectorial*"

¹⁴ The neighbourhood of administrative Mena del Hierro has been classified by the Municipality of Quito as "B203" (or residential area of low-density) whereby some land uses are allowed and some others are restricted.



Figure 3-54. A vulcanising enterprise at the north-western side of the Machala and Avenida Occidental intersection. Note car repair activities being carried out on the four-lane, high-speed road (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 3-55. A body-work enterprise along the Machala road (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

Most commercial and industrial establishments, except for the high-impact type, have two further characteristics: the owner lives on the same section of land where the business operates, and the enterprises are all small-scale and use mainly family labour. High-impact industries are large, they employ workers who mostly are not from the *barrio*, and their owners live outside the *barrio*. For these reasons they do not form part of the *barrio*'s social web.

The question for the future is: what types of land use and enterprises will dominate? Will small-scale commerce and industry continue to be the major activities or will large, non-family-based, high-impact industries expand? The dominance of one or the other of these types will certainly have noticeable consequences for the social fabric of the *barrio*. Small-scale and family-based businesses will most probably strengthen the *barrio*'s current social organization, whereas the increase of large-scale, high-impact industries will most probably reduce the density of social networks in the neighbourhood.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has presented new field data on the history of emergence of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro, on the sociodemography of its residents, and on the main features of its physical setting. The field methods used for the study were life histories and informal discussions with key informants, mental maps, socioeconomic surveys, aerial photographic analysis and mapping of buildings and land-use. As Mena del Hierro is an evolving *barrio*, analysis of its physical characteristics has been approached from an evolutionary perspective.

Three types of conclusions emerge from this study: (1) those regarding the differences between perceived and administrative *barrio* boundaries; (b) those regarding the influence of the *barrio*'s history on self-help organizations seeking to improve the *barrio*, and (3) those regarding the characteristics of the *barrio*'s sociodemographic and physical setting, and its potential influence on communication between residents.

Perceived and Administrative Boundaries

Two distinct social areas exist within the official administrative unit of Mena del Hierro, differentiated by socioeconomic level and lifestyle. The main reason for this pattern is that administrative Mena del Hierro was populated over two different periods, separated from each other by approximately ten years. The lower income area, populated during the first period and characterized by a poorer socioeconomic level, is the focus of this study. The

limits of this area have been provisionally identified from the mental maps of residents and from direct observation, but they will be further examined in Chapter V (Social Networks).

The History of the *Barrio*

Popular Mena del Hierro, a settlement that emerged from the subdivision of the *Hacienda La Concepción* into *huertos familiares*, has a history characterized by "positive" events. The lots that resulted from the subdivision were cheap and large, allowing spatial and economic flexibility for residents. The pioneer residents of the *barrio* where optimistic migrants set on "conquering" a space in the city where they could live and improve their social and economic situation. The initial self-help achievements of the first residents created a sense of pride and a desire to continue working towards future improvements. This series of positive events has obviously had beneficial effects on the physical improvement of the *barrio*, as residents have been highly motivated over the years to participate in self-help activities. This history contrasts with that of the neighbouring *barrio* of San Rafael, which is characterized by a series of negative impacts of urban expansion in a pre-existing village. As a result, its residents are apathetic and live with a feeling of failure and abandonment. Their *barrio* is now one of the least developed in the area, despite the fact that it has existed for almost a century.

Characteristics and Social Influence of the Sociodemographic and Physical Setting

From a sociodemographic point of view, the residents of popular Mena del Hierro are a relatively homogeneous group. Social conditions are thus favourable, at least in principle, for the development of friendships. On the other hand, the built environment within lots does not seem to be conducive to communication between residents.

Aspects of the sociodemography of the *barrio* in which homogeneity is apparent are the following:

- (1) *Kinship ties*. The original large size of lots in Mena del Hierro has permitted groups of related families to live together on the same section of land under the extended family system. The majority of residents have kinship ties within the *barrio* (see Chapter IV for details).
- (2) *Group size*. Mena del Hierro is a small *barrio* of 800 people who share an area of less than 20 ha. Thus, social contact between residents is facilitated by the small size of the neighbourhood.

- (3) *Life cycle.* The majority of the *barrio's* population are couples with children under fifteen and thus residents have common interests regarding their life cycles.
- (4) *Geographical origin.* The large majority of the adults are migrants to Quito from the countryside whereas most children and youths have been born in Quito. The pattern of migration to Quito follows the principle of geographical proximity as most migrants have come from the immediately adjacent province of Pichincha. A third of all migrants come from the rural hinterland northwest of the *barrio*.
- (5) *Urban experience.* Most residents have had urban experience before moving to the *barrio*. The majority of adults have lived elsewhere in Quito before settling in Mena del Hierro, thus their path of migration has been indirect. Most children and youths have histories of pure intra-urban migration, having been born to migrant parents in Quito.

Intra-urban migration to Mena del Hierro is best explained by the principle of geographical proximity, just as in the case of rural-urban migration. Most *barrio* residents previously lived in the nearby northern urban area of Cotacollao. Thus, intra-urban migration is essentially limited to a geographic realm which is traditionally familiar to the rural migrant. The classic centre-periphery model therefore appears to be inappropriate in the case of Mena del Hierro.

Over half the residents of Mena del Hierro have spent more than half of their lives in Quito. Migrants to the *barrio* have thus had as much experience in urban environments as they have had in countryside environments. For all residents, the largest part of their urban experience has been in Mena del Hierro.

- (6) *Residential permanency.* Mena del Hierro is not a *barrio* of newcomers. The majority of residents of all ages has lived between 5 and 20 years in the *barrio*. Most residents are either house owners or live under the *servicios* system, a usually stable housing arrangement between kinspeople. Thus most *residents* of the *barrio* can be characterized as stable.
- (7) *Geographical location.* Despite immediate access to the Avenida Occidental and proximity to the city centre, over the past twenty years the residents of Mena del Hierro have lived in relative spatial isolation due to the absence of public transport. However, this has changed recently with the advent of a bus service in 1994.
- (8) *The need for mutual assistance.* No basic infrastructure and services were available in 1972 when settlers first arrived at Mena del Hierro. Thus residents were compelled to collaborate with each other to improve their physical environment. Using the system of

mingas, impressive improvements have been made, particularly by the construction of a piped drinking water system which residents manage themselves.

In contrast to the above features, the housing density of the *barrio* does not favour social encounters. As a result of the process of emergence of Mena del Hierro, the size of initial lots was very large, ten to fifteen times the usual size of lots for low-income housing. Just over half of these original lots have been subdivided over the years into smaller sections. The size of many of the subdivided lots is still fairly large in comparison to the average for low-income housing. Most land subdivisions have occurred in the lower part of the *barrio*, near the Avenida Occidental.

The actual size of individual land sections in Mena del Hierro is nonetheless difficult to estimate. In some cases, several house owners may live on the same section of land but without any apparent physical boundaries. The main explanation for this phenomenon is kinship and the extended family system, whereby groups of related families live their daily lives as if they were one social unit. Thus, physical boundaries between individual properties are not necessary.

By comparison with the *barrrios* of the northwest, Mena del Hierro has one of the lowest population densities. This does not mean that the number of residents and dwellings have stagnated. The total number of dwellings has doubled over the past ten years, at an average annual rate of 9%. Despite this increase, two thirds of the *barrio* remain with few dwellings and with still much scope for densification. The area where the largest growth of dwellings has occurred is near the Avenida Occidental.

An estimation of the potential capacity of the *barrio* to accommodate more residents and dwellings suggests a possible six-fold increase in the current numbers of dwellings and population. It has also been estimated that if the current yearly growth rate of new dwellings continues, the six-fold densification could be complete within the next 15 years.

Another salient characteristic of land use in the *barrio* is the low level of commercial and industrial activity and the dominance of residential and agricultural uses. This pattern is characteristic of the *barrrios* of the northwest, and is explained by their youth and by their relative geographical isolation due to poor roads and lack of public transport. From a spatial point of view, commercial activities concentrate mostly in the lower part of the *barrio* near the road communicating to the city. The upper topographical level of Mena del Hierro has preserved a much more rural character. Despite the current dominance of housing and agriculture, the trend over the past ten years has been a reduction in the surface area of agricultural land.

Another interesting feature of land use in the *barrio* is the mixture of uses within individual residential sections. These sections serve multiple purposes for their residents: accommodation, recreation, and social and economic bases. As in other Latin American cities, mixed land-use in residential areas is typical of low-income populations, and distinguishes them from high-income groups who tend towards spatial specialization.

Thus, despite the fact that the low density of housing in Mena del Hierro does not favour the development of social contact between residents, the physical environment and small size of the *barrio* is conducive to the social interaction patterns and economic activities of the residents: kinship, agriculture, commerce, industry and housing renting.

Future Trends

How stable are the sociodemographic and physical environments in Mena del Hierro? The *barrio* is still physically evolving and thus its built environment will certainly change in the future. The process of land subdivision, for example, is bound to accelerate in the coming years as a result of the current process of connecting Mena del Hierro to Quito's water system. Water taxes will be calculated on the basis of the size of land sections and thus it is in the interest of residents to have smaller sections in order to pay less taxes.

The number of dwellings and businesses is also certain to increase in the near future in response to recent improvements in water provision, public transport and road paving. The six-fold increase in density calculated above will pose an extraordinary challenge for the future provision of infrastructure and services, especially if it occurs with the next ten years or less.

Future changes in lot size, land use, density and geographical mobility may have several consequences for the social life of the residents of the *barrio*. Will the new populations make the current sociodemographic structure of the *barrio* less homogeneous? Will the resulting densification and mixing of the built environment be more conducive to social contact between residents? Will increased mobility drastically change the social life of residents? These questions regarding the social stability of the *barrio* will be further explored in Chapter V (Social Networks).

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CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESIDENTS OF *BARRIO MENA DEL HIERRO*

A special case among Quito's low-income *barrios*

INTRODUCTION

Early research on *barrios populares* in Latin America refuted the old image of these communities as socially and economically apathetic and pointed out the positive aspects of their organization (Morse, 1965; Mangin, 1967; Turner and Mangin, 1968; Perlman, 1976). Recent research on economic aspects of *barrios populares* has centered on how well migrants adapt to the cities and on the wealth of "survival strategies" that the poor devise in order to survive in the cities (Logan, 1981; Lomnitz, 1988; Hardy, 1987; Pérez Sáinz and Ribadeneira, 1987). It has also emphasised the economic intra- and inter*barrio* heterogeneity of *barrios* and their differences in development potential (Butterworth and Chance, 1981; Riaño, Y. and Wesche, 1992). The economic heterogeneity among residents of each *barrio* has also been highlighted. Residents' income levels may vary from low to middle-class. The one feature that most residents have in common is an unstable income (Logan, 1981; Lomnitz, 1988; Pérez Sáinz and Ribadeneira, 1987).

Thus, there are different economic levels of *barrios populares* and different economic levels of *barrio* residents. Most research work has been conducted in *barrios* with lower economic levels and among poorer residents. Little is known so far regarding the specific economic characteristics of higher level *barrios* and their residents. Research emphasis on poorer groups has probably resulted from overfocusing on the concept of survival strategies, a concept best suited to *barrios* with lower economic levels

What are the specific economic characteristics of higher-income *barrios*? What are the main economic activities and occupational characteristics of their residents? What makes these *barrios* different from others? What makes them similar? Should they, from an analytical point of view, be considered as part of *barrios populares* or rather as part of average, middle-class neighbourhoods?

This chapter examines in detail the economic characteristics of the labour force in Mena del Hierro, a higher-income *barrio* of Quito, Ecuador. The analysis aims at providing an economic framework for examining the socializing patterns of *barrio* residents.

Data sources for this treatment are personal field work observations and 209 household questionnaires from a medical census (SAFI) carried out in Mena del Hierro in 1990¹. Census questionnaires provide information on the economic activities of "household heads" and "spouses". Information on the working age population which is 15-25 years of age, and is not household head or spouse is, unfortunately, lacking. The exact number of how many residents belong to this group is not clear. However, the size of this group should be less than 16% of the total working age population. The total number of residents between 15-25 in the *barrio* is 80. This number represents 16% of the working age population. Thus, the SAFI medical census covers nearly 90% of the working age population.

In order to complement the information provided by the medical census, data on the economic activities of the young have been provided by a survey carried out by this research on the spatial preferences of residents which included a section on general socioeconomic information. The sample surveyed represents thirty six per cent of young population. Because these two surveys were made on different samples, the results will be presented separately. Tables on labour force will only include the medical census data, i.e. data on household heads and spouses. Information on young people's economic activities will be separately presented in the text.

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE AND INACTIVE POPULATION

Economically Active Residents by Gender

Results of the SAFI census show that the labour force, or economically active residents, represent over sixty per cent of the working age population in Mena del Hierro and a third of the total resident population (Table 4-1). This last percentage is relatively low if compared with the *barrios* of Quito's northwest which have an average participation rate of almost 50 per cent (CIUDAD, 1992).

As seen in Table 4-2, men have a very high economic participation whereas that of women is very low. Practically all men are economically active but only a third of the female population is part of the labour force. Results of the separate survey carried out by this research show that, similarly to women, few young people are economically active. Only thirty eight per cent of the young (15-25 years) earn an income. The overall low proportion of economically active residents in Mena del Hierro is thus explained by the low participation rates of women and young people. It is, however, also explained by the large proportion of children below 15 years, who represent forty percent of the total resident

¹ This census was carried out by local doctors with the cooperation of young *barrio* residents. Data was collected but not processed and tabulated in summary tables.

population.

Table 4-1. Labour force in Mena del Hierro

Total population	Working-age population	Sample of working-age population	Economically active population	Participation rate ^d (total pop.)	Participation rate ^b (working-age)
793	488 ^c	394 ^d	254 ^d	32 ^{c,d}	64 ^d

a Percentage of total resident population

b Percentage of working-age population

c Residents over 15 years of age

d Does not include part of the working age population group 15-25 years of age (up to 16% of total)

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

Table 4-2. Labour force participation rate by gender

	Total population	Economically active population	Participation rate (%)
Men	191	187	98
Women	203	67	33
Total	394	254	64

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

It is unclear at the present time how the economic participation of women in Mena del Hierro compares with that of other *barrios* of Quito and the *barrios* of other large Andean cities. The reasons for the low participation rates of women in Mena del Hierro are also unclear. Do women not need to earn an income? Do family structure and cultural values restrict women from employment? These questions will be explored later but one certain fact constraining the gainful economic involvement of women is the large percentage of children under fifteen years.

Economically Active Residents by Household Status

Most male household heads are economically active whereas less than half of female household heads participate in the labour force (Table 4-3). Only a third of the female spouse population takes part in income-earning activities. A third of households in Mena del Hierro receives an income from two parents.

An analysis of the economic participation of "household heads" and "spouses" by household type shows that practically all male heads of couple structured households are economically active (Table 4-4). In contrast, less than half of female household heads participate in

income earning activities. How solo mothers without any apparent income manage to support their children is unknown.

Table 4-3. Labour force participation rate of household heads and spouses

		Total	Economically Active	Participation Rate (%)
Heads	<i>Male</i>	192	187	97.4
	<i>Female</i>	17	7	41.2
	Total	209	194	93
Spouses	<i>Male</i>	-	-	-
	<i>Female</i>	185	60	31
	Total	185	60	31

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

Table 4-4. Labour force participation rate of household heads and spouses by household type

Type of Household		Total Household Heads and Spouses	Economically Active Household Heads and Spouses	Participation Rate (%)
Couple	<i>Male heads</i>	185	184	99
	<i>Female heads</i>	-	-	-
	<i>Male spouses</i>	-	-	-
	<i>Female spouses</i>	185	60	31
Single parents	<i>Male</i>	-	-	-
	<i>Female</i>	7	3	43
One person	<i>Male</i>	7	3	43
	<i>Female</i>	10	4	40
Total number		394	254	93

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

Economically Inactive Residents

Forty per cent of the working age population is economically inactive. The large majority of the inactive are homemakers (Table 4-5). The high percentage of homemakers contrasts with the average percentage of Quito's northwestern *barrios*: in these *barrios* sixty eight per cent of the non-active are students whereas homemakers only represent a third of the total (CIUDAD, 1992). All inactive women, both household heads and spouses, are homemakers.

Nearly two thirds of the inactive young are highschool or university students.

Table 4-5. Economically inactive residents by status and gender

	Total inactive population		Men		Women	
		%	Total inactive residents	%	Total inactive residents	%
Homemakers	136	97	1	20	135	100
Students	2	1.5	2	40	-	-
Retirees	2	1.5	2	40	-	-
Total	140	100	5	100	135	100

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

LABOUR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployed labour force in Mena del Hierro represents only two percent of economically-active household heads and spouses (Table 4-6). The survey carried out by this research on spatial preferences, including twenty nine young residents, found that only one was unemployed. This result is surprisingly low. Real unemployment however is difficult to discern, especially in countries like Ecuador. Homemaking, studying and self-employment often hide unemployment.

Informal conversations with young people in Mena del Hierro for example, showed that many young students, especially university students, irregularly attend their studies as they are really looking for a job. In Ecuador, access to university is free and costs are very low. For many young people being registered at university is mostly a temporary occupation until a job is found.

The study by CIUDAD (1992) in the northwestern *barrios* of Quito also found evidence that studying among the young hides unemployment. Also, in the case of some women, particularly solo mothers, homemaking is probably a temporary occupation until an income opportunity is found. Cleaning jobs, for example, are unstable jobs in Ecuador and women often have periods of unemployment where they stay at home looking after their children. The incidence of these kinds of hidden unemployment in Mena del Hierro is however difficult to quantify. Self-employment, specially informal self-employment, in Ecuador is mostly a way to counteract endemic unemployment. As explained later in the section on employment status fifty percent of Mena del Hierro's residents create their own employment.

Table 4-6. Economically active residents: employed and unemployed

Total economically active household heads and spouses	Total employed residents	Rate of unemployment (%)
254	250	2

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

Field work observations showed that unemployment mostly occurs among young people. The CIUDAD study (1992) in the northwestern *barrios* arrived at the same conclusion. The effects of unemployment, however, vary according to resident groups. The sample survey carried out by this research reveals that most unemployed male household heads have spouses who are economically active. In some cases they have an additional income source like rent or a farm in the countryside. Most young people have the possibility of some economic support from their parents. Single mothers probably suffer the most the effects of unemployment.

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR

The major source of employment for residents of Mena del Hierro is the tertiary sector or service sector of the economy (Table 4-7). A minority of only seventeen per cent works in the secondary or industrial sector. The service sector is equally important as a source of employment for both men and women. In contrast, the industrial sector is slightly more important for women than for men.

Table 4-7. Employed residents by gender and economic sector

	Employed population	Agriculture (%)	Industry (%)	Services (%)
Total	250	3	17	80
Men	183	4	16	80
Women	67	1	20	79

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

Table 4-8 compares the distribution of employed residents by economic sector in Mena del Hierro with that of other *barrios* of Quito. There are two main differences: (1) The service sector (especially the community, social and personal services and the transport branches) is between one and a half and two times more important as a source of employment in Mena del Hierro than the Quito *barrios* mean; (2) the industrial sector (especially the construction

branch) is around three times less important in Mena del Hierro as a source of employment than in the *barrios* of Quito. In sum, tertiary sector jobs dominate in Mena del Hierro as opposed to the *barrios* of Quito where secondary sector jobs are the main sources of employment.

Table 4-8. Employed residents in Mena del Hierro by economic sector, compared to other *barrios* of Quito.

	Employed Residents (%)				Quito ^d
	Mena del Hierro	San Carlos Alto ^a	Barrios of NW Quito ^b	Barrios of Quito ^c	
1) Agriculture	3	0.9	0.5	4.2	1.9
2) Industry	17	56.4	24.6	51.8	23.6
<i>Manufacturing</i>	14	31.7	18.3	13.1	16.9
<i>Construction</i>	3	21.7	6.3	37.9	6.7
<i>Electricity, gas and water</i>	-	3.0	-	0.8	-
3) Services	80	40	66.5	43.9	69.1
<i>Wholesale/retail trade</i>	14	14.8	17.3	12.7	19.0
<i>Community, social and personal services</i>	48	18.7	33.5	22.2	38.6
<i>Transport and storage</i>	18	6.5	10.5	7.1	4.9
<i>Financing services</i>	-	-	0.5	0.4	5.9
<i>Other services</i>	-	-	4.7	1.5	0.7
New workers	-	-	0.5	-	1.1
NR	-	-	7.9	-	4.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

^a Source: Ribadeneira (1991). Note that San Carlos Alto is situated beside Mena del Hierro

^b Source: CIUDAD (1992) and INEC (1990)

^c Source: ORSTOM (1987)

^d Includes *barrio* and non-*barrio* populations. Source: INEC (1990)

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

The distribution of the labour force along the spectrum of occupational types shows a clear dominance of clerical, sales and service workers (Table 4-9). There are very few professionals and technicians and no managers or administrators. The three most important occupations (fifty five percent) are drivers, "employees" and trade workers (mainly

carpenters², mechanics and tailors). Most occupations in Mena del Hierro are thus of a semiskilled nature.

Table 4-9. Employed residents by gender and occupational groups

	Total		Men		Women	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Professional and technical workers ^d	10	4	7	4	3	5
Administrators and managers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clerical, sales and service workers:	171	75	140	77	52	73
<i>Drivers</i>	45	18	45	25	-	-
<i>Wholesale and retail workers^b</i>	35	14	16	9	19	28
<i>"Employees"^c</i>	45	18	34	19	11	16
<i>Service workers^d</i>	19	8	10	5	11	13
<i>Trade workers^e</i>	46	19	35	19	11	16
Agricultural workers	7	3	6	3	1	2
Production workers:	43	17	30	16	13	20
<i>Brickmakers</i>	6	2	3	2	3	5
<i>Manufacturing industry</i>	29	12	19	10	10	15
<i>Construction</i>	8	3	8	4	-	-
Total employed residents	250	100	183	100	67	100

a Includes doctors, teachers, technicians and sales executives.

b Includes people who run a shop, wholesale vendors of agricultural products, and street vendors

c Undifferentiated "employees" (no further information available).

d Includes cleaning women, cleaning men, watchmen and policemen.

e Includes plumbers, painters, mechanics, electricians, carpenters, locksmiths, metalworkers, shoemakers, bakers, hairdressers, tailors, handcraft workers.

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

This result contrasts with the occupational structure of most *barrios* in Quito where unskilled labour dominates, mostly as construction labourers, watchmen and cleaning personnel. Driving is the dominant occupation for men in the *barrio*: a quarter of employed men practice this occupation. In contrast with men, the majority of employed women (two thirds) work as wholesale/retail traders, mostly running a shop. Wholesale/retail activities are mostly neighbourhood-based, family businesses. Two and a half times more women than men work in lower-rank service jobs (e.g. cleaning and caretaking) in Mena del Hierro. There is however not a large concentration of lower-level service jobs for women, as often is the case in many *barrios* of Quito.

² In Latin American countries carpenters work with wood, constructing furniture, cabinets and doors, and lining walls and ceilings.

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Self-employment is very important in Mena del Hierro. Half of the employed residents are self-employed (Table 4-10). This percentage is much higher than the thirty-five per cent average in the *barrios* of Quito's northwest (CIUDAD, 1992). Agriculture has the highest proportion with all workers self-employed. Almost two thirds of service sector workers are self-employed whereas only fourteen percent of industry workers (all brick-makers) create their own employment.

Free-lance workers comprise fifty per cent of the self-employed. The rest of the self-employed are employers with a maximum of five employees. Most of these self-employment activities are of an informal nature. Informal enterprises are mostly small, not officially registered and home-based. They avoid business taxes and government control of business operations. As in traditional informal businesses family and non family labour is often overworked and sometimes underpaid. Brick-making businesses are family based.

Informal free-lance workers include tailors, drivers, carpenters, painters and plumbers. Informal businesses with employees include breadmaking, brickmaking, shops, vegetable-packing, grocery distributors, farming, shoemaking, vulcanizing, car repair workshops, transportation and carpentry. Informal businesses, except for shops and in part breadmaking, are not directed at the local demand but at customers outside the *barrio* either in the immediate sector, in other parts of the city or in suburban areas.

Table 4-10. Employed residents by gender and employment status

	Total employed residents	Employers ^a (%)	Own-account workers ^b (%)	Employees ^c (%)
Total	250	25.2	25.2	49.6
Men	183	24 ^d	22 ^e	54
Women	67	28 ^f	34 ^g	37

^a A person who operates his or her own economic enterprise or who engages independently in a profession or trade, and hires one or more employees

^b A person who operates his or her own economic enterprise or who engages independently in a profession or trade, and hires no employees

^c A person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages, salary, commission, tips, piece-notes or pay in kind

^d Includes trade workers, brickmakers, wholesale/retail workers, farmers, drivers owning taxis or buses

^e Includes cleaning men, construction labourers, trade workers, retail workers

^f Includes trade workers, brickmakers, wholesale/retail workers, farmers

^g Includes cleaning women, trade workers, retail workers

Source: SAFI Census, 1990

The proportion of self-employed women is much higher than that of men. Two thirds of women are self-employed whereas less than half of the men create their own employment. The majority of self-employed women are free-lance tailors and employers in the

wholesale/retail business. The majority of self-employed men are drivers who own a bus, taxi or wholesale/retail business.

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS AND INCOME LEVELS

The former sections characterized the labour force in Mena del Hierro according to occupational structure and employment status. This section aims to estimate the relative income of residents and to examine possible income differences and/or similarities among *barrio* residents. This is a complex enterprise theoretically requiring the inclusion of two variables: income sources and number of household members. In *barrios populares* obtaining data on relative income poses particular problems, as illustrated in the survey by this research on spatial preferences with a section on socioeconomic data.

1. First, some residents have no accurate knowledge of their monthly salary because of irregular incomes and unstable jobs. For the informally self-employed economic opportunities continually come and go. Because they are constrained to living on a day-to-day basis they are unable to keep accounts or to plan ahead.
2. To establish how many people live on one salary is difficult because of the extended family system.
3. Answers to questions on income are unreliable. For reasons of personal image residents gave biased answers. As part of the participatory research approach some young residents took part in the survey as interviewers. I have the impression that in these cases, and also when I interviewed, some residents raised the amount of their income in order to produce a good impression on the people they knew. Many residents also associate surveys with official authorities and expect to obtain a concrete benefit. I have the impression that the amount of income is lowered in these cases. Survey results are thus not reliable.

The efficacy of surveys to assess relative income (as defined by income and the number of household members) in *barrios populares* is in general limited by informality: 1. as explained in the section on landlordism, residents may have several sources of income, most of them of an informal character; 2. the concept of the nuclear household as an economic unit is not always valid. People who do not live under the same roof but are members of an extended family may pool incomes and share living costs. Or else some members of the extended family may depend on the others entirely for survival.

In *barrios populares* I believe in-depth case studies are more useful than large surveys to obtain an accurate picture of the economic reality of residents. Participant observation is crucial to obtain an insider view of the economic organization of members of *barrios*

populares. To obtain a clear picture of how the monthly income varies over the year a careful follow-up of monthly earnings is also necessary. Such an approach was beyond the scope of this study.

In the absence of reliable data and in order to have a minimal idea of residents' income a qualitative estimate of relative income will be carried out in the following section. The estimate will focus on employment income. Two qualitative indicators will be used to estimate the employment income of residents: occupational structure and employment status. These two indicators are considered relevant in assessing employment income for the following reasons: The type of occupation indicates a person's technical skill and salaries are in general based on the degree of technical skill. Employment status may also indicate a person's income level. Two drivers for example, may have the same skill but different incomes when one is an employee and the other is an employer with a relatively successful transportation business.

A mere analysis of employment income is however not enough to estimate relative income. Two factors make a crucial difference to the economic stability of a person: income regularity and social security. The importance of regularity of income has already been emphasized in the literature. For Lomnitz (1988) for example, the degree of income regularity is the key factor of differentiation among the poor. Social security has in contrast received less attention in the literature. Lack of social security affects the economic stability of residents. Self-employed workers in *barrios populares* for example, cannot allow themselves to be ill or have an accident because their families will be left without an income and expensive health costs will have to be paid.

The qualitative estimate of income regularity and social security will also use occupational structure and employment status as qualitative indicators. Middle-skill employed secretaries, for example, have access to medium-low level salaries, regular income and social security. On the contrary, low-skill and self-employed cleaning ladies have low level salaries, no guarantee of regular income and no social security³.

The estimate will be carried out for all employed residents in Mena del Hierro. The left side of Table 4-11 classifies employed residents according to their employment status and relative technical skill. The right side of Table 4-11 classifies the occupations of residents according to income level, income regularity and access to social security.

Employed residents of Mena del Hierro have three income levels: low, medium-low and medium-high. The income level of most occupations directly corresponds to the degree of

³ The situation of cleaning ladies can be variable however. In principle, and according to the law, cleaning ladies should be paid minimum social benefits. In practice however, not all employers pay these social benefits. Official control of this payment is difficult, the market of cleaning ladies is very competitive and many women very much need a job. As a result many do not demand their rights and tolerate lower conditions than those stipulated by the law.

technical skill except when the resident has the status of employer. Employers have medium level skills but get middle-high incomes. Informal conversations with many employers in Mena del Hierro showed that most employers get relatively good incomes as their enterprises are competitive and have much demand despite being small.

Table 4-11. Qualitative classification of employment income level, income regularity, and social security, according to employment status and technical skill

Employment Status	Employment Type	Technical Skill	Income Level	Regular Income	Social Security
OWN-ACCOUNT WORKERS	<i>Cleaning women</i>	<i>Low</i>	LOW	NO	NO
	<i>Cleaning men</i>	<i>Low</i>			
	<i>Subemployees</i>	<i>Low</i>			
	<i>Construction labourers</i>	<i>Low</i>			
	<i>Construction foremen</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Independent trade workers without employees</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Retail workers without employees</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
EMPLOYERS	<i>Independent trade workers</i>	<i>Medium</i>	MEDIUM	YES	NO
	<i>Brickmakers</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Wholesale/retail workers</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Owner drivers</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
EMPLOYEES	<i>Professionals and technicians</i>	<i>High</i>	MEDIUM	YES	NO
	<i>Other employees</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Drivers</i>	<i>Medium</i>			
	<i>Watchmen</i>	<i>Low</i>			
	<i>Policemen</i>	<i>Low</i>			
	<i>Industry workers</i>	<i>Low</i>			

Source: This study

Income regularity has been defined on the basis of employment status and type of occupation. Employees, for example, have fixed incomes and therefore enjoy income regularity whereas own-account workers have no guaranteed income regularity. This is particularly true in the case of housemaids, cleaners and construction labourers where the

labour supply often exceeds the demand. Employers are estimated to have income regularity, despite their self-employment, because of the relative success of their businesses which are in demand not only in the neighbourhood but in the city of Quito and sometimes elsewhere.

Employment status directly reflects social security. Own-account workers and employers have no social security whereas employees generally do. Employed drivers of buses and taxis are the exception. In Ecuador, employed bus and taxi drivers earn higher salaries than other employees but have no social security.

Table 4-12 shows the distribution of employed residents according to income level. Residents are economically heterogeneous. As explained above, there are three income levels in the *barrio*: low, middle-low and middle-high. Residents with middle-low incomes dominate however. Half of the population earn middle-income salaries. In the other half of employed residents low-incomes and medium-high incomes are equally distributed. In sum, the majority of residents (three quarters) has middle level incomes. Only the minority, twenty five per cent, is relegated to the lowest economic level. Employment income levels in Mena del Hierro are, on average, higher than those in most *barrios* of Quito.

Table 4-12. Definition and distribution of income levels of employed residents

Total employed	Low Level ^a	Medium-Low Level ^b	Medium-High Level ^c
250	22 %	50 %	28 %

^a Up to one minimum salary (\$US 37) per month

^b One to three minimum salaries (\$US 38 - 111) per month

^c Three to five minimum salaries (\$US 112 - 185) per month

Source: This study

Table 4-13 shows the distribution of residents with regular income and access to social security. Only a quarter of residents has occupations characterized by irregular incomes but two thirds of the population has occupations and an employment status where no access to social security is guaranteed. Limited access to social security is the one problem which residents of Mena del Hierro share with the population of other *barrios* of Quito.

Table 4-13. Social security and income regularity of 250 employed residents

	Yes	No
Social security	37 %	63 %
Regular income	75 %	25 %

Source: This study

Table 4-14 crosses the variables of income level, income regularity and social security. Income regularity and social security have been regrouped into one variable, defined as socioeconomic stability. Seven economic groups result, characterized by income level and socioeconomic stability. Low-income residents for example, are divided: those with unstable jobs and no social security (group 1) and those with job stability and access to social security (group 2). Residents with middle-low incomes are separated into those with low socioeconomic stability (group 3), medium socioeconomic stability (group 4) and high degree of stability (group 5). Middle-high income residents are divided: those with medium socioeconomic stability (group 6) and those with high socioeconomic stability (group 7). Group six, at an upper level of the economic scale is dominant (twenty five percent of the employed population). Groups one and seven, at opposite ends of the economic scale, are the minorities.

DISCUSSION

Economically speaking, Mena del Hierro is a very special *barrio*. There are remarkable differences between the economic characteristics of the labour force in Mena del Hierro and the *barrios* average of Quito. In Mena del Hierro, the majority of the employed population is semi-skilled, works in tertiary sector activities and earns middle-income salaries. The majority of the labour force of the average *barrio* of Quito is in contrast low-skilled, works in secondary sector activities (particularly construction) and earns low-income salaries.

Table 4-14. Employed residents classified with respect to qualitative income level and socioeconomic stability (250 individuals in sample)

Socioeconomic Stability		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
		NO	NO	YES
Social Security		NO	YES	YES
Income Regularity		NO	YES	YES
Employment	LOW	Group 1: 7 %	-	Group 2: 15 %
	MEDIUM-LOW	Group 3: 18 %	Group 4: 13 %	Group 5: 9 %
	MEDIUM-HIGH	-	Group 6: 25 %	Group 7: 3 %
TOTAL		25 %	38 %	27 %

Group 1: Construction labourers, subemployees, housemaids, cleaners

Group 2: Watchmen, policemen, industry workers

Group 3: Construction foremen, independent tradeworkers without employees, retail workers without employees

Group 4: Employed bus/taxi drivers

Group 5: "Other" employees

Group 6: Employers

Group 7: Professionals and technicians

Source: This study

Differences in household economic organization between Mena del Hierro and *barrios* of Quito which are dedicated to primary and secondary sector activities are extreme. In Santa Isabel and Santa Rosa de Singuna (two *barrios* neighbouring Mena del Hierro), for example, most residents are engaged in family and neighbourhood-based mud extraction and brick production activities. The labour of every household member is crucial to this kind of economic activity, particularly the labour of women and children to ensure production continues during men's absence in temporary jobs in the city. In Mena del Hierro, in contrast, men are the breadwinners, women are homemakers and children are often economically protected by their parents even after attaining their majority at eighteen years.

The social values of residents and the economic distribution of roles among household members in Mena del Hierro tend to be oriented to the traditional values of urban western style societies. Neighbouring Santa Isabel and Santa Rosa de Singuna, in contrast, are based on the social values and household economic organization of peasant indian societies. These two extremes of economic organization and social values cohabit without much apparent conflict. However, informal conversations with residents of Mena del Hierro, particularly young people showed that they perceive their neighbouring *barrios* as "backward", "indian", and "wasteful".

Mena del Hierro's residents make an important contribution to the city's economy. Formally employed residents for example, provide labour for state and private sector enterprises in the tertiary sector of the economy. Informal sector enterprises in Mena del Hierro provide important goods and services for shops, companies and individuals in the city. They produce bricks for the construction sector and bread for shops in the *barrio* and in the city. They provide fresh fruit and vegetables to city supermarkets, *panela* (raw sugar blocks) to shops in the suburban areas of Quito and car and bus repair services for individuals and bus companies. Free-lance workers transport goods and people around the city, provide cleaning services to houses and offices, supply furniture and metal parts for individuals and industries, sew custom-made clothes, dispense painting and plumbing repair services, and provide labour for the construction industry.

A question comes to mind. Why is Mena del Hierro so special economically speaking? Some explanations. First of all, Mena del Hierro is not an isolated case of economic wealth among the *barrios* of Quito. It is located in the northwestern part of Quito, a *barrio* area which has an economic level on average higher than most *barrios* of Quito. Secondly, the characteristics of the first wave of pioneer residents have also had a tremendous influence in today's Mena del Hierro.

Informal conversations with pioneer residents showed that they were ambitious rural immigrants who enjoyed a middle-class status in countryside areas before moving to the

city. They had some cash in hand which allowed them to buy land in the city and later make use of this land for economic purposes. The majority of these immigrants lived in the hinterland northwest of and relatively close to Quito. Most of this area's production is oriented to markets in the capital city and thus several immigrants had experienced previous contacts with Quito before definitely moving to the capital city. A carefully planned and progressive move of family members to Quito was thus possible in many cases. For those who kept their farms in the countryside moving to Mena del Hierro meant being half way between production and market areas. Some other pioneer residents had urban experience before moving to Mena del Hierro as they had lived and worked for some years in Quito or in small towns in the countryside. These urban experiences allowed some residents to acquire skills and some capital before moving to the *barrio*.

Thus, Mena del Hierro is a special case among Quito's low-income *barrios*. From an income point of view, Mena del Hierro has more in common with a formal middle-class neighbourhood than with the average *barrios* of Quito. Once Mena del Hierro has acquired minimum urban infrastructure and services it will look like a very attractive middle-class neighbourhood, particularly because of the natural beauty of its surroundings and its privileged location only twenty minutes by car from the city centre.

Mena del Hierro is not an average, middle-class neighbourhood however. Apart from beginning as an illegal land subdivision without minimum infrastructure, there are some important economic similarities between Mena del Hierro and the average *barrio* of Quito. Two thirds of the employed residents in Mena del Hierro are affected to some degree by socioeconomic instability, either because they lack social security or because both social security and a regular income are lacking. Socioeconomic instability results from the informal nature of employment in Mena del Hierro: half of the residents create their own employment and nearly fifteen percent of residents are employed bus and taxi drivers, who in Ecuador do not get social security. Another point of similarity with the *barrios* of Quito is the economic heterogeneity of employed residents. There is a wide range of occupations in Mena del Hierro which varies from construction labourers to professionals. Skills range from low to high and residents' employment income from low to middle-high.

The characteristics of the type of employment and the occupational structure of Mena del Hierro's residents have direct consequences on the extent of residents' social spaces. 1. For most informally employed residents the neighbourhood is not only the place where they live but also the place where they work, or the place around which income earning activities revolve. Living and working, two of the most important urban activities for social contact, spatially coincide for many informally employed residents. 2. The dominant occupation in Mena del Hierro is that of a driver. Many drivers do not have a spatially fixed work place in the city but are continually moving around, transporting goods and people from one place to another. Many of them return to the *barrio* to rest in between work breaks. The

neighbourhood is, for these drivers, the only fixed place of social reference in the city.

Around two thirds of the resident population has some degree of dependency on the neighbourhood for daily social contact. These are the main groups of residents which have some degree of dependency on the neighbourhood for social contact. They are presented in order of dependency, from lower to higher level.

(A) 1. Bread-makers. They produce in the neighbourhood and distribute to customers locally and in other parts of the city. 2. Wholesale-workers. They clean, pack and store fruit, vegetables and *panela* in the *barrio* before distribution to supermarkets and shops in the city and in suburban areas;

(B) Free-lance workers and drivers. They do not have a fixed work place in the city but income earning activities revolve around their homes. Vehicles are parked and working equipment is stored at their homes. Between jobs residents return home and often deal directly with customers who come to arrange a contract.

(C) Brick-makers, carpenters, black smiths, tailors, mechanics and shopkeepers. These residents produce and sell bricks, furniture, metal parts, and custom made clothes in the *barrio*. Mechanics repair cars and buses in *barrio* workshops. Shopkeepers sell groceries, medicaments, repair parts, etc. to customers in the neighbourhood.

D) Homemakers. Economically inactive residents revolve around the *barrio*. Homemakers for example, have a high degree of dependency on the *barrio* for daily social contact.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has presented an analysis of employment, occupational structure and income groups in Mena del Hierro, in order to provide an economic framework for examining the socializing patterns of *barrio* residents. In addition, this work contributes to the scarce literature on the specific economic characteristics of higher-income *barrios populares*.

Mena del Hierro is a special case among Quito's low-income *barrios*. From an income point of view, the *barrio* has more in common with a formal middle-class neighbourhood, but a comparison based on this variable alone is misleading. The *barrio* is poor in infrastructure, and over two thirds of the employed residents are affected by socioeconomic instability to a greater or lesser extent, mostly due to the informal nature of their employment. Half of the employed residents create their own employment and another 15% are employed bus and taxi drivers, who in Ecuador do not get social security. Thus, despite the fact that *barrio* residents have a higher income than the average *barrio* resident in Quito, they need the help of each other because of their short- or long-term economic instability and because there is

no welfare system in Ecuador that they can rely on.

Thus, surprisingly, the unstable economic situation of residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro is seen to be conducive to social contact. The spatial overlap of residential and economic activities also provides a favourable setting for social interaction within the *barrio*. Many of the informally employed residents rely on their residential space to conduct their economic activities and thus they spend much of their working time in the *barrio*, and many of the drivers return home several times a day between trips. Thus the economically determined potential for social contact is well established; the aim of the following chapter is to explore to what degree this potential is actually realized within the *barrio* in the form of social networks.

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CHAPTER V

THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF BARRIO RESIDENTS

The fabric of community

INTRODUCTION

The livability of large cities has increasingly become a challenge for urban dwellers and planners. Problems of limited access to urban resources and socioeconomic opportunities, drugs, crime and conflict between social or ethnic groups plague cities in the West and in the Third World to different extents. Two fundamental questions must be answered if we are to aspire to make cities socially livable: how do people live in the cities, and how do they want to live? Understanding people's way of life is of crucial importance because cities are not homogeneous but a mosaic of social worlds. Ley (1983:202) postulates that "the existence of large cities has permitted the emergence of plural lifestyles because, unlike rural and small town-society, population thresholds are sufficient to maintain diverse subcultures and their institutional groups". An understanding of the way each social group lives and wants to live in the cities is thus significant if problems of social instability, such as conflicts between social or ethnic groups, are to be avoided.

Several empirical studies on the social organization of urban groups in French and North American cities have shown the plurality of existing social worlds, and the variability in style and collectivity of life of urban residents (Whyte, 1943; Gans, 1962; Ledrut, 1968; Hannerz, 1969; Ley, 1983; Guillon and Taboada, 1986; de Rudder and Guillon, 1987; Calogirou, 1989). Ethnic, racial and socioeconomic differences seem to be at the root of urban heterogeneity.

Latin American cities are also heterogeneous in this sense. Dramatic lifestyle differences exist between city residents, particularly between residents of *barrios populares* and those of high income neighbourhoods. Residents of *barrios populares* have, in general, a collective lifestyle based on neighbourhood-centred networks of mutual help and friendship. In high-income neighbourhoods, by contrast, residents lead more individualistic lives. Social contact takes place mostly outside the neighbourhood in highly defined and localized spaces such as social clubs.

How can the various neighbourhoods of Latin American cities be classed according to specific lifestyle and degree of collective life? What is the geographical basis for the social life of city residents? These are crucial questions for understanding the social geography of Latin American cities. Studies of the social organization of urban groups in Latin American and Caribbean cities have been carried out since the 1960's, mainly in *barrios populares*. These studies have focused on reporting the existence of dense social networks of mutual dependency and on examining the social and economic role of these networks for the adaptation of immigrants (Lomnitz, 1977; Logan, 1981; Lobo, 1982; Riaño P., 1986; Vargas, 1986; Pérez Saínz and Ribadeneira, 1987; Altamirano, 1988; Norris, 1988)

Most of these studies, however, lack a geographical perspective. They have not explicitly examined the geographical basis for the social life of *barrio* residents. Is the resident's spatial extent of social activities confined to the neighbourhood? Do residents socialize in other non-neighbourhood spaces? If yes, what is the relative role of these spaces for their social life?

Few studies have explicitly studied the emergence of a sense of community and a sense of place among residents of *barrios populares*. What are the crucial factors leading to the existence of a community? How do residents achieve a feeling of belonging to a community? These are important questions to address regarding the problem of livability of cities. I believe urban social problems are easier for the resident to handle when the individual has a feeling of belonging to a community, where he or she is socially respected, receives support from others and most of all, has a feeling of "being at home".

A third limitation of previous research is its almost exclusive focus on poorer *barrios*. *Barrios* in Latin American cities are socially and economically heterogeneous, ranging from very poor to middle-class. Little is known so far on the characteristics of social life in upper-level *barrios*. What are their social characteristics? Is collective life less dynamic in these *barrios* because of the residents' higher income? In other words, do social practices of mutual help and reciprocity diminish -or disappear-with an improved economic situation?

In this chapter, the nature of community in Mena del Hierro, a higher income *barrio* of Quito, will be examined. The specific aims of the chapter are: (1) to examine the characteristics of social networks, (2) to discern the geographical basis for the social life of *barrio* residents and (3) to provide an explanatory framework for the later examination of residents' behaviour in public outdoor spaces of the *barrio* (chapter VII).

Two forms of social networks are examined in this paper: formal and informal groups. The "visible" (public) and "invisible" (private) character of individual networks is also examined and discussed. The present characterization of the organization and activities of social networks in Mena del Hierro is based mostly on the qualitative ethnographic method of participant observation. Social cartography was used in addition to map social networks.

This consisted of locating the residences of members of individual networks, according to the information obtained by participant observation. These maps of social networks were further combined with mental maps elaborated by *barrio* residents to produce a final map displaying the actual social boundaries of the *barrio*.

The study of the spatial extent of networks' activities is exclusively based on the method of participant observation. Chapter IX will complement this study by addressing a similar questions but using the method of a structured survey with a representative sample of residents.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Geographical Research on the Social Organization of Urban Groups

The subject of social networks has, unfortunately, received only scant attention from geographers (Ley, 1983). In examining the social geography of North American and some European cities, Ley has developed a comprehensive approach to the geographical study of formal and informal social groups. This approach centres on four themes: 1) social distance; 2) the formation of social groups; 3) the nature of social networks; and 4) the characteristics of membership in voluntary associations. Each theme is illustrated with examples of relevant empirical studies carried out in several disciplinary areas. The following is a summary of the four themes:

- (1) *Social distance* For Ley this an important concept in understanding patterns of group formation. Social life is a twofold process of both setting at a distance and entering into relations. Social distance is "itself a product of a similar biographical situation, including time and space, and of the sharing of common concerns" (1983: 174). Early empirical studies used social distance to measure the effects of race and ethnicity on group composition (Park, 1924; Bogardus, 1926). Later studies extended the analysis to occupational and class distinctions and changes in social perception over time (Bogardus, 1959; Triandis and Triandis, 1960). Ley postulates that present-day studies require further extension to more subtle attitudinal and lifestyle variations.
- (2) *Formation of social groups*. Ley sees social groups as "formed by chance and choice". They are formed by chance "in the circumstances of biography beyond an individual's control, such as his or her pre-given culture, social status, ethnicity, age and the space he or she occupies" (1983:183). Relationships also form by choice as individuals actively seek others who are like-minded. Relationships thus form around a community of interest, the sharing of central concerns, within the constraints of their biographical situation.

Group formation studies have examined patterns of association and segregation among

groups of park users in Vancouver (Hall, 1974) and friends in Detroit (Laumann, 1973). A second set of studies has focused on the role of physical distance. Research on physical distance has dealt with the following studies: the spatial extent of children's play groups (Bunge and Bordessa, 1975); the frequency of visiting among neighbours; the role of housing design on possibilities of social contact (Cooper, 1975; Appleyard, 1981); the role of spatial proximity in the formation of social groups (Whyte, 1957) and the pattern of gang space partitioning (Ley, 1975).

A third set of studies has examined the effects of distance and social compatibility on higher or lower proportions of visiting with friends, relatives and neighbours (Stutz, 1973). In general, however, studies on group formation seem to provide little insight into the biographical aspects of group formation. The understanding of group formation seems to remain superficial. This is partly explained by an overemphasis on statistical methods. It seems that using qualitative methods, such as participant observation, would be useful to provide an "insider" understanding of the internal dynamics of group formation.

(3) *Social networks*. According to Ley, these provide an appropriate framework for the study of urban life. Most people are not alone in the city but are part of a social network comprising kin, neighbours and friends which permits orientation and adaptation to the urban setting (Smith and Smith, 1978). The concept has been popularized by social anthropologists where it provided an effective approach for examining social adaptation to urbanization in the Third World. Mitchell has defined a social network as "a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behaviour of the persons involved" (Mitchell, 1969:2).

Ley stresses that the important questions to formulate in the analysis of networks are the following: a) the nature and implications of the linkages joining individuals; b) the density of the network and c) the position of individual members within a network. Three positions of the individual have been identified in his study of social networks: the conformist, the isolate, the bridgeman. The conformist is a member well included within a network. The isolate is largely divorced from the network as no communication with members exist. The bridgeman, "although connected to the network, also has links to other networks; his position is one of intermediary between a network and the outside world, a position which may bring him some influence and authority" (Ley, 1983:191).

Social network studies have focused on examining the patterns of friendship and antagonism between key figures of community groups in inner city neighbourhoods (Ley, 1974). A second set of studies has examined the role of informal social networks, such as the extended family and friendship circles, in solving urban problems of housing and employment (Barnett et al, 1970; Hyland, 1970; Anderson, 1974). Studies have also been

carried out on the role of kin networks in the adjustment of immigrants in the cities, particularly of Mexican Americans (Brown et al, 1963; Matthiasson, 1974). The triggering effect of kin networks in the migration process of Italians to North American cities has also been a subject of study (MacDonald and MacDonald, 1964).

(4) *Voluntary associations*. Ley recognizes such associations as occupying "an intermediate social position between informal groups and urban institutions. They provide a rich fabric of secondary groupings for the urban resident. They are the bond for the individual to a broader yet still manageable community" (1983:200). Similarly to informal groups, membership in voluntary organizations is constrained by race, ethnicity, class, age, religion and language (Smith and Freeman, 1972). Ley points out the influence of social distancing in selective membership. Empirical studies have examined the levels of organizational affiliation of urban dwellers and the patterns of selective association in church membership in Belfast and San Diego (Boal, 1971; Stutz, 1976).

Conceptual Definitions

Sense of belonging to a community is one of the main concepts used in the introduction to this study. Defining sense of belonging to a community is, however, problematic because the term "community" means different things in different contexts. A study by the social science panel of the National Research Council of the United States of America (NRC, 1975:2) defined the micro- and macro-scale meanings of the concept. The micro meaning of community refers to a "grouping of people who live close to one another and are united by common interests and mutual aid...". In contrast, the term community in a macro sense refers to "any population that carries on its daily life through a common set of institutions...". This term may also be used to refer to "interest groups whose common activities are relatively independent of location factors..."

In the micro context the term community has been defined by Hallman (1984:34) as "a people within a limited territory possessing shared values, common interests, and norms of conduct, engaging in social interaction and mutual aid, and having their own groups, associations, and institutions to help meet their basic needs". For Ledrut (1968), in his social study of neighbourhoods in Toulouse, a collective way of life is the main characteristic which defines a community. According to Ledrut, a collective way of life exists in a neighbourhood when: a) residents engage in relationships of mutual help and friendship; and b) social organizations are present (e.g. associations, sports groups). Frequency of interaction is crucial in defining degree of "collectivity".

For Davies and Herbert (1993:1) community is a term "that implies some kind of association, perhaps even sharing and participation in common relationships". They identify

five approaches to the study of community, namely, community as association, as a community-of-interest-area; as territorial units, whole or part; as ideal or utopia; as places or areas in the cities. This last approach identifies communities as areas within the cities "that have particular characteristics that set them apart from the rest of the city". This study concentrates on community in this interpretation of the term.

Neighbourhood is another term recurrently used in the introduction. Definitions of neighbourhoods vary widely, depending largely on whether physical, economic or social criteria are employed. Bourne and Bunting (in Bourne L. and Ley D., 1993:186) provide a definition of neighbourhood from a social point of view: "Neighbourhoods... are considerably more than local collections of housing units. For their residents they provide a familiar place, a focus of daily activities, and a set of informal social support networks. They offer, in varying degrees, a source of identity, of security, and shared living experiences, as well as the benefits (and costs) of membership in a common social space. Homes and neighbourhoods together take on non-economic values of profound personal and social significance".

FORMAL AND INFORMAL SOCIAL GROUPS IN MENA DEL HIERRO

Daily life in Mena del Hierro is not individualistic. Rather, it is characterized by an outstanding degree of "collectivism". Residents of Mena del Hierro do not live their daily lives on an individual basis but always in groups. Every type of resident, children, young people or adults, is part of at least one type of group in the *barrio*, either formal or informal. Fourteen types of groups can be distinguished in the *barrio* on the basis of the function that they serve: friendship and mutual support, exchange of information, economic survival, child care, recreation, sports, music, handwork, religious practice, neighbourhood improvement, management of water resources, development of cultural activities, and provision of credit facilities.

Informal groups spontaneously emerge among residents, they have neither official names nor official purposes, and are independent of other groups or organizations. Formal groups, in contrast, have an official name and established purposes and are in most cases partially or fully sponsored by organizations external to the neighbourhood. There are nine formal groups in Mena del Hierro. Men are active members of both formal and informal groups whereas women's participation, especially in the case of adults, is more important in informal groups. Approximately sixty formal and informal groups exist in the *barrio*. Considering that Mena del Hierro has only around eight hundred people, one neighbourhood group for every thirteen residents is a remarkably high frequency.

Informal Groups: from Public to Private

The social fabric of Mena del Hierro is woven from the relationships of family, friends, neighbours, kinspeople and *paisanos*¹. Four types of informal groups have been identified in Mena del Hierro: peer groups, groups of kin, *paisano* groups and street neighbour groups. The nature of peer groups is "public", in that they are readily visible to the outsider observing public spaces of the *barrio*. Kin, *paisano* and street neighbour groups, in contrast, mainly operate in settings which are essentially private and hence they are invisible to the casual outsider. Informal groups are formed on the basis of age group and common interests, kinship, common region of birth, and spatial proximity (Table 5-1). These groups constitute genuine social networks. Members meet regularly and their common interests include friendship, recreation and mutual help.

Peer Groups

According to Hallman (1984:36) peer groups have an informal nature and comprise people of similar age and interests. Many such groups exist in Mena del Hierro for children, youth and adults. In the *barrio* groups are also defined on the basis of gender as well as age. Group members get together for recreation, and help each other by sharing information, swapping contacts and giving material and psychological support.

(a) Children's play groups

Recreation has a rich meaning for group members. Groups of boys, for example, regularly meet during the week to play soccer and to compete with their home-made go-carts down the steep streets of the neighbourhood (Fig. 5-1). During the week they take over the basketball sports field to play soccer. On weekends they play soccer in the corners of the same sports fields where their relatives are playing soccer or volleyball. They dream of competing with other *barrio* soccer groups and of eventually becoming national soccer stars.

(b) Basketball groups

Groups of girls and young women get together every weekend at the *barrio's* community field to play basketball. They spend the whole afternoon playing, talking and watching others. They compete for playing space with groups of young men who also meet every weekend to play basketball (Fig. 5-2). As it will be seen in chapter V these male and female groups rarely mix. Even while talking and waiting their turn to play they stay in separate corners. As seen in Figure 5-3, members of the female basketball group live close by and are, in the majority of cases, related by kin.

¹ *Paisanos* are people who share the same region of origin.

Table 5-1. Informal groups in Mena del Hierro

GROUP	BASIS OF GROUP DEFINITION	RESIDENCE OF GROUP MEMBERS		GROUP ACTIVITIES	MEETING PLACE		
		Neighbourhood	Countryside		Neighbourhood	Outside neighbourhood	
PEER GROUPS	Children	•			•		
	Youths	•		Recreation & Mutual help	•		
		Young men's basketball group					
		Young men's volleyball group					
	Adults	Young men "S-20" group	•			•	
		Adult men's volleyball group "Palomas Muertas"	•				
GROUPS OF KIN (36 groups)	Kinship	•			•		
STREET NEIGHBOUR GROUPS (6 groups)	Spatial proximity	•			•		
"PAISANOS" GROUPS (7 groups)	Common region of origin	•	•	Mutual help & recreation	•	•	

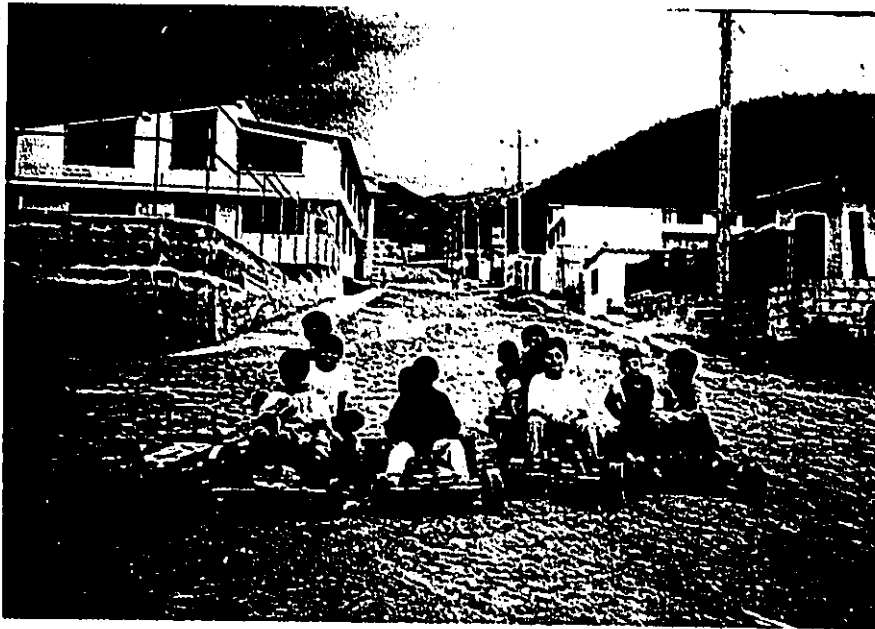


Figure 5-1. Boys of the *barrio* play group. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992)

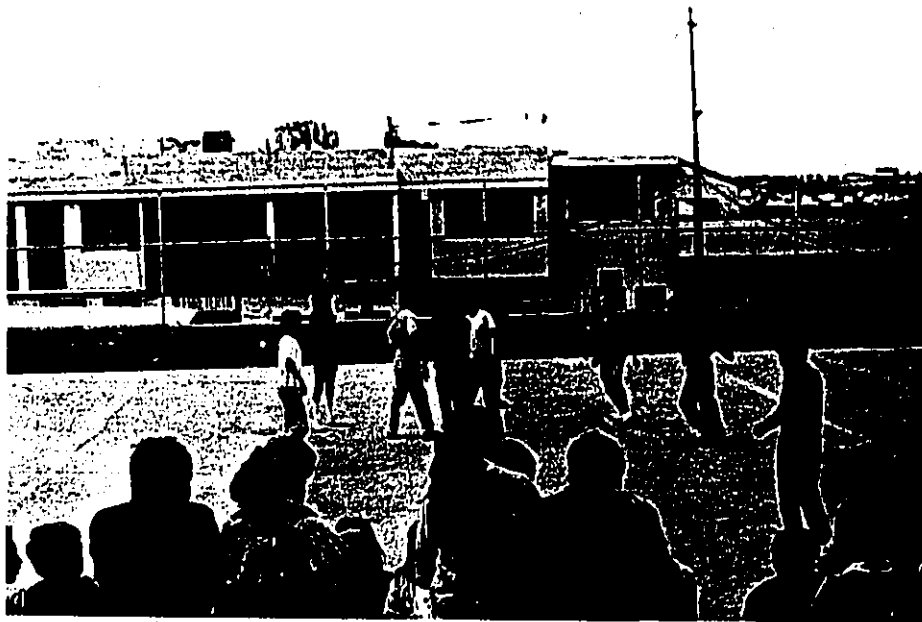


Figure 5-2. Girls and young women of the *barrio* basketball groups (above). (Photo: Laureano Nastul, 1993). Young men of the *barrio* basketball groups (below). (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991)

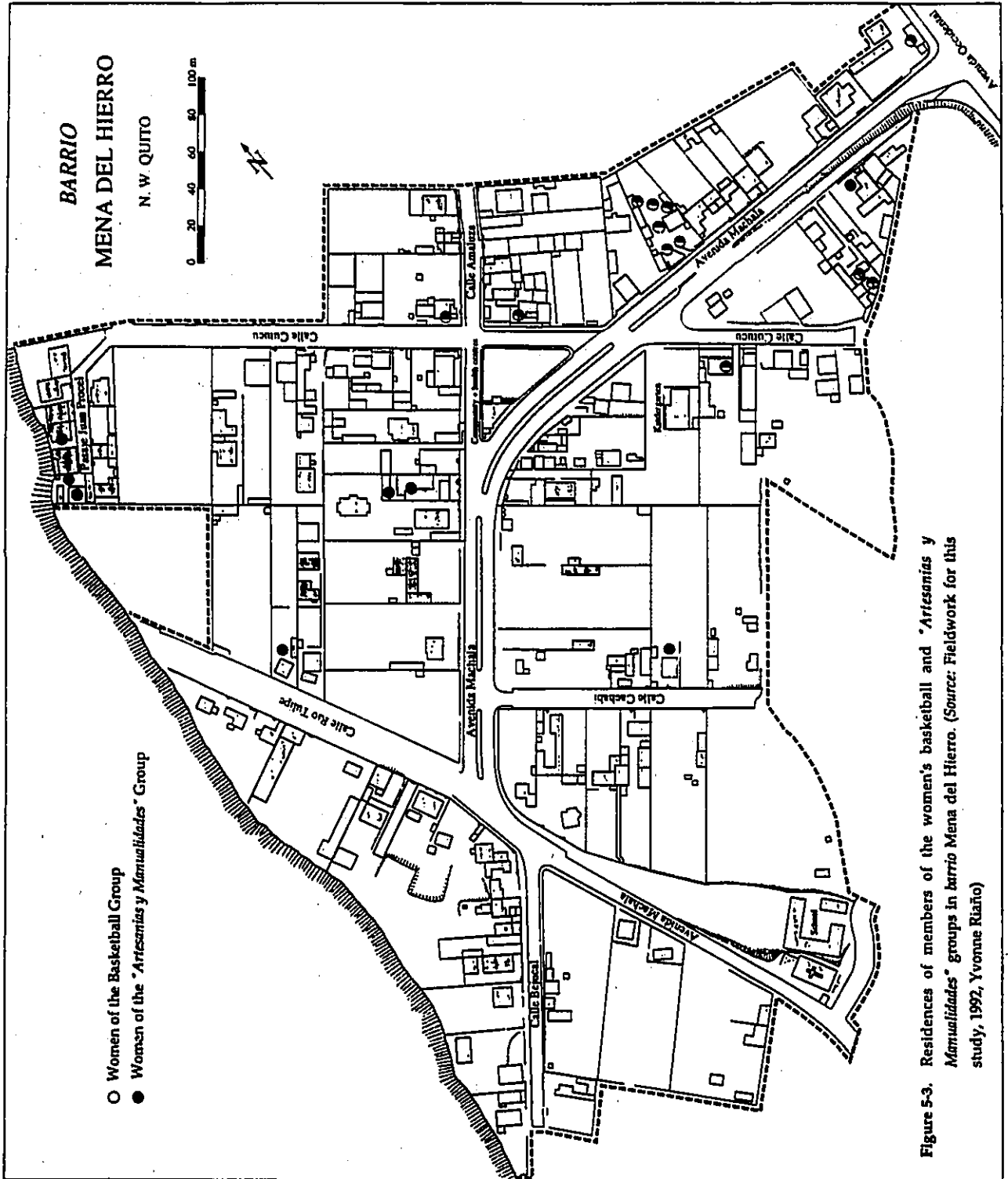


Figure 5-3. Residences of members of the women's basketball and "Artesanías y Manualidades" groups in barrio Mena del Hierro. (Source: Fieldwork for this study, 1992, Yvonne Riaino)

(c) Volleyball groups

Playing "boli"², a very popular activity in Mena del Hierro, gets young men together. Groups of players meet at every empty space in the *barrio*, streets and empty lots to play, talk and exchange information and gossip. No women take part in these groups. Groups of young *barrio* men compete amongst each other, specially during the weekends. As seen in Figure 5-4 young men take great pride in themselves when they win a volleyball match. *Boli* is very popular among adult *barrio* men also. Unlike the male and female basketball players, however, young and adult males mix to play a volleyball match, specially in the weekend.

A very stable group of twenty three adult men, locally known as "Palomas Muertas"³ (Dead Pigeons), has formed around the sport of volleyball. This group has existed for several years. It consists mainly of *barrio* pioneers who meet every weekend in *barrio*'s open spaces to play volleyball and watch, talk, bet and drink (Fig. 5-5). For them, the main reason to regularly attend is that of "amistad". "Amistad" in this sense means meeting a group of people known for many years, whom they can trust, rely on and have fun with. This friendship has grown during the years since they came to the *barrio*. No facilities and infrastructure were available and they started to work together towards the improvement of the neighbourhood. Mostly immigrants from the countryside, they share the passion for playing *boli*, the typical way of socializing for men in rural areas. As seen in Figure 5-6 the residences of members of this group are dispersed throughout the *barrio*.

Women are excluded from the *Palomas Muertas* social space and also from *boli* games in general where betting and drinking take place. These last two activities are considered by *barrio* residents as inappropriate for women. The *barrio*'s political decisions are often made at the volleyball arena as many members of the *Palomas Muertas* group are "líderes barriales" or members of the local *Comité Promejoras*, the organization responsible for the *barrio*'s physical and social improvement. By participating in the "Palomas Muertas" group *barrio* men exchange mutual help and have an open door to *barrio*'s politics. By being excluded from these groups women are unable to participate in the key social spaces where political decisions are made.

2 "Boli" is the familiar term used in spoken language by residents of Mena del Hierro for the game of volleyball. *Barrio*'s residents play Ecuadorian Volleyball, a game played by six players instead of the usual eight. They also use a heavier ball. This sport is traditionally played in countryside areas of Ecuador by men. As in countryside areas residents of *barrios populares* have a real passion for playing *boli* which is often accompanied by betting. For them "apostar es la sal del boli" (betting is what gives spice to the game of volleyball).

3 This nickname has been given to the group by young *barrio* men to refer to the sexual capacities of older men.



Figure 5-4. Young men of the *barrio* volleyball groups. (Photo: Pablo Cañar, 1991)



Figure 5-5. Adult men of the *barrio* "Palomas Muertas" volleyball group. (Photo: Laureano Nastul, 1993)

(d) "S-20" group

An exceptional peer group in Mena del Hierro is the "S-20", an informal group of twenty young male residents⁴ (Figs. 5-7 and 5-8). In contrast to the other spontaneous peer groups in the neighbourhood, members of the "S-20" have clearly defined the aims of the group and their difference from other youth groups. They have given a name to their organisation, "*Somos 20*", meaning "we are twenty". The "S-20" group is an informal group in the sense that it was spontaneously created by *barrio* members, is not officially registered and has no external source of funding. Within the social area of the *barrio*, however, the "S-20" is a "formal" group since its name, aims and members are clearly identified by most residents. Figure 5-9 shows that the residences of the group members are dispersed throughout the *barrio*.

The group emerged in 1991 and has its roots in an earlier group, "Scorpio", created in the *barrio* by "S-20" members during their childhood. Group members have a lot in common. They have a common history as they grew up together in a sparsely populated and geographically isolated *barrio* which lacked basic infrastructure. They are the children of approximately six groups of kin (Cañar-A, Cañar-B Cargua, Gallegos, Hidrovo, Morales) who came to the *barrio* in the very early days and who have always played an influential role in *barrio* life. Several group members are related by kinship. Today, group members share common problems of unemployment, irregular income and low social significance within the larger Ecuadorian society. They also constitute an influential group within Mena del Hierro.

The main aim of the "S-20" group is recreational. During the formal interviews I conducted with group members about their aims the main words that came out were "*hacer algo por el barrio*" (to do something for the *barrio*'s good) and "*estar bien*" (to be fine). Informal conversations during leisure times, however, showed that "being fine" was really the main aim of the group. "To be fine" has multiple and profound meanings for the young men:

- (1) *To have fun together*. Group members regularly meet to have a session of "*chacota*". *Chacota* means making jokes, gossiping, kidding and inventing nicknames for each other and laughing about others. "S-20" members also meet to plan fun activities, to dream projects, to watch girls, to organize parties in the *barrio* and trips outside the city. As they have multiple membership in other *barrio* organizations they also plan the activities of the other groups. Young "S-20" members are joyful and enthusiastic. As one *barrio* resident says "*los jóvenes son los que ponen el ambiente en el barrio*" (the young ones are the ones who give atmosphere to the *barrio*).

⁴ This is the *barrio* group which I know best. We worked together in the video workshop which I set up for my participatory research in the *barrio*.



Figure 5-7. Young men of the *barrio* "S-20" youth group. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991)



Figure 5-8. The leaders of the *barrio* "S-20" youth group. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991)

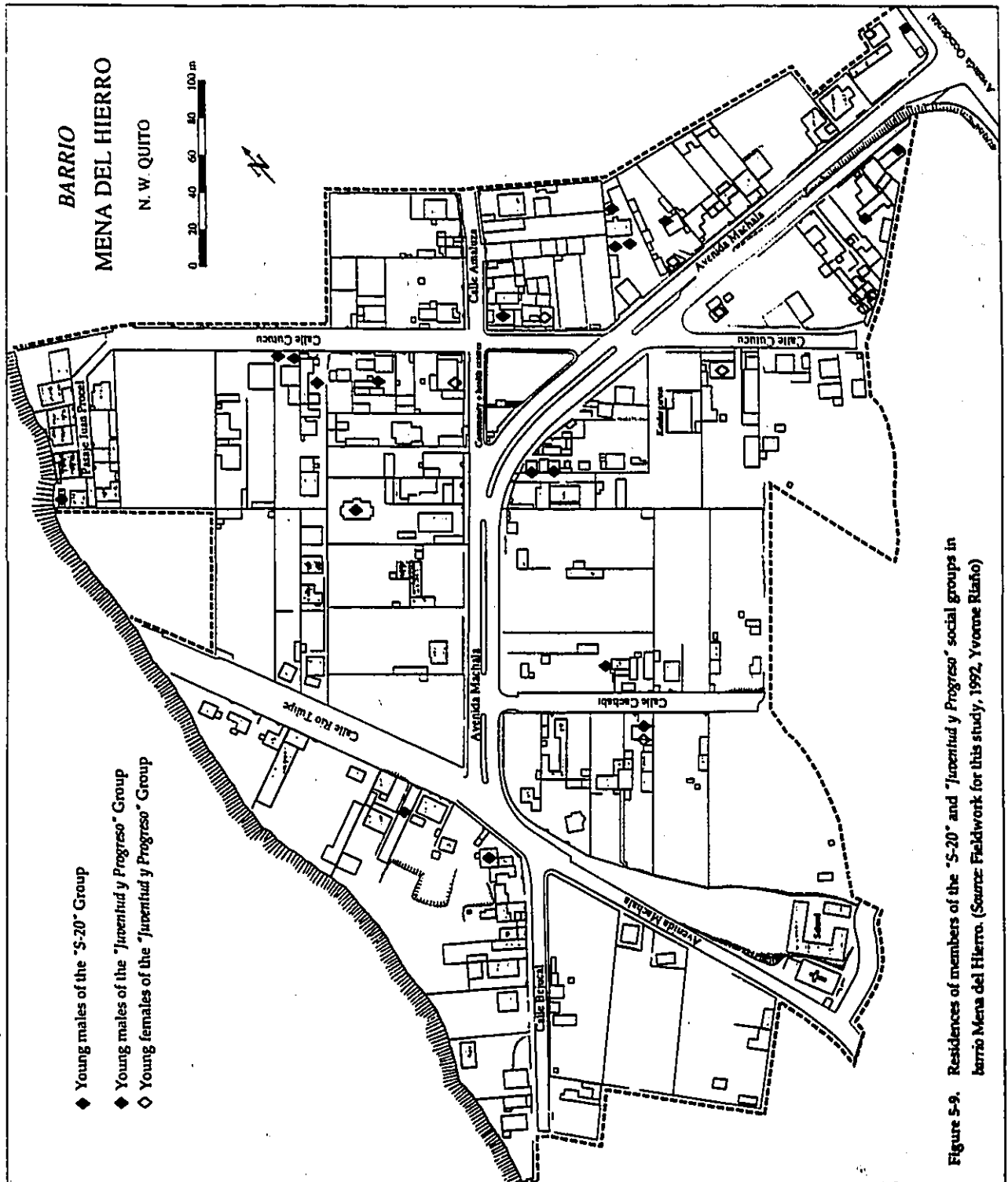


Figure 5-9. Residences of members of the "S-20" and "Juventud y Progreso" social groups in barrio Mena del Hierro. (Source: Fieldwork for this study, 1992, Yvonne Riaño)

- (2) *To have a social space of self-security and mutual solidarity.* "S-20" members support each other in cases of economic or personal difficulties. Problems are not kept to the individual but are collectively handled. Group members, for example, organized a "peña"⁵ to collect funds and pay off Raúl's debts during a period of extreme financial difficulty. Ways of solving marriage or friendship difficulties are collectively discussed. They enjoy being protagonists and keenly participate in any activity that gives them the opportunity. The video workshop set up by my research gave the group a good opportunity to have fun, gain self-confidence and be protagonists. They keenly participated, however, only until the novelty of the activity wore off.
- (3) *To have a social space in the city where they increase their self-esteem and gain in social significance.* "Los logros de uno son los logros de todos" (the achievements of one are the achievements of all). This statement by one of the group members, referring to the personal achievements of one group member, clearly shows the importance of the "S-20" as social space for the reinforcement of personal and collective self-esteem. "Doing something for the *barrio's* good" is an activity which gives group members an opportunity to gain social prestige within the *barrio* and elsewhere. "S-20" members organize together with other *barrio* groups, social and cultural activities for the neighbourhood on the occasion of Mother's Day, the *barrio's* anniversary and the end of year festivities. Because of their dynamism and their multiple membership in other *barrio* organizations, the "S-20" constitute a powerful and influential group within Mena del Hierro.

Group members have a strong sense of belonging to their group, in particular and to their *barrio* in general. They have little conflict among themselves but tensions with young female members of the youth group *Juventud y Progreso* and adult members of the *Comité Barrial* exist. "S-20" members are also jealous of intruders. I experienced this myself during my participatory research activities. The young men quickly accepted me and enthusiastically participated in the initial video workshop activities I set up for the participatory research. They made several non edited videos on themselves and on their recreational and cultural activities. They also gave a name to their video group: "Chuma-video" (*Chuma* means getting drunk and is also the nickname of one of the group's members).

As the workshop activities moved to the video originally proposed by me, on the history and daily life of *barrio's* residents, the enthusiasm of group members decayed. They were obviously not so interested in working on a project which had not come from themselves. Also, their relationship with me "cooled down". Only later was I able to understand the reasons behind. I had originally hoped that a sense of group would develop between us instead of a "them" and "myself" situation. At a meeting with some S-20 members and two Canadian students who had been helping with the video and research activities I thanked

⁵ An indoor concert with Andean musical groups, usually *barrio* musical groups from Quito's northwest.

the students for their help on behalf of the group. The S-20's said nothing to me, but later while drinking rum, one of the group members told me how strongly they resented my action (*In rum veritas!*). They considered it as an intrusion; there was only one group, the S-20's. I was definitely not part of it.

Conflicts of interest between the young and organizations external to the *barrio* have also emerged over the years. In 1989, for example, the *Juventud y Progreso* group, a group of young males and females was working together with the external organization *Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes* (ACJ), on a health programme for Mena del Hierro. The ACJ viewed the role of groups of young people in the *barrios* as "*concientizadores*"⁶. This aim did not coincide with the interests of the male members. After a period of joint work with the ACJ, young males distanced themselves from the *Juventud y Progreso* group and created the "S-20" group.

Conflicts of interest still exist with the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente de Quito* (FBNQ), the umbrella organization of the northwestern *barrios* of Quito. Similar to the ACJ, the Federation believes that the young have an important political role to play in the *barrio*.⁷ Regarding my research activities, for example, the Federation saw the main objective of my participatory research and video workshop activities as persuading the young to give a political content to their activities. This objective ignores reality. The "S-20" group is not a political group but a "*jorga de amigos*" (group of friends) who are together for a practical and concrete purpose: "to be fine".

The "S-20" group has expanded its membership today to thirty members and has created a "*caja de crédito*", a self-help bank to provide credit to group members for small enterprises. They are as active and influential as ever in *barrio* life. "S-20" members are present in eight other *barrio* organizations: the youth group *Creando Caminos*, the musical group *Trovadores del Ande*, the youth soccer group, the volleyball group, the *Comité Promejoras*, the *Espacio Alternativo*, the *Campamentos Vacacionales* and the religious group. Every group member is, on average, a member of at least four *barrio* groups. Additionally, many group members are also part of neighbour and kinship networks. Thus, young males have a busy life in the *barrio*. Activities span the whole year and peak during sports competitions, local celebrations and

6 The philosophy and aims of the ACJ at the time: Problems of health and social inequality in the *barrios* are the result of political structures which only favour rich groups. A revolutionary change of political structures in the country is needed in order to solve problems resulting from social inequality such as health. The role of the young as *concientizadores* is to make residents aware of the need to unite in order to get rid of unjust political structures.

7 For Federation leaders, the promotion of sociocultural activities in the *barrios* has a clear aim: to contribute to building a sense of common identity among residents of *barrios populares*. This has a political objective: to unite residents and make them active members of a strong political movement of *pobladores* or "*movimiento popular*". The goal of this movement is to gain political decision making space at the city level which permits a *gestión popular* of the city of Quito, i.e. an urban management which includes the needs and the point of view of the *barrios'* populations in Quito.

end of year festivities.

Young members of the "S-20" group gather mostly in outdoor *barrio* spaces. Contrary to other *barrio* youth groups, such as "galladas"⁸ in Bogotá, who always meet at the same street corner, "S-20" members do not "always" meet at one place exclusively used by them. They share public space with adults and other youths. S-20" members have, however, a preferred meeting place, at the footpath in front of Raúl's house, the group leader.

Because group members are active in a variety of *barrio* groups their spatial routines and their meeting places cover practically the entire *barrio*. They can be observed almost everywhere; at the front of the church, at the sports fields, in front of the micromarket, by the community centre, in front of the shop near Raúl's house. They do not exclusively meet outdoors however. They often gather inside Raúl's house, or in the community centre, to discuss their multiple group activities. They do not need to appropriate only one place in the *barrio*, such as in the case of the *galladas* in Bogotá or in the case of "Streetcorner Society" groups (Whyte, 1955). They are all together and the whole *barrio* is "theirs".

Research on teenage activities has shown that North American teenagers in general seek opportunities to get away from their home and immediate neighbourhood (Hallman (1984). This is certainly not the case in Mena del Hierro. Because "S-20" members are involved in so many groups and activities in the *barrio* they actually spend most of their free time in the neighbourhood. They meet regularly at least five times in a week.

Sometimes young "S-20" members also meet outside the *barrio*. They have much contact with other male youths in the *barrios* of Quito's northwest. They take part in activities organized in these *barrios* such as parties, sports competitions and concerts. In addition, the group sometimes leaves the city for a weekend trip to the countryside where relatives live.

The cohesiveness of young males in Mena del Hierro is striking. In contrast to *galladas* youths, who are split into several little groups within the *barrio*, many young males in Mena del Hierro are integrated in a single group, the "S-20", which acts like a large extended family for group members. The cohesiveness of these young males and the long-term stability of their group can be explained by the following: (1) Several members of the "S-20" group have grown up together and have a common history; (2) They share common problems and interests; (3) They enjoy being influential in the *barrio*. Members of the "S-20" group are the "elite" of the *barrio's* youth and have a family tradition of leadership. They come from families who are better-off than others and who play an influential role in the *barrio's* life

8 Pilar Riaño (1991) has conducted ethnographic research on the "galladas" of the *barrios* of Bogotá. She defines them as "informal groups of young males between the ages 13-25 who share a street culture but are not necessarily involved in delinquent activities nor do they live in the street. They are organized geographically by blocks, and possess a strong sense of belonging to their group, to the "poor" and to their *barrios*..."They associate according to similar tastes, sharing values such as toughness, machismo a sense of joy and an ironic attitude towards life".

and politics; (4) Many group members are related by kinship; (5) The group activities satisfy the personal and collective needs and interests of group members. They have a social space where they have fun, obtain self-security and mutual support, and gain in social significance. The "S-20" group in Mena del Hierro constitutes a true form of mini community with established norms, shared values, and patterns of mutual help.

Peer groups in Mena del Hierro play a crucial social role, similar to that described by Whyte (1955) in his famous "Streetcorner Society" study: they provide social interaction to their members, mutual support and connections with neighbourhood organizations and political networks. Also, as described by Hallman (1984:36), peer groups in Mena del Hierro "in addition to providing a basis for friendship, function as a "reference" group, that is, they offer values and norms of conduct to guide their members' attitudes and behaviour".

Groups of Kin

The importance of kin relationships among the poor has provoked debate in the literature (Banck, 1980; Norris 1988; Peattie, 1974). Whiteford (1974) maintains that the poor discourage family ties which might compromise them financially, whereas Lomnitz (1977) and Eckstein (1977) suggest that the poor have proportionally more kin relationships than other income groups in the city. Lomnitz (1977) found in her study of a Mexican shantytown, that kinship is the fundamental relationship for organizing exchange networks. What is the importance of kinship in Mena del Hierro's social organization?

When I began fieldwork in Mena del Hierro I did not suspect that kin relationships were so extensive. After months of participant observation, and analysis of the collected data, the magnitude of the kinship network became apparent. In fact, over 50% of households in Mena del Hierro are mutually related by immediate kinship and even more by close or distant ties. Relationships between kin are thus one of the most striking features of the *barrio's* social organization.

Kin relationships are manifest in many aspects of the *barrio*: in the spatial distribution of households; in the membership of formal and informal social groups; and in the economic and political life of the *barrio*. In addition, kinship plays an enormous role in the "invisible" realm of Mena del Hierro's daily social life. After first defining the bases of kinship more closely, the following sections will address each of the above aspects in detail.

(a) Definitions of kinship and sources of information

Kinship ties are divided into three groups here: immediate relationships between spouses, parents, children and siblings; close relationships between uncles, aunts, first cousins and in-laws, and distant relationships between second or more distant cousins. Kinship ties

have been defined in this study on the basis of household units, i.e. from the rare cases where people live alone to the dominant case of nuclear families.

Two sources of information were used to identify kinship relationships between households. First, a survey carried out by local doctors in 1990 provided a list of the composite family names of household heads and spouses. Second, this list was discussed with three key informants in the *barrio* to correct and complete the names, and to specify the exact nature of the relationship between the repeated family names. It turned out that most, but not all, repeated names were indeed kin. By recasting the list into individual rather than composite names, the size of individual kin groups could be established.

Only sparse information is available on close and distant relationships and therefore such groups are not included in the following analysis. It is estimated, however, that if the number of closely and distantly related households is added to the number of immediately related households, between sixty and seventy percent of all households in Mena del Hierro may be considered as kin.

Some groups of kin in the *barrio* have been here defined as clans. Clans are simply defined as a large set of immediately related households which mutually help each other and which have a special influence in the *barrio* because of their numerical extent and the key positions that clan members hold in the economic and political structure of the *barrio*.

(b) Quantitative extent of kin relationships

Thirty-eight groups of kin have been recognized in Mena del Hierro, each consisting of two or more households (Fig. 5-10). The number of kin-related households is 114, which represents 54% of all households in the *barrio*. This is a remarkably high percentage. The reasons for this phenomenon will be explored at the end of this chapter.

Nearly half of the thirty-eight groups are "connected" to one or more other groups of kin. Connected groups share one or more members, mostly through marriage. Shared group members are the "bridgemen" defined by Ley (1983) as having an intermediary position between social networks. This role may thus bring them influence and authority. There are thirteen such intermediaries in Mena del Hierro. Their specific influence and authority is an interesting subject for future study. Figure 5-11 shows in detail an example of the connectivity of the Cargua group with four other groups of kin.

(c) Spatial distribution of kin groups

Groups of kin occupy 50% of the inhabited sections in Mena del Hierro. While the groups are spread throughout the *barrio*, the member households of individual groups are not widely dispersed. Rather, they tend to be concentrated in single sections which are home to between 2 and 11 immediately related households. Not only are group members concentrated in this

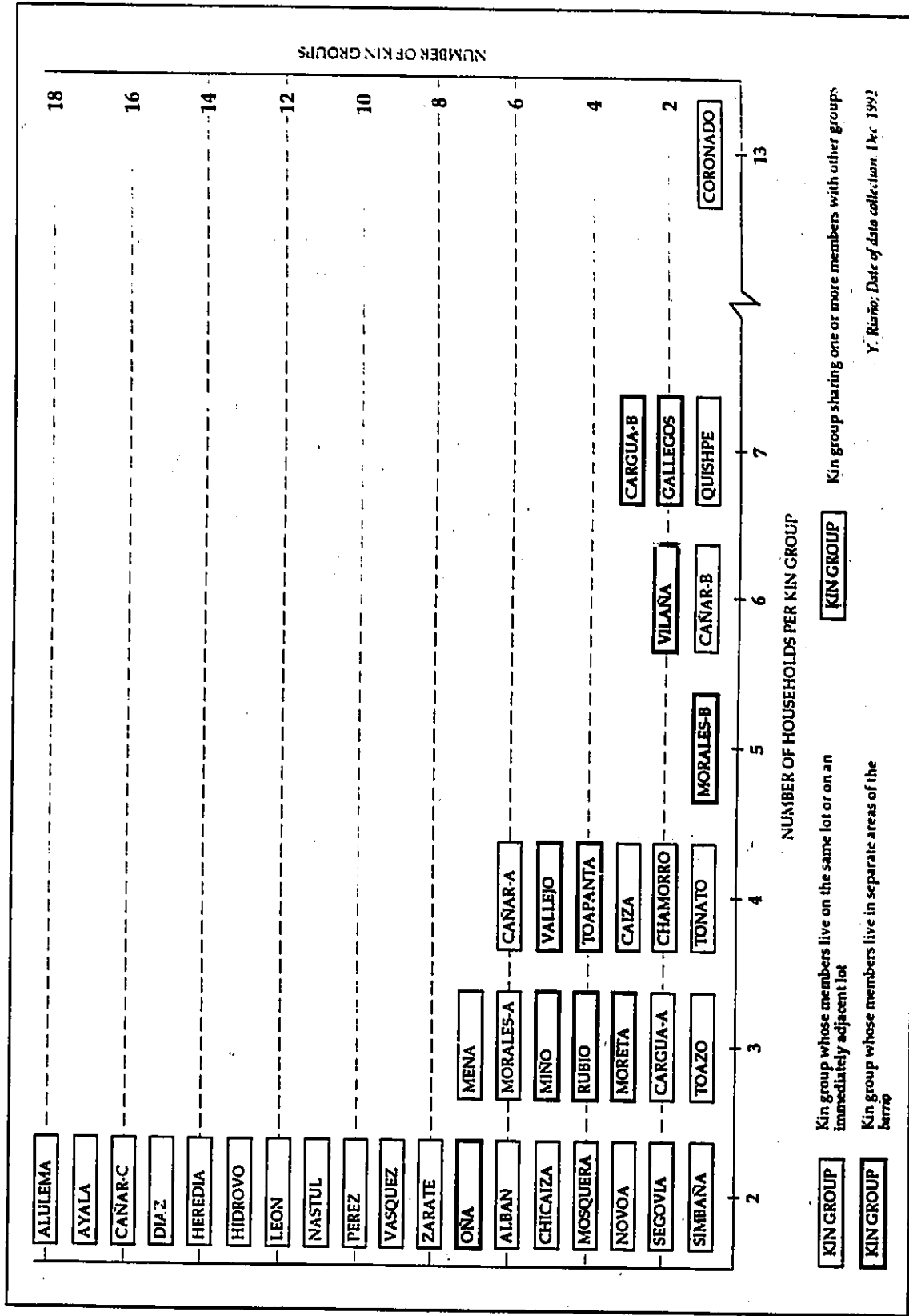


Figure 5-10. Kin groups in barrio Mena del Hierro.

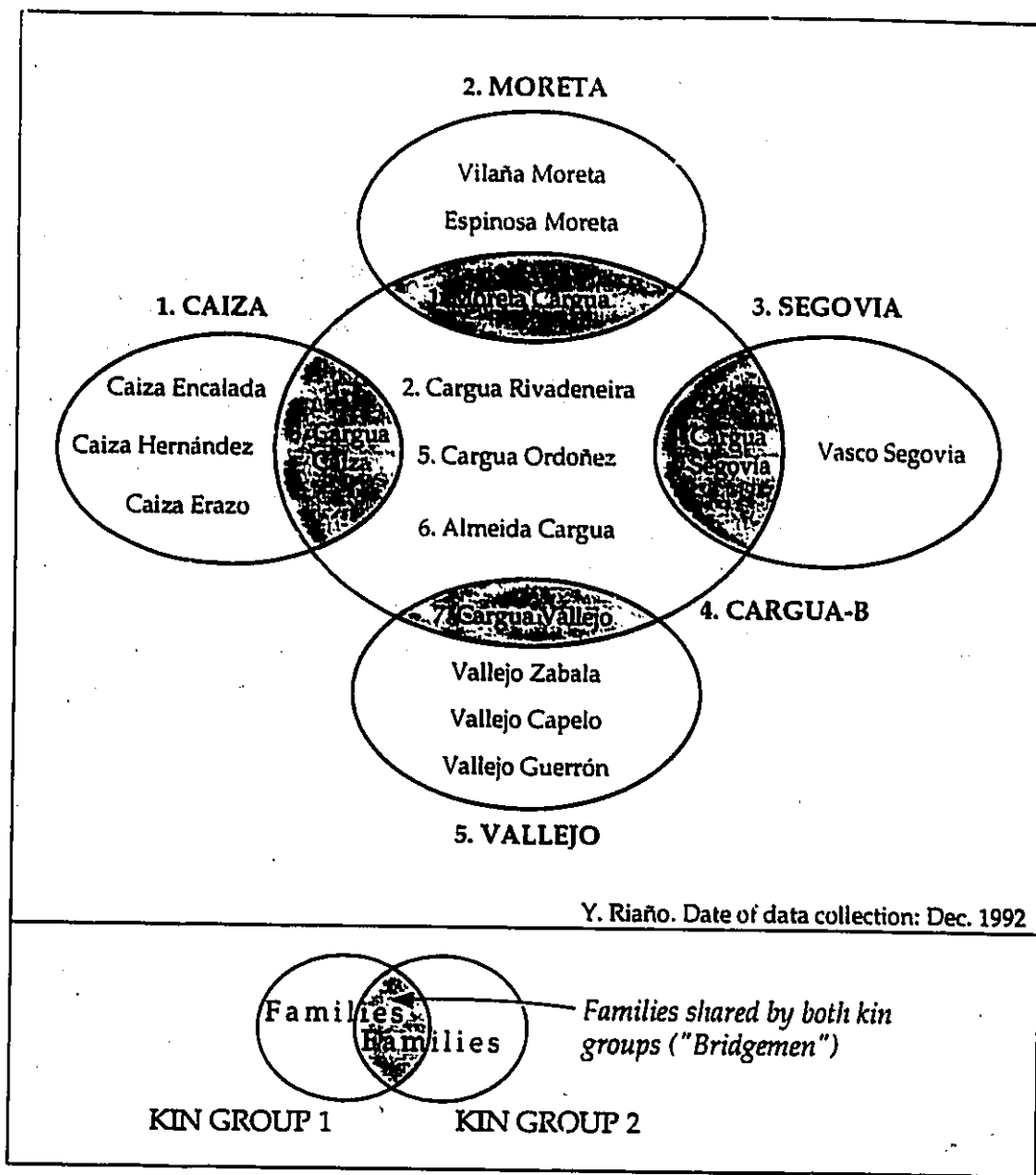


Figure 5-11. Connectivity between the Cargua-B kin-group and other kin-groups in *barrio* Mena del Hierro.

way but members of unrelated groups are excluded. There are also several instances of two or more groups living on the same section, but in each case these groups are mutually connected by binary or higher-level kinship linkages. The only unrelated households which are found on kin-group sections are tenants who have no other kin in the *barrio*.

Two distribution patterns can be distinguished with respect to the member households of individual groups (Figs. 5-12 and 5-13). The most common pattern (74% of all groups) is that all households are situated on the same section or contiguous sections, but in separate dwellings. Figure 5-14 is an example of such a cluster configuration. In the second distribution pattern (26% of all groups) is that the majority of member households cluster on one or several contiguous sections, but also a small number of member households are located elsewhere in the *barrio* as outliers of the group (Fig. 5-15).

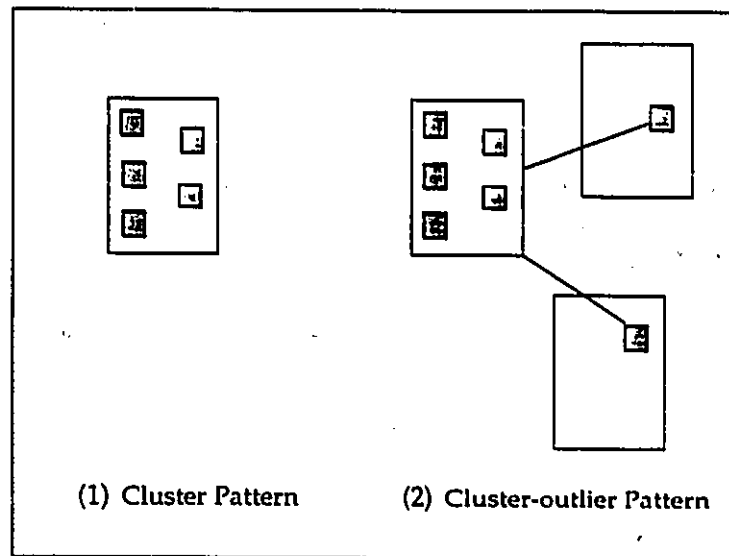


Figure 5-12. Spatial patterns of kin-group distribution in *barrio* Mena del Hierro

The two observed patterns of spatial distribution of kin groups can be explained by two simple processes: one historical, and the other modern. The original hacienda of Mena del Hierro was initially subdivided into very large lots (*huertos familiares*) of around 2500 m². During the first wave of settlement of the *barrio*, immigrants from the countryside bought up the lots individually, or formed groups to buy the lots collectively. The collective lots were then subdivided into sections for each member household. With time, additional households came to occupy the sections: either the children of the founding families, more kin from the hinterland, or tenants. The end result is the clustered pattern of kin distribution visible today. An example of this mode of densification is presented in Figure 5-16.

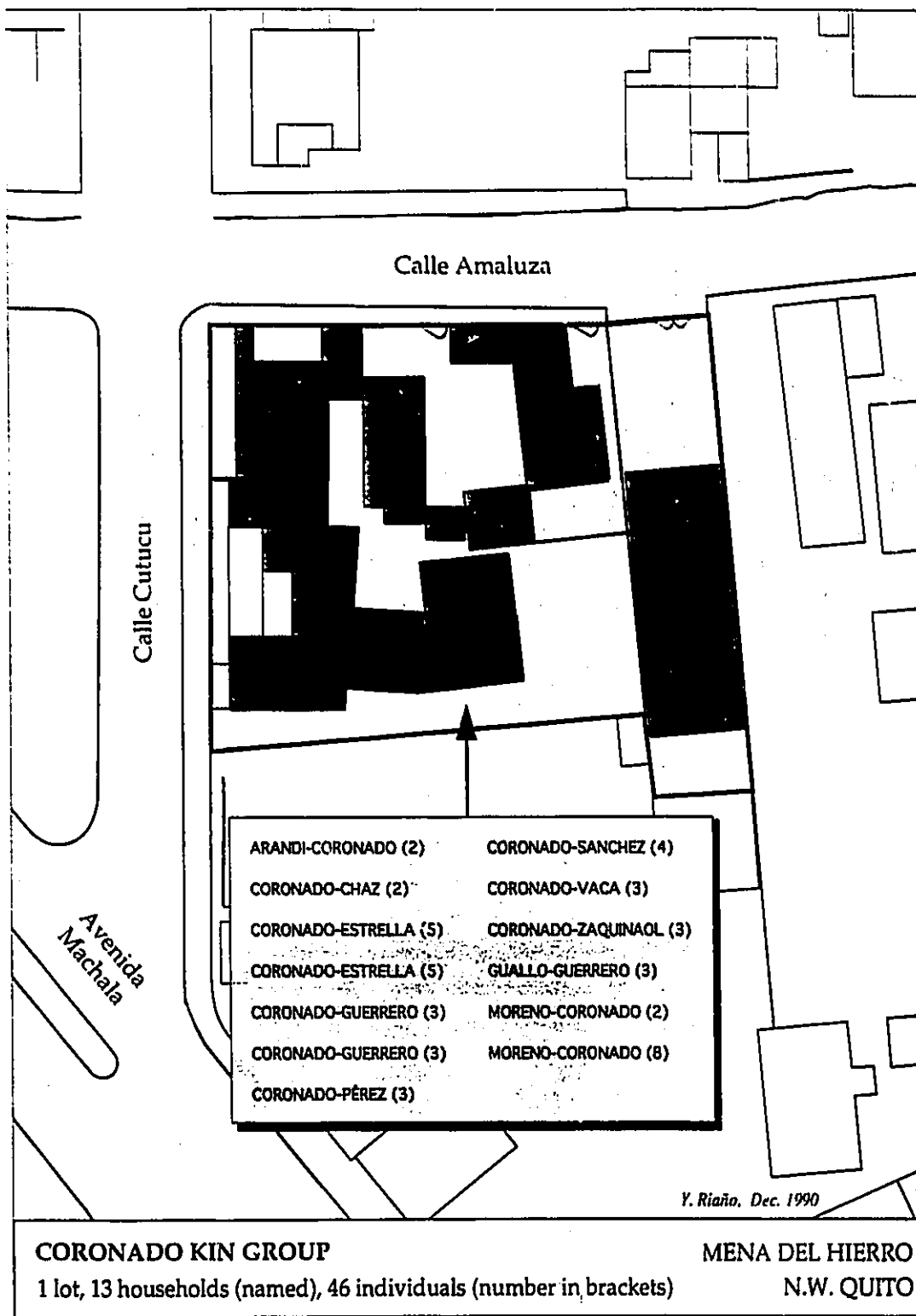


Figure 5-14. The cluster spatial distribution of the Coronado kin group, *barrio* Mena del Hierro

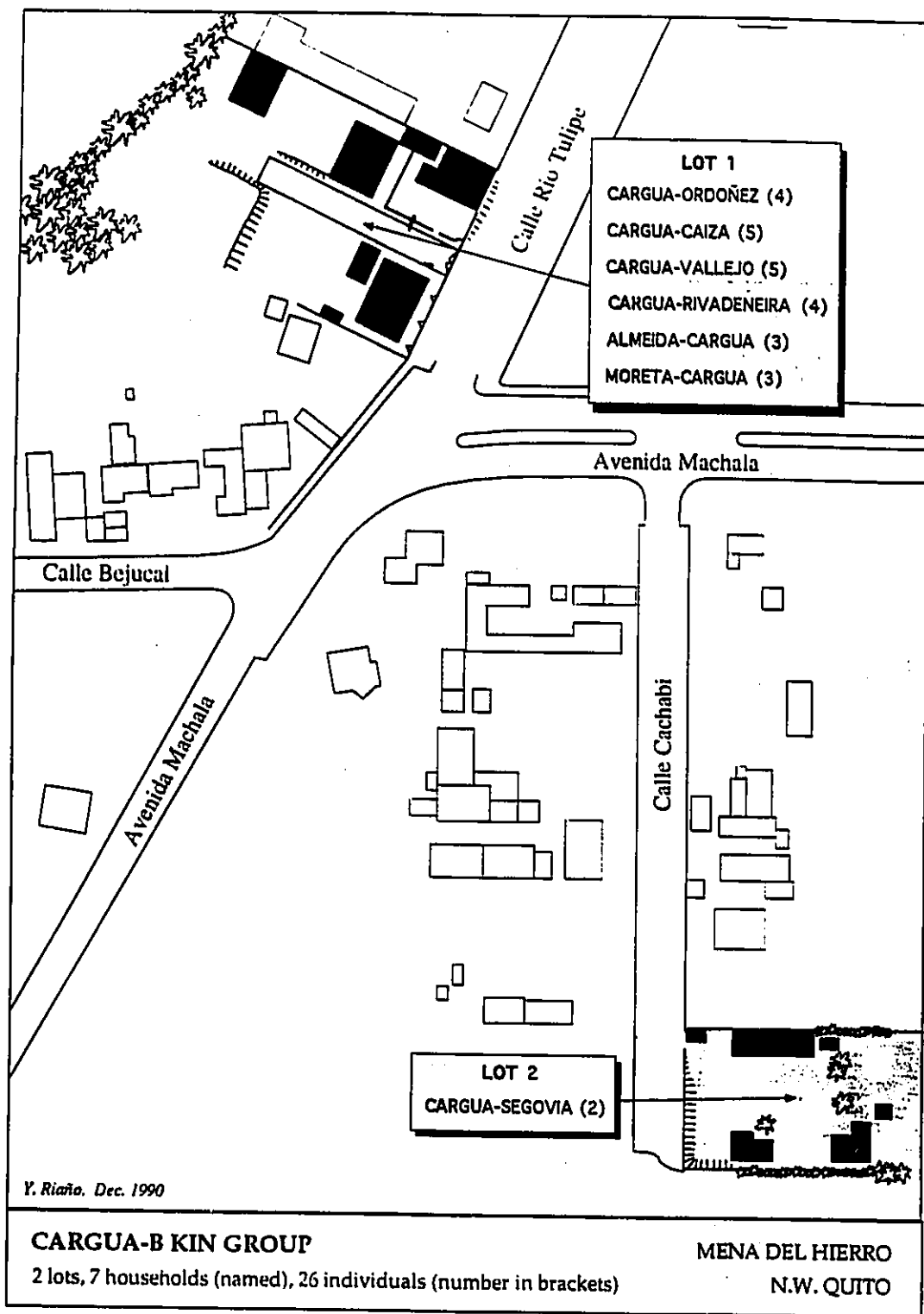


Figure 5-15. The cluster-outlier spatial distribution of the Cargua-B kin-group, *barrio* Mena del Hierro.

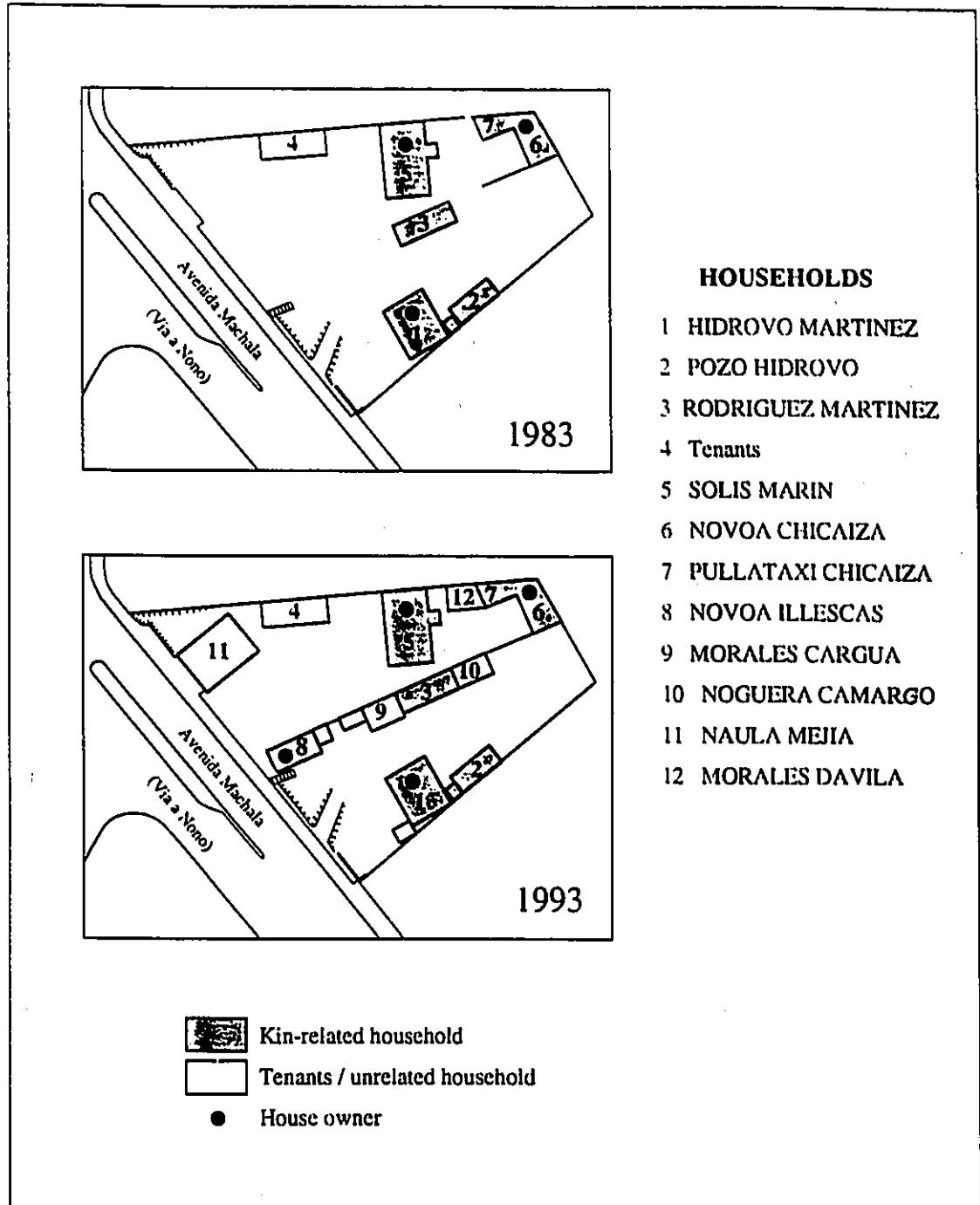


Figure 5-16. The evolution of kin-clusters: An example of original *huerto familiar* lot 153.

The second pattern, cluster-outlier distribution, arises from the common custom of intra-*barrio* marriages. Thus either the new wife or the new husband leaves the home cluster to live in the spouse's cluster. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this process is that the new outlier household is often in the near vicinity of the home cluster, a fact which underscores the importance of geographical proximity for social contacts. Continuing marriages between kin group members thus tend to gradually disperse the group households and at the same time increase their connectivity. It seems that this evolutionary process is likely to continue in the future, and it is even likely to be enhanced eventually by overcrowding of the original lots.

(d) Social, economic and political influence of groups of kin

Some groups of kin noticeably influence Mena del Hierro's micro-society. Their influence stems from the following factors: (a) their large numerical size; (b) their special status in the *barrio* as pioneer settlers, (c) the pervasive presence of their members in the *barrio*'s other formal and informal groups; (d) the key positions that individual members have as group leaders or business owners. In fact, the large numerical extent and the influence some groups of kin exert in Mena del Hierro's public life makes them into genuine family clans.

Examples of family clans with strong social, economic and political influence in Mena del Hierro's micro-society are the Gallegos, Cargua and Coronado groups. These three groups have several features in common. The first families of each group who moved to the *barrio* were among the earliest settlers of Mena del Hierro. They immigrated from the hinterland northwest of Quito and settled directly in Mena del Hierro. The Cargua and Coronado families, who owned middle-size farms in the countryside, had always traded their agricultural produce in Quito, and hence they were familiar with the city before settling in Mena del Hierro.

The Gallegos clan, comprising six households plays both an influential role in both the economy and political role in Mena del Hierro. One of the group members, the Mosquera-Gallegos household, owns the largest grocery store in the neighbourhood. Store-owners provide an informal system of credit which allows residents to "buy now and pay later". This informal credit system is based on trust. As most residents buy food supplies from this store a perpetuating "in-debt" relationship exists between *barrio* residents and the Mosquera-Gallegos household. Two men from the Gallegos clan have been *barrio* presidents in two consequent periods. These men also play a key role in the *Palomas Muertas* informal sports group. Two members of the Mosquera-Gallegos household, a young man and a young woman, have been leaders in the *barrio*'s youth groups, "S-20" and *Juventud y Progreso*, since these groups were formed.

The Cargua clan, made up of seven households, has always been influential in the political decisions of the *barrio*. Male members of this group have traditionally held key positions in

each one of the three commissions which form the *Comité Barrial*, the *barrio's* organization for the neighbourhood's physical and social development. The weight of the *Carguas* in the political decisions taken by the *Comité Barrial* is strongly felt by *Comité* members. Some *barrio* ex-presidents complain of the lack of freedom to make decisions because of overwhelming pressure by the unified *Carguas*⁹. Male members of the *Cargua* clan also have key positions in the young and adult soccer teams, the "Palomas Muertas" group, the "S-20", and the *Juventud y Progreso* group.

The Coronados clan, of eleven households, also plays an influential social and economic role. The residences of these eleven household are spatially concentrated in one lot (Fig. 5-14). This lot is the "Manhattan" of the *barrio* with its island-like concentration of buildings and its high density of construction. Contrary to the Gallegos and *Cargua* groups, who are perceived by most residents as playing a positive role in the *barrio's* life, the Coronado group is disapproved of by most residents. There are several reasons behind this attitude.

For some years a female member of the Coronado clan ran an informal savings bank in the *barrio* where residents who deposited their savings in her "bank", for a minimum period of time, were promised a yearly interest three times higher than that of formal financial institutions. A household appliance store, located at the Coronado's "Manhattan", at the core of the *barrio*, was the centre of financial operations. The savings system was based on trust. Many residents entrusted their savings to her, some just a few *sucres*, others considerable amounts of money. One day, the "bank" owner disappeared from the *barrio* without trace. Every item from the household shop disappeared along with her. Nothing remained for residents to claim as compensation for their loss of money. There were, however, eleven Coronado households left behind to counteract any intent of revenge by Mena del Hierro's residents.

In recent times, another female member of the Coronado clan has set up an open air discotheque, again located at the "Manhattan" centre. This has generated considerable discontent in the *barrio* because of noise and alcohol excesses over the weekends. The *Comité Barrial* claims that the discotheque clients are not *barrio* residents and has asked the discotheque owner to close her business. According to *Comité* members, the discotheque owner has ignored the request and has, in revenge sent a group of Coronado children to break the glass of all the windows of the community centre. The Coronados provoke social conflict in Mena del Hierro.

(e) Kinship and membership in formal and informal social groups

Kinship is also significant in the collective life of Mena del Hierro. Immediate and close kin relationships are present in practically every formal or informal group in the *barrio*: the

⁹ Information from informal conversations with several *Comité* members.

sports groups, the religious group, "S-20", the *Juventud y Progreso* youth group, the *Trovadores del Ande* musical group, the handicraft group, the *Comité Barrial* and street neighbour groups.

The high proportions of kin related members in the *barrio's* social groups appear in Table 5-2 (specially in the case of male groups where between 50% and 70% of members are related). The percentages of female groups are significantly lower. Perhaps, the extent of kinship relations within a group is a crucial factor in explaining its strength and stability. Male groups in Mena del Hierro have traditionally been much more solid and dynamic than female groups (with the exception of the basketball group).

Table 5-2. Kin related members of formal and informal groups

Group Name		Total Members	Kin-related Members (%)
Females	Handicraft	8	25 ¹
	Basketball	12	58
	Juventud y Progreso	10	30
Males	Palomas Muertas	22	32
	Comité Promejoras	18	50
	S-20	20	60
	Juventud y Progreso	20	60
	Soccer Mayores	14	71
	Soccer Menores	29	68

¹ Members of this group are related by distant kinship

(f) Kinship and daily social life

Groups of kin are an important source of social contact for residents. They provide kinspeople with immediate moral, social and material support in cases of daily necessity. Adult women, for example, share much of their daily homework routine with their kinswomen, although they do not live in the same house. The borders of their homes therefore extend beyond the place where they spend the night. The frequency and intensity of interaction of kinspeople is, in general, very high. They meet either as the kin group itself, or at the other social groups in the *barrio*. When residents of Mena del Hierro refer to their family they do not only refer to their parents and siblings but to their grandparents, uncles and cousins living in the *barrio*. Groups of kin in Mena del Hierro can thus be socially characterized as an extended family despite the fact that they do not share the same dwelling.

Barrio networks of social exchange, however, are not exclusively organized on the basis of kinship. As it will be explained later, immediate spatial proximity (street neighbours) and

paisanaje are additional factors in the membership of social exchange networks. Because street neighbours, kinspeople and *paisanos* are sometimes one and the same, the analysis of specific characteristics of the mutual help systems will be addressed in the section on street neighbours.

One last question arises. Why are there so many kin groups in Mena del Hierro? The reasons for the large number of kin groups in the *barrio* are implicit in the mechanisms of land settlement and densification, and in the social and economic roles of kinship networks discussed in this chapter. Clearly the cluster and cluster-outlier patterns reflect the dual motives of immigration to Mena del Hierro: economic advantage and social contacts. First, the bridgehead on the city margin forged by the pioneer settlers evidently attracted or at least permitted their kin to join them from areas of origin. Second, the sense of community which evolved from the kinship networks and the efforts of the pioneers in establishing self-help groups promoted intensive and highly localized social contacts, as well as the desire of the young to remain in the *barrio*. These processes in turn lead to the high frequency of intra-*barrio* marriages, thereby reinforcing the kinship network. The net result is that the extended family character of the *barrio* is both self-sustaining and growing.

Paisano Groups

Relationships with *paisanos*, people who share a common region of origin in the countryside, play an important role in the social life of *barrio*' residents. Inhabitants of Mena del Hierro maintain social ties with three types of fellow countrymen (defined by place of residence): *barrio paisanos* (living in the same neighbourhood), city *paisanos* (living in the same city) and countryside *paisanos* (living in the rural region of origin).

(a) *Barrio paisanos.*

Mena del Hierro is a *barrio* with a large population of immigrants (Chapter III). Over seventy percent of the house owners living in Mena del Hierro are immigrants from countryside areas. If we group the *barrio* household heads by birth place -outside Quito-, seven groups of *paisanos* result: those from Pujilí, Sangolquí, Biblián, Nono, Nanegalito, Gualea, and Pacto¹⁰ (Figure 3-24, Chapter III).

¹⁰ Mena del Hierro's residents often refer to immigrants from Nono, Nanegalito, Gualea, and Pacto as one group, "*los del noroccidente*", because these four localities are in the same region (hinterland rural area northwest of Quito). If we use this distinction only three groups of *paisanos* exist in Mena.

(b) City *paisanos*

One group of *barrio* residents, the *pujileños*, have close ties with *paisanos* living in Quito, outside Mena del Hierro. The *Comunidad de Pujileños* is a group of immigrants from Pujilí, a rural area in the Andean province of Cotopaxi, who live and work in Quito and who have formed a group for purposes of mutual help and maintenance of regional traditions. Group members yearly celebrate the traditional festivals of their region (Chapter VIII). The headquarters for the social meetings of this group is the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. The characteristics of this group are similar to these of the *Clubes de Provincianos* in Lima which have been assessed as playing a key role for the adaptation of immigrants to the city (Altamirano, 1988).

(c) Countryside *paisanos*

Barrio immigrants maintain close ties with *paisanos* living in the countryside. The proximity of their rural region of origin enables the majority of *barrio* immigrants to visit their relatives and friends frequently. *Barrio* immigrants and their countryside *paisanos* have in fact developed a social network which allows them to: (1) obtain mutual help, (2) practice recreational activities of common interest, (3) exercise common religious customs, and (4) develop economic activities.

- (1) Mutual help activities. Paisano network members exchange useful economic information. Campos Coral, for example, a former resident of Pacto, and now resident of Mena del Hierro, bought, in the early days of the *barrio* a couple of *huertos familiares* lots for purposes of later resale. His relatives in the countryside informed him later that José Nastul, a farmer in Pacto, was looking for accommodation for his teenage children in Quito where higher education was available. Campos Coral was able to sell part of his land to José Nastul who was pleased to obtain it without having had to spend much time in the capital city looking around for adequate buying possibilities.

Some years later, the Nastul children were settled in Mena del Hierro, and decided to import agricultural produce from their farm in Pacto to sell in Quito. They needed a truck for this operation. José Miño, a resident of Mena del Hierro and owner of a farm in Nanegal (near Pacto) was able to help them by asking among his rural relatives and acquaintances. Thus, the Nastul's succeeded in obtaining a truck at a lower price than in Quito without having to spend much time outside the capital city.

Barrio immigrants and countryside *paisanos* exchange services. They provide mutual help in case of educational, health, work or recreational need. *Paisanos* from the countryside are, for example, lodged at their relatives or friends' houses in the *barrio* while they attend to business matters in Quito, receive medical treatment in the city's hospitals, find a place at school or seek a job. Countryside *paisanos* reciprocate by giving young

barrio people the possibility to work in their farms during periods of unemployment. They also make their rural properties available to their *paisanos* living in Quito for purposes of relaxation over holidays.

Countryside *paisanos* also provide *barrio* immigrants with agricultural produce for household consumption.. This is specially the case of immigrants from the hinterland area northwest of Quito who are able to obtain free agricultural produce once or twice a month due to relative geographical proximity. As demonstrated on Table 9-12 (Chapter IX) nearly twenty per cent of all households living in Mena del Hierro receive free agricultural produce from their relatives in the countryside. A study of the northwestern *barrios* of Quito by CIUDAD (1992) arrived at a similar percentage.

- (2) Recreational activities. Playing "boli" (Ecuadorian volleyball) is a common passion of countryside *paisanos* and *barrio*' immigrants. During visits to the countryside or to the city by members of this urban-rural network they use the opportunity to play "boli", meet others, exchange information and have a good time together. Additionally, young *barrio* men take part in the yearly inter-regional soccer competitions held in the countryside. They play for the local team in the area where their parents were born. Playing "boli" and soccer provide a means of social integration in the rural and urban social environments for network members of both city and countryside.
- (3) Religious activities. *Barrio* immigrants observe the custom of a yearly pilgrimage to the *Virgen del Quinche*, the religious patron of residents of the rural area northwest of Quito. *Barrio*'s immigrants have great faith in her. On the sixteenth of November every year, they walk for ten hours with their relatives and friends to the *Virgen*'s sanctuary at El Quinche, where they meet their countryside *paisanos* and pray together.
- (4) Economic activities. Several *barrio*' immigrants make a living from their economic activities in the rural hinterland northwest of Quito. They "import" agricultural produce to be sold at shops, markets and supermarkets in Quito. Some immigrants, like the Cargua's, Miño's, Nastul's and Coronado's, have kept their farms in the countryside in the care of their relatives. Others, like the Mosquera's, do not have a farm but "good contacts" among farmers of the region who provide them with agricultural produce to sell in the city. Thus, some immigrants are able to sell their rural products in Quito avoiding intermediaries. Others profit from their rural social network by earning money as intermediaries between producers and consumers.

In conclusion, countryside *paisano* networks provide *barrio* immigrants and their relatives in the countryside with a crucial social space for mutual support, social stability, economic survival and the maintenance of social, religious and sports customs traditional to the countryside. The maintenance of these customs is present in the style of life of Mena del Hierro's residents. Several families, for example, grow crops and raise animals for self-

consumption within their properties. Many residents maintain a rural style of cooking, eating, dressing and speaking. Men gather outdoors to play "boli" and bet. Residents practice the custom of reciprocal exchange of goods and services. Some shop-owners have a gate at the shop entrance and are usually not present in the shop but inside the house attending to homemaking activities. When shoppers come to the gate they yell "¡vendersh" (sell, sell). This is the "bell-like" sign for the shop owner to rush back to the shop and start handing groceries over the gate to the customer. Farmers from Nono bring milk and meat from their farms to sell door-to-door to many *barrio's* residents. The life style of Mena del Hierro's residents is thus not that of average middle-class urban residents. It is instead a mix of both the urban and rural worlds which they inhabit.

Street Neighbour Groups: the Example of the Pasaje Juan Procel Network

As explained at the beginning of this chapter, social exchange in Mena del Hierro is organized on the basis of kinship, *paisanaje* and street neighbourliness. The *pasaje*¹¹ Juan Procel in Mena del Hierro is an interesting case to illustrate the system of mutual help and reciprocal exchange. In this case, the relationships of street neighbourliness, kinship, and *paisanaje* coincide¹² (Fig. 5-17).

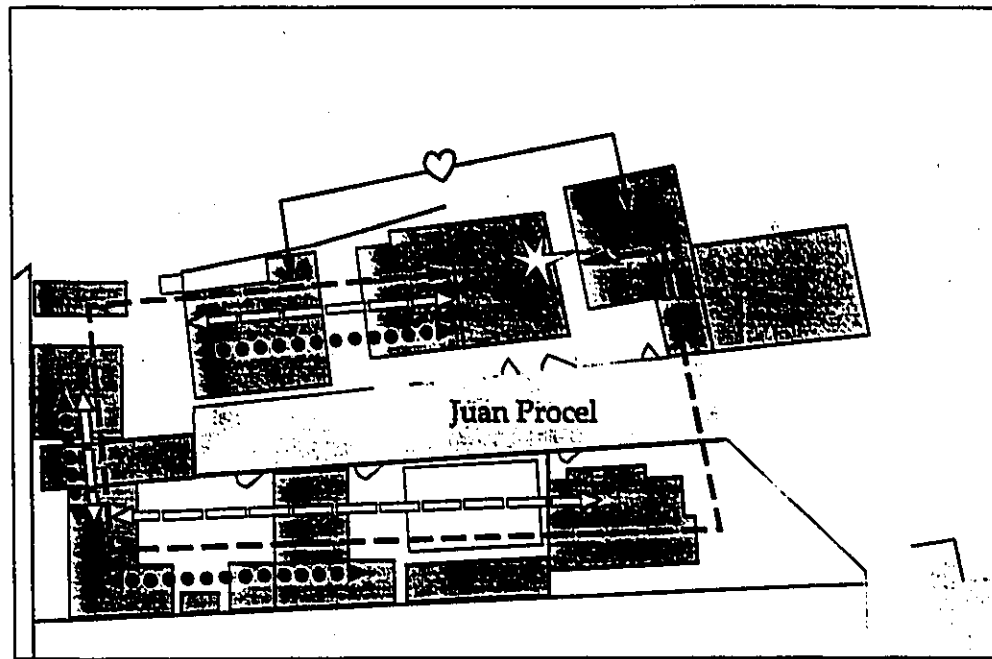
During my first visits to this *pasaje* I saw only spacious houses situated on relatively large lots¹³. Some of them were fenced and it was not possible to see within. There were no people out on the street. This did not correspond with my former experiences in densely populated *barrios* of Bogotá where streets are always packed with neighbours who are working, playing or socializing. The *pasaje* appeared more like the high-income, and low-density neighbourhoods of Bogotá where residents live an isolated life style. I had the impression that I was at the wrong place for my study of social life in the *barrios* of Quito.

I was mistaken. After a period of living in the area, and of talking to neighbours, I realized that *pasaje* neighbours share a web of social activities and that a complex system of mutual help exists between them. As seen in Figure 5-17, twelve households live at the *pasaje* Juan Procel, on nine lots. These nine lots are subdivisions of a former single *huerto familiar* lot (lot 212 in Fig. 3-32, Chapter III). Five different types of relationships exist between the twelve families living at the *pasaje*: (1) friendship, (2) kinship, (3) *paisanaje*, (4) *noviazgo*, (5) unfriendliness.

11 *Pasaje* is an alleyway; in this case it is a cul-de-sac.

12 The working and sleeping "headquarters" for my research were based at one of the houses in this *pasaje*, at the blind end of the alley, next to the Nastul Cardenas household (see fig. 4)

13 The smaller lots in the *Pasaje* are two to three times bigger than the average lot in the *barrios* of Bogotá, Colombia.



- ◄-----► Friendship Relationship
- ◄=====► Paisano Relationship
- ◄●●●●●●●●●●► Kin Relationship
- ◄-----♥-----► Noviazgo Relationship
- ★ Conflict

Figure 5-17. The social relationships of street neighbours: the example of Juan Procel

- (a) *Friendship and unfriendliness*. Ten of the twelve families living in the *pasaje* are related by ties of friendship. They consider their *pasaje* neighbours as "good friends". They realise many recreational activities together. They provide reciprocal support to each other in cases of necessity. Two *pasaje* households are excluded from the friendship network. The Pérez families (B11), the only *pasaje residents born in Quito*, are seen by the rest as "drunkards" and "thieves". No social contact exists with them. The Pérezes have committed a serious mistake in the eyes of their *pasaje* neighbours. Residents of the *pasaje* complain that they did favours and lent possessions to the Pérezes but that the Pérezes neither reciprocated the favours nor even returned the possessions. Not having respected the unwritten rules of a network of reciprocal exchange, they are now outcasts.
- (b) *Kinship and noviazgo*. Nine of the twelve *Juan Procel* households are related by immediate kinship to one or two other households in the same street (Fig. 5-17). Four groups of kin result: (1) the Caizas (Caiza Rodriguez, Caiza Encalada, Caiza Erazo¹⁴); (2) the Leóns (León Pazmiño, Balarezo León¹⁵); (3) the Nastuls (Nastul Sandoval, Nastul Cardenas); (4) the Pérezes (Pérez Bedón, Pérez Solís). Members of these four groups of kin live in separate lots with the exception of the Pérez who live within the same quarters. Two young *pasaje* neighbours (members of the Caiza Encalada and Santis families) have a *noviazgo* (going out) relationship. If they marry, and stay in the *barrio*, the Caiza group will be enlarged and a new group of kin, the Santis, will emerge.
- (c) *Paisanaje*. Eight of the twelve families living in *Juan Procel*, originally came from three locations outside Quito and are thus, related by *paisanaje* (Fig. 5-9). Three groups of *paisanos* result: (1) the *Pujileños*¹⁶ (Balarezo León, León Pazmiño and Riera Albarracín); (2) the *Pactenses*¹⁷ (Nastul Cardenas and Nastul Sandoval); and (3) the *Salgonquenses*¹⁸ (Caiza Rodriguez, Caiza Encalada and Caiza Erazo).

There are many examples of the mutual support and reciprocal exchange between members of the *pasaje* Juan Procel network. Neighbours often lend possessions to each other (e.g. car or truck, food, home appliances) and exchange services (e.g. housing construction, money lending, information, home repairs, child care). When L. Nastul (B12) married, for example, don Caiza kindly lent him his car for transporting the bride to the church. Neighbours got together to decorate the car with flowers and colourful ribbons. This was prepared as a surprise for the future couple.

14 These are three Caiza brothers who bought a large piece of land and subdivided it among themselves.

15 The two Leóns are siblings. Similar to the Caizas, they also bought a piece of land together and subdivided it into two lots.

16 Pujillí is a rural area of the Cotopaxi province, and is located in the southern part of the Ecuadorian Andes.

17 Pacto is a rural area northwest of Quito.

18 Salgonqui is a rural area south of Quito undergoing urbanization.

Another example of cooperation between neighbours is the mutual exchange of food products between the Nastul' (B12, B16), León (B10) and Balarezo (B12) households. These last two households are breadmakers. They do not charge the Nastuls for their bread and make sure they always have their daily provision. The Nastuls, who bring agricultural produce from their farm in Facto to be sold in Quito, offer in return fruit and vegetables to the León and Balarezo households.

Moral support is also provided in the case of personal difficulties, and neighbours often intervene in marriage troubles to alleviate problems. One night, for example, Don Caiza arrived home drunk. He got out on the street, started to fire a gun in the air and began to swear at his wife. Neighbours rushed to hide Don Caiza's wife in one of the *pasaje* houses and took don Caiza to another house. There, they helped him to calm down and get over his drunken state. The day after, an ashamed Don Caiza asked his neighbours to forgive him for his aggressive behaviour and promised not to do it again. When neighbours tell this story they are not angry about it. They laugh about the events and show their pride in having helped settle the conflict.

Material help and moral support is especially provided to residents who play a key role in the maintenance and stability of the *pasaje* network. L. Nastul, for example, is considered by neighbours as a key member of the *pasaje* group because of the services he provides to his neighbours and because of his dynamism in organizing activities for the group and for the *barrio* in general. After he married he and his wife were looking for accommodation. Neighbours found out the new couple was going to live outside the *barrio*. They got together and helped don Balarezo set up an apartment in a section of his flour store where sanitary facilities already existed. To the neighbours' satisfaction, the Nastul couple still lives in the *pasaje*. Neighbours now help them by babysitting their offspring.

Many recreational activities take place among *pasaje* neighbours. Given the lack of sports field facilities in Mena del Hierro, Don León (B10) has set up a volleyball field within his lot. *Pasaje* neighbours meet every weekend at Don León's field to play (Fig. 5-18). Other residents of Mena del Hierro often join them. Don León calls his sports field "*el espacio público de nuestra cuadra*" (the public space of our street). One of the walls of the sports field displays a mural painted by L. Nastul, the artist of the *pasaje*. End of the year festivities, like New Year's Eve, are also jointly celebrated by neighbours (Chapter VIII). When neighbours organize *paisano* parties, to commemorate a regional anniversary, *pasaje* neighbours are invited to join in, even though they do not all come from the same region.

Better-off *barrio* residents are usually named *padrinos* when a child is born or when a couple marries. These *padrinos* act as protectors, offering marriage help and advice, a financial loan when necessary, or providing important social or professional connections to help in finding a job, a place at school, hospital, etc. When L. Nastul married, however, nobody from the



Figure 5-18. Adult males of the *Juan Procel* street neighbours group playing volleyball at the residence of a group member. (Photo: Karina León, 1992)

barrio was named *padrino*. In this case, my husband and I were chosen as *padrinos*. I was pleased to accept this role which meant I had become part of the community. At the same time I was able to confirm that participant research is not neutral. By having been named *madrina* I changed the dynamics of an existing social network.

In addition to the relationships of kinship, *paisanaje* and spatial proximity that bind *pasaje* neighbours together, the physical characteristics of the street where they live also contribute to their social contact. Having one blind end to the street forces neighbours to always go out the same way. This increases the frequency of their meetings. The low-density of housing, which in principle does not favour social contact, is not a barrier in this case for intense social exchange.

Formal Groups: the Public Networks

General Characteristics

(a) Activities

A variety of formal groups exist in the *barrio* for the youth, adults and the community at large. One of the main characteristics of these groups is their "public" nature. They operate in public space and can easily be identified by an outsider to the community. Most of these groups result from the residents' own initiatives to satisfy their social, cultural, religious, economic, recreational and infrastructural needs. As seen in Table 5-3, there are nine such groups in Mena del Hierro. The majority of formal groups have been developed by young people and address a wide range of their needs: to meet others, to practice sports and recreation, to develop artistically, to have economic support, to practice religion, to contribute to the community's development and to gain social respect as individuals and as a group. Adult groups are more limited in number and extent of activities. Women's groups revolve around activities of homemaking and family survival. Men's groups concentrate on recreation and management of the *barrio's* natural, physical and financial resources.

(b) Participation

The overall percentage of the *barrio's* residents who participate in formal groups is significant: thirty six percent of residents over eighteen years weekly participate in the activities of these group. As Table 5-4 shows, youth groups have the largest number of regular participants. Women's groups have the lowest number participating. The group with the largest number of regular and non-regular participants is the *Comité Promejoras*, the body directing the affairs of the *barrio*. The *Comité* comprises 300 members who are landowners from both the "rich" and "popular" areas of Mena del Hierro¹⁹. The group is

¹⁹ As explained in Chapter III, the official administrative border of Mena del Hierro encompasses two areas which are entirely dissimilar from social, economic and physical points of view.

Table 5-3. Formal groups in Mena del Hierro: Aims and activities

GROUP NAME	AIMS OF GROUP					GROUP ACTIVITIES	
	Cultural	Religious	Health	Economic	Sports		Upgrading
YOUTH GROUPS	•						Organisation of community cultural activities; Support for "Comité Promejoras" Group
				•			Saving money and providing credit to group members
					•		Soccer at local and interbarrial level
		•					Religious activities; Support to child-care activities of the <i>Federación de Barrios</i>
	•			•			Song-writing and participation in musical festivals
Women's Group "Agua y Desarrollo"			•				Improving quality of drinking water for household consumption
ADULT GROUPS				•			Learning handicrafts in preparation for income-earning
					•		Soccer at local and interbarrial level
COMUNITY GROUP						•	Upgrading of barrio infrastructure' Provision and administration of drinking water; Organization of social activities for the community

Table 5-4. Formal groups in Mena del Hierro: Characteristics of group members and meeting habits

GROUP NAME:	CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMBERS					MEETING HABITS		
	Female	Male	Number ¹	Place of Residence Mena del Hierro	Neighbour Barrios	Frequency of Meeting	Regular Meeting Mena del Hierro	Neighbour Barrios
YOUTH GROUPS	•	•	30	•		Weekly	•	
		•	30	•		Weekly	•	
		•	30	•		Weekly	•	•
	•	•	15	•	•	Weekly	•	
		•	5	•		Weekly	•	•
ADULT GROUPS	•		10	•	•	Weekly	•	
	•		8	•	•	Weekly	•	
		•	16	•		Weekly	•	•
COMMUNITY GROUP		•	20	•		Biweekly	•	
	•	•	300 ²	•		Biannual		

¹ Only includes residents of Mena del Hierro

² Owners of land or housing in "rich" and "popular" Mena del Hierro

directed by twenty men from popular Mena del Hierro. Figure 5-6 shows the dispersed residences of group directors in the *barrio*.

Residents of "rich" Mena del Hierro, approximately a third of the total 300 members, depend on the *Comité Promejoras* for the provision of fresh water, and thus regularly pay fees, but do not participate in any of the Committee's activities. The participation of owner residents of "popular" Mena del Hierro, men and women, in the Committee's social activities is, in contrast, enthusiastic. The participation in activities of improvement of *barrio*'s infrastructure is less enthusiastic having much diminished over the years. This participation is now limited to approximately two thirds of total members, i.e. those from "popular" Mena.

(d) Spatial coverage of groups and main meeting places of members

Four of the nine formal groups existing in Mena del Hierro have a spatial coverage which goes beyond the *barrio*'s borders. As seen in Table 5-4 such groups include residents from the neighbouring *barrios* of San Rafael and Santa Isabel. The activities of these four groups have permitted the social integration of residents from the three *barrios*, particularly of women and youth.

Regular members of all formal groups meet at least once a week, except for board members of the *Comite Promejoras* who meet every two weeks. Preferred meeting places are highly concentrated in Mena del Hierro for most groups. The exception are the two soccer groups who have to play in the neighbouring *barrio* of Santa Anita where a soccer field is available. Meetings for organization activities however, take place in Mena del Hierro.

(e) Stability of formal groups

Most formal groups in Mena del Hierro are not fragile but stable organizations with a long tradition of existence in the *barrio*. As seen in Table 5-5, youth and adult men's groups have existed for nearly a decade. The *Comité Promejoras* has been active in *barrio*'s upgrading activities for practically twenty years. Women's groups are the exception. The *Artesanías* group has only emerged in the past two years and the *Agua y Desarrollo* group has existed for less than six months.

The initiative for the creation of formal groups, and the leadership of activity organization, has come in all cases from *barrio* residents themselves except for the groups of adult women and the religious group. As explained earlier, adult women in Mena del Hierro have traditionally been active members of informal *barrio* groups but have not been present in formal groups which organize activities for the *barrio* as a whole. As Table 5-5 shows non governmental organizations -concerned with women and development in the *barrios*- have provided the stimulus for the creation of groups for adult women in the *barrio*. The religious

Table 5-5. Formal groups in Mena del Hierro: Historical, organisational and financial characteristics

	GROUP NAME	HISTORY				MEMBERSHIP IN WIDER ORGANISATIONS	FINANCING/ SPONSORSHIP	
		Period of existence (years)		Origin of initiative to found group			External sponsor	Own resources
		≤ 2	2-10	10-20	Residents of barrio			
YOUTH GROUPS	Youth Group "Juventud y Progreso"		•		•	Federación de Barrios del N.O. de Quito	•	
	Youth Group "Caja de Credito S-30"		•		•		•	
	Soccer Group "Juvenil Mena del Hierro"		•		•	Liga Deportiva del N.O. de Quito	•	
	Religious Group		• /			Private ecuadorian firms	•	
	Musical Group "Trovadores del Ande"		•		Jesuit Church	Jesuit Church	•	
ADULT GROUPS	Women's Group "Agua y Desarrollo"	•				Federación de Barrios del N.O. de Quito		
	Women's Group "Artesanías y Manualidades"	•				CIUDAD. UNDP	•	
	Soccer Group "Mayores Mena del Hierro"		•		Spanish NGO	Order of spanish nuns	•	
COMMUNITY GROUP	Comité Promejoras			•	•	Liga Deportiva del N.O. de Quito	•	
				•	•	Federación de Barrios del N.O. de Quito	•	

/ Interrupted existence

group has existed for many years but has had problems of continuity. The leadership for the creation of the religious group and the organization of activities has irregularly come from the priest assigned to the *barrio* every year. Young residents have enthusiastically participated in the group until the tenure of the priest came to an end.

(f) Formal group membership in wider organizations

Formal groups in Mena del Hierro are not isolated in their activities. Most groups belong to the umbrella organizations of the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente de Quito* and the *Liga Deportiva del Noroccidente*, both of which provide support to local groups in the northwestern *barrios* of Quito (Table 5-5). The Federation²⁰ is a non-governmental organization, created by *barrios* residents and supported financially by group members and by international organizations concerned with Third World development. The Federation is constituted of nearly forty groups from a total of twenty *barrios* in the northwest (nine *Comités Promejoras*, fifteen youth groups, three women's groups and ten other groups, concerned with educational activities).

The Federation plays a crucial social role in the *barrios* of Quito's northwest. It represents the *Comités Barriales* before the municipality for the acquisition of basic infrastructure and services for the area. It develops and coordinates activities of health, school education and child care for residents of the area. The *Campamentos Vacacionales*, for example, is an example of a remarkable effort to provide day care to children of the northwestern *barrios* during their school holidays. Over a period of three months the Federation organizes holiday camps in different parts of the area for approximately 3000 children²¹. These holiday camps are a very well organized activity, highly estimated by parents and by children in the *barrios* of Quito's northwest. In addition to this activity the Federation organizes several cultural events in the area to promote the social exchange and integration of residents of the northwestern *barrios*.

The *Liga Deportiva Barrial del Noroccidente* is a sports organization created by residents of the northwestern *barrios* which regroups several *barrio* sports groups, mainly soccer groups. It provides logistical and technical support to group members and organizes a yearly soccer competition between the teams of the different *barrios*. The *Ligas Deportivas Barriales* are an institution in Quito. They are numerous, have existed for many years, are of great importance to residents of *barrios populares* and have traditionally had great support from prominent politicians. Soccer in Ecuador is one of the few concrete opportunities for

20 The *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente* emerged in 1983 as a defence mechanism of the northwestern *barrios* against the "green belt" initiative of the municipal government. The green belt project consisted of creating an area of ecological protection at the foothills of the Pichincha. The more than twenty *barrios* existing within the green belt area were scheduled for eradication.

21 This activity is funded by *Pioneros de Francia*, an international non-governmental organization.

residents of *barrios populares* to improve their economic situation and social status. Players for the official Ecuadorian soccer team are often found by the *Ligas* in the teams of the *barrios*. As in most Latin American countries, members of the national soccer team are not only national idols but are also extremely well paid. Many boys and young men in the *barrios* live for the hope of becoming members of the official Ecuadorian soccer team (Figure 5-19).

Politicians in Quito have understood the importance of soccer for *barrio* people and the political benefits that can be obtained from supporting the *Ligas Deportivas Barriales*. They have, thus, set the mechanisms of *clientelismo* in action. The majority of mayors of Quito, for example, have given important "favours" to the *Ligas* before their election to office. They have allocated municipal resources for the construction of stadiums, for the fencing and for the artificial illumination of sports fields in densely populated *barrio* areas of Quito. Numerous votes from residents of *barrios populares* have been the return payment for these political "favours". Soccer and politics are intimates in Quito.

(g) Funding of formal groups

Youth and soccer groups raise their own funds by organizing social and cultural activities in the *barrio*. The *Comité Promejoras* gets its resources through payments from group members for the provision and administration of fresh water. Women's groups, however, depend entirely on external resources for their existence (Table 5-5). Partial financial or logistical support is also provided to self-funding groups by private enterprise, the church and the two *barrio* umbrella organizations, the Federation and the *Liga Barrial*. Private enterprise, for example, finances the uniforms of soccer groups; the Federation provides logistical and technical support for the cultural activities of youth groups; Jesuit priests provide installations for the meetings of the religious group; and the *Liga Barrial* finances the yearly soccer competition.

The Social Role of Individual Formal Groups

(a) Community groups

The *Comité Promejoras* is the organization with the widest representation in the *barrio*. It has its origins in a self-help group formed in the early seventies by the first *barrio* settlers who aimed at obtaining basic infrastructure. This self-help group has evolved over the years having today an elaborate structure formed by a president and three working groups. The latter are responsible for water administration, the organization of sociocultural events and community health.



Figure 5-19. Young men of the *barrio Menores* soccer group. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991)

The Committee has played a crucial role over the years in organizing residents for self-help activities to acquire infrastructure. *Mingas* have been the main self-help system used by the Committee. *Mingas* are a traditional form of collective work in the rural Andes whereby neighbours, friends and relatives voluntarily get together to do any needed work for one person or for the whole community. Many *mingas* have taken place in Mena del Hierro over the years. They have partially or fully contributed to the acquisition of fresh water, electricity, the community centre, the community sports field and the partial installation of sewerage and footpaths.

The character of *mingas* has, however, changed over the years from voluntary to obligatory. As most infrastructure and services are available today in Mena del Hierro and many residents are no longer prepared to invest their free time in self-help *barrio* activities the original enthusiastic participation of residents in *mingas* has declined. The Committee has thus made *mingas* obligatory by charging a fine to group members who do not attend self-help activities necessary for *barrio* improvement.

The Committee's proudest achievement is the organization of self-help activities for the provision of fresh water. No fresh water for household consumption was available in the neighbourhood at the beginning of the eighties. The Pichincha mountain above Mena del Hierro is, however, rich in fresh water springs. *Barrio* residents, stimulated by the *Comite Promejoras*, got organized to find an appropriate spring. Once the spring was located they had the water tested and approved for human consumption. Residents then constructed the necessary facilities to transport, store and distribute the water to individual homes.

The provision of fresh water is a remarkable self-help effort resulting entirely from the residents' organizational, financial and labour contribution. Residents still remember with satisfaction the day when fresh water started to flow in the *barrio*. Don Gustavo León, a *barrio* ex-president, relates how many residents were sceptical of the Committee's assurance that water would flow in the neighbourhood. Once water started to flow every one was overjoyed. Residents began timidly to wet their hands with the flowing water and ended up hosing each other down. The day ended in a big party of the whole *barrio*.

Today, the Committee's working commission for water is the *barrio*'s organization responsible for the administration of water. They maintain the installations for the distribution of water and collect monthly payments for the water service. As there is insufficient water to supply every home for the entire day, the water commission has divided the neighbourhood into several sectors, each of which receives water for a three hour period. The timetable changes over the week to ensure that every sector gets water early in the day at least twice a week. The water is not treated but residents do not suffer of stomach upsets (unlike foreign researchers)

The financial resources generated by the provision of water have strengthened the power of the Committee in Mena del Hierro. They have made a major contribution to the *barrio's* significant improvement in infrastructure and services over the years: This self-help system of water administration has, however, an important limitation. Water resources are insufficient in the long term to satisfy the needs of the growing *barrio* population.

Barrio residents have been divided over the years whether to continue with the self-administration of water or whether to put pressure on official authorities to obtain municipal water. The issue resolved itself when the municipality started in late 1994 to connect the *barrio* to Quito's water supply system. For residents this has the obvious advantages of an unlimited provision of treated water (at least in theory). It also has some disadvantages, however. The municipality's water is several times more expensive than the *barrio's* water. The cost of getting access to the service is in many cases exorbitant as fees are based on the size of lots. Many lots in Mena del Hierro are still very large being the result of a *Huertos Familiares* development. The *barrio* will also no longer have economic resources of its own. The residents who were employed by the water commission to administer and provide water will be jobless. The fruits of a tremendous effort invested by residents over the years will be lost.

Another recent effort of the Committee has been to give a name to the *barrio's* streets which before only had letters as a reference. These names have been made official by the Committee before the municipality. The influence of residents who have their geographical origin in the rural area northwest of Quito can be seen in the type of names given to the streets. Most of these names such as Rio Tulipe, Rio Cachabi, Rio Amaluza correspond to rivers in the northwestern hinterland of Quito.

(b) Youth Groups

Creando Caminos, formerly *Juventud y Progreso*, is the most active in developing activities for the whole community. Figure 5-9 shows the dispersed residences of group members. This group has played a significant social role in the *barrio* over the years organizing cultural and health activities for *barrio's* residents and recreational activities for themselves. The *Brigada de Salud*, for example, is a community health programme set up by local doctors and members of the former *Juventud y Progreso* aimed at providing continued health assistance to *barrio* residents. The annual Mother's Day festival, an organized outdoor musical festival, provides entertainment and a space for social integration to the *barrio's* mothers.

The *periódicos murales*, a wall size newspaper displayed on the walls of the Community Centre, aims at communicating useful social, cultural and political information to *barrio* residents. The volleyball competition, organized yearly by group members allows young people from several *barrios* in the northwest to meet every weekend over a period of three months. The cooperation of *Juventud y Progreso* with the self-help activities of the *Comité*

Promejoras as well as with the organization of the year end festivities has been significant over the years. Group members also organize parties for themselves on occasions such as the *Día del Amor y de la Amistad* or on any other occasion which can be used as an excuse to celebrate.

The Religious group provides a space of social integration for youth from Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. This is an important function because youth of these three *barrios* often have negative perceptions of each other. These negative perceptions result from the differences of life style ("modern"/Indian), educational level and material wealth that exist in the three *barrios*.

The musical group *Trovadores del Ande* provides for young *barrio* men a concrete possibility of improving their economic situation and social status. Figure 5-20 shows the concentrated distribution of residences of group members who are also related by kin. Several musical groups in Ecuador which play traditional Andean music have become successful internationally. One of these, the "*Yuñaccashi*", originated in a *barrio popular* of Quito's northwest. This is not a coincidence. Youths in the *barrios* of Quito have great musical talent and a wealth of musical groups exists in these areas. The international success of the *Yuñaccashi* and other Ecuadorian groups playing Andean music has fuelled the desire of *barrio* youth to repeat the same experience. This is also the dream of *Trovadores del Ande* in Mena del Hierro. The *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente* supports the aspiration of musical groups in the northwest by organizing public presentations and recording their music on tapes for sale. The quality of these recordings is, unfortunately, far from good.

The aims of *Trovadores del Ande* have evolved over the years. This change reflects the changing ambitions of Latin American youth in the past twenty years. *Trovadores del Ande* started ten years ago as an informal group of children who gathered in the streets to play. Subsequently, they evolved into a politically motivated group, *Rebelión*, who aimed at communicating through their music the social and economic injustice existing in Latin America and the need for a structural change. Today, in a climate of wide economic crisis and unemployment, *Trovadores del Ande* is guided by the concrete and immediate aim of economic survival and improvement of its position in society.

As explained earlier, the *Caja de Crédito S-30* is a recent economic self-help initiative of the informal youth group "S-20" to mutually help each other in case of unemployment, financial difficulty or needed support to start an informal economic business. The *Caja de Crédito S-30* is a too recent to permit an assessment, but is likely to play a crucial economic role for *barrio* youth in the future. At the present time, however, they do not have any financial support but their own.

Typical of the *barrios* of Quito the soccer group *Juvenil Mena del Hierro* has a long tradition in the *barrio*. As explained earlier, this group has the important function of providing for

youth a possibility of improving their economic status and gaining social respect. It also provides a means of integration with youth from other *barrios* in the northwest. The possibilities of personal depression, involvement with drugs or with crime, which are symptomatic of many Latin American youths in the *barrios*, are greatly reduced. Figure 5-20 shows the dispersed spatial distribution of group members in the *barrio*.

(c) Adult Men Groups

Similarly to the youth soccer group the soccer group *Mayores* Mena del Hierro also provides men with a space to meet and socialize with the northwestern *barrios*. Figure 5-20 shows the dispersed spatial distribution of group members in the *barrio*. In addition to this, soccer groups play a crucial function of social stability for both young and adult men. Soccer group activities keep *barrio* men occupied during a great part of their free time, specially during the six months of each year when *interbarrio* competitions take place.

(d) Adult Women Groups

The *Artesanias y Manualidades* and *Agua y Desarrollo* groups are the only possibilities, other than shopping, for adult women to get out of their homes and find respite from burdensome homework activities. Figure 5-10 shows the residences of the members of these groups. Although the activities carried out by these two groups have again to do with homemaking they are non routine and also offer the possibility to meet other women from Mena del Hierro and neighbour *barrios*. Unfortunately, the aims of the *Artesanias y Manualidades* group are in practice not realized. Leaders of this group train women to produce handicrafts in order to make them able to earn an additional income for their families. However, no skills in marketing are provided nor contacts with potential buyers. Although the activities of *Agua y Desarrollo* are very recent to be assessed they are likely to provide an important stimulus for women to get involved in public *barrio* activities.

Characteristics of Relationships between Formal Groups

Relationships between formal groups in the *barrio* are, in general, of a cooperative nature. There are, however, some friction between the youth group *Creando Caminos* and the *Comité Promejoras*. As explained earlier, youth in Mena del Hierro have played a crucial role over the years in organizing cultural, health and sports activities for the community. The youth group has much symbolic power within the *barrio*. They have, however, no control over the use and management of the *barrio*'s material and financial resources. They depend on the authorization of the *Comité Promejoras* (an organization dominated by adult men) to use the *barrio*'s financial resources or the Community installations for their activities as a group. As the youth group would prefer to have free access to the community's resources, and the *Comité* is reluctant to provide this, friction between the two arise. Recently, the strategy of

the youth to gain more power within the *barrio* has been the "infiltration" of the *Comité*. Some members of the youth group have become board members of the Committee in key positions of decision.

The relationships between the *Comité Promejoras*, the youth group and the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente* are of cooperation but friction also exist, mainly because of the differentiated ambitions of the groups. The aim of the Federation's activities is to build a large pressure group uniting the northwestern *barrios* of Quito to obtain infrastructure and to gain increased participation in municipal decisions over the urban future of the area. The aim of the *Comité Promejoras*, in contrast, is limited to reaching the infrastructure level of an average middle-class neighbourhood in Quito. For some members of the *Comité* the Federation is an unnecessary intermediary to obtain infrastructure for the *barrio*. Traditional *clientelismo*, based on one-to-one negotiations with capital city politicians, is a more effective means of obtaining concrete benefits for the *barrio* than being a small part of the Federation. As explained earlier, friction between the Federation and youth groups, especially *Creando Caminos* and *Trovadores del Ande*, also exist. The main aim of the Federation's activities is political. The main aim of the youth is recreational and economic (see section on the informal group S-20).

Besides formal and informal groups developed by *barrio* residents there also are organizations in Mena del Hierro which have been initiated and funded by government agencies. Institutional organizations however, have not existed for as long as formal groups and are not numerous and influential in *barrio's* life. There are three such organizations in Mena del Hierro: the *Espacio Alternativo "Mil Colores"*, the *Fernando Daquilema* school and the medical service. The main social contribution of these organizations is to the *barrio's* children and to community health.

The *Espacio Alternativo Mil Colores* is an after-school day care centre created in 1994 for children of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel by the *Banco Central del Ecuador*. Day care for children is, however, provided by members of the youth group *Creando Caminos* and the Religious group. The aims of the *Espacio Alternativo* are: a. to make *barrio* children aware of their rights as children, b. to stimulate their artistic talent, and c. to promote the social integration of children from the three neighbouring *barrios*.

The *Fernando Daquilema* school is a public primary school created in the late eighties by the Ministry of Education for the children of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. This school is managed by the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente* and directed by a female resident of Mena del Hierro. The resources for this school are, however, quite limited and the level of education remains below that of other public schools. In practice, few no children from Mena del Hierro attend this primary school because they consider that its educational quality is low. The school is thus, mostly frequented by children from San Rafael and Santa

Isabel who cannot afford a better school.

The *medical centre*, located in the community centre of Mena del Hierro, has been set up by the Ministry of Health with the purpose of providing immediate and affordable basic health services to residents of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Doctors of the medical centre have played over the years a double role as physicians and community workers. Doctors have carried out *concientización* work trying to make residents politically aware of the fundamental right they have to health and the need to get organized to fight for this right. These activities have created conflicts with local residents. The motivation of young people to participate in the activities organized by the doctors is to meet others and not political. Adult women are not interested in learning the socioeconomic sources of illness but in finding a concrete way of helping their families' health. Directors of the *Comité Promejoras* consider that doctors should limit their activities to health care and not get involved in the *barrio* as community workers. They are wary of doctors because they see them as a competing force for power within the *barrio*.

Although not a government organization, the *Jesús del Gran Poder* church, is another institution in Mena del Hierro but it plays a very small role in collective life, limited to celebrating Mass every Sunday and during catholic religious celebrations. The initiative for the celebration of religious activities mostly comes from local residents, particularly from San Rafael and Santa Isabel (Chapter VIII). The most significant role of the church is to organize *barrio* youth in the religious group.

THE COMMUNITY OF MENA DEL HIERRO

The concept of community was loosely defined in the introduction as any kind of association or participation in common relationships. On these grounds a community certainly exists in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. It is composed of a wealth of social links between residents, classified in the foregoing pages into formal and informal groups and described individually in detail. While the field observations are thus conclusive in establishing the existence of a community, questions now arise as to its nature when considered as a whole. In the sections which follow, various aspects of the community will be explored in an attempt to describe the communal essence of the *barrio*.

Spatial Dimensions: Official Delimitation Versus Perception

Throughout this chapter the geographical extent of the "*barrio* of Mena del Hierro" has been taken as an area of about 12 ha which two key informants (members of the youth group) defined as "their *barrio*". However, the area officially recognized by the municipality of

Quito as the "neighbourhood of Mena del Hierro" is far larger, encompassing some 37 ha (Fig. 3-21, Chapter III). The extent to which this difference between official and perceived boundaries of the community is generally felt can be assessed by examining the observable indicators of community described above – the social groups.

For this purpose, a map was compiled by superimposing all the maps showing residences of group members in the *barrio*. The resulting spatial distribution is remarkable (Fig. 5-21). The limits of the residential area comprising all group participants indeed match the limits of the *barrio* as defined by the informants. On the one hand this result illustrates the awareness that community members have of their effective territory, and on the other it illustrates that the two geographical definitions of the *barrio*, official and perceived, are both tangible and distinct. Mena del Hierro is thus a prime case of an administrative area which has nothing to do with real social boundaries.

Social Dimensions: Private Versus Public

The community of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro has another interesting property: in addition to having two spatial dimensions it also has two social dimensions. An "invisible" or "private" community operates, composed of an intricate linkage of *vecino*, *paisano*, and kin groups. Except for the few revealing exceptions described above, practically all residents participate in this network to various extents, yet its pervasive presence is not obvious to the outsider. The second dimension is the "visible" or "public" community formed by readily observable networks such as the sports players and the formal groups.

Both the private and the public communities are highly active, but the social roles of men and women are clearly divided between them: men are responsible for the dynamism of the public community, whereas women are responsible for that of the private community. This division by gender has consequences for the part that residents eventually play in managing their own urban environment. Young *barrio* men enter public life spontaneously through their sports groups and thereby gain exposure to the *barrio*'s male-dominated political networks (e.g. via the volleyball groups) and even to networks beyond the *barrio*'s sphere (e.g. via the inter-*barrio* soccer competitions). In contrast, few women develop the ability to perform well, and hence participate effectively, in public life because they are excluded from these key social groups.

Given its importance and level of activity, it is surprising that the public community has so few active participants (between 15-20% of all *barrio* residents). What explains the enthusiasm of this selected group of residents? What makes them different? Are there any special reasons for their participation beyond the obvious motivations of recreation and socializing? In order to answer these questions, the characteristics of individual public group

members have been examined in detail.

A rigorous approach to this kind of analysis would be to list all conceivable characteristics for all members, and then to search through the resulting matrix for statistical correlations. However, in the present case such an approach is superfluous. It became obvious after living and working in the *barrio* for some months that only a small number of factors are important in explaining the group membership of individuals: (1) the period of their residence in the *barrio*; (2) home ownership; (3) geographical provenance; (4) membership in a kin group; and (5) connections to other kin groups. To provide some numerical illustration of these qualitative field results, the data on public group members have been tabulated (Table 6), and their salient characteristics expressed statistically as follows.

For each of the five factors listed above, the frequency of incidence among group members was calculated as a percentage of the total number of members. These percentages were then normalised to the corresponding frequencies calculated for all residents of the *barrio*. Thus factors which have the same incidence as in the *barrio* as a whole have 0% correlation. Factors which have much higher incidence among group members compared to the *barrio* population are represented by high positive percentages of correlation. For example, the incidence of home owners among participants of the social groups is 100%, whereas the percentage of home owners in the *barrio* is only 42%. The correlation of home ownership is therefore expressed by the ratio $(100-42)/42$, i.e. 138%.

Table 5-6. Correlation of participants of "public" groups with selected characteristics

Characteristics of participants	Residence prior to 1983	Home ownership	Origin in the northwestern hinterland	Member of kin group	Connectivity of kin groups
Participant frequency / Barrio frequency	92%/38%	100%/42%	80%/45%	80%/50%	54%/53%
Correlation	142%	138%	78%	60%	2%

Table 5-6 shows that indicators of "establishment" in the *barrio*, such as a long period of residence and home ownership, show the highest correlations, but origin in the northwestern hinterland and membership in kin groups are also strongly correlated. The members of the social groups responsible for the vigorous public life of the *barrio* are thus seen to share a vested economic interest in the *barrio*, permanency, common rural background, and an extended family network. All these characteristics collectively define a strong sense of belonging in the *barrio*, in other words, a strong sense of place.

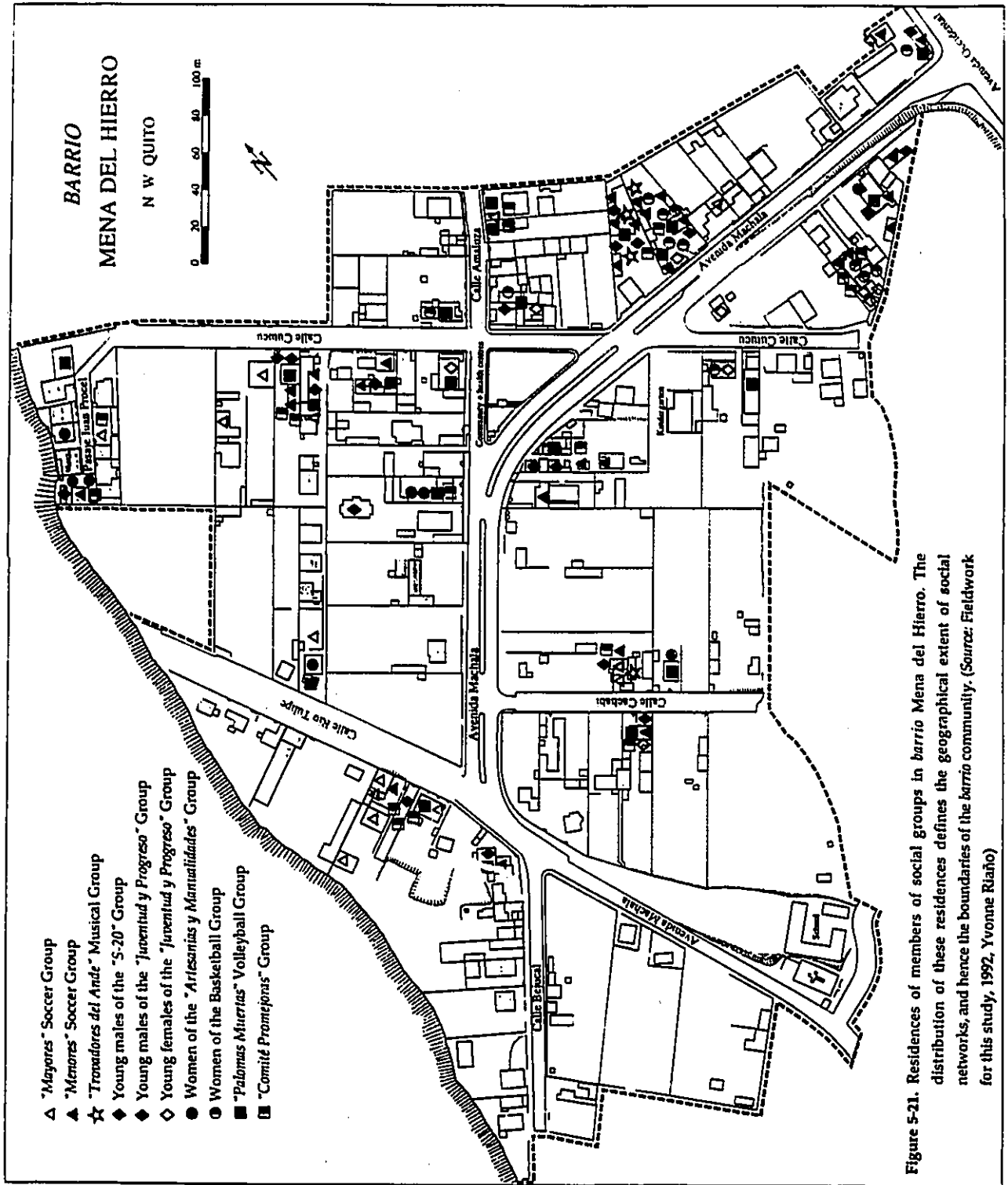


Figure 5-21. Residences of members of social groups in barrio Mena del Hierro. The distribution of these residences defines the geographical extent of social networks, and hence the boundaries of the barrio community. (Source: Fieldwork for this study, 1992, Yvonne Riaño)

Network Membership: Multiple Versus Exclusive

Another structural feature of community in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro is the fact that social networks are not isolated but tightly linked. The linkages are formed by the multiple memberships of individual residents in various private and public groups. As a result of this linking, the social roles of individuals coincide and overlap: a neighbour is at the same a friend and a relative; a group fellow is a friend and a relative, and so on. Multiple group membership provides extensive and intricate social contact for individuals. Thus a given resident of the *barrio* socializes not only with his relatives and their acquaintances in the neighbourhood, but also with his acquaintances and their relatives as well.

The private and public networks in the *barrio* are linked by the members of public groups (approximately 80 residents). Fourty of these play a special intermediary role between networks, thereby ensuring the connectivity of the public. Such intermediaries are commonly known as "bridgemen", and in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro this term is quite apt. With only three exceptions, all of the bridging group are men, and most are young (60%). On average the bridgemen belong to 2.5 public groups, although most of the young male members belong to 3 or 4. This high level of multiple membership lends the bridgemen and their 16 associated kin groups a special status of influence and public respect within the *barrio*.

The multiple membership of residents in community groups contrasts with the specialized group participation in some other societies. For example, Davies and Herbert (1993:3) maintain that specialization is responsible for the failure of most contemporary North American associations to provide members with the emotional identity and unconditional support that they need. The reason is that the associations "... are only partial ones, related to the specific purpose of the interest group or the service provided". This is certainly not the case in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro.

Multiple network membership has two very important social functions for *barrio* residents. It provides them with an extensive source of social contacts and with a wide variety of activities. Multiple group membership allows *barrio* residents, particularly the young, to satisfy a crucial need that otherwise cannot be easily provided by the larger society: social respect. The intense social involvement of the young in the *barrio's* activities and their acceptance by community members are undoubtedly important in building the surprising degree of emotional and social health that the young enjoy.

Community Stability: Collectivity Versus Individualism

Associative life is what makes the *barrio* Mena del Hierro a genuine community. However, the community is far from perfect. There is obvious tension towards residents who do not conform with the dominant lifestyle based on reciprocal social exchange. Tension is also

apparent between young and adults in their search for local power and representativeness. Public life and decisions regarding community management are dominated by the male members of a select minority of kin groups. Women and renters generally do not participate in public decisions.

Despite these limitations there is much social cohesiveness among residents and a cooperative and peaceful atmosphere prevails. There is neither crime nor outbursts of violence. Residents seem generally content with life in the *barrio*, and this is especially striking in the young people, many of whom are unemployed. Being unemployed is not a social stigma in the community of Mena del Hierro. Being active in the organization of social activities for the community is what counts, and youths thereby earn their social respect.

Six crucial elements hold the community of *barrio* Mena del Hierro together: (1) kinship, (2) residential permanency, (3) common geographical provenance, (4) material needs, (5) the density of social networks, and (6) collective achievements. Kinship networks in the *barrio* are large, dense and totally permeate public and private life. Housing ownership by many—and the concrete prospects of many others of becoming house owners guarantees the residential stability of residents. The common geographical origin of the majority of immigrants results in the community having a homogeneous lifestyle. These residents also have an optimistic spirit in common, typical of immigrants elsewhere, and a desire to "conquer" a space in the city. The need for *barrio* infrastructure plus the long-term economic instability of most residents breeds mutual dependency. The collective achievements in acquiring infrastructure over years of self-help work have instilled the residents a common pride, a feeling of community belonging, and a sense of place.

How stable are the social networks in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro over time? In the literature on *barrios* there is much debate regarding the long-term stability of social networks of exchange. Some researchers believe exchange ties are kept on a short-term, temporary level in order to stress independence among residents (Whiteford, 1974; Hardy, 1987). Vargas (1986) argues that social relationships of reciprocity have traditionally existed among low-income populations in Latin America. They are their defense mechanism against poverty in the context of governments unable to solve the survival problems of the urban poor. For Lomnitz (1988), the exchange system in the *barrios* of Mexico follows the rules of reciprocity, a mode of exchange between equals, imbedded in a fabric of social relationships which is persistent in time, rather than casual and momentary as in market exchange. When the exchange ceases to exist however, the network disintegrates. Other researchers maintain that the social practices of mutual help and reciprocity are a permanent feature of the culture of lower-income groups in Latin America and the Caribbean (Austin, 1984; Martin Barbero, 1989; Riaño P., 1991).

The social networks of Mena del Hierro are likely to persist in time, for several reasons. Although residents have an improved economic status in comparison to residents of other *barrios*, they still suffer from a lack of social security and some from a lack of a regular income. They need to support each other on a long-term basis. The complex linkage of networks in Mena del Hierro, as described above, is another factor which guarantees their persistence. In fact, these ties are likely to increase with time: marriages between neighbours will reinforce kinship networks; the arrival of people and relatives from the countryside will strengthen *paisanaje* networks; and the dynamism of formal and informal groups in constantly developing new activities for residents will ensure social integration.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has presented new field data on the characteristics of community in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. This research has been approached from the perspective of participant observation and the analysis of the social and spatial characteristics of *barrio* networks.

Mena del Hierro is a *barrio* where the majority of residents have an economic status closer to that of an average middle-class person in Quito, than to a working class inhabitant of a low-income *barrio*. Despite this improved economic status, and hence reduced dependence on others for economic survival, *barrio* residents do not lead isolated lives. They have created a well-integrated and stable community where residents participate in a wealth of self-organized and locally-based formal and informal networks. These networks are responsible for the dynamic social life that characterizes the *barrio* Mena del Hierro and for the significant improvements in infrastructure and services that it has achieved over the last ten years.

Social networks in the *barrio* can be classified as "visible" and "invisible". Kin, *vecino* and *paisano* groups, for example, operate at a smaller scale than sports and formal groups, are mostly aimed at household survival, and are not obvious to the eye of a casual observer. As a consequence, community life in the *barrio* has two dimensions: public and private. There is marked difference in gender roles between the two. Men are mostly responsible for the vitality of public networks whereas women maintain the private networks. This social division of gender roles within the community is something of a puzzle: on the one hand, the exclusion of women from public networks and public decisions goes against the democratic principles of equality in community life. On the other hand, the equilibrium of the *barrio's* community depends on the existence of both public and private networks and the key role that each gender group plays at each level.

Kinship is the keystone of community in the *barrio*. Over fifty percent of the *barrio's* households are related to others by immediate kinship and many more may be related by

close or distant family ties. Kinship permeates all levels of community life, whether public or private. This omnipresence is explained by the multiple representation of kin-related residents in the *barrio's* networks, by the economic and political influence of kin groups, and by their sheer numerical extent.

The cluster-like residential distribution of kin groups is one of the special features of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. The majority of groups cluster on one or more contiguous land sections where household members live in separate dwellings but share much of their daily routine, particularly women. This social and spatial organization of kin group members reduces the spatial extent of women's movements within the neighbourhood and explains their reduced presence in the *barrio's* outdoor public spaces.

The framework of community in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro is woven from the elements of residential permanency, common geographical provenance, common material needs, membership in local kinship and social networks, and a history of collective achievements. All these factors have contributed to the sense of social and spatial belonging that prevails in the *barrio*. These factors exemplify how a "sense of place" emerges in a location previously devoid of social significance.

Although the *barrio* offers unlimited possibilities for social contact, the social life of the residents is not confined to the neighbourhood. In fact, the spatial basis of the residents' social activities is threefold: the immediate neighbourhood; the neighbouring *barrios* of Quito's northwest, and the countryside. This triangle of social worlds plays a crucial role in the social health that characterizes residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro at both the individual and collective level. Youths in Mena del Hierro suffer from unemployment problems. Most adult workers are affected by problems of lack of social security. To a certain extent *barrio* residents are socially and politically excluded from the wider Ecuadorian society. Despite these social problems, there is no evidence in Mena del Hierro of public problems of drugs, alcohol, violence or crime. Belonging to this threesome of social worlds evidently provides a positive sense to the life of residents of Mena del Hierro. *Barrio* residents thereby achieve social respect, a sense of community and a sense of place. These are social needs which are not readily satisfied within the context of the larger Ecuadorian society.

The social health and cohesiveness of male youth in Mena del Hierro is one of the most striking features of the *barrio*. Despite their limited access to social opportunities, and in contrast to their counterparts in other *barrios* with comparably marginal positions, they are not split in gangs or *galladas* and have not resorted to crime. They play, in contrast, an important role in the *barrio* as organizers of the many *barrio*-based social and economic activities.

Several conclusions emerge from this study for future research and for management of social

and physical resources in *barrios*. The approach of participant observation has proved very successful in revealing the "visible" and "invisible" dimensions of community. This approach, however, has its limitations, as it cannot be implemented everywhere with the same facility. For example, this study originally intended to include the neighbouring *barrio* of San Rafael but, because of the reserved nature of the mostly Indian residents, it proved impossible to become an accepted participant in the community in the short field time available.

Researchers willing to use the method of participant observation or individuals involved in *barrio* upgrading programmes must be aware of the power structures existing within a community. Selective work with one group might lead to conflict with other groups and hence to the failure of research and community improvement programmes.

Individuals promoting the participation of *barrio* residents in social or infrastructure programmes must also be aware of the existence of diverse social areas within neighbourhoods. The definition of their spatial boundaries is of utmost importance if implementation is to be successful. This study has provided a method to delimit the social boundaries of a community. Defining the nature of community in every *barrio* is also necessary. Whereas the public and the private community are equally important in Mena del Hierro, public community might not exist in other *barrios* (as is the case in neighbour San Rafael) and thus any research or management intervention must work with the private community. This in practice is a much slower and more complicated undertaking.

Municipal authorities responsible for urban density policies in the *barrios* need to take account of the importance of kinship in *barrio* communities. Enforcing laws that restrict the size of lots in Mena del Hierro, for example, will disrupt the social and spatial basis of kin groups and thereby dislodge the keystone which holds the community together.

Non-governmental organizations, municipal administrators and private enterprise play a very active role in stimulating social exchange among residents of the *barrios* of Quito. Although this role is often motivated by individual political and economic benefits, especially in the cases of administrators and business enterprises, their social engagement in the *barrios* of Quito has been constructive in integrating the residents of the *barrios*, particularly the young people.

On the other hand, the intervention of municipal administrators in the administration of water resources in Mena del Hierro is disrupting the community. *Barrio* residents originally set up their own local system of fresh water distribution and administration. After fifteen years of local management, official authorities are connecting the *barrio* to the city-wide water network without any involvement of residents. As a result, the community is losing a large investment of effort and capital as well as the sense of pride in a major collective achievement. Local employees are losing their jobs and the associated social standing in their community. This example thus underscores the need to include locals in implementing

improvement programmes.

As shown in this study, generalizations of the characteristics of *barrios* cannot be made accurately on the basis of official statistics, especially given the possible lack of overlap between census units and communities. Such data are not scientifically representative as they do not reveal the real dimensions of social life in *barrio* communities. It is thus necessary to conduct many more studies along the lines of the present investigation -based on participant observation and social and spatial analysis of networks- in order to understand the social complexity of the *barrio* universe. Useful generalizations are otherwise not possible.

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CHAPTER VI

HISTORY OF APPROPRIATION OF BARRIO OUTDOOR SPACES FOR SPORTS

Creating and recreating public space

INTRODUCTION

Public outdoor space is a scarce but much desired resource in popular Mena del Hierro, as it is in other *barrios* of Quito. The scarcity is due to the informal manner in which the *barrio* was initially urbanized. No provision for public outdoor space was made when the *Hacienda* was subdivided into *huerto familiares*, because the nominal purpose of these lots was strictly agricultural. Similarly, during the progressive subdivision of the *huertos* by the new owners in the years that followed, no coordinated effort was made to set aside public outdoor areas for recreation or other purposes. Nevertheless, public outdoor space has always been in high demand by the residents, because it plays such an important role in their socializing patterns. Their solution to the problem has involved appropriating land as it becomes available, but the results have been neither satisfactory nor permanent.

This chapter describes the strategies adopted by the residents to create public outdoor spaces, and the history of social use of these spaces from the early 1970s to 1994. An evaluation is also presented of the effectiveness of the strategies in the face of physical and social constraints on land availability. The account is based on field observations and on informal conversations with early settlers of the *barrio*, with its administrators, with members of the youth group, and with the administrator of a privately run sports field.

CREATING AND RECREATING PUBLIC SPACE FOR SPORTS: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Despite the scarcity of real public space in the *barrio*, the residents have developed several strategies over the years to "create" public space for playing sports. These strategies include: (a) appropriating private land; (b) appropriating land which has an unclear status of ownership; (c) making private land available for public use in exchange for economic compensation; and (d) making use of streets for playing sports. In the first and second cases, residents take over private lots which are not in use, or barren areas of contested ownership, and adapt them to sports fields. As it will be explained below, this

appropriation is sometimes carried out with either the tacit or the explicit authorization of the landowner. In the third case a resident adapts his own private land for a sports field and makes it available to the local residents in return for cash payment. In the last cases, residents appropriate the streets that have little traffic to play soccer or volleyball.

In popular Mena del Hierro, six outdoor areas have been used by the residents over the years to play sports (Fig. 6-1). Four of these fields are actually private land which is used by the public, and only one is today formally the public property of the community. The history of appropriation of these spaces by different groups in the community is described in succession below. Additionally, a description is provided of the use given by each group to these areas and of the role that these spaces have played over the years in the creation of social networks. Finally, the chapter will present an account of how the public space created by residents disappears but emerges again.

The "Daquilema" Sports Field: The Search for Public Use

At the beginning of the 1970s, this area was no-man's-land. It was a leftover piece from the subdivision of the *Hacienda "La Concepción"* into urban land. As the land was not in use a group of adult men, mostly residents from Mena del Hierro and neighbouring Cotocollao, appropriated this area to play *Pelota Nacional*, a traditional sport of Ecuadorian rural areas¹. This group met regularly every weekend to socialize, and to practice the sport typical of the rural environment from which most of them came². With time, and as a result of their frequent and regular encounters, this area acquired a special significance for them. From being just an empty area in the *barrio* it became "their place". A social space for adult men had emerged.

This social space was disturbed, however, in the late 1980s. In 1987 the residents of Mena del Hierro decided to build a school for the community (Fig. 3-46 in Chapter III). The *Fernando Daquilema* school was then built partially using residents' free labour but also with financial and administrative support from the Municipality and the *Federación de barrios del Noroccidente*. As developers of Mena del Hierro did not provide open areas for recreation and services there was little choice for the location of the new services but the area already being used for *Pelota Nacional*. The new constructions, particularly the school, considerably

1 The game consists of hitting a heavy rubber ball in the air by means of a large and heavy, rectangular, wooden racquet. One side of the racquet is covered by rubber tips to facilitate throwing and receiving the ball. A very large sports field is required for this game since the ball can travel fairly long distances. A lot of strength is required to lift up the racquet and hit the ball. The game is traditionally reserved to men.

2 Information provided by a resident born in Cotocollao who as a child used to accompany his father to the "Daquilema" area to play *Pelota Nacional*.

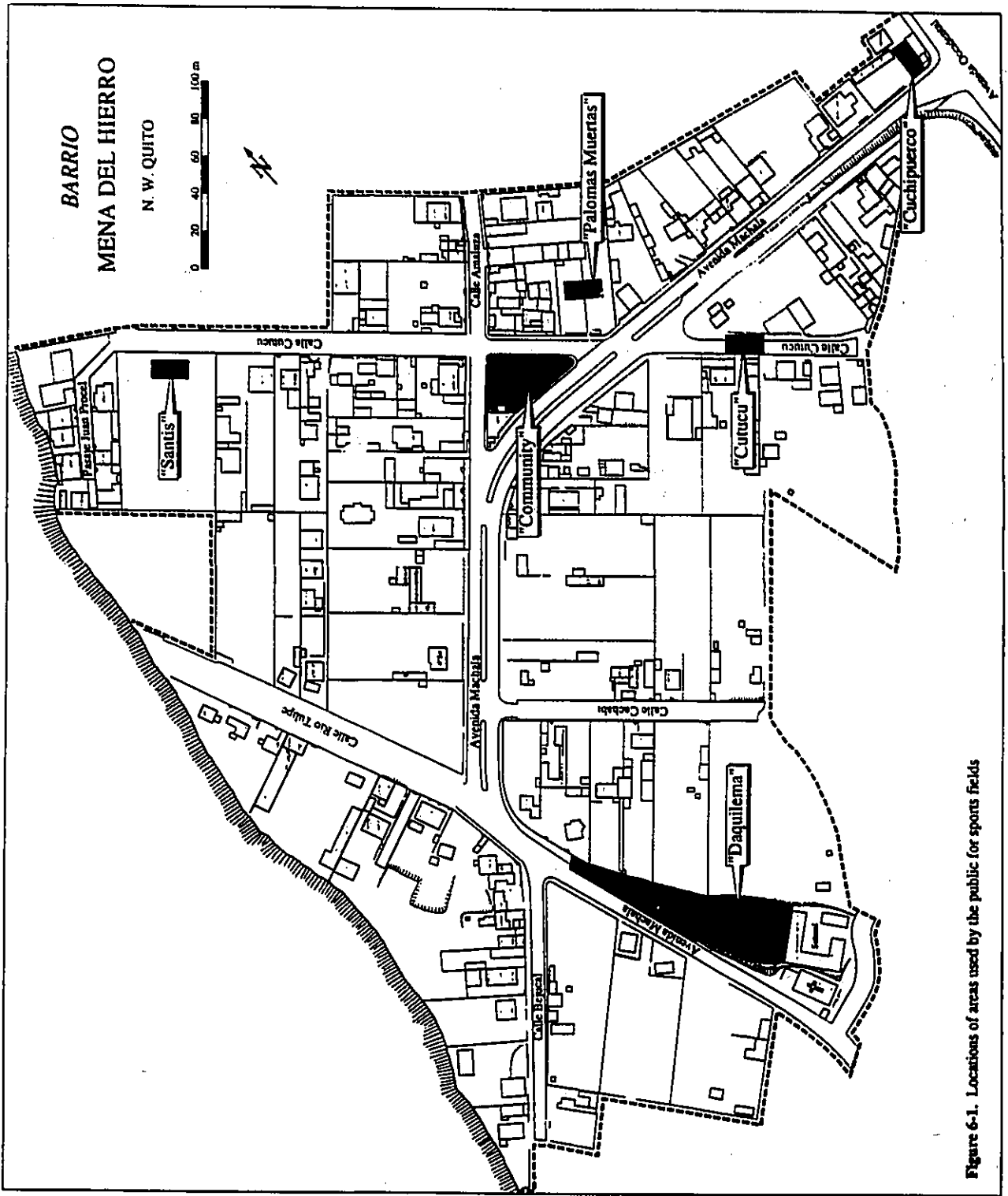


Figure 6-1. Locations of areas used by the public for sports fields

reduced the area of the sports field. The remaining space was too small to continue playing *Pelota Nacional*, and so the men were forced to leave the area. Some of them moved to a field in Jarrín, a neighbourhood in the vicinity of Mena del Hierro. Others stopped playing the game of *Pelota Nacional* altogether. Today, the tradition of playing this sport is being lost in Mena del Hierro. The church and school facilities constructed in this area provide a very important service for *barrio* residents but they have disturbed a social space which had emerged more than a decade ago.

Some time thereafter the sports field was appropriated by a new group. This time, young *barrio* men took over the field and adapted it for the "indoor" soccer sport. These men started to meet every weekend and sometimes during the week to play soccer and to chat. A new social space materialised. The men who frequented this new social space were mostly residents from neighbouring Santa Isabel but included some young men from San Rafael and Mena del Hierro.

In 1988, a year later, a conflict between school administrators and soccer players emerged. Administrators of the *Fernando Daquilema* school claimed that they had exclusive right to use this area for school children's recreation. They also complained that soccer players destroyed the windows of the school. Soccer players stopped using the field. But in 1991 they took over again. The field began to be used intensively, especially on the weekends and sometimes during the week. Players were mostly young men but also some adult men. Boys accompanied their relatives. They copied and repeated the activities of the older men. They played a mini-version of soccer on one side of the field. By participating in this social space they were learning the rules of male public life.

In 1992, the conflict between soccer players and school administrators emerged again. Users of the field stopped playing soccer altogether. For a second time in the history of this sports field a social space for *barrio* residents disappeared. In the same year, and for a third time, this space was appropriated and adapted again by a group of male *barrio* residents to play volleyball. In 1993 this area had become very popular with volleyball players. Many people met here to play, chat and drink, especially on the weekends. A new social space had appeared for the third time in the history of the sports field.

Besides volleyball this area is used as a recreation area for children of the *Fernando Daquilema* school during the week and as a sacred place for religious festivities. Given the scarcity of public outdoor space this multifunctional use is very convenient for the neighbourhood. But multifunctionality creates conflict among residents and the future of the "Daquilema" sports field is uncertain. Several different groups in the community are still interested in appropriating this space for an exclusive use. These groups are school administrators, owners of the public bus company, and leaders of the *Comité Barrial*.

Arguments have arisen between groups as to who has the right to appropriate this space for

a specific use. Church administrators claim that this land belonged to them and that they donated it to the three neighbouring *barrios* in order to have a common area for recreation purposes. Some other *barrio* residents claim that the area should be used as a multiple-purpose sports field. In order to accommodate more children school administrators want to expand the school buildings to cover part of the field. Other residents want to use the area as a bus stop for public transportation (two new bus lines began operation in the neighbourhood in July 1993). At present, conflict continues between different interest groups over use of the area. Legally, this area should be of public use and ownership as it is a leftover piece from the subdivision of the *Hacienda La Concepción* into the Mena del Hierro neighbourhood.

The "Community's" Sports Field: The Only Formal Public Space in the *Barrio*

Similarly to the "Daquilema" field, this area was a leftover piece from the subdivision of the *Hacienda* into urban plots. It was centrally located in the neighbourhood but was steep and had no function. Since the early 1980's however a lot of effort has been invested by community members to transform this area into a useful place for residents. In 1980 for example, several residents got together in a *minga* to adapt the area for a volleyball sports field. This sports field was very successful from the beginning especially among male residents. Every weekend, *barrio* men, mostly adult, gathered in the area to play, talk and bet while other residents would sit around and watch.

The volleyball field also became very important for other functions. During election times for example, politicians were welcome here. Residents gathered to show political support hoping in exchange to get real infrastructure improvements for their *barrio*. In 1988, community leaders decided to build a community centre in the area to house a health unit, the community's office for water administration and several rooms for community meetings. The area was chosen because of its central location and because of the lack of other available free areas for community services. The community centre was built partly through *minga* work.

In the same year the *barrio* administrators decided to construct a basketball court. A concrete platform for the court was constructed over the volleyball field and extended over an unused steep slope. A concrete stage and rows of steps for spectators were built on one side of the court. The platform was made by building a concrete retaining wall around the base of the slope and filling it with earth up to the level of the original volleyball field. The filled-in space was very large and was up to three metres high. It is unfortunate that this space was not used for additional community facilities. Presumably costs were the reason.

The new land use given to this area ended the social space that had emerged around the volleyball sports field. Volleyball players were displaced and a new group of residents took over the area. Young men and women from Mena del Hierro and also from San Rafael enthusiastically appropriated the area. It soon became their central social space in the *barrio*. Every weekend young residents would gather, especially in the afternoons, to play basketball, watch the game and converse. These meetings would often continue after sunset despite the lack of illumination for the field. By 1992, the basketball field had become so successful among *barrio* youth that more than seventy people attended on a weekend afternoon. Several basketball teams had to play simultaneously to cater to the numbers wanting to play. The basketball field was obviously insufficient for the needs of *barrio* youth.

In 1991, community leaders decided to restructure the area in order to accommodate more users. The idea was to gain space to expand the sports field. The plan consisted of removing the concrete steps for spectators, then building new steps a few meters back and enlarging the concrete surface on a side of the field which was not in use. The residents of Mena del Hierro were asked by the *barrio*'s administrators to form a *minga* to begin the restructuring. The residents worked for two weekends to remove the steps, and the basketball poles and rings were put aside. After that, construction work ceased altogether.

Conflict emerged over this project between the youths of the *barrio* and the adult community leaders. Mena del Hierro's young residents refused to participate in the *minga* because they had not been consulted about restructuring the field. Some young residents also complained that the sports field was used merely by San Rafael's youth and not by themselves. There was no reason therefore to participate. Some other complaints emerged about the adult leaders' abuse of power. The young people's access to the community centre for their own activities was restricted by the *barrio* administrators.

The young people's lack of participation in the *minga* was very disappointing for the community leaders because from their point of view, the reconstruction of the sports field was primarily aimed at the young. Besides, the restriction of young people's access to the community centre was justified by their own irresponsible behaviour on previous occasions when they had used the facilities. There had been alcohol excesses, fighting amongst themselves and lack of care in using the centre's facilities.

The annual elections of the *barrio* administrators took place soon after reconstruction work of the sports field had begun. However, the new administration did not continue with the reconstruction of the area and this stayed in semi-ruins for over a year. Young residents were thus deprived of their most important social space in the *barrio*. Some of them started to play basketball in the fields near the *barrio*. Conflict with other users arose as these fields were already crowded. Meanwhile, volleyball players moved back to the "community" field to play volleyball on the area left unaffected by reconstruction.

In mid-1992, nearly a year after reconstruction work had started, the sports field was still in ruins. Discontent among young people increased. The "Una parte de mi vida" video made the year before with young people and myself, was shown to the community during a special event. In this video, the new *barrio's* president comments on the problem of lacking sports areas and emphasizes the need to take action to solve this situation. The obvious contradiction between his words and the reality of abandoned reconstruction works put the president under pressure. In June 1993, work to restructure the basketball field was resumed.

With the purpose of saving money Mena del Hierro's president hired a family group of workers (five people including parents and small children) from nearby Santa Isabel. Work by this group proved irregular and finally a professional group was hired. Reconstruction works were finally completed in September 1992. The new area accommodated two sports fields: one for basketball and one for volleyball. Obviously the aim in reconstructing the field was to provide a stable sports field for volleyball players and not that of accommodating more basketball players. *Barrio's* adult men were very satisfied with the new facility. They regained the social space which they had lost in 1988. For young people however the new area did not bring any advantages. They had to play in circumstances more restricted than ever.

Soon after the two new sports fields were ready, the *Cisne Azul* Day Care began in the Community Centre. This Day Care was administered by the *barrio's* women with the aim of enabling other neighbourhood women to earn an income⁴. Children were cared for during the week from early morning until late afternoon. They enthusiastically used the "community" sports field to play during break times. But this project lasted only six months. The new national government, elected in Ecuador in mid 1992, decided to cut off financing for social projects and the *Cisne Azul* Day Care fell victim to this change of policy.

Today, after nearly fifteen years of the residents managing land use in the "community" area, this place has become a crucial focus for the social life of the whole community. Several functions are served here: musical festivals, sports competitions, fiestas, and recreation area for children, young people and adults. Thanks to the effort invested by residents over the years to improve and appropriate this area it has today clearly acquired a public use. There is no doubt that the area "belongs" to residents and exists to be used by all. The "community" area is also the only outdoor space in the *barrio* to acquire a true public character over the years.

⁴ This project was funded by the government and administered by the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente*.

The "Palomas Muertas" Sports Field: A Lost Place of Social Reference

Volleyball players were displaced from the "community's" sports field in 1988. In the search for a new place to play and meet these players took over a vacant but privately owned area in front of the "Community's" sports field. They adapted the land to a volleyball field by clearing grass, bush, stones, and waste, levelling the surface of the land and placing wooden poles at the ends of the field. The appropriation of the land by *barrio* males was consolidated by their regular meetings every Saturday and Sunday afternoon to play volleyball.

The main fact that seems to explain why this private land was so easily appropriated is the Ecuadorian law regulating land use and ownership. According to this law it is possible for official authorities to expropriate a vacant area of land if it stays too long without any use. People in Ecuador tend to grow crops, set up a provisional construction or do anything which suggests that their land is actually used for some purpose. The appropriation of land by volleyball players is thus useful for the land owner as he/she can show to official authorities that land is used for a specific purpose. In the case of this new sports field there was a tacit agreement between Diógenes Coronado, the owner of the land, and users of the area. The owner "leased" the land to local residents at no charge, trusting that they would leave when required. The owner was a *barrio* resident himself and lived beside the sports field. He also participated from time to time in the volleyball game.

The volleyball field soon became an important place of social reference for male *barrio* residents, especially the adults. They reinforced their friendship ties through their repeated weekend meetings. On these occasions one person brought a net and ball to play. There was usually only one person who owned a net and a ball, thus giving him a lot of power to decide who was allowed to play. (In practice however there is quite a lot of flexibility in allowing most *barrio* men to participate). Most of them knew each other from living in the neighbourhood and from having worked together in the improvement of the *barrio*. Users of the volleyball sports field were mostly *barrio* pioneers who also played a key role in the community either as administrators or as business owners. This was the social space of the *barrio's* "personalities".

This area was an almost exclusively male social space. Few females were observed here on the weekends and they usually sat on the side of the field as distant spectators⁵. Boys accompanied their male relatives to watch. From an early age *barrio* boys become socialized in the male public world by attending these games and occupying a privileged place among *barrio* men. The game of volleyball was always accompanied by betting. Betting consists of

⁵ Information for this section is based on participant observation. Several informal conversations were conducted with users of this space.

paying to the winning team a "*java de cerveza*", a basket containing twenty four bottles of beer. The beer was consumed during and after the game. For local residents "*apostar es la sal del volley*" ("betting is the spice of volleyball"). Playing volleyball is of no interest without the betting.

The almost exclusive right of use of this area by adult males was so clearly acknowledged in the *barrio* that male members of the youth group "S-20" named the area "*Palomas Muertas*" ("Dead Pigeons") – an allusion to the sexual capacities of adult men. Everyone knew about this name and everyone laughed about it including adult men. During my 1991 field work two Canadian students assisted me. Young *barrio* residents were very keen to know the English translation of all the informal names they used for *barrio*'s social places.

The process of land appropriation lasted from 1988 to late 1991. On the 9th of September 1991, the fear that the area would one day be built up came true. The land was divided and sold to two new owners. One of the two owners planted corn and put a fence around the limits of the plot⁶. The other started the construction of a house. The original land owner was a member of the volleyball group so the players knew about the land sale a month before they had to leave. Several players had sports accidents during that month. Players started to pass the word around that the sports field was "under a spell". Use of the sports field decreased noticeably during that month. Mere superstition? Or appropriate mechanism of psychological self-defence to part from a place?

When the fence that divided the sports field through the middle was installed a very important place of social reference for adult men abruptly disappeared (Fig. 6-2). For a period of time men stopped weekend meetings in public outdoor spaces. Some then began to meet in the *barrio*'s restaurant to play a card game called "40". Around this time the "community" and the "Daquilema" sports field were not being used; because of construction work in the first case and because of conflict with school administrators in the second. Users of "*Palomas Muertas*" took advantage of this situation. Some began playing volleyball on the section of the "community" field which was unaffected by reconstruction. Other volleyball players started using the "Daquilema" area. Use of the "community" sports field for volleyball has become permanent today. Future use of the "Daquilema" field however is still unpredictable.

Today the "*Palomas Muertas*" field is used for growing crops and for a discotheque business. Young people attend the discotheque on the weekends to dance, drink, and meet others. The new use given to the land creates conflict among *barrio* residents. For adult residents the new business is socially undesirable, because from their point of view it is a "*lugar de perdición*" (a place of ruin), where knife fights occur between young people who abuse alcohol.

6 See video entitled "*Una parte de mi Vida*", made during this study with young people from the *barrio* (attached to this thesis).

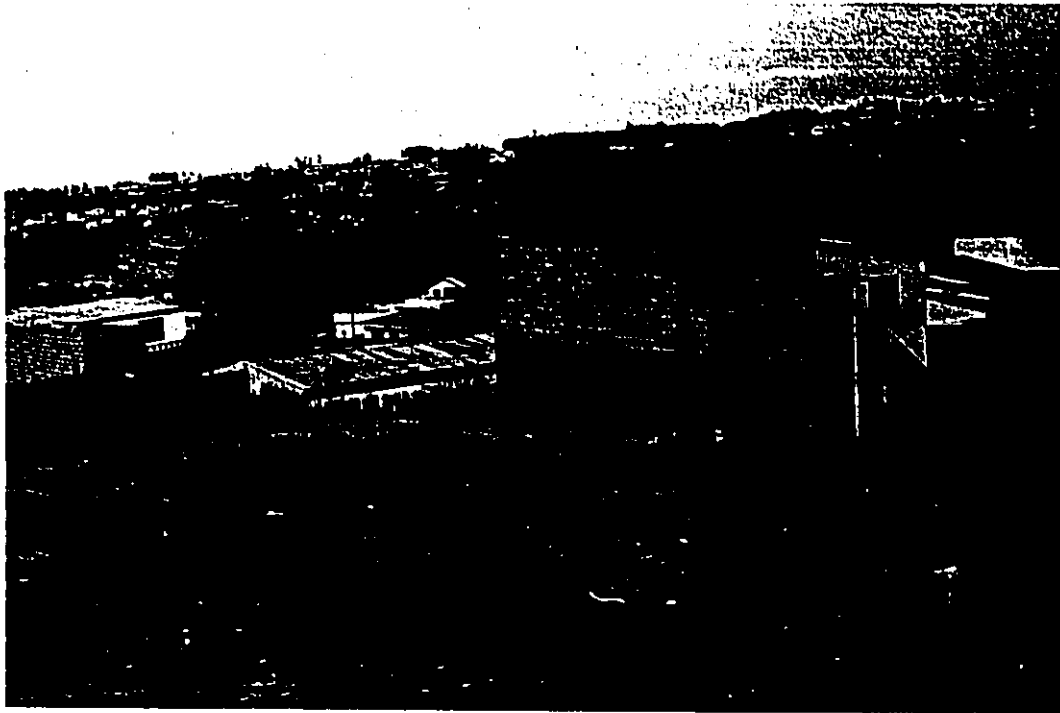


Figure 6-2. *Above:* The "Palomas Muertas" sports field, a piece of private land appropriated to play volleyball. Over years of repeated weekly use, this place became an important space of social reference for men of the *barrio*. *Below:* The land of the sports field is sold. With the erection of a fence which divided the sports field through the middle, a place of significant social meaning for the *barrio* abruptly disappeared.

The "Cuchipuerco" Sports Field: Another Lost Social Space

This sports field has a central position, located at the intersection of the Avenida Occidental and Machala Street at the entrance to the *barrio*. It is a privately owned piece of land and had a temporary construction on one side with vacant land on the other. In order to avoid its confiscation the land owner rented out the property in 1989, to a *barrio* family who gave it several uses. The temporary construction was adapted for a vulcanizing business, a grocery shop, a restaurant and a bar (the size of the construction for all these activities is less than 100 m²!). A volleyball sports field was set up on the vacant land.

The Zambrano family made a business out of the sports field by renting out the field, the volleyball net and the ball. It was also expected that users bought food and drink from the "take-away" restaurant/shop/bar. Cooked and uncooked foods were available and also alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Players were welcome to use the field at night. In exchange, they had to pay illumination costs and, as will be later explained, a percentage of the bets.

The "Cuchipuerco" name for this sports field was given by young members of the "S-20" group. There are several explanations for this name. The most probable is that pigs were raised here before the sports field existed. "Cuchipuerco" combines the two words "cuchi", the Quechua word for pig, and "puerco", the Spanish word for the same animal⁷.

The sports field was open to users whenever Doña Rosa, the business owner, was at the shop. Usually Doña Rosa was present all day long during the week and weekends and on Friday and Saturday evenings. This timetable could change however according to Doña Rosa's personal engagements. But *barrio* residents who had their own net and ball often came to use the sports field when Doña Rosa was absent.

This sports field was very popular among *barrio* men right from the beginning and soon became the "*barrio's club*". This sports field seemed to suit *barrio* men's preferred style of entertainment very well because of the services offered. Around 100 men from the *barrio* and nearby areas gathered on Friday nights to play an Ecuadorian version of volleyball, to watch, converse, and to bet. They also drank home-made *aguardiente*, and ate cooked foods.

The noisy activities lasted sometimes until dawn. Several games took place during the night and teams of players were chosen on the spot. As soon as a game was over, several men rushed to the centre of the field and started to discuss the composition of the new team. They knew each other's relative strengths in playing volleyball and team members were carefully chosen so that a balanced match with players of similar strength would take place.

⁷ The "Cuchipuerco" name is used by young people and their friends and relatives but cannot be used openly. Doña Rosa gets very upset when she hears her place being referred to by that name.

The interest in having a balanced match was motivated by the fact that everyone placed a bet, both team members and spectators. The amount of the bet depended on the acknowledged strength of the players (in the case of a good match, bets go above 100,000 *suces*, the equivalent of two minimum monthly salaries). An intense atmosphere was observed on these occasions due to the men's anxiety over the outcome.

A further important element in guaranteeing the fairness of a match is to have a judge. He is chosen by team members on the basis of his impartiality. The judge sits next to one of the poles supporting the net and keeps the betting money inside one of his socks. At the end of the game he distributes the money among the winning players. With the exception of Doña Rosa, who stayed up until everyone had left, practically no women were observed on these occasions.

A sports field of public use like "*Cuchipuerco*" is a good business in a *barrio popular*. Doña Rosa earned money from renting the sports area, from selling food and drinks to around one hundred people and also from the practice of gambling. Doña Rosa's private initiative in providing outdoor space for use by residents was also useful for the community. However, it is not a stable solution in the long run.

Towards the end of 1992, the owner of "*Cuchipuerco*" decided to change the use of his land and build a permanent construction for commercial purposes. The provisional construction, i.e., the vulcanizing business, the bar and the restaurant were demolished overnight and the volleyball sports field became a construction site. Users of this area were thus deprived of a social space which, over a period of three years, had attracted a great number of participants.

Doña Rosa's response to the change of situation was to rent a new area for a new business. She and her family rented the land located on the opposite side of the Avenida Occidental to "*Cuchipuerco*". A multifunctional use was again given to the land: vulcanizing business and volleyball sports field. This time however, business efforts concentrated mostly on the vulcanizer and not so much on the sports field. Doña Rosa found it very strenuous to keep running a sports field similar to "*Cuchipuerco*". Mena del Hierro residents were also less attracted to use the new sports field as they had to cross the Avenida Occidental, a fast speed highway with no special pedestrian crossings. "*Cuchipuerco*" as a social space was lost for ever.

The Cutucu Street and the "Santis" Sports Field: New Settings for Volleyball

Since 1988, volleyball players have been displaced from several sports fields in Mena del Hierro ("*Community*", "*Palomas Muertas*", "*Cuchipuerco*"). After every displacement players appropriate new areas in the *barrio* and make the most use out of the area until a new

displacement takes place. In early 1992, volleyball players "conquered" new areas to play their favourite sport. One of these areas is the southern side of Cutucu Street at the intersection with Machala Street. Young *barrio* males were responsible for the appropriation. They planted a wooden post on the eastern footpath and made use of the concrete street post located on the opposite side to hang the net. They began to meet in the weekends. But this new spatial appropriation lasted little more than a year.

Cutucu Street was paved in June 1992. Exactly a year later, two lines of public transportation buses began providing a regular service for Mena del Hierro's residents. There are two bus stops in the *barrio*, both of them located on Cutucu Street, one on the south side of the Machala street and, the other on the north side. The *Lu Vicentina* line, located on the southern bus stop, made the game of volleyball on the street impossible. Players had to leave. A new social space for young males again disappeared. Two new social spaces for Mena del Hierro's residents emerged however. Residents meet at the bus stops and have friendly chats while waiting for the bus.

The northern bus stop, serving the *San Roque* line, also breaks up a social space. It is the social space of *barrio* women who used to meet over the weekends at the food kiosk installed on the northern side of Cutucu Street. The area had been appropriated some years before by a street vendor, a woman who set up a stall to sell vegetables to *barrio* women at favourable prices. Over the weekend, women made the excuse of having to go out shopping and used this opportunity for some social contact.

The second area "conquered" by volleyball players is the "*Santis*" sports field. In 1992, a group of residents, mostly from the *Santis* family appropriated a vacant but private piece of land on the northwestern side of Cutucu Street. The *Santis*, a family living at the northern end of Cutucu, adapted this land to play volleyball. The group of players comprises mostly family members who play fairly regularly over the weekends. It is unclear how long this spatial appropriation will be able to exist.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE PUBLIC USE OF OUTDOOR SPACE

The preceding section has presented an historical overview of the residents' strategies to make public use of outdoor space in the *barrio*. These created spaces have been crucial for the development of social networks among residents, particularly among male residents. However, the continuity of public use of the spaces has been hindered over the years by legal and social constraints. The temporary or permanent loss of such social spaces has had negative social consequences. Social networks have been destabilized as the network members lost their preferred meeting places. Also, restrictions on the use of a particular sports field cause spill-over effects onto other sports fields of the neighbourhood or nearby

areas. Displaced players try to find a new place to meet and play, thus generating conflict between former and new users. The main constraints impeding the public use of outdoor space in the *barrio* are summarized and discussed below.

- (1) *Outdoor space is private.* One of the main disadvantages to neighbourhoods that develop outside the law is that little or no land is set aside for purposes of public recreation. As a consequence many sports fields are spontaneously set up by residents on vacant land which is privately owned. Private land owners are legally entitled to restrict the use of their land for public recreation purposes at their own discretion. "Palomas Muertas" and "Cuchipuerco" are the best examples of this case. Local residents were able to use these private areas for over three years. They became very important places for the men who regularly met there. When one day the land owner decided to build, people had no option but to leave.
- (2) *Outdoor space is not private but conflict of use between community groups restricts public use.* Scarce public outdoor space and the inability of residents to find a solution of land use that satisfies the interests of different groups are the main causes behind such conflicts. This is the case of the "Daquilema" field. This area is not privately owned by anyone and has had, over the years, a multifunctional use for several groups of the community. Although this multifunctional use for several groups seems convenient -given the scarcity of public space- some people in the *barrio* are not satisfied with the way space is used and would like to see a different use or solution to multifunctionality. It is unfortunate that, after twenty years of *barrio* history, no solution has yet been found by local residents to conciliate the interests of different groups. It is particularly unfortunate in the case of "Daquilema", since it is one of the few outdoor places in the *barrio* with the potential of becoming a true public space for residents.

The process of land use decision taking by the *barrio's* elected administrators is not always democratic. Often, *barrio* managers tend to monopolize decisions of land use and tend to exclude other community groups from the decision-making process.

- (3) *Outdoor space is not private but decisions to change its land use by barrio administrators restrict its public use.* Scarce public outdoor space and poor management result in restricted public use of sports fields. The case of the "Community's" sport field illustrates four main problems in the local management of outdoor space: (1) The waste of land in the initial design of the sports field; (2) The lack of long term assessment of recreation needs of different groups in the community; (3) The lack of continuity between the project one group of *barrio* administrators and the next group; (4) The inefficient management of reconstruction work.

Since the initial land use design of the sports field was not suitable, community administrators found it necessary to redesign and reconstruct it. Residents wasted much of

their free time and energy in performing reconstruction work. Waste of effort could have been avoided with good initial planning. Reconstruction work also restricted public use of the field. This restriction was further aggravated by the inefficient management of the construction site which prolonged the reconstruction by a year.

RESIDENTS' STRATEGIES TO CREATE PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACE: AN EVALUATION

The residents of Mena del Hierro have been extremely dynamic over the years in developing strategies to compensate for the lack of public outdoor space in the *barrio*. Such strategies, however, have several problems which are outlined in the following section.

Private initiatives by residents are not stable long-term solutions. Using private land for sports fields is only a temporary solution. Appropriation of private lots for sports is only possible if vacant land is available. As the neighbourhood progressively becomes built up with time, eventually there will be no spaces left to appropriate. Furthermore, the alternative solution of individuals making their private land available for public use does not guarantee continuity. For business or personal reasons private individuals may decide to stop conducting this activity at any time. The stability of social interaction in the neighbourhood is thus threatened by the future scenario of lack of public outdoor spaces.

Over the years, community administrators have shown a lot of initiative in adapting vacant areas in the neighbourhood for recreational purposes. Thanks to joint efforts with *barrio* residents, some outdoor spaces like the "community" sports field have today acquired a true public nature. They have made some mistakes in the long-term management of public outdoor space but overall they are no worse than many municipal managers. The problem of incorrectly assessing the long-term recreation needs of the community is not unique to community administrators. Many professionals and municipal administrators in Ecuador, and in other Latin American countries, face similar problems when planning recreation facilities for urban communities.

Overall, it seems that local managers of Mena del Hierro reproduce many of the traditional problems of municipal administrators but in a smaller territorial unit. However, they clearly have more initiative and are truly interested in improving the environment in which they live. Also, when calling on residents to participate in community improvement activities, the local managers receive more acceptance and cooperation.

Finally, it is worth considering the fairness of the reality that the lack of public outdoor space in the *barrios* must be solved by private individuals. Through this practice, private residents end up subsidizing urban developers, the state, and the land owners. The residents reduce the costs of urban developers and of the State by providing the fundamental urban

resource of public space. In addition, residents who appropriate private land do a service to landowners. In Ecuador, the government may confiscate private land if it remains unused for too long, and it is also likely that abandoned land will be invaded by squatters. Thus, thanks to the guaranteed temporal appropriation of their land by *barrio* residents, the landowners actually avoid government confiscation and long-term invasion.

CONCLUSIONS

As a consequence of the illegal emergence of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro, no land was set aside at the outset for outdoor recreation. Thus, over the past fifteen years *barrio* residents have been constrained to appropriating vacant land in the *barrio* to play *Pelota Nacional*, soccer, volleyball and basketball. These improvised sports fields have served a crucial role as areas for the development of the residents' social networks, especially for men. However, as most of the appropriated land has been private, the sports fields have periodically disappeared as the owners change the use of their land. As the *barrio* becomes more and more densified the possibilities for appropriating vacant land for sports will eventually disappear altogether.

In peripheral *barrios* in general, residents tolerate the burden of living in material hardship for some years. However, in many cases, and with the help of the Government, of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and of community self-help groups, neighbourhoods manage to acquire the lacking infrastructure and services. But an urban need which residents seldom manage to satisfy is that of public outdoor recreation areas. The problem of scarce public space can not be solved by self-help initiatives alone. The active initiative and joint efforts of community members, government agencies and the private sector are urgently needed to acquire private land in the *barrios* for sports fields. A possible solution is for the State to give special incentives (e.g. credit, tax reduction) to private businesses to set up sports fields in the *barrios*. In this case, a condition of running the business for a minimum number of years would be required.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVERYDAY BEHAVIOUR OF RESIDENTS IN PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACES OF THE BARRIO

The hub of social activity

INTRODUCTION

There is much evidence in the literature on the material and symbolic importance of public outdoor urban space for the social activity of urban residents. Public outdoor areas such as squares, streets, parks, and promenades serve as spaces for communication where residents satisfy their universal need for face-to-face contact and free congregation (e.g. Media Development, 1990). Empirical research on children in Berlin and Madrid has revealed the crucial role of urban outdoor space in their process of socialization (Jacob, 1984; Bisquert, 1982). In the *barrios* of Latin America, public outdoor space has been argued to be the main material support for the social way of life of the residents (Ferreira dos Santos et al., 1981). In Lima, *barrio* outdoor spaces are more important symbols of urban identity than the city as a whole (Degregori et al, 1987). Indeed for the populations in the *barrios*, public outdoor space seems to be a more significant means of social identification than class or ethnicity (Riaño-Alcalá, P., 1991).

In order to discover whether these generalizations also apply to the *barrio* Mena del Hierro, the aim of this chapter is twofold: (1) to examine the social importance of public outdoor space as the specific setting for the social activities of the residents, and (b) to examine the differences between the various age and gender groups of the residents with respect to their behaviour in public outdoor space.

As explained in Chapter I (Methodology), social cartography was the main method employed in the field to produce a detailed record of the everyday behaviour of residents in public outdoor spaces. The method consists of mapping the spatial location, sex, age, and activities of *barrio* residents in a specific outdoor space at ten-minute intervals. Spatial recording was carried out in nine different outdoor places of the *barrio* during weekdays and weekends from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. As seen in Figure 7-1, the recording is done on a sheet which contains: (a) a map of the studied space; (b) identification of date, observer, time of observation, number of observation, and weather conditions; and (c) a section for

qualitative observations. The back of this sheet contains a table (Fig. 7-2) for quantifying the numbers of people observed, their age and gender characteristics, and their activities in outdoor space.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIED OUTDOOR SPACES

As explained in Chapter VI, public outdoor space as such is a scarce resource in Mena del Hierro. The result of the informal process of urbanization of the *barrio* is that no recreational outdoor spaces were set aside for the public use of the community. Thus, although residents use several spaces in the *barrio* for sports purposes only one of them is officially open to use by the community. The others are either private vacant land which has been appropriated by residents, private land which has been made available by owners for broad public use in exchange for economic compensation, and land left over from the illegal subdivision which is under dispute among residents regarding the right to public use. Thus, the use in this chapter of the term "public outdoor space" will actually refer to spaces which are widely used by the community, independently of the legal status of land ownership.

In order to have a complete picture of the social outdoor behaviour of residents this study has examined all the outdoor spaces in the *barrio* that are open to use by the broad community and that have a functionally important location within the *barrio*. These spaces include:

- (a) All sports fields in the *barrio* which are – at least in principle – open to use by any member of the community
- (b) *Barrio* street areas which serve as places of social articulation for the whole community. (e.g. the entrance to the *barrio* from the Avenida Occidental; the main intersection of the *barrio*; the front of the church and school; the front of the Community Centre and micromarket)

A total of five sports fields and four street areas have therefore been included in the geographical study of spatial behaviour. Each of these places has individual characteristics regarding geographical location, size, number of shops around it, and legal status. As seen in Figures 7-3 and 7-4, the individual spaces show a wide range in geographical centrality, area, and number of shops. The legal ownership includes places which are public, private and under dispute. The names used for three of the sports fields have been given informally, and are commonly used, by youths in the *barrio*. These are: *Cuchipuerco* (meaning "place of pigs" and referring to the pigs that used to be raised in this space before a sports field existed), *Palomas Muertas* (meaning "Dead Pigeons" and referring to the men who use this space), and *Santis* (the family name of the kin group who appropriated this space) The names of the other two sports fields and of the street areas have been assigned for this study according to their specific spatial or functional features.

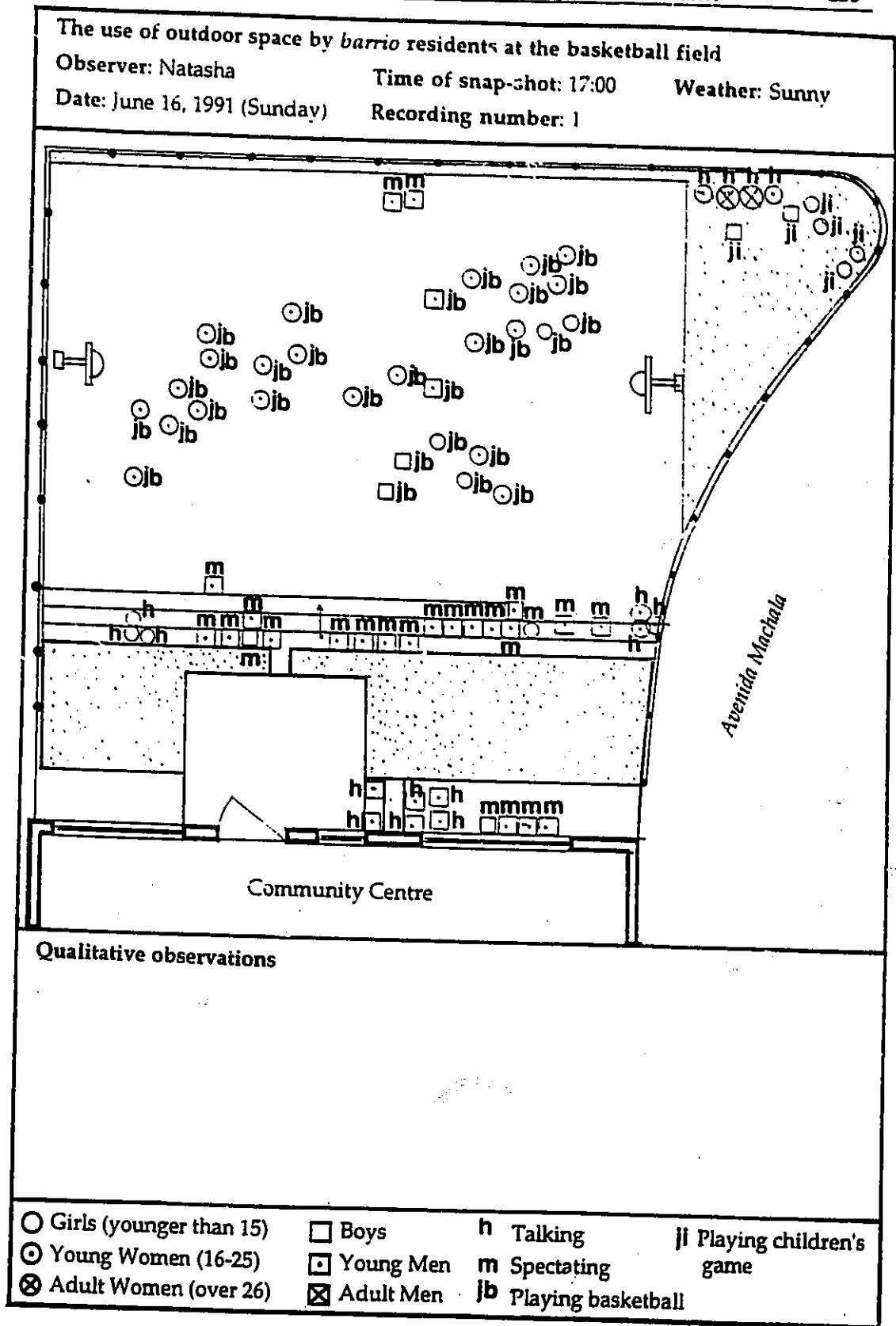


Figure 7-1. An example of the form used to record the spatial location and activities of *barrio* residents in outdoor spaces.

FECHA: June 16 HORA DE LA TOMA: 17:00

NUMERO DE PERSONAS QUE SE ENCONTRABAN USANDO CADA ESPACIO AL MOMENTO DE LA TOMA:

		basketball field																				
		○	⊙	⊗	□	▣	⊠	Tot	○	⊙	⊗	□	▣	⊠	Tot	○	⊙	⊗	□	▣	⊠	Tot
1.- COMPRAR	C																					
2. BEBER/COMER	B																					
3. DORMIR	D																					
4. HABLAR	H	3	5	2				10														
5. LEER	L																					
6. MIRAR	M	1			2	22		25														
7. PAUSA	P																					
8. ESTUDIAR	E																					
9. BASKETBALL	JB	4	22		2			28														
10. FÚTBOL	JF																					
11. J.INFANTIL	JI	4			2			6														
12. VOLEYBALL	JV																					
13. ORG.COMUNAL	OC																					
14. RELIGION	R																					
15. SALUD	S																					
16. T. VENTA	TV																					
17. T. REPARACION	TR																					
18. T. DOMESTICO	TD																					
19. T. AGRICOLA	TA																					
20. VIAJAR	V																					
21. AGUARDAR	A																					
22. OTROS	O																					
23. TOTAL		12	27	2	6	22		69														

NUMERO DE PERSONAS NUEVAS QUE LLEGARON AL ESPACIO RESPECTO A LA TOMA ANTERIOR:

5		
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Figure 7-2. An example of the form used to quantify the data collected by social cartography.

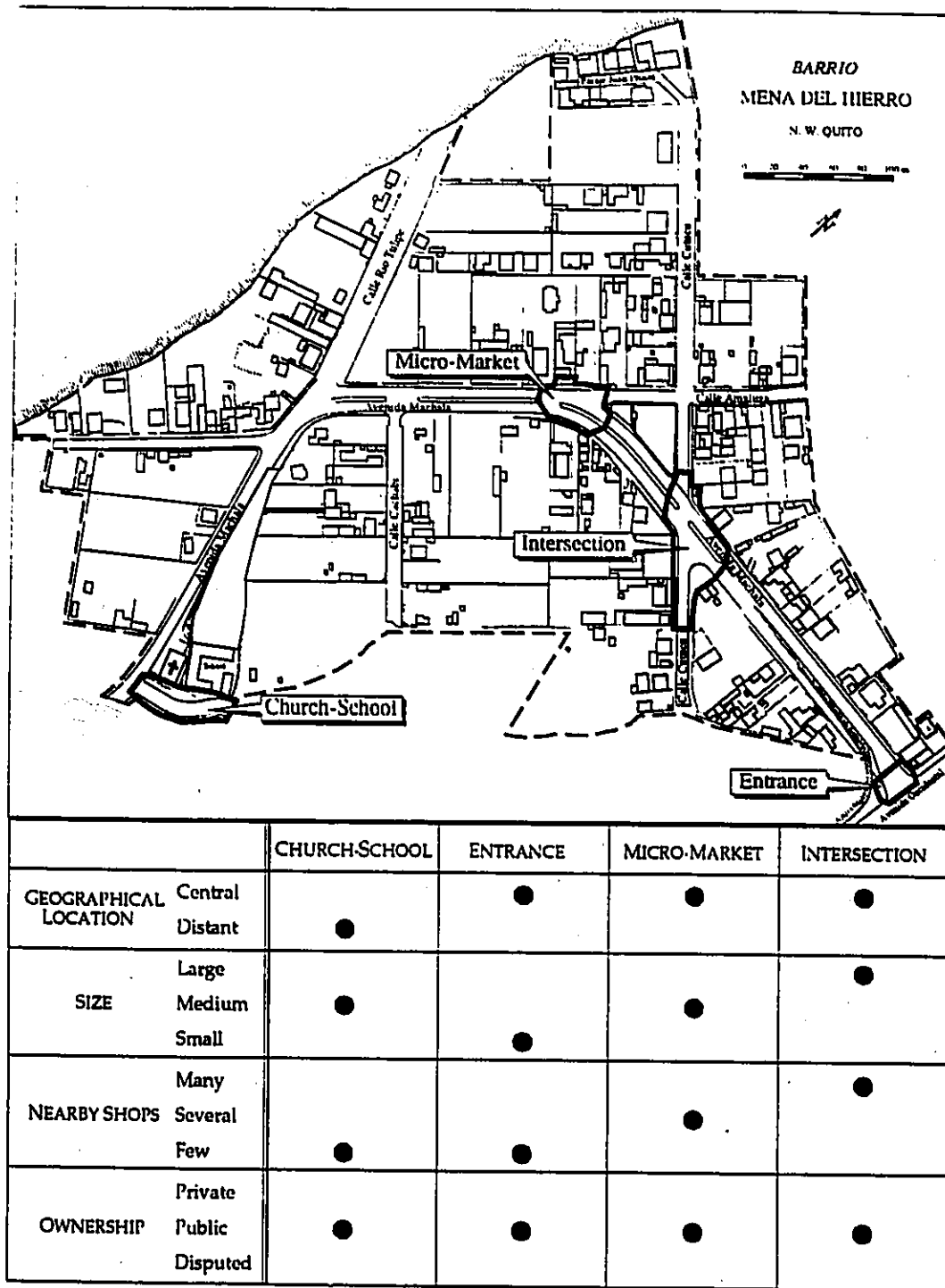


Figure 7-4. The main features of the street areas studied for spatial behaviour

THE EVERYDAY RHYTHM OF LIFE IN THE *BARRIO*

The aim of this section is to present the overall everyday rhythm of life in the *barrio* during typical weekdays and over the weekend, in order to provide a context to the spatial behaviour of residents in outdoor space. During the week, everyday activity in the *barrio* starts very early. Many residents wake up before sunrise to begin their work or school activities. The beginning of activity in the streets therefore coincides with sunrise (shortly before 6 a.m.). Between 6 and 8 a.m., *barrio* women and children leave their homes to buy bread and milk in the *barrio*'s shops. Other residents walk out to go to school or to work. Residents greet each other but most street meetings are brief as workers and students must hurry to catch public transport in nearby Cotocollao and homeworkers have to attend to house chores.

Over the morning, the outdoor rhythm of activity changes in approximate cycles of two hours. During this period, women and children intermittently go out to shop for lunch. Around midday, some residents start coming back from work or school. Others start leaving to go to afternoon working shifts or to afternoon school. The outdoor spaces of the *barrio* empty between 1 and 2 p.m. This change of activity coincides with the closing of the main grocery shop of the *barrio*. Between 2 and 4 p.m. few people are observed outdoors, mostly boys who are playing on the *barrio*'s streets or sports fields.

The opening of the main grocery shop of the *barrio*, around 4:30 p.m. coincides with the increase in numbers of users outdoors. Women and children start shopping for the evening dinner. Several residents of the remaining age and gender groups leave their homes to meet others outdoors. The largest numbers of people are seen outdoors around 5 p.m. Shopping and meeting activities in the streets continue until around 9 p.m. when most residents go back to their homes. This pattern of everyday activity is similar on a Friday or on a weekend day, with the difference that many more people meet outside, particularly in sports fields, and activities continue later than on normal weekdays.

THE NATURE OF ROUTINE LIFE IN THE *BARRIO*

The activities presented above can be considered as typical of the everyday rhythm of activity in the *barrio*. However, an important degree of unexpected everyday activity also takes place throughout the year. One of the characteristics of the residents lifestyle is that they do not always plan their activities ahead of time but enjoy the spontaneous events. Given the openness of residents towards changes in their routines, many are willing to take part in improvised activities. Also, residents have a loose perception of time – very different to the perception prevalent in North American societies where "time is money". Additionally, events external to the *barrio* may alter the everyday routine within the *barrio*.

Irregularities in everyday routines became evident during data collection for the present social cartography study. On a particular Friday, which first appeared to be the same as any other, several residents suddenly decided to get together in a "*minga*" in order to clean up the rubbish from the streets that had not been collected for several days by the municipal truck. A large group of residents left their homes and enthusiastically gathered outdoors for a period of over two hours until the streets were clean. Another day the trucks of the Municipality unexpectedly appeared in order to pave the main street of the *barrio*. As a result, large numbers of residents unexpectedly gathered on the streets: some to help with the paving works, some simply to watch, and some others to find out when the street where they lived was going to be paved. The unexpected decision by the Municipality came as a result of an "emergency measure" by the incumbent city mayor to gain the political sympathy and the necessary votes for his party to continue in power during the coming municipal elections. Hence, for these two days the results of social cartography were atypical, and therefore cartography was repeated on two other normal days to obtain statistics on regular routines.

Thus, in contrast to North American societies, where routine activities have a heavy predominance over periodic and unexpected events (Stephens, 1976) everyday life in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro is characterized by a relatively high degree of unexpected activity. Consequently, field methods involving social cartography must be complemented by participant observation, which enables the researcher able to clearly differentiate between routine and unexpected activities.

THE INTENSITY AND FREQUENCY OF USE OF PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACE

Use of Sports Fields on Weekdays

In terms of numbers of users, sports fields are not very intensive sites of activity during the week (Fig. 7-5). The frequency of use is also discontinuous. In the mornings practically no residents use sports fields. The intensity of use increases in the afternoon when small groups of residents carry out social activity in these areas. Although absolute numbers are low, the activity shows a peak towards the end of the afternoon, but because the sports fields are not illuminated artificially, activity stops after the nightfall.

There are two exceptions to this trend. In the "Daquilema" field, use of space is more intensive and continuous. As this sports field is located immediately adjacent to the *barrio's* school, children make intensive use of it in the mornings, during recess time. Numbers progressively decrease in the afternoon when children have left school. The second exception is the *Cuchipuerco* field. Over the week, users are practically absent from this area. On

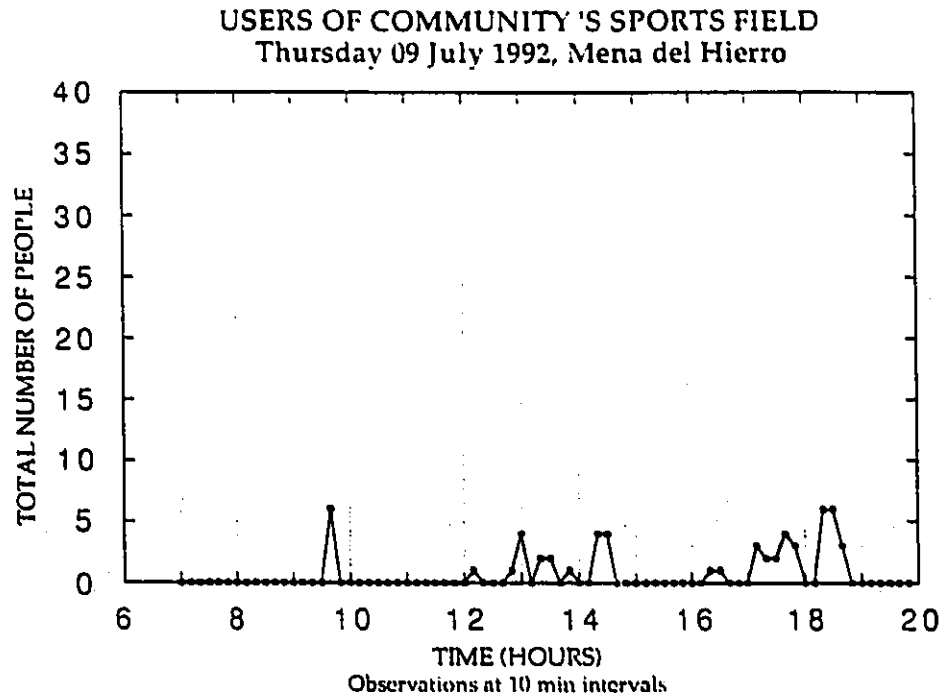


Figure 7-5. Typical intensity and frequency of use of sports fields on weekdays.

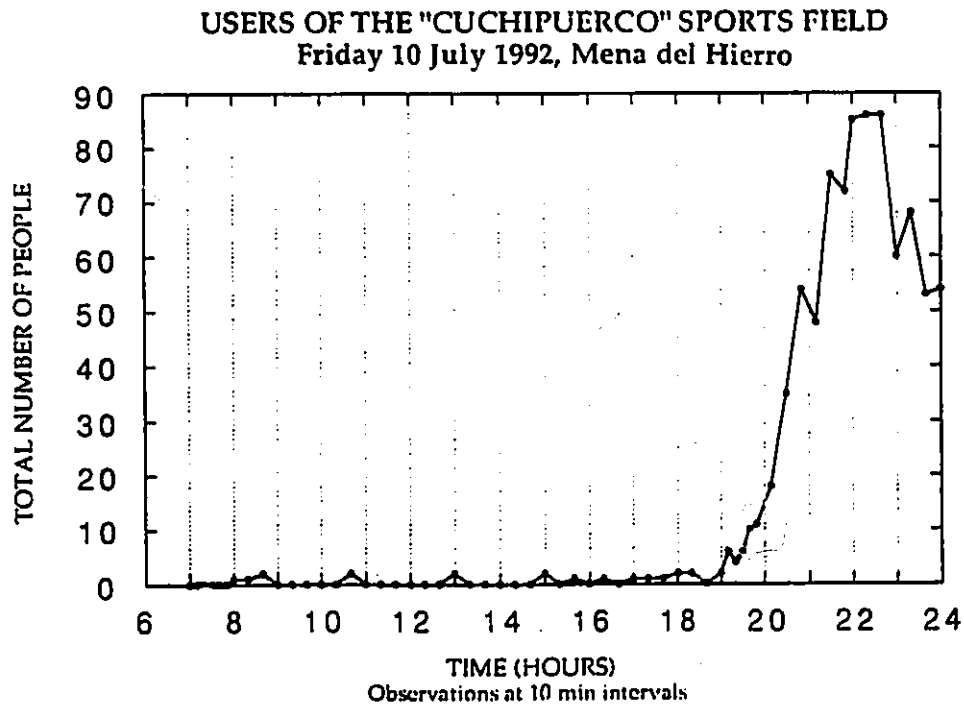


Figure 7-6. Typical intensity and frequency of use of the *Cuchipuerco* sports field on Fridays.

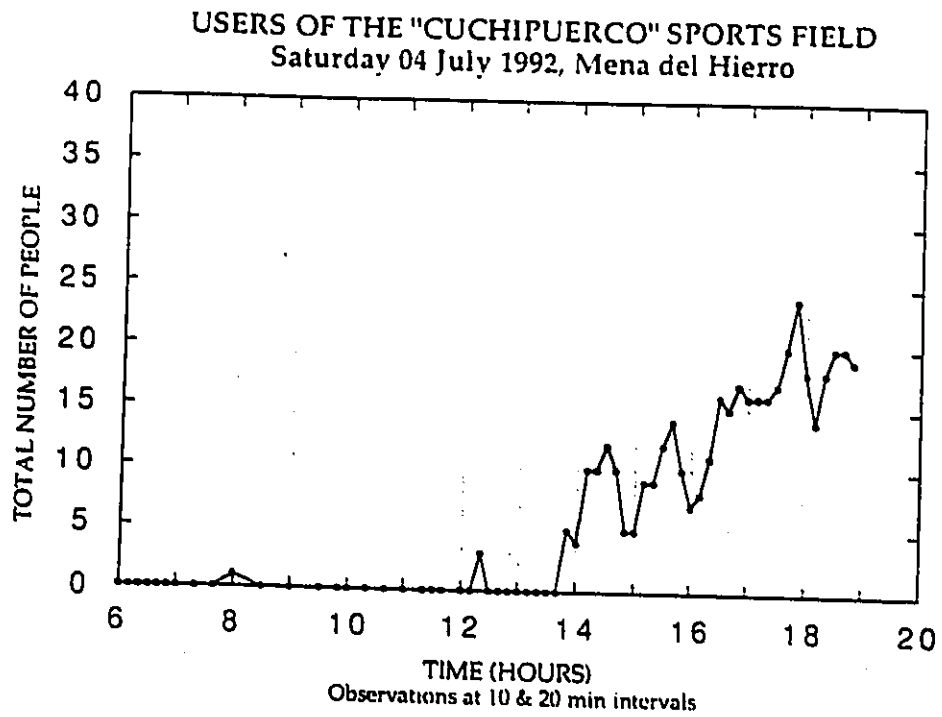


Figure 7-7. Typical intensity and frequency of use of sports fields on weekends.

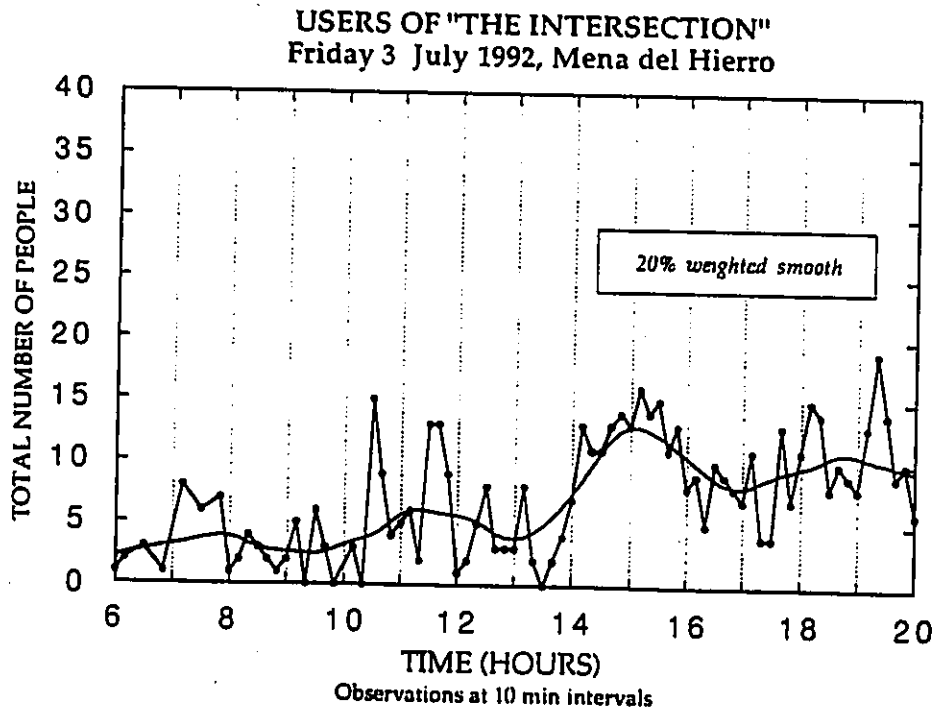


Figure 7-8. Typical frequency and intensity of use of street areas on weekdays.

Fridays, however, there is dramatic change. Private managers of *Cuchipuerco* illuminate the sports field around 7 p.m. and the area starts to fill up. Activity reaches a peak at 10 p.m., when approximately 90 residents gather in the area. Activity often lasts until dawn (Fig. 7-6).

Use of Sports Fields on Weekends

The frequency of use of sports fields over the weekend is discontinuous. Few residents are observed in the morning but numbers drastically increase towards the beginning of the afternoon when residents have finished resting, shopping and doing household chores. Many more people use sports fields during the weekend than on weekdays. Peaks of use are between 4 and 6 p.m. and residents continue using sports fields until nightfall forces them to leave¹. (Fig. 7-7) At the small fields, *Cuchipuerco* and *Santis*, between 15 and 25 people are observed during that period. At the larger sports fields, *Daquilema* and *Community Centre*, between 35-50 users were observed at peak time of use on Saturdays and between 40-80 on Sundays. In *Cuchipuerco*, activities start around 2 p.m., increase during the afternoon and finish around 8 p.m. Many more users are observed in the weekend than during the week: At peak times of use there are eight times more users in the *Community Centre* field; two and a half times more in the *Daquilema* field; and two times more in *Santis*.

Use of Street Areas on Weekdays

In contrast to sports fields, the frequency of use of street areas is continuous over the entire day. The use of street areas begins very early in the morning and continues uninterrupted (except for a one hour break around 1 p.m.) until after 9 p.m. Numbers of users progressively increase in the afternoon, reaching a peak of use between 3 and 7 p.m. (Fig. 7-8). A maximum number of users of 15-20 is observed between 2 and 6 p.m. at the *Intersection* and *Micromarket* areas, the busiest of all. An exception to these general trends is the *barrio* entrance area, where the highest numbers of users are observed early in the morning. These are residents are waiting for transport to work or school.

Qualitative field observations showed that on Friday nights residents continue to meet on the streets until around 10 p.m. Despite the cold climate, several residents gather in the streets to talk, drink, and listen to music. To the casual observer, the intensity of public life in the streets seems more like a coastal neighbourhood than a neighbourhood of the Ecuadorian altiplano.

¹ Informal discussions with residents reveal that they would like to continue using the fields well into the night if illumination were installed.

Use of Street Areas on Weekends

The general trend of street area use on weekdays continues on weekends with the difference that activity starts a little later than during the week. The frequency of use is continuous over the entire day. Numbers of users progressively increase from 9 a.m. onwards with a decrease of activity around 1 p.m. Activity starts again around 2 p.m. and continues to increase until 8 p.m., when a peak is reached in numbers of users (Fig. 7-9). Street areas are still busy around 10 p.m. and activity often continues even later. The overall number of users at peak times is double the number of users during the week. The exception to these general trends is the *barrio* entrance area where the highest numbers of users are observed early in the morning.

Use of public outdoor space on Sundays is continuous and has the same rhythm as on Saturdays, but with two important differences. Intensity of use clearly decreases around 7 p.m. when people leave the streets to get ready for the workday on Monday. The second and most important difference is the activity at the church-school area. The weekly celebration of Mass congregates the highest observed numbers of people in the everyday use of outdoor space. Thus, the peak of everyday outdoor activity in the *barrio* takes place after the weekly Mass (Fig. 7-10), when between 100 and 200 people gather at the front of the church to converse, drink and eat. Note, however, that these numbers of users include some residents from the neighbouring *barrios* of San Rafael and Santa Isabel.

DOMINANT GENDER AND AGE GROUPS IN THE USE OF OUTDOOR SPACE

Use of Sports Fields During the Week

In terms of numbers of users, boys are the dominant *barrio* group using sports fields on weekdays (Fig. 7-11). Boys' exclusively appropriate the Santis and the Community's sports field. However, boys share the Daquilema sports field with young girls, especially during the morning at school recess time, although the boys still dominate numerically. This is probably explained by the fact that boys play soccer, an activity which by cultural tradition automatically excludes girls. Alternatively, it may be due to the fact that girls prefer to play in the smaller and more private recreation area located within the limits of the school building itself. In the afternoons, young boys compete with adult men for the use of the Daquilema field.

The numerical dominance of boys in sports fields finishes on Friday nights. Young and adult men take over the *Cuchipuerco* sports field, the only illuminated field of the *barrio*, to play volleyball (Fig. 7-12). *Cuchipuerco* becomes an exclusively male world where nearly 100 men congregate to play volleyball, bet, and drink. The few women observed on these occasions

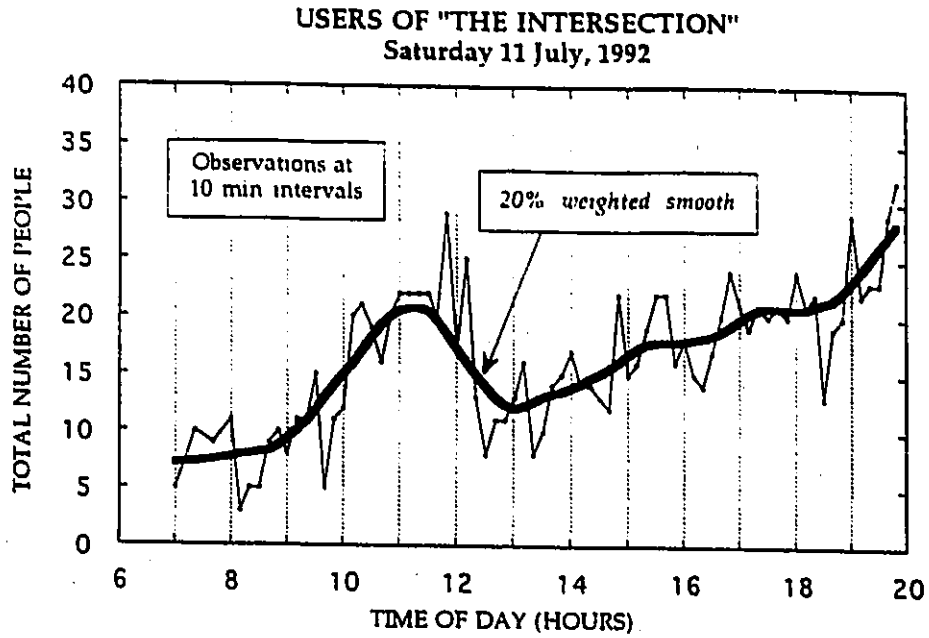


Figure 7-9. Typical intensity and frequency of use of street areas on Saturdays.

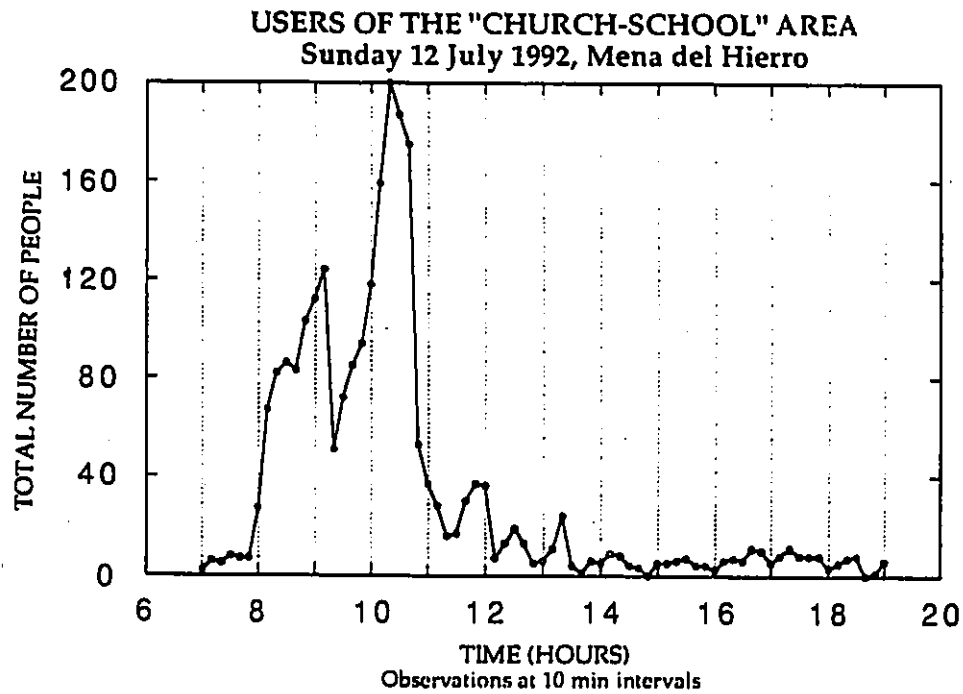


Figure 7-10. Weekly Mass: The peak of outdoor activity in the *barrio* occurs every Sunday after Mass.

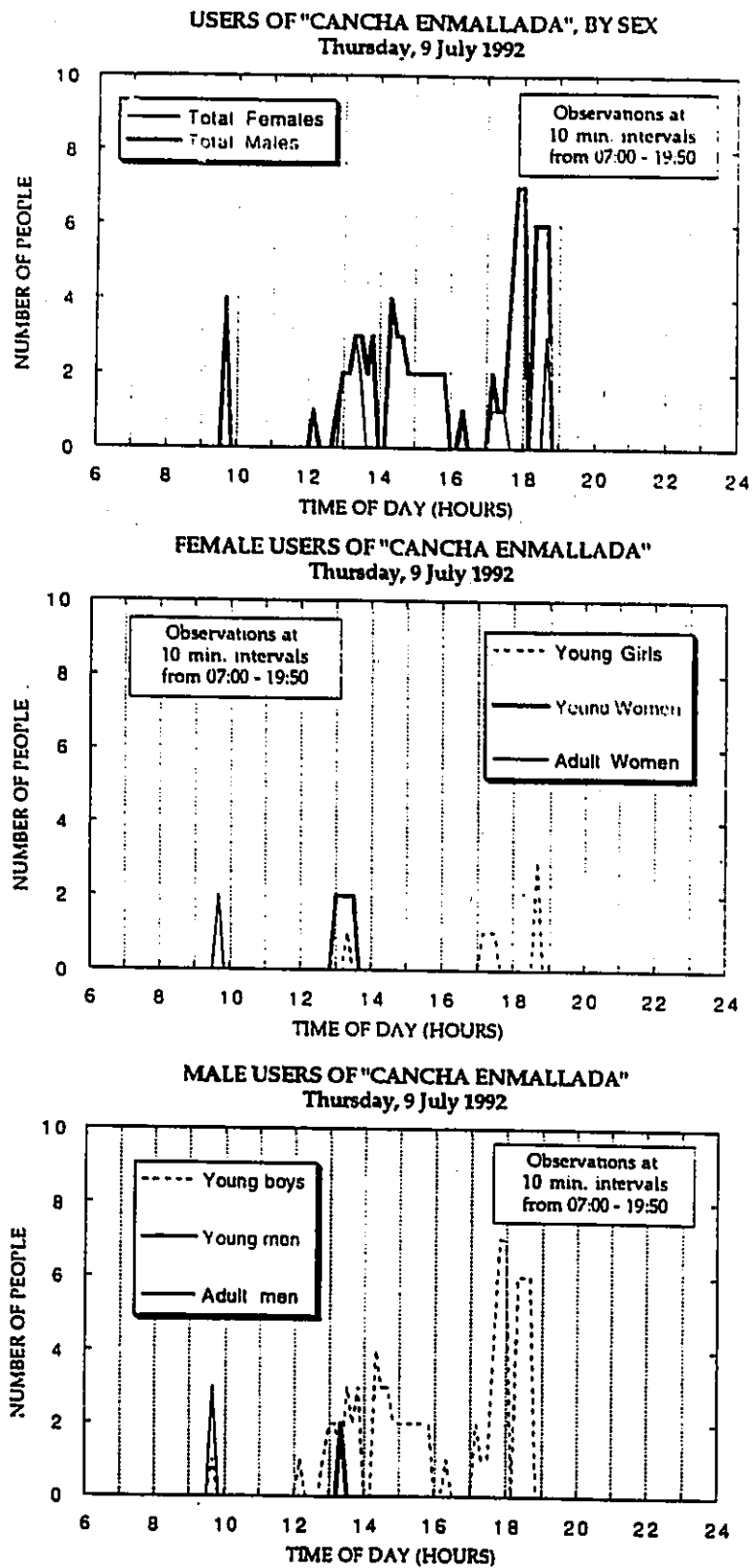


Figure 7-11. Main users of sports fields on weekdays, by gender and age group.

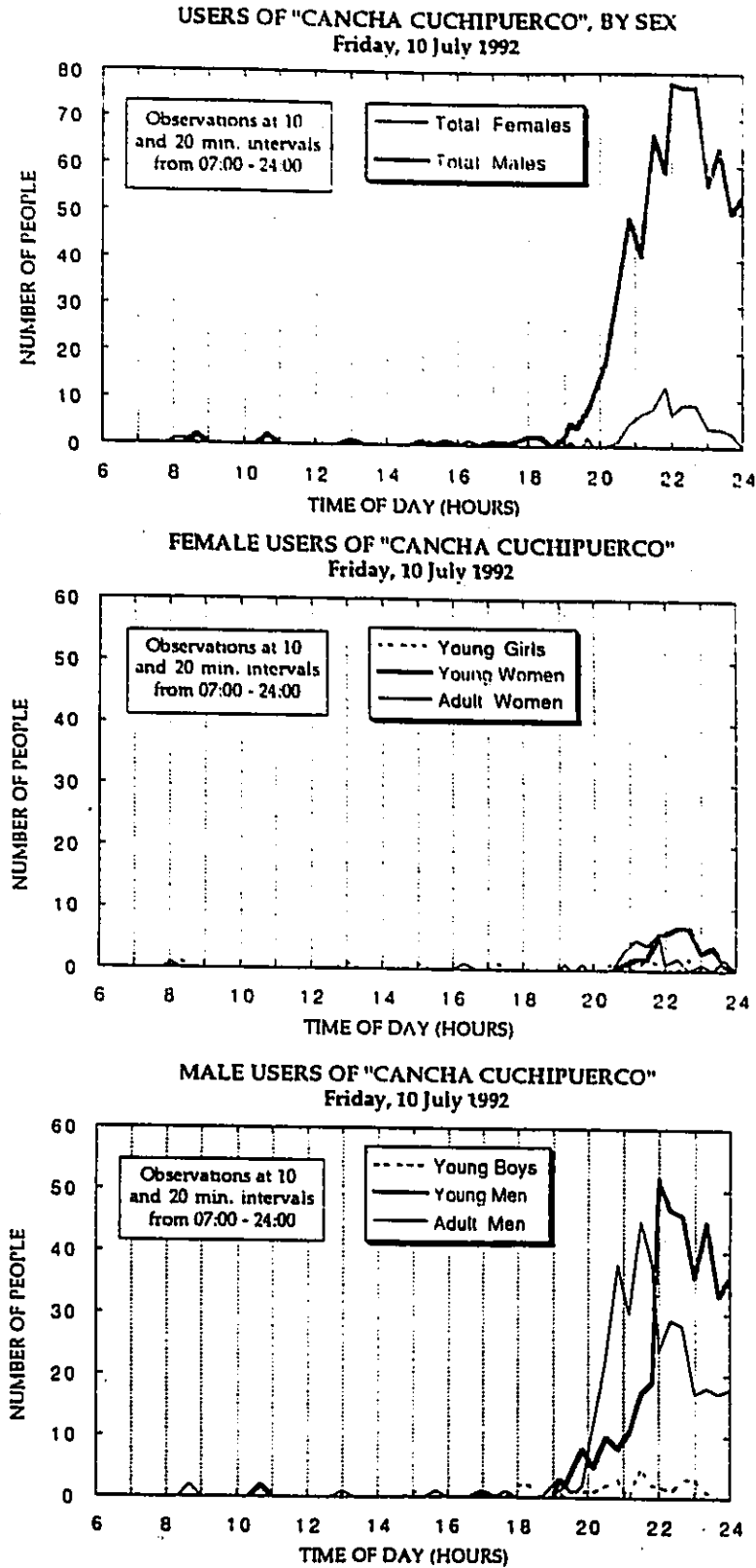


Figure 7-12. Main users of the *Cuchipuerco* sports fields on Fridays, by gender and age group.

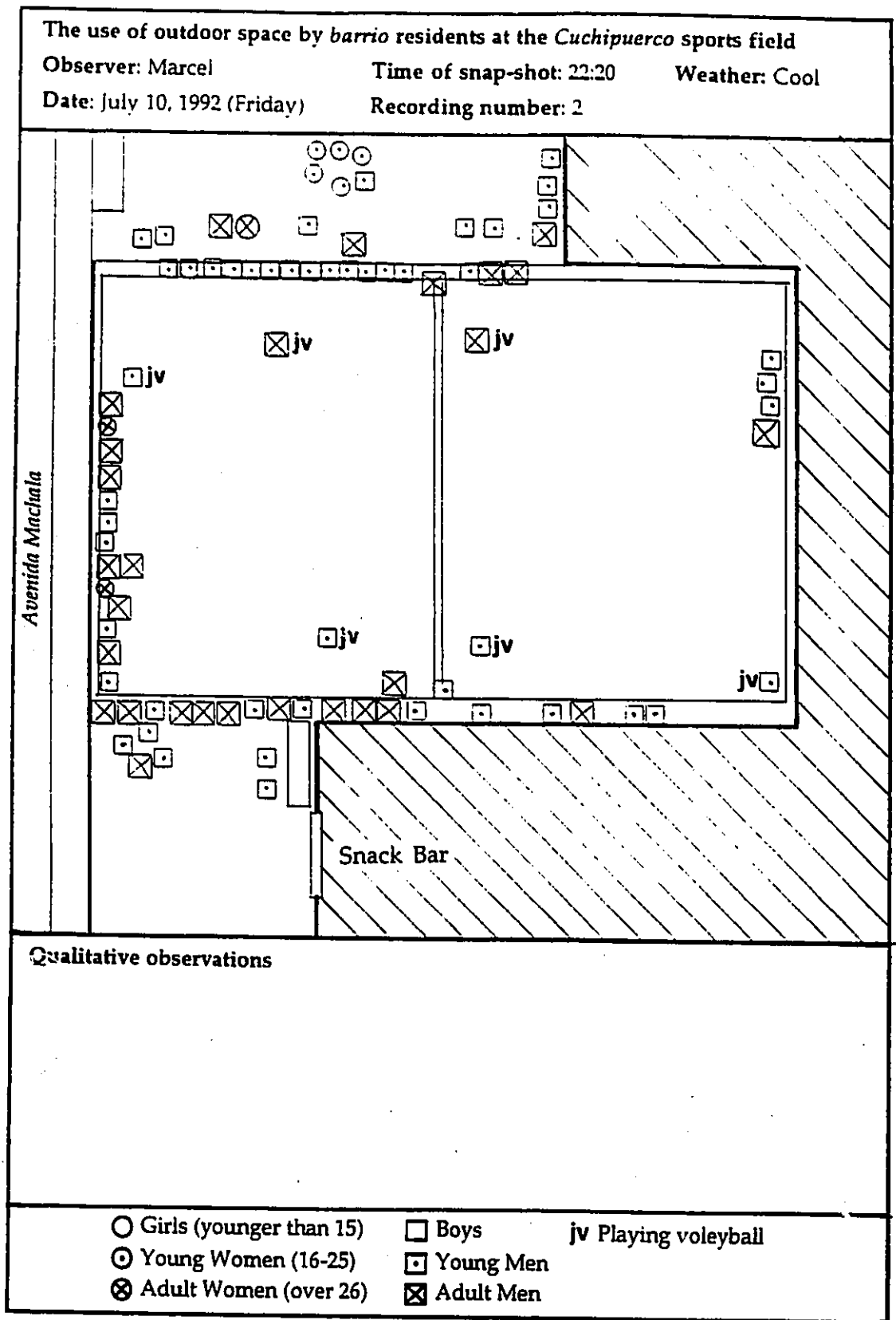


Figure 7-13. Social cartography of the Friday night appropriation of *Cuchipuerco* by *barrio* males.

are either located in a marginal position, or are accompanied by a male relative (Fig. 7-13).

Use of Sports Fields on Weekends

The weekday numerical dominance of male residents in the sports fields of the *barrio* continues on Saturdays. This absolute dominance is, however, reduced to only two fields: Daquilema and *Cuchipuerco*. Daquilema is dominated by boys² and Cuchipuerco by young men playing volleyball (Fig. 7-14). At the Community basketball field, however, girls and young women numerically exceed young men³. As can be seen in Figure 7-1, teams of either male or female players compete for the use of the basketball field. In some cases young women play and young men observe. In other cases young men play a rough style of basketball to force teams of young women to leave the field. The Santis field is used by children and adults of both sexes. Dominant users are members of the Santis kin-group who adapted a vacant private area in 1992 to play volleyball. The pattern of gender appropriation of sports fields observed on Saturday continues on Sundays.

Use of Street Areas on Weekdays

Before midday on weekdays, approximately equal numbers of male and female residents use street areas in the *barrio*. The majority of the males are boys and men. The majority of female residents are girls and women. In the afternoon the numbers of male residents increase and males of all age groups clearly dominate over female residents in the use of street areas (Fig. 7-15). The exception to this pattern is the church-school street area where male and female residents are equally present over most of the day. However, the majority of these people are school children who play in front of the school during recess time, and before and after school.

Use of Street Areas on Weekends

The pattern of gender use observed on weekdays in the *barrio* continues on Saturdays. The only difference is that the afternoon numerical dominance of street areas by male residents starts only after 5 p.m. (Fig. 7-16). Explanations for this behaviour are that some young and

2 Young boys' dominance of Daquilema is a new phenomenon. In 1991, young and adult men used to appropriate this field over the weekend to play soccer and even on weekdays. The 1992 the soccer players were displaced by a claim by school administrators to exclusive right of use of the area for the school. Thus, boys became the principal users of the area over the weekend. The legal status of the use of Daquilema is not clear yet, and it is thus difficult to predict which group or groups will dominate in the future in the use of this improvised sports field.

3 Data presented here for the Community Centre sports field correspond to observations carried out in 1991 before repair work on the field had started.

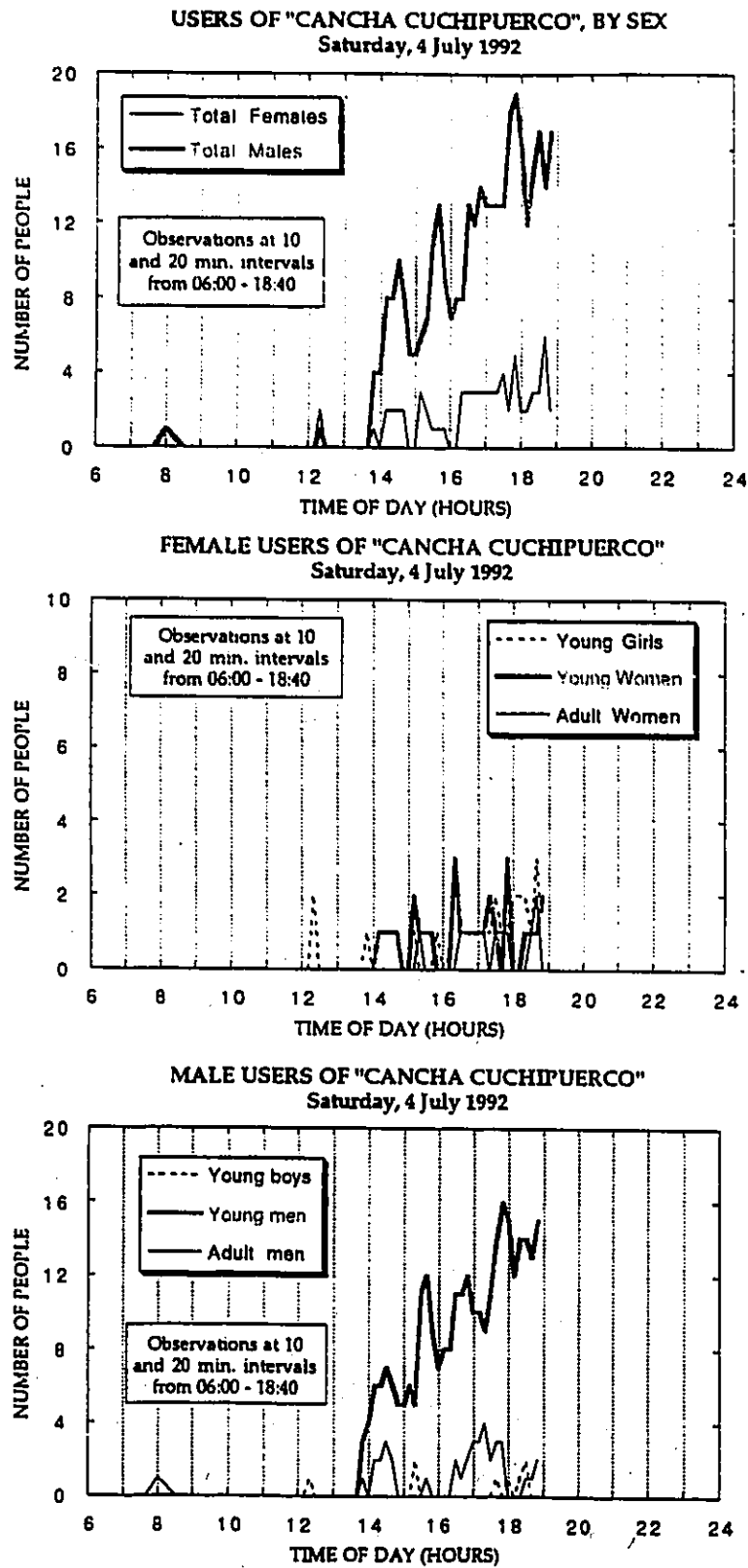


Figure 7-14. Main users of sports fields on weekends, by gender and age group.

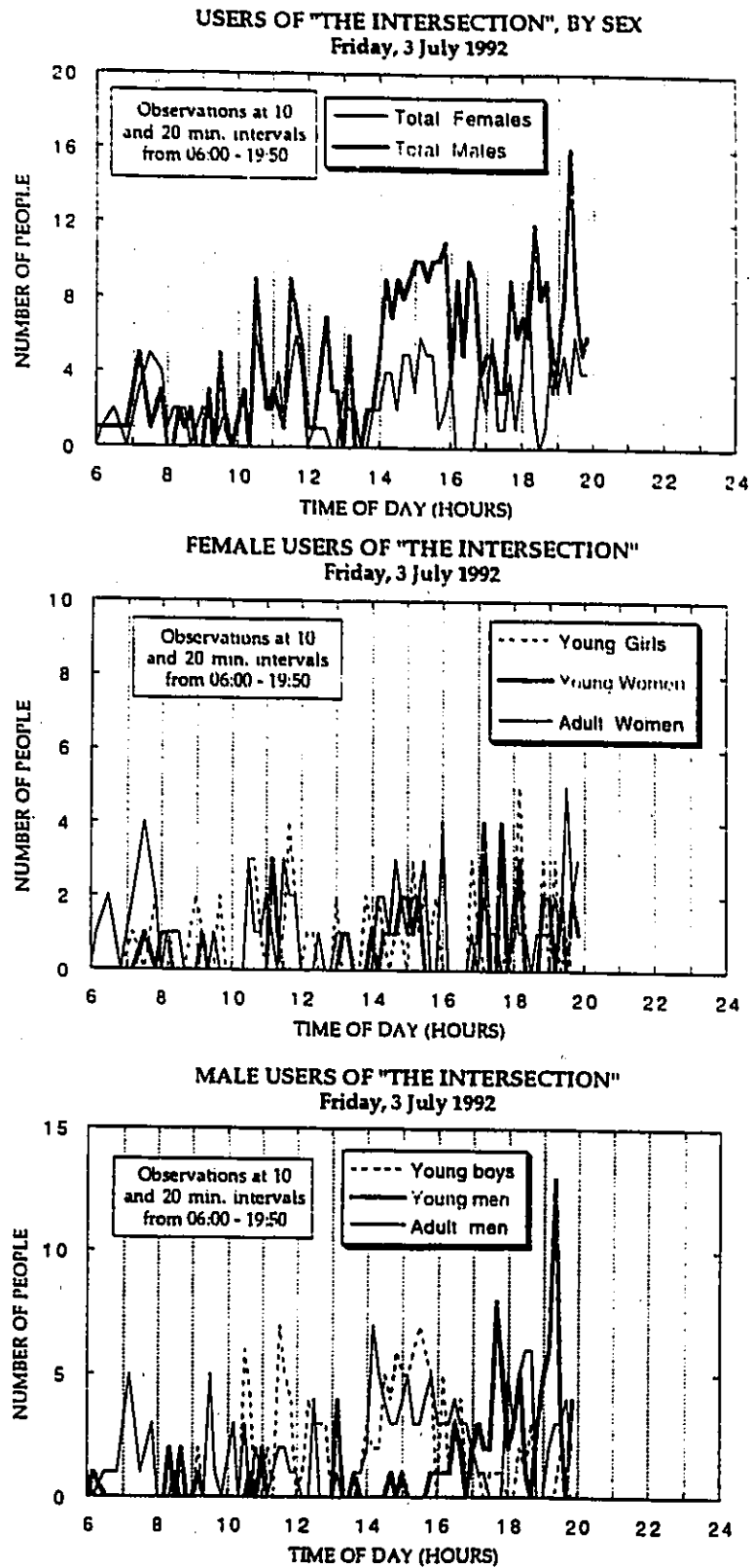


Figure 7-15: Main users of street areas on weekdays, by gender and age group.

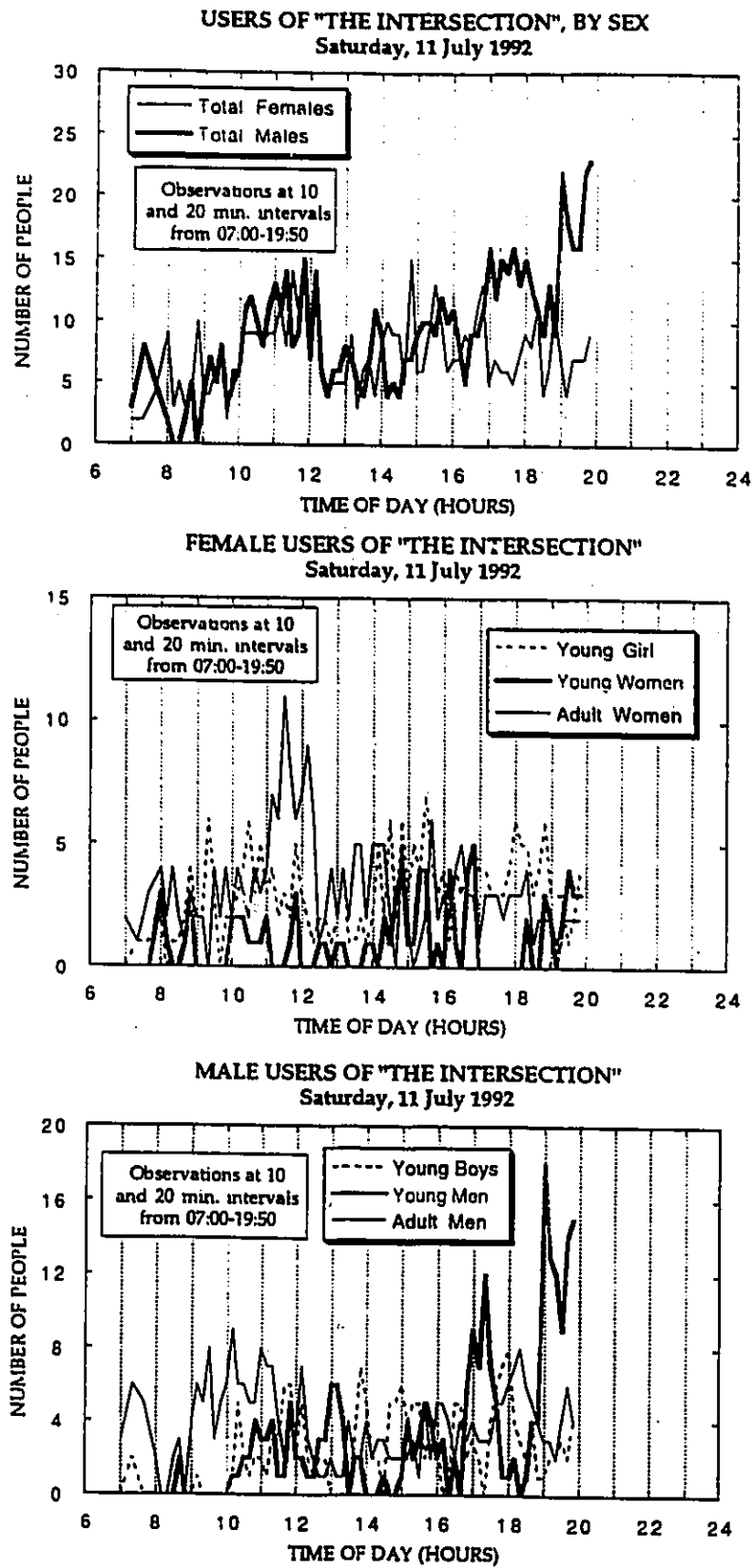


Figure 7-16. Main users of street areas on weekends, by gender and age group.

adult men like to go to the nearby *barrio* of Santa Anita on Saturdays to play soccer and thus they return to Mena del Hierro at the end of the afternoon, and some others gather at the *barrio* sports fields rather than on the streets. Of all gender and age groups in the *barrio*, young women are the least present on street areas over the entire day⁴. After 7 p.m. the streets are almost exclusively appropriated by male residents. The pattern observed for Saturday continues on Sundays with the difference that the almost exclusive appropriation by male residents of the streets begins at 4 p.m.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACE

One of the main characteristics of the *barrio* residents' lifestyle is their focus on social activity outdoors. Residents use every available public outdoor space in the *barrio* to meet each other and take part in a wealth of recreational activities. Groups of boys and young males appropriate *barrio* streets over the weekend to play with carts, kick a ball, ride a bike, play volleyball or simply meet (Fig. 7-17). Groups of young and adult males appropriate street corners to chat, drink, eat, gossip and laugh (Fig. 7-18). These are usually areas which are located near a shop, where it is possible to buy beer, or near the residence of one of the group members.

Female residents seldom socially interact on the streets for long. The main excuse of women to socialize outdoors is shopping (Fig. 7-19). These street meetings are usually short. By social tradition in the *barrio* the streets are not a place for women no matter what their age. Tied to their never-ending household tasks, adult women have little free-time available and thus cannot afford to meet in the streets for extended periods of time. Also, given the cluster-like residential distribution of kin-groups, women are able to satisfy their needs to socialize in their own homes. Thus in contrast to the rest of the residents, adult women of the *barrio* mainly socially interact in the private sphere rather than in the public sphere.

Sports fields are another main focus of social activity in the *barrio*. They are the main sites of social interaction for residents, except for adult women. Indeed sports seems to be an excuse to socialize, as many people attending the fields do not play but go there merely to watch and meet friends (Fig. 7-20). In this sense, sports fields fulfil the same role for low-income groups in the *barrios* as clubs do for the high-income groups of the city. Sports activities include volleyball, soccer and basketball. Volleyball and soccer fields are exclusively appropriated by male residents of all ages (Fig. 7-21). Children make exclusive use of sports fields to play soccer during the week. On the weekend children are displaced by young and

⁴ It is not easy for many young women to get out. Parents do not like their daughters to be out too much. They also do not have much time as they have to help with household chores and study for school. In many cases, their only legitimate excuse to get out is to play basketball. To go out at night they often have to be in the company of their brothers.



Figure 7-17. Boys and young males appropriate the streets of the *barrio* to meet and play.
(Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 7-18. Young males appropriate the streets of the *barrio* to play volleyball. (Photo: Laureano Nastul, 1992).



Figure 7-19. Street corners in the *barrio* are appropriated exclusively by young and adult males to chat, drink, and laugh. As a participant observer, I was the only woman to "hang out" with men on the streets (Photos: Wilson Solís, 1992 and Laureano Nastul, 1993).

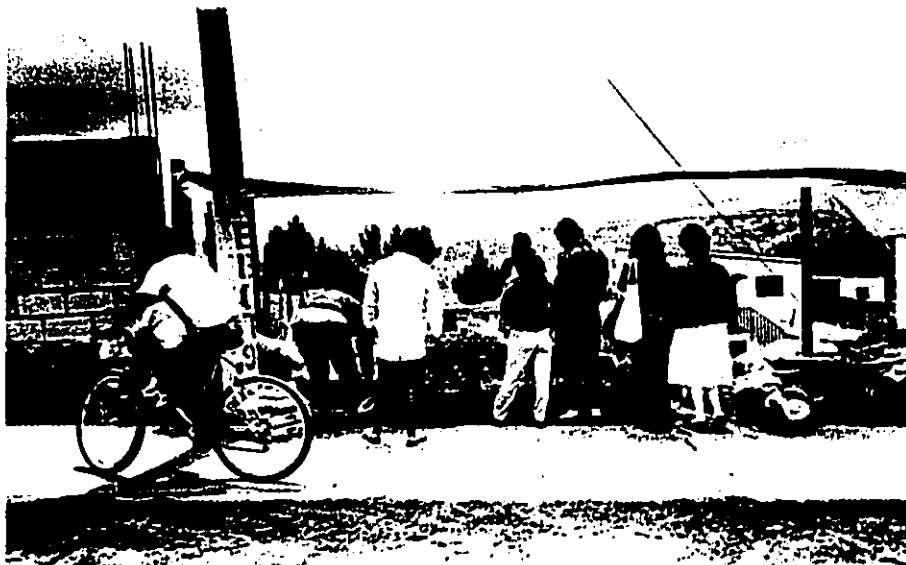
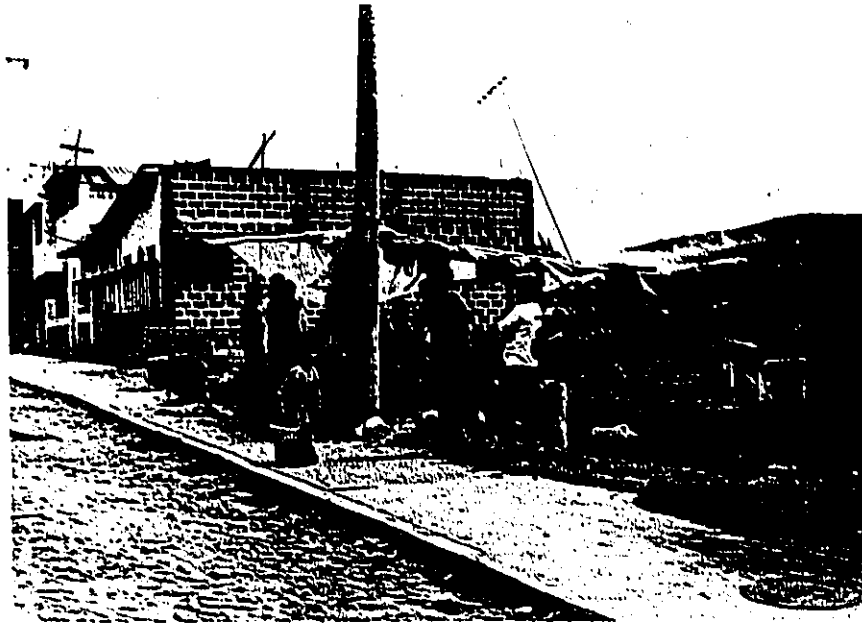


Figure 7-20. Female residents socialize on *barrio* streets mainly through shopping. Their meetings are usually brief. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 7-21. Sports fields are the main settings for socializing in the *barrio*. Several residents attending the fields do not play but go there merely to watch and meet friends. (Photos: Natasha Brideau, 1991 and Laureano Nastul, 1993).

adult males who take over the fields to play soccer and volleyball. Children usually accompany their male relatives as spectators and thus they are socialized from an early age in this almost exclusively male public world.

Volleyball activities include betting and often drinking. This is especially the case of the *Cuchipuerco* sports field where residents gather at night on Fridays and Saturdays en masse to play an Ecuadorian version of volleyball (3 players instead of six), to spectate, to drink home-made *aguardiente* and to bet. This habit of playing volleyball and betting is a tradition from rural environments, readily observable in the rural hinterland northwest of Quito, from where many *barrio* residents have immigrated. In Quito this social practice takes place only in *barrios populares* and many people from higher-income neighbourhoods come to Mena del Hierro to place their bets as well. The social use made of soccer and volleyball sports fields automatically excludes women (Fig. 7-22). By sporting tradition, women in Ecuador do not play soccer and although they commonly play volleyball, the late-night matches in the *barrio* involve alcohol and betting, and hence women are excluded by social tradition.

The *barrio*'s basketball court is the only sports field in the *barrio* where women are the main participants. These are girls and young women who compete with young males for the use of the *barrio*'s central basketball court (Fig. 7-23). As there is only one basketball field in the neighbourhood and there are always several groups wishing to play, a space problem arises. The solution to this problem is remarkably harmonious: sets of four or five teams simply play their games simultaneously on the same field. The casual observer sees a chaotic scene of people and balls (and dogs) going in all directions but every member of each team knows exactly where to go and which ball to follow.

CONCLUSIONS

Outdoor public space is the focus of social activity for residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. Everyday life is characterized by a remarkable degree of social activity outdoors. There is a high density of outdoor sites of social exchange within the *barrio*, including streets and sports fields. Activity peaks by the end of the afternoon when over a third of the entire *barrio* population is out on the *barrio*'s streets and sports fields playing, conversing, drinking and eating. Residents strongly desire to be outdoors to the point that social activity on the streets continues into the night despite the prevailing cold climate of the altiplano and the 6 p.m. equatorial nightfall. Illuminated sports fields are used beyond midnight.

Except for adult women, sports is the preferred activity of residents for social interaction. Given the scarcity of sports fields in the *barrio*, residents appropriate every available corner for this activity: from streets to vacant land. Male residents of all ages are the dominant group using outdoor space in the *barrio*. The basketball court is the only exception, where girls and young women compete with young men for the use of this facility. Adult women



Figure 7-22. Volleyball and soccer fields in the *barrio* are exclusively appropriated by boys, young men and adult men. (Photos: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

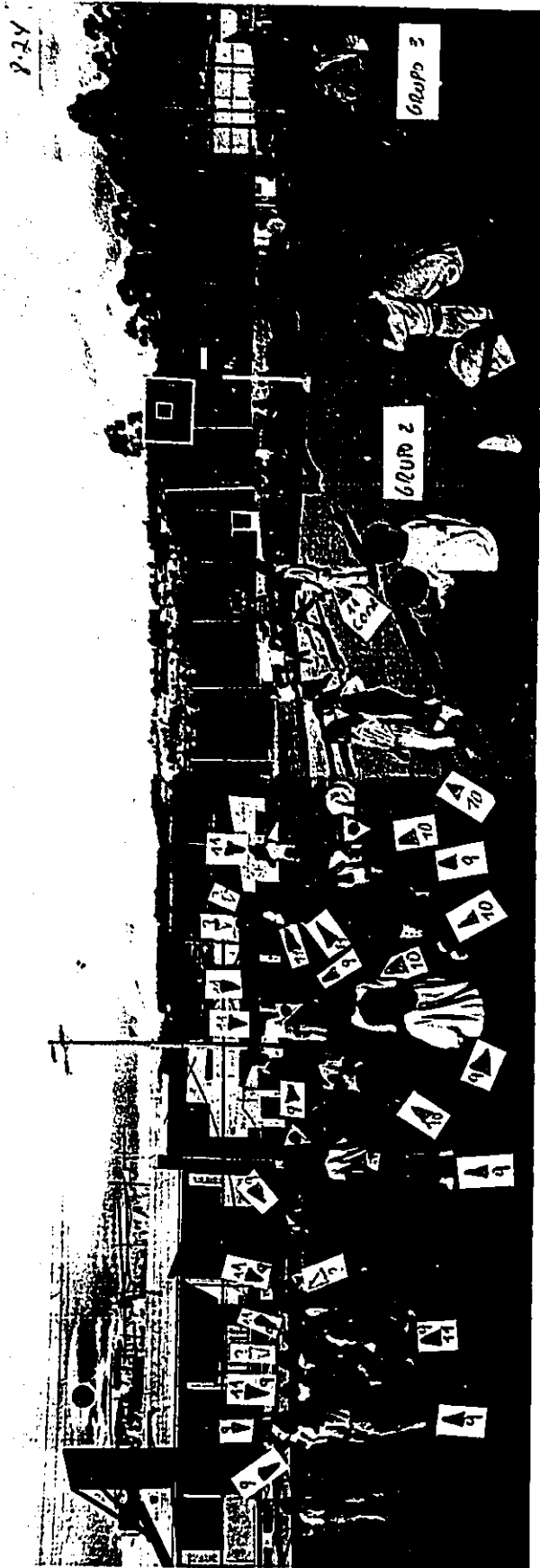


Figure 7-23. The basketball court is the only sports field in the *barrio* where the number of girls and young women exceeds the number of males. However, on weekends they must compete with young men to use the field. Every weekend nearly 80 young residents gather here to play basketball. Since too little space is available for conventional games, several groups play on the same court simultaneously (try locating the four balls being used!) while other groups wait their turn. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).

socially interact outdoors mainly through shopping although their meetings are usually brief. There are several reasons for this behaviour. On the one hand social tradition limits the presence of women on the streets and housework leaves little time free. On the other, because of the cluster-like residential distribution of kin-groups, women may satisfy their need to socialize with others in their own homes. In contrast to the rest of residents, the social interaction patterns of adult *barrio* women are to meet in the private sphere rather than in public outdoor space.

Everyday life in the *barrio* is not always routine. Unexpected events happen with quite high frequency. A characteristic of the lifestyle of residents is their enjoyment of improvising and participating in spontaneous, non-routine activities. Unexpected events in the *barrio* also take place as a result of forces external to it. Thus, contrary to many societies where routine activities dominate by far, unexpected events are not an exception to the rule in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro.

The social importance of public outdoor space to the residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro cannot be overemphasized. It is one of the aspects of the *barrio* which is most striking to the observer. In this respect, popular Mena del Hierro seems quite typical of many other *barrios populares* in Latin America. This research therefore supports the vital role attributed to public outdoor space in the literature, as reviewed in the introduction.

Regarding the utility of social cartography for recording spatial behaviour, it is worthwhile pointing out that the method yields no more than numerical support for facts and trends that are already qualitatively obvious to the researcher after having been immersed in the field for some time. Social cartography does not provide insight into the reasons for the social and spatial behaviour of residents in the way that participant observation does. However, social cartography provides useful statistics for the planning of recreational facilities. Traditional planning calculations on the number of necessary sports fields for urban communities are done on the basis of international standards which do not apply to the lifestyle of *barrio* residents, who focus on the *barrio* and on sports for their social activity. The use of social cartography to characterize routine activity is complex in the context of a society like the *barrio* Mena del Hierro where unexpected events take place with relatively high frequency. In this case the use of participant observation is indispensable to allow the researcher distinguish routine patterns from unexpected events.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIO.SPATIAL BEHAVIOUR OF BARRIO RESIDENTS DURING PUBLIC FESTIVITIES

The outdoor arena of public self-affirmation

INTRODUCTION

The organization and performance of public festivities are fruitful topics for study because they reveal the social fabric, the local culture and values, and the spaces of symbolic reference of the group (Campaña, 1991). These are all elements that contribute to explaining spatial behaviour in the urban environment. In this chapter the social role of public outdoor space in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro will be analysed by examining the most important public social and religious festivities.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVITIES

Easter Week in Mena del Hierro

For the residents of Mena del Hierro and neighbouring San Rafael and Santa Isabel, Easter celebrations are the most important of all religious festivities. Large numbers of people from the three *barrios* congregate to celebrate and participate in an event of importance to all. In addition to their religious and social motives to participate in this celebration, residents seem to be attracted by the dramatic character of the festivity. Easter week commemorates Jesus Christ's glorious entrance into Jerusalem followed by his crucifixion and death. It culminates with his triumphant resurrection and ascension to heaven. This series of events provides a perfect drama.

Easter celebrations consist of religious processions, public gatherings and celebrations of the mass which take place during mid-April and last a whole week. The *Jesús del Gran Poder* church, situated at the intersection of the three neighbouring *barrios*, is the religious and spatial focus of interest. Palm Sunday and Good Friday are the two most important celebrations for residents of these *barrios*.

Palm Sunday

The Events

Palm Sunday commemorates the historical entry into Jerusalem when Jesus was acclaimed as religious leader by an enthusiastic crowd waving palm leaves. The *barrios'* local ceremony begins at the sports field located at the spatial intersection of San Rafael, Santa Isabel and Mena del Hierro. A large, orderly crowd congregates there to await the priest who will bless the palm leaves which they carry. The priest arrives accompanied by several young priests who play guitars and sing religious songs while they walk amongst the crowd. The head priest prays and blesses the palm leaves by sprinkling them with holy water. The sports field is transformed from its everyday function to a sacred place where people congregate to pray and to celebrate a joyous and important religious event (Fig. 8-1).

Once the palm blessing ceremony is over the orderly crowd leaves the sports field to walk in procession along Machala street led by the priest. The street is appropriated by the pedestrian crowd who are holding palm leaves, praying, and slowly progressing towards the *Jesús del Gran Poder* church. Preceded by the priest (Fig. 8-2), the people enter the church and the Mass ceremony begins. Once the Mass is over, Palm Sunday's celebration officially ends. Participants leave the church but remain gathered outside it, to eat, drink, and talk with friends.

The Participants of Palm Sunday

Residents of the three *barrios* participate in the festivity. Children, young women and adults take part; the only exceptions being the young males. They participate however in their own individual way. They are present from beginning to end of the ceremony but always observe events from a distance (Fig. 8-3). Once the mass service is over and people leave the church, young males approach friends and relatives and engage in friendly conversations.

Palm Sunday is a peak time for social activity in the area. After the ceremony, about one hundred and fifty people gather in front of the church to engage in friendly conversation. Both, traditional and modern styles can be observed among participants; residents of Mena del Hierro tend to wear modern clothing whereas poorer inhabitants of San Rafael and Santa Isabel tend towards traditional, Indian clothing. Informal street sellers, mostly women from the *barrios* of San Rafael and Santa Isabel, take this opportunity to earn an additional income. Dressed in their traditional Indian clothes, and accompanied by their children and dogs, they sell home-made food and drink.

Palm Sunday has an important social as well as religious function for *barrio* residents. Participants in the festivity take great pride in the size and style of the palm leaves they bring to be blessed, as these signify the extent of their faith and their social status (Fig. 8-4).



Figure 8-1. Palm Sunday. Residents of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel congregate for the public celebration of an event of symbolic importance for all. The crowd gathers at the open area in front of the church to have their palms blessed by a priest. Thus, this area is transformed from its daily function of improvised sports field to a sacred arena. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 8-2. The Palm Sunday crowd walks along Machala Street in solemn procession towards the *Jesús del Gran Poder* church. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 8-3. Preceded by the priest, the Palm Sunday crowd enters the church to attend Mass. Many youths participate in the ceremony from beginning to end, but as distant observers (see background of photo). Youths take advantage of the opportunity for social contact as more than a hundred residents gather in front of the church after the ceremony to engage in friendly social exchange. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).



Figure 8-4. Palm Sunday is a good opportunity for *barrio* residents to gain in public standing. The size and elaborateness of palm arrangements carried by individuals in public outdoor space reflect the degree of their commitment to the religious festivity, and permit the bearers to become public models of religious behaviour. (Photo: Yvonne Riaño, 1992).

The Organizers of Palm Sunday

The organization of this festivity is the responsibility of the Jesuit priests who provide religious services for the *barrios* of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Children of the three *barrios* cooperate with the priests as part of their religious obligations to be accepted for the First Communion sacrament. The head priest takes the main role of the day. He portrays Jesus and the people gather round him in respect. The secondary role of the residents is limited to bringing palms to the ceremony and to orderly participation.

Good Friday

The Main Events

This religious celebration commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. The local church and the main streets of the three neighbouring *barrios* are the main scenes for the tragic events of Good Friday. The day's celebration has four dramatic events: (1) Calvary Hill where Jesus Christ was crucified, (2) The *Procesión del Viacrucis*, representing Jesus' arduous walk to his crucifixion, (3) The *Misa del Descendimiento* ceremony where the body of Christ is taken down from the cross, and (4) The *Procesión del Santo Sepulcro* where his body is symbolically transported to the burial place. These events occupy the entire day.

- (1) *The arrangement of Calvary Hill.* The ritual of the day begins in the church, where tall, green, tree branches, supported by a frame, are arranged to represent Calvary Hill. A big cross with an elaborate image of a white Jesus Christ is placed on top of the green arrangement to simulate the crucifixion. This activity is performed by the *Priostes* with the help of their sons. *Priostes* are male residents, mostly from San Rafael and Santa Isabel, who are responsible for the organization and financing of the day's festivities. Meanwhile, women are busy in their homes preparing the *fanesca*, a traditional dish of the day in Ecuador¹.
- (2) *Procesión del Viacrucis.* The portrayal of the dramatic death of Jesus Christ begins in the afternoon. The *Procesión del Viacrucis* re-enacts the moments when Jesus carried the cross through the streets of Jerusalem before his crucifixion. It takes place in the main streets of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel and finishes at the *Jesús del Gran Poder* church. During this procession residents walk behind their local Christ and sing and pray at every one of thirteen stops. The main streets of the *barrios* cease for a time to be just a means of circulation and become the *via dolorosa*, or sacred way followed by Christ

¹ The *fanesca* is a thick fish soup cooked with milk, white cheese and twelve different kinds of grains which grow in the Altiplano. The preparation and consumption of this dish is limited to family members. *Priostes* interviewed in 1992 complained about the difficulty of providing this dish given the high costs of ingredients. Some of them decided to continue the tradition by only consuming *molo*, a potato mash, which had traditionally accompanied the *fanesca* dish.

during the agony preceding his death (Fig. 8-5).

A local resident representing Jesus Christ leads the procession. He is one of the *Priostes* who carries a cross, wears a white tunic, a crown of leaves on his head and walks bare footed. Two other *Priostes*, in plain clothes, each carry a cross. They represent the good thief and the bad thief who were crucified at the same time as Jesus Christ.

Each of the thirteen stops represents a place where Jesus fell on his way to crucifixion. These stops may be situated in front of a house or at a community centre, places chosen by the priests from among the residents. They take great pride in giving a sacred character to the front of their houses by decorating them with flowers and religious images (Fig. 8-6). On this occasion borders between *barrios* disappear and the territory of the three becomes one. It is equivalent to a huge, sacred place with a strong symbolic value for residents.

- (3) *Misa del Descendimiento*. Towards the end of the afternoon another stage of the drama takes place. The *Misa del Descendimiento* is the Mass ceremony where participants mourn the death of Christ before his crucified image. This ceremony is led by the priest and the *Santos Varones* and *Cucuruchos*, roles played by the *Priostes* (Fig. 8-7).

The function of the *Cucuruchos* is to walk about the church during the mass making sure that a strict atmosphere of mourning is kept. Their heads are covered with long purple masks, they wear purple tunics and carry a long, thin, wooden cross. This is used to tap on the floor whenever someone makes a noise or disrupts the orderly, solemn atmosphere. During the ceremony the image of the crucified Christ is surrounded by solemn *Santos Varones* wearing white, embroidered tunics. Their role is to take Christ's body down from the cross slowly and carefully, using white silk material since Christ's body should not be touched directly.

- (4) *Procesión del Santo Sepulcro*. After the image of Christ's body is removed from the cross it is placed inside a transparent coffin. This is illuminated from within by lighted bulbs, giving it a moving and dramatic appearance. Then a night procession takes place, again on the main streets of the *barrios*. The *Santos Varones* bear the coffin while other residents, including women, follow, carrying religious images which are also illuminated. People walk along the streets with candles in their hands. The procession ends between seven and eight in the evening and residents go back to their houses. The drama of Good Friday is over.



Figure 8-5. The Good Friday Procession. A crowd of residents from Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel walk along the main streets of the *barrios* following their local Christ. The streets have become the *via dolorosa*, the road followed by Christ as he carries a heavy cross to his crucifixion. On this occasion, public outdoor space acquires an important symbolic meaning for residents (Photo: Laureano Nastul, 1991).



Figure 8-6. One of the thirteen stops of the *via dolorosa*, by the front of a house in the *barrio*. These stops represent the points where Christ fell on his way to crucifixion. The procession crowd sings and prays at every stop. Specific places for procession stops are assigned by the local priest on the basis of the demonstrated religious devotion of individual residents. For the *barrio* residents, this represents an opportunity to publicly affirm themselves before the members of their community. (Photo: Laureano Nastul, 1991).



Figure 8-7. Above: a *prioste* carries the cross of Christ along the main street of the *barrio* during the Good Friday Procession. Below: a group of *cucuruchos* stands in front of the church before the beginning of the day's Mass. *Priostes* and *cucuruchos* are the main public characters of the ceremony and are responsible for its organization and funding. They are willing to bear the costs of this undertaking because of the considerable public affirmation they receive. (Photos: Laureano Nastul, 1991).



The Participants of Good Friday

Good Friday celebrations attract large numbers of residents from Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Between sixty and seventy residents participate in the procession. This number is doubled at the Mass ceremony. Most participants seem to be residents from San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Few youths are observed directly taking part in the procession. Thus, the majority of participants are either children or adult residents, of both sexes. The greatest numbers of participants are observed at the Mass celebration, the exception being the young *barrio* males who do not directly take part in any of the events. However they do participate in the festivity but as distant observers. They follow the processions from the side, observe people going into church and wait outside until the ceremony is over to meet their friends and relatives.

From a gender point of view the protagonists of Good Friday are males- Jesus Christ, the *Santos Varones*, the *Cucuruchos*, the priest. Women only play a main public role as decorators of the house fronts which serve as stops in the *Procesión del Viacrucis*.

The Organizers and their Social Motives

In contrast with Palm Sunday, *barrio* residents, mostly from Santa Isabel and San Rafael, play the key role in organizing and financing the day's celebrations. They decorate the church, carry the cross, take Christ from the cross and carry his coffin during the procession. The role of the priests is limited to leading prayers during the mass and procession ceremonies.

Eight male residents from the *barrios* of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel are the *Priostes* who organize and finance the costs involved in this celebration. They volunteer to assume this responsibility for a consecutive period of eight years². To maintain the tradition of celebrating Good Friday is the expressed motivation of the *Priostes*.

The costs of Good Friday celebrations are considerable. Residents who volunteer as *Priostes* are not necessarily the most well-to-do or economically prosperous. On the contrary their earnings are rather modest³. The most likely interpretation of this phenomenon is that the *Priostes* are, subconsciously, motivated to improve their social standing in the community by undertaking an activity which is respected by all (*Santos Varones*, for instance, are supposed to be models of religious behaviour). Also, poor residents of the *barrios* live in a society which gives them little chance of improving their social standing. By contrast, religious activities such as Good Friday gives them an accessible opportunity to gain respect.

² Information source: Interviews carried out in 1992 with three of the eight *priostes* present at the *Jesús del Gran Poder* church.

³ One of the *Priostes* for example, earns his living by selling hand-made brooms.

The Role of the Church

Priostes complain about the role of the Church in Good Friday celebrations. Priests have to be paid by the *Priostes* to celebrate the Mass and do not appear greatly interested in continuing the traditional celebration. In 1992, for example, the *Procesión del Viñrucis* did not take place and the traditional *Lavatorio de Pies* and *Sábado de Gloria* are losing importance because of the priests' lack of interest.

A possible interpretation is that church members are not interested in small celebrations that take place in every *barrio* but in big centralized ones which attract more people, give them more prestige, and are easier to organize from an administrative point of view. Another reason may relate to the changing nature of the Catholic Church. Priests no longer live in the *barrios* as they once did, most probably because there are not enough of them, given the increasing lack of vocation. Priests are assigned to the *barrio* for a one year period and, as a result, have little contact with the residents and are distanced from their culture and needs⁴. It seems paradoxical that it is not the Catholic Church but the residents of Indian origin who are interested in preserving the Catholic religious traditions in San Rafael and Santa Isabel.

Easter Week in the *Barrios* of Northwest Quito

Easter week celebrations take place in several *barrios* of the northwest of Quito. They all celebrate the same event but the style of celebrations is not homogeneous. Each *barrio* has its own Easter Week culture. Residents of nearby San Carlos Alto, for example, take their image of Christ down from the cross on Tuesday instead of on Friday as in Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Subsequently they mourn the body of Christ over a whole week. The *Cucuruchos* role is not limited to keeping order in the church; they also take part in the *Viacrucis* procession (Ribadeneira, 1987)

The Easter Week culture of the *barrios*' seems to be influenced by traditional, religious practices stemming from either Quito or the countryside. Easter week commemoration in San Carlos Alto, for example, follows a style of celebration typical of the rural areas northwest of Quito. In the case of Santa Isabel, San Rafael and Mena del Hierro, the celebration aims to reproduce the traditional ceremony of the Quito City Cathedral of the city of Quito which honours *Jesús del Gran Poder*. The cathedral ceremony reproduces in turn the Good Friday ceremony celebrated in Seville, Spain. This last was introduced in Quito by the Franciscan Community in 1961.

The difference in styles of the area can probably be explained by the residents' different geographical origin and the traditional religious symbols of reference of the area. Residents

⁴ During my fieldwork for example, the priest assigned to provide religious services for the three *barrios* asked me personally to help him to get to know people of the community.

of Santa Isabel and San Rafael were already living in this area at the time of the *Haciendas* before the urbanization of the area. The traditional and most important religious symbol of this former rural area near the capital city was the Cathedral of Quito in the centre of the city. Residents of San Carlos Alto and Mena del Hierro are mostly immigrants from rural areas who came to Quito seeking new opportunities. They probably maintain their religious customs from the countryside in celebrating Good Friday. This explains the differences in style of celebration with residents of Santa Isabel and San Rafael. This also explains the limited participation of residents of Mena del Hierro in the *Via Crucis* procession.

Other Religious Celebrations in Mena del Hierro and the Loss of Traditions

The February *Carnival*, in principle a religious festivity, is also publicly celebrated in Mena del Hierro. The Carnival consists of groups of friends, neighbours and relatives getting together to play with water, the object being to make the others wet whilst remaining dry oneself. Friends get attacked in the street with water bombs or are simply lifted, and dumped bodily into a large builder's bucket. This game which originally was meant to be played between acquaintances is completely out of hand in Quito today. During the whole month of February the streets of the city become dangerous places; pedestrians may be attacked at any hour of the day by a water bomb from an unknown source.

All Souls' Day is celebrated on the 2nd of November. In rural areas and in *barrios* of Quito with a strong Indian influence this is a very important religious celebration. Groups of friends and neighbours get together to mourn their dead for a whole day and night. They visit the cemetery, pray all day, eat, and offer to the dead the foods they preferred when they were alive. In Mena del Hierro this tradition has been lost and the only remaining practice of this festivity is the preparation of *colada morada* and *guaguas*.

Colada morada is a drink made out of purple corn, fruit and spices. *Guaguas* are bread loaves shaped like a child. The purple colour and the child figure are probably analogies to the idea of death and birth. In Mena del Hierro, several women from the *Club de Madres* volunteer to get together to prepare the traditional drink and publicly offer it to *Barrio* residents. The community sports field is the central space where drinks are offered to passers-by.

There are two other important religious festivities which used to be celebrated in Mena del Hierro and surrounding San Rafael and Santa Isabel: *San Juan, San Pedro y San Pablo* and the *Pase del Niño*. The festivity of *San Juan, San Pedro y San Pablo* is celebrated annually in Ecuador around June. Special importance to this festivity is given by Indian populations in Andean rural regions of Ecuador who celebrate it with great pomp. This festivity coincides with a traditional, Indian festivity to worship the sun. A mix of native Indian and Catholic elements is observed on this occasion.

The custom to have a local celebration of *San Juan, San Pedro and San Pablo* in Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel has been lost in recent years. The reasons behind the loss of this tradition are not clear. In nearby Cotocollao however (the traditional urban centre) the tradition to commemorate religious festivities is strongly maintained. *San Juan, San Pedro y San Pablo*, for example, is a popular festivity that many people from surrounding neighbourhoods attend.

The *Pase del Niño* is the second tradition which has long ago being lost in Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. This celebration consists of a procession where people carry an image of the baby Jesus along the streets. They are followed by people representing typical characters of the *yumbo* dances such as *los ángeles, la yumbada, los morenos*. The *yumbo* dances also mix native Indian and Catholic rituals. The *Pase del Niño* is still celebrated in some *barrios* of the area, such as Santa Anita.

Discussion of Religious Festivities

The public celebration of religious festivities is an important value for residents of Mena del Hierro and neighbouring San Rafael and Santa Isabel. An active, numerous and enthusiastic participation is observed during the events of Easter week. Public outdoor space is a main scene for the celebration of Easter festivities. The day-to-day character of the main streets of the *barrios* and of the Daquilema sports field is dramatically changed by the celebration. Streets cease to be mere means of circulation and become sacred areas of religious procession. The sports field is transformed from a plain, open area into a sacred place where more than one hundred people congregate to pray and celebrate an important religious event in their lives.

Public outdoor space has a very important social function for residents of the three *barrios*. As material support for social practices of social and religious importance, public outdoor space becomes an important symbol for *barrio* residents: it is the place where palm leaves are blessed on Palm Sunday, where one walks together with others in the religious procession of Good Friday and stops to pray, where one meets and talks with friends and relatives after the religious service. On the occasions of religious festivities public outdoor space also permits the spatial and social integration of Mena del Hierro, San Rafael and Santa Isabel. Daily borders between the three *barrios* disappear, the territory of the three becomes one, that of people who share the same religious motivations.

Religious festivities have several functions for *barrio* residents. First of all, residents are able to satisfy the need for public celebration of religious beliefs. Social respect, an important social need for community members, is also satisfied. Festivity organizers improve their social standing in the community by performing these esteemed activities. In the context of a

society which gives little opportunity to poor people to improve their social position, religious activities are a relatively easy means to gain social respect.

Barrios populares in Quito have many similarities but also several differences. One of these differences concerns different ways of celebrating religious festivities. In the northwest of Quito, for example, every *barrio* or group of *barrios* has a unique way of celebrating Easter week. Residents are proud of these differences. These differences are indeed what gives a special personality to every *barrio* and make up what can be called the local culture of every neighbourhood. The tradition to give importance to having a specific local celebration is inherited from rural Andean areas of Ecuador. Easter week, and especially Good Friday, is celebrated with great pomp in the countryside. Peasants spend a fortune financing the festivity which puts them in debt for many years.

The intensity of public outdoor festivities in *barrios populares* during Easter week contrast with the total absence of outdoor festivities in high-income neighbourhoods of Quito. Like many cities in Latin America, Quito is a mosaic of different social worlds. Every neighbourhood, or group of neighbourhoods has a specific style of life, of social practices and values, a specific local culture.

The celebration of religious festivities is, however, a tradition which is increasingly losing importance in *barrios populares* of Quito. In Mena del Hierro and neighbouring San Rafael and Santa Isabel for example, several celebrations such as *San Pedro*, *San Juan y San Pablo* and *El Pase del Niño* have already been lost completely. In traditional *barrios* of Quito and in rural areas of Ecuador, San Pedro and San Pablo is the most important religious festivity of the year. Easter week has started in recent years to lose some of its traditional rituals. Tradition is making room to modernity.

SOCIAL FESTIVITIES

The Musical Festival of Mother's Day

The Events

Mother's Day is celebrated in May. This festivity is enthusiastically celebrated in Mena del Hierro. It consists of an outdoor musical festival organized by Mena del Hierro's youth group *Juventud y Progreso* for the mothers in the three neighbouring *barrios*. This is one of the rare occasions when women, accompanied by their children, take over public outdoor space en masse (Fig. 8-8). The show takes place at the community sports field, starting in mid-afternoon and continuing until after nightfall. On this day the sports field becomes an amphitheatre. Around a hundred women sit in a row to watch and listen to several musical groups, from different *barrios* of the northwest of Quito, play Andean and Caribbean tunes.



Figure 8-8. The public celebration of Mother's Day in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. Over a hundred women gather on the community's sports field to listen and watch musical and theatre groups. This is one of the rare occasions when *barrio* women, accompanied by their children, appear in public outdoor space en masse to enjoy social interaction. (Photos: Yvonne Riaño, 1991).



During the festival women receive flowers, champagne and biscuits served by members of the youth group. Children play round about and are entertained by clowns, and by theatre groups alternating with musical groups. The Mother's Day festival is an exceptional occasion in that large numbers of women are able to enjoy social interaction in public space over the period of an entire afternoon.

At the end of the afternoon the festival moves inside the community centre because the sports field is not illuminated. The women and children return to their homes to attend to household duties. During the afternoon, some young residents, not members of the youth group, have been present, listening to the music but as distant observers. As women leave, the gender composition of the crowd changes and young males become the majority. The festival becomes a party where participants dance and drink alcohol.

The Organizers and their Social Motives

As explained earlier the festival is organized by Mena del Hierro's youth organization *Grupo Cultural Juventud y Progreso* with the financial and logistical support of the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente de Quito*, the grassroots umbrella organization of Quito's northwestern *barrios*. There is also a minor support from the *Comité Barrial de Mena del Hierro*, the community organization for infrastructure improvement. The young members of the Cultural Group have organized this festival for several consecutive years and take great pride in being main organizers. During my fieldwork young people were able to film the festival thanks to my camera and training in videotaping. They proudly kept the tape as a record of their activities as a group.

The Mother's Day festival would not be possible however without the financial and logistical support of the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente*. The Federation has also promoted young musicians in the *barrios* of the northwest of Quito for some years. Many young people in these areas have great musical talent and several musical groups have consolidated in the northwest as a result of the Federation's work. Musical groups today are organized in an association called *Coordinadora Cultural del Noroccidente* which carries out many cultural activities in the northwestern *barrios* of Quito.

The expressed motive of members of the youth group to organize the Mother's Day festival is to contribute to the community's well-being but, most importantly, and in their own words, "to amuse themselves". They see themselves as a "*jorga de amigos*" (group of friends) who want to make the most out of life. To gain social prestige within the community is also a possible, unexpressed motivation.

For the *Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente* promoting cultural activities in the *barrios* has a clear aim: to contribute to building a common sense of identity among residents of *barrios populares*. This aim also has a clear objective: to unite residents of *barrios* towards a political

action which seeks the reorganization of power structures in the city of Quito. Such reorganization should permit a "*gestión popular*" or urban management of Quito's *barrios*, from the point of view of the needs and interests of low-income residents. The difference in motivations between members of the youth group and Federation leaders, however, often create conflict between these two groups.

End of Year Festivities

The "Fiestas Barriales"

The anniversary of Quito's foundation on the 6th of December is celebrated annually by the city's administrative authorities, to create among residents a sense of pride in the history and cultural heritage of the capital city. The *Comisión de Fiestas del Municipio* finances on this occasion several cultural events in the main streets, squares, and parks of the city. This Commission and private rum producing companies also contribute to finance *Bailes Populares* in the *barrios* of Quito.

Residents of Quito, of all socioeconomic groups, take to the streets for over a week to watch the events, and to dance, sing, eat and drink. The streets are filled with bands, theatre groups, jugglers, clowns, balloons and food kiosks. Outdoor *bailes* and competitions between bands take place everywhere. The consumption of alcohol is high. All week long the radio and newspaper give information about the events and their location.

In Mena del Hierro, residents also celebrate. Several events take place in the *barrio*: a *Baile Popular*, "campeonatos relámpago" (blitz competitions) of indoor soccer, volleyball and cards. There are also fireworks, drinks, and food. The *Baile Popular*, a ball open to all, mingles people from Mena del Hierro and several *barrios* of the area. On this occasion, the community sports field is the crucial space where all the events of the day take place. People gather at this outdoor space to watch and dance to the rhythm of several musical groups and individual singers who entertain the crowd with Caribbean music and traditional Ecuadorian tunes.

Musical groups may be from nearby *barrios* and singers from Mena del Hierro. Local talent is revealed on this occasion⁵. The atmosphere at the sports field and at the community centre is that of a carnival: people dance indoors and outdoors, kiosks run by residents sell food and drinks, people come and go; fireworks crack in the air. The *Baile Popular* in Mena del Hierro is well known in the Cotacollao district as it is one of the five big balls which traditionally take place in the area. These *Bailes* are very important for inhabitants of Cotacollao and surrounding *barrios populares*. They have become a stable part of the local

⁵ For example, Renán Miño, a *barrio* singer, for example, has already managed to start recording professionally.

culture and around three hundred people may participate at each event.

The *Baile* is organized by the Committee for the Improvement of the *Barrio's* Infrastructure, through the Commission for Social Affairs. The bulk of the financing is the responsibility of residents of Mena del Hierro. An interesting system of local financing exists: residents contribute a sum of money which is expected to correspond with their economic situation. There is considerable social pressure on those who own businesses (shops, bread makers, etc. to contribute a generous amount. Every year an interesting competition among the wealthy of the *barrio* takes place. None of them wants to appear as inferior to the others and thus they keep on increasing their contribution in order to come at least to the same level of the others.

All residents profit from this competition. Local shop owners often have an image of making too much money and the *Baile* is probably a good opportunity for them to gain social legitimacy within the community, as the amount of contributions is publicly read out during the party. Residents of Mena del Hierro forgive their wealthy if they show generosity and cooperation at such times.

"Blitz" sports competitions also take place on the day of the *Baile*. Indoor soccer and volleyball competitions for both young and adult males are held at the community sports field. Female basketball teams from San Rafael and Mena del Hierro also compete. As it is traditional in the Ecuadorian rural areas and in some *barrios* of Quito, betting accompanies all the competitions. Male residents play *cuarenta* (forty), also a traditional card game from rural areas, while their wives accompany them and observe the game. Betting takes place here also. Winners of the sports competitions receive trophies which have usually being donated by alcohol companies such as *Ron Caney*.

Another important *fiesta* takes place in Mena del Hierro during the week of Quito's festivities: the *fiesta* of the *Provincianos de Pujilí*. *Pujileños* are a group of immigrants from Pujilí, a rural area in the Andean province of Cotopaxi, who live and work in Quito. The community of *pujileños* in Quito maintains close ties with each other and get together every year to celebrate the festivity of their native land. Their traditional food and drinks are consumed and dances and costumes typical of their home province are presented during the celebration (Fig. 8-9). This is an outdoor festivity, financed by all members of the group which takes place in Mena del Hierro. A *barrio* ex-president, also an immigrant from Pujilí, provides a large space outdoors on his property for the event. Neighbours are also invited, especially since many of them are from Pujili.

Residents of Mena del Hierro celebrate during the week of the anniversary of Quito's foundation but they give their own content to the celebration. They are really celebrating the festivity of their *barrio* and/or of their province of origin. Official authorities seek to foster a sense of identity among inhabitants of Quito around the symbol of the capital city.



Figure 8-9. The outdoor celebration of the *Fiesta de Provincianos de Pujill* in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. On this occasion outdoor space allows immigrants to the city to maintain their regional traditions. The participants in the party gather outdoors to consume traditional food and drinks, and to dance and wear costumes typical of their home province. (Photos: Laureano Nastul, 1992).



Residents of Mena del Hierro, however, consolidate a different and unique identity by means of the celebration: that of *provincianos*⁶ who live in Quito in an urban space which they have founded and to which they have given a unique social character and style of life. The timing of the celebration with Quito's anniversary probably has a pragmatic character: to make use of the funds available from the municipality and rum producing companies. Residents also like to celebrate when the others are celebrating and have much pride in celebrating their own special *barrio* festivity. This makes them different and special.

The Año Viejo Festivity

The end of the year is also publicly celebrated in Mena del Hierro. The focus of the public celebration is the "*Año Viejo*", a dummy made out of straw and fabric, which represents the old year and which "dies" after being burned on the streets of the *barrio* at midnight on the 31st of December. This is not a celebration by the whole community but of groups of street neighbours who gather together to make the dummy, burn it and then dance all night within their homes. Burning an *Año Viejo* is an old tradition of the Andean rural world. To burn an "*Año Viejo*" symbolizes getting rid of negative events that took place during the past year. People may then start the new year with a new spirit.

The "*Año Viejo*" is a male figure which has a will tied to the body. The will contains a list of wishes which traditionally contain a criticism of politicians for their bad management of the country or region. In Mena del Hierro, the dummy usually represents one of the locals and is made by male residents, helped by their sons. Male residents, either individually or in a group, also write the will but always in secret. The object of the will is to openly say the things to neighbours and family members which usually one does not dare say. This includes behaviour criticism, gossip, asking to be forgiven for past mistakes, etc. Writing a will requires initiative and a lot of creativity. It should be humorous and ideally, should rhyme. The residents who make the "*Año Viejo*" are usually those most active in the improvement of *barrio* infrastructure.

Street neighbours, friends, and family members go out to the street near 12 p.m. The "widow" of the "*Año Viejo*" goes out fully dressed in black and stands next to the dummy while somebody reads the will. Residents laugh and make comments until midnight when the dummy is burned. After the burning the people embrace and exchange New Year greetings. The celebration continues indoors: residents dance, eat and drink for several hours afterwards. These parties do not have a very private character; Mena del Hierro residents freely circulate from one party to the next.

The celebration of New Year's Eve in neighbouring San Rafael has a different character to

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that of Mena del Hierro. There are activities all day long; sports, cards competitions, and a *Baile Popular* at the end of the day. In contrast to Mena del Hierro, New Year's Eve dancing in San Rafael takes place out in the street – despite the many holes. The dancing is open to everyone and people dance together accompanied by a musical group from neighbouring Santa Isabel.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has shown that a passion for public celebration is one of the characteristics of the lifestyle of Mena del Hierro's residents. Numerous religious and social celebrations take place in the *barrio* throughout the year. Such celebrations are organized by youths and adults, although youths specialize in organizing social events and adults in organizing religious events. Women appear in public space en masse on Mother's Day but they play a notably passive role in other festivities. The active role in organizing and defining the content of the public celebrations is reserved for men.

Public outdoor space is the main arena for all festivities. The streets and the community sports field in particular, are flooded with people of all ages and from several *barrios*. The sports field takes on different functions according to the occasion: that of an amphitheatre for the musical festival; a ballroom for the *baile popular*; a field for the sports competition and a *plaza* for the bonfire. The need for several spaces for public festivities is thus solved without friction between the residents using the principle of multifunctionality.

Social celebrations in the *barrio*, whether open to the whole community or restricted to smaller groups, are held intensively. This is not the tradition in most high-income neighbourhoods of Quito. The social atmosphere in the *barrio* resembles that of a village in the countryside, whereas the high-income neighbourhoods resemble middle-class suburbs in North American cities. The festivities themselves stem from customs in the former rural environments of the residents. Many traditions from the countryside, such as the *año viejo*, are maintained in the *barrio*, while these are increasingly being lost in the big cities.

Public outdoor space serves several social functions during religious festivities. Beyond satisfying the basic sociocultural need for public celebrations, the festivities contribute to reinforcing a sense of social belonging in the *barrio*. Individuals periodically need to appear in public to officialize their public role. As a group with little chance of attaining recognition in the wider society, the *barrio's* social and religious festivities give their organizers the perfect chance to gain social respect before members of the community. The public celebrations are widely attended and thus residents of the *barrio* are able to integrate socially with members of the surrounding *barrios* in the northwest of Quito. Local sporting and musical talents are revealed at these outdoor festivities, and the organizing of events builds confidence and

experience for other self-help activities.

Several groups are involved in promoting social festivities, but with quite different motives: The *Federación de barrios del Noroccidente* seeks to unify the residents of *barrios* of the northwest to gain political decision-making power in the urban management of Quito; The *Grupo Cultural* aims at amusement and at making the most out of life; Members of the *Comité Barrial* are preoccupied with obtaining personal benefits through clientelistic relationships with traditional parties; The "wealthy" of the *barrios* want to gain social respect among community members; The Municipality seeks to foster a sense of belonging within the City of Quito. And lastly, all these groups are preoccupied with consolidating their own power.

Despite the Municipality's efforts to promote the city of Quito as a symbol of social identity, the residents of Mena del Hierro spontaneously identify themselves more with their *barrio*. They affirm a unique identity, that of *provincianos* living in a special space within the city, a space which they have founded and to which they have given a particular personality through the lifestyle and social relations they practice there. Public space thus plays a crucial social and existential role for *barrio* residents as an arena of self-affirmation. It gives special local meaning to the lives of residents otherwise affected by social exclusion in the wider society.

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CHAPTER IX

THE SPATIAL PREFERENCES OF BARRIO RESIDENTS FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The results of a structured survey

INTRODUCTION

Locational choices and specific reasons for these choices have traditionally been a central concern of urban geography. This theme has been dominantly approached from an economic perspective. Thus the main explanatory patterns for locational choices are geographical distance and accessibility, measured by cost of transportation (Beguin, 1984). Location theories have been built on economic models of decision-making which describe individuals as: "economic maximizers, aiming for the highest possible income; "satisficers", concerned with environmental uncertainty; or "strategists", able to control risks and uncertainties of the environment to maximize economic output (Berry et al., 1987).

Economic models, however, have been increasingly criticized for their exclusive focus on a narrow set of factors to explain spatial location. The traditional concept of the friction of distance has been eroded as a causal variable. For many geographers, sociocultural factors are emerging as the determining forces on locational choices. Social distance, social prestige, cultural values, quality of life and lifestyle similarities have been shown to be important in influencing spatial choices (Firey, 1945; Whyte, 1955; Jones, 1960; Cooper, 1971; Berry and Cohen, 1973; Abler, 1974; Ley, 1983).

Most economic models have focused on the study of industrial location and have neglected the study of urban activities carried out by residents of the city. Thus economic models have a static nature. Where are the people who live in the city? What are their movements in space? What are the patterns of urban activities? Recent efforts in urban geography have addressed these questions by looking at the daily activity patterns of residents of the city. Such studies have examined: (a) the time spent by city residents in discretionary and non-discretionary activities (Chapin, 1974); (b) the travelling time for daily activities and their spatial location (Anderson, 1974; Chapin, 1974); and (c) daily urban routines across space and time (Hägerstrand, 1974; Pred, 1981), and the movement field of elderly men on their weekly round (Stutz, 1976).

Most of these studies in the literature have examined activities on a daily and weekly basis and have not included less routine activities which are carried out on a monthly, bimonthly or yearly basis. Also, the more attention has been devoted to the timescale than to the nature of the activities themselves. For instance, all activities taking place on a daily basis are examined rather than looking at the activities individually and inquiring where they are conducted and how frequently. The studies have not examined in detail specific sets of activities, for example social activities, nor the reasons that residents have for conducting these activities in certain places

Social space studies have provided a more comprehensive approach. Chombart de Lauwe (1960) studied the daily, weekly, and occasional orbits of group social activity in Paris. Buttner (1972) examined the spatial orbits of social interaction and urban service activities for "localite" and "urbanite" residents in Glasgow. The daily to yearly frequency of these activities was investigated. Flad (1973) examined the spatial location of regular and occasional activities for a group of American Indians in Syracuse. However, the reasons for spatial preferences are not specifically addressed in these studies. An exception is the investigation by Ledrut (1968) of the social importance of neighbourhood and city space for social interaction and shopping activities, as well as the reasons for preferring one space or another.

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the understanding of locational choice by documenting the spatial preferences of Mena del Hierro's residents for social activities. The specific objectives of the chapter are: (1) to ascertain the geographical location of residents' preferred places for their activities, (2) to discern the specific reasons for such spatial preferences, (3) to investigate the frequency of social interaction and shopping activities. In this chapter the social interaction patterns of residents will be examined based on the results of structured interviews (see Chapter I for methodological details). This methodology is expected to permit recognition of the relative importance of specific geographical locations for the social interaction activities of residents, as well as the relative role of social and economic factors in influencing the spatial preferences of residents.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As explained above, several studies on daily activity patterns have been carried out so far. Ley (1983) provides a comprehensive summary of main studies on daily patterns which will be presented below. In a study on discretionary and non-discretionary activities in Washington, Chapin (1974) found that the time city residents spend on discretionary activities is almost identical to the time spent on the job or in homemaking. Discretionary time is spent on passive activities such as watching television, resting and relaxing. Time-budget studies in Washington by Anderson (1971) and Chapin (1974) suggest that the

longest trip of city residents is the journey to work whereas the shortest is for social interaction and recreation. Intermediate trips are for shopping. The work trip is spatially focused, the shopping trip is multinodal and discretionary trips appear to be scattered randomly.

Time-geography studies in Sweden (Pred, 1981) have portrayed individuals and households as following a series of daily paths through time and across space, with their movement broken by periods spent at a sequence of stations, including settings as the home, the office, school, shops, and sites of discretionary activities such as the church or community centre. These studies with their concern on scheduling problems and differential constraints on activities have proven useful in Swedish planning studies. A categorization study of daily activities according to their repetitiveness showed the heavy predominance of routine activities for students and educators in Michigan compared to periodic or unexpected events (Stephens, 1976). Such findings lead Ley (1983:99) to conclude that "urban man is a pragmatist rather than an optimizer and essentially conservative as he keeps to familiar and well-tried schedules".

The study of urban routines is for Ley (1983:102) essential to the field of social geography. "Routines consolidate a lifestyle or a subculture. They involve repeated interaction with persons, places, and objects that are well-known and have a meaning to people over and above their objective features"...For most of us the routines of the daily round provide our effective linkage with the city, the cultural reality of urban living". The spatial configuration of routines has been addressed by social space studies. The concept of social space has been developed to define the process of social interaction of specified groups in particular places. Social space implies not structure but process (Buttimer, 1969, 1972; Boal, 1970; Weightman, 1976). Usually the social space of a group will incorporate the places identified with its recurrent routines, its daily or weekly rounds (Ley, 1983). For example, the weekly round of a group of elderly men living in the skid-row area of San Diego was limited to a few blocks around their residential hotel (Stutz, 1976). Their social space is defined by the field of movements between stations of the weekly round including restaurants, bars, a public plaza, the welfare department, rescue missions, a library, a small park and drop-in centres. Around such stations, the attitudes and subcultural norms of skid-row men were constructed and reinforced (Wiseman, 1970).

Social space is also a concept with objective and subjective dimensions. The objective social space of a group is defined by their patterns of interaction on the map, whereas subjective space is defined by their perceived extent of a socially meaningful area (Ley, 1983). Flad (1973) incorporated both of these two dimensions in a six-month study of the social space of American Indians in Syracuse. Using a methodology of participant observation and a limited number of questionnaires, Flad was able to demarcate the stations on the daily round. Within Syracuse, Indian social space is riveted around the downtown neighbourhood.

An Indian subculture is maintained both in a number of public and private settings including restaurants, taverns, churches, the lacrosse arena, neighbourhood homes and the nearby reservation. Shared information and common activities promote a distinctive group identity within a confined area.

Patterns of social space vary with economic status. A pilot study of children in Vancouver (Ley, 1983) showed that the social space of working class children was proximate and private, focused on the nearby homes of friends and relatives, neighbourhood stores, and places of worship. In contrast, the social space of upper-middle class children includes more public and distant settings such as the ski slope, a restaurant or out-of-town trips. As defined by Ley (1983:104), "upper-middle class are being socialized into an identity that includes distance, glamour, and performance in public places, whereas working-class children, particularly those of immigrant parents, will find their identity in a more private and local world with less varied settings".

Further studies of social space have shown that interaction patterns for different purposes in a local area do not necessarily coincide in space (Herbert and Raine, 1976). A study of an Appalachian community in Cincinnati showed that there was a variation in the radius of several standard ellipses drawn around the home area describing the distribution of friends, relatives and the voluntary associations to which community members belonged (Hyland, 1970). In his work in Paris, Chombart de Lauwe (1960) recognized concentric tiers of social space stratified according to the activity type and its relative frequency. First there is "familial space", or the network of relationships characteristic of the domestic level of social interaction; then "neighbourhood space", or the network that encompasses daily and local movement; "economic space", which embraces certain employment centres; and finally the "urban sector" or "urban regional" social space.

Findings from Buttmer's study (1972:295) of the social space of localite and urbanite populations in Glasgow show "a restricted, roughly circular profile for the typical localite, with most daily and weekly destinations except the journey to work concentrated in the five- and ten- minute zones. The urbanite's profile, by contrast, is highly diffuse, involving little interaction with the zone closest to home". In his study of social space in several neighbourhoods of Toulouse, Ledrut (1968) identified three types of neighbourhood social life. In a first group of neighbourhoods the level of collective life is very intense as residents very much socialize with each other and enthusiastically participate in collective activities. In a second group of neighbourhoods residents interacted with each other but their participation in collective activities was low. A third group of neighbourhoods showed little interaction between residents as well as a low participation in collective activities. Reasons are. An intense social life in the neighbourhood, however, does not, in most cases, exclude a relationship of residents with the city, particularly with downtown.

THE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF BARRIO RESIDENTS

Residents of Mena del Hierro are very sociable individuals. They meet others around a set of five types of activities including: a) religion, b) food shopping, c) social meeting; d) sports (basketball, soccer and volleyball), e) clubs (soccer club) and associations (parents, religious and *barrio* improvement associations). Some of these activities, such as religion, shopping and visiting, are practised by all age and gender groups in the *barrio*. However, every age and gender group has a preferred focus of social interaction: girls and young women prefer basketball; boys and young men favour soccer; and adult men prefer volleyball. Food shopping is, in contrast, the dominant focus of social activity for adult women.

Table 9-1. Social activities of *barrio* residents, by age and gender

	FEMALES			MALES		
	Children	Youths	Adults	Children	Youths	Adults
Mass	84%	83%	92%	100%	78%	91%
Easter	95%	92%	71%	87%	72%	65%
Christmas	95%	92%	67%	93%	78%	65%
Basketball	79%	50%	12%	20%	33%	0%
Volleyball	21%	8%	4%	0%	50%	52%
Soccer	26%	8%	4%	67%	78%	22%
Minor Shopping	68%	50%	92%	40%	39%	43%
Bulk Shopping	69%	58%	92%	40%	50%	43%
Associations	16%	25%	12%	40%	56%	39%

In general, religion is the activity that congregates the largest numbers of residents of the whole community whereas associative activities are only practised by a third of the community, dominantly by male residents of all ages. Most associative activities, however, are the result of residents' own initiative and not of external and already existing clubs and associations. (e.g. Soccer club Mena del Hierro; Parents' Association; Community Improvement Committee). In the following section, a detailed description of residents' level of participation in every type of social activity is presented.

The Participation of Residents in Religious Activities

The Mass

The total number of residents who participate in the Mass ceremony is very high. Eighty-eight percent of all residents, including children, young and adult, make use of their free time

to visit the church. Men and women have similar percentages of participation: 89% and 87% respectively. With a participation of 100%, *barrio*'s boys are the *barrio* group with the highest number of participants. Young men are on the contrary the age group with the lowest number of participants: 78%. This is however a high percentage of participation if compared with that of most young men living in the capital cities of Latin America today.

Table 9-2. Participation of *barrio* residents in religious activity, by age and gender: Mass

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Attend Mass	16	10	22	48	15	14	21	50	98
(%)	84.2	83.3	91.7	87.3	100.0	77.8	91.3	89.3	88.3
Do not attend Mass	3	2	2	7	0	4	2	6	13
(%)	15.8	16.7	8.3	12.7	0.0%	28.6	9.5	12.0	11.7
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

Easter Celebrations

Most residents of Mena del Hierro participate in Easter celebrations. Seventy-eight percent of all residents participate in this religious festivity. Participation by women is a little higher than for men: 84% versus 73%. *Barrio* girls are the group with the highest number of participants: 95%. Adult men, in contrast, are the group with the lowest number of participants: 65%.

Table 9-3. Participation of *barrio* residents in religious activity, by age and gender: Easter Celebrations

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Participate	18	11	17	46	13	13	15	41	87
(%)	94.7	91.7	70.8	83.6	86.7	72.2	65.2	73.2	78.4
Do not participate	1	1	7	9	2	5	8	15	24
(%)	5.3	8.3	29.2	16.4	13.3	27.8	34.8	26.8	21.6
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

Christmas

Similarly to Mass and Easter activities most residents of Mena del Hierro participate in the public celebration of Christmas time. Seventy-nine percent of the residents population meet at the church to celebrate this religious event. The participation of women is slightly higher than that of men: 82% versus 77%. *Barrio's* girls are the group with the highest number of participants: 95%. Adult men are the group with the lowest rate of participants: 65%. The participation of *barrio's* girls and adult men in Christmas activities is the same as for Easter celebrations.

Table 9-4. Participation of *barrio* residents in religious activity, by age and gender: Christmas

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Participate	18	11	16	45	14	14	15	43	88
(%)	94.7	91.7	66.7	81.8	93.3	77.8	65.2	76.8	79.3
Do not participate	1	1	8	10	1	4	8	13	23
(%)	15.3	8.3	33.3	18.2	6.7	22.2	34.8	23.2	20.7
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

The Participation of Residents in Sports Activities

Basketball

Thirty percent of all residents practice the sport of basketball. Basketball is essentially a sport of female residents: 43% of *barrio's* female residents play basketball versus 16% of male residents. The two groups with the highest number of participants are girls and young women: they participate with respective percentages of 79% and 50%. In contrast, very few adult women practice the sport of basketball: only 12%. No adult men play basketball.

Table 9-5. Participation of *barrio* residents in sports, by age and gender: Basketball

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Participate	15	6	3	24	3	6	0	9	33
(%)	78.9	50.0	12.5	43.6	20.0	33.3	0.0	16.1	29.7
Do not participate	4	6	21	31	12	12	23	47	78
(%)	21.1	50.0	87.5	56.4	80.0	66.7	100.0	83.9	70.3
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

Volleyball

Twenty-four percent of the residents practice the sport of volleyball. In contrast to basketball, volleyball is a game mainly practised by male residents. Thirty-seven percent of male residents play volleyball versus 11% of female residents¹. The two groups with the highest numbers of participants are young and adult men with respective percentages of 50% and 52%. Boys do not play volleyball, however, many are always seen at the sports field accompanying their relatives and watching the game.

Table 9-6. Participation of *barrio* residents in sports, by age and gender: Volleyball

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Participate	4	1	1	6	0	9	12	21	27
(%)	21.1	8.3	4.2	10.9	0.0	50.0	52.2	37.5	24.3
Do not participate	15	11	23	49	15	9	11	35	84
(%)	78.9	91.7	95.8	89.	100.0	50.0	47.8	62.5	75.7
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

¹ Survey results show that four girls play volleyball, i.e. 21 percent of the interviewed population. This percentage of participation by girls elevates the total participation of *barrio's* female residents in volleyball playing to 11 percent. This is an odd result. A review of the interviews carried out with the four girls shows that they play volleyball twice a week in the "Cuchipuerco" sports field. During my almost two years of fieldwork however I never saw one girl playing volleyball anywhere in the neighbourhood nor in Cuchipuerco. In Mena del Hierro girls are sometimes seen watching men play volleyball, in the company of their relatives, but never playing themselves. It is possible that these four girls misunderstood the question. Three of them were interviewed at the same time by the same interviewer and it is possible that they repeated the same answers of the first girl interviewed. These four girls live close to each other in the neighbourhood. It is therefore also possible that they are friends because they live close to each other and that from time to time they play volleyball. But I doubt it.

Soccer

Thirty percent of the residents use their free time to play soccer. Similarly to volleyball, soccer is a sports for men. Fifty percent of the *barrio's* male population socially interact with others through the sport of soccer. Only 13% of *barrio's* females play soccer². The two groups with the highest number of members playing soccer are boys and young men: 67% and 78% respectively. For adult men, soccer is a less popular sport than volleyball. Twenty percent of the adult men population play soccer versus 52% that play volleyball. The group with the lowest percentage of participants is adult women: 4%.

Table 9-7. Participation of *barrio* residents in sports, by age and gender: Soccer

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Participate	5	1	1	7	10	14	5	29	36
(%)	26.3	8.3	4.2	12.7	66.7	77.8	21.7	51.8	32.4
Do not participate	14	11	23	48	5	4	18	27	75
(%)	73.7	91.7	95.8	87.3	33.3	22.2	78.3	48.2	67.6
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

The Participation of Residents in Food Shopping Activities

Residents of Mena del Hierro define their food shopping in two categories: "el diario" meaning everyday needed foodstuffs like bread and milk and, "el mercado" meaning all the groceries needed to feed a family. These two kinds of food shopping have been named here "daily foodstuffs" and "market", respectively.

Shopping for Everyday Foodstuffs

Fifty-eight percent of residents shops for everyday foodstuffs. This is an activity performed mostly by female residents. Seventy-four percent of the female population participate in this activity 41% of the male population. The two groups with the highest number of participants are adult women and girls: 92% and 68% respectively. Young men are the group with the lowest percentage of participants: 39%. Boys and adult men have a similar but slightly higher percentage of participation: 40% and 43% respectively.

² Again, survey results for girls do not coincide with the reality observed in Mena del Hierro. Girls are observed sometimes watching men play soccer but never playing themselves! By cultural tradition soccer is a rough game to be played by men and not by women.

Table 9-8. Minor purchase shopping of *barrio* residents, by age and gender

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Shoppers	13	6	22	41	6	7	10	23	64
(%)	68.4	50.0	91.7	74.5	40.0	38.9	43.5	41.1	57.7
Non-shoppers	6	6	2	14	9	11	13	33	47
(%)	31.6	50.0	8.3	25.5	60.0	61.1	56.5	58.9	42.3
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

"Market" Shopping

Sixty percent of residents participate in the activity of "market" shopping. Many more women than men do "market" shopping: 76% versus 45%. The two groups with the highest number of participants are adult women and girls: 92% and 68%, respectively. Boys and adult men have the lowest percentage of participants: 40% and 43%. Young men have a slightly higher participation than adult men and boys in "market" shopping activities: 50%.

Table 9-9. Bulk purchase ("Market") shopping of *barrio* residents, by age and gender

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Shoppers	13	7	22	42	6	9	10	25	67
(%)	68.4	58.3	91.7	76.4	40.0	50.0	43.5	44.6	60.4
Non-shoppers	6	5	2	13	9	9	13	31	44
(%)	31.6	41.7	8.3	23.6	60.0	50.0	56.5	55.4	39.6
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

The Participation of Residents in Associative Activities

Thirty-one percent of the residents use their free time to participate in activities of associative nature (i.e. sports, political, religious, youth, neighbourhood improvement groups). The percentage of participation of female residents is very low compared to that of

male residents: 16% versus 45%. The group with the highest number of participants is young males: 56%. Boys and adult males also have relatively high rates of participation in associative activities: 40% and 39%. Of the female residents, young women is the group with the highest number of participants: 25%. The group with the lowest number of participants is adult women: 12%.

Table 9-10. Participation of *barrio* residents in associative activities, by age and gender

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Participants	3	3	3	9	6	10	9	25	34
(%)	15.8	25.0	12.5	16.4	40.0	55.6	39.1	44.6	30.6
Non- participants	16	9	21	46	9	8	14	31	77
(%)	84.2	75.0	87.5	83.6	60.0	44.4	60.9	55.4	69.4
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	23	56	111
(%)	17.1	10.8	21.6	49.5	13.5	16.2	20.7	50.5	100

THE FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF BARRIO RESIDENTS

Survey results show that the frequency of social meeting between neighbours of Mena del Hierro is very high. An average of 70% of the *barrio* residents conduct religious, sports, food shopping, visiting and associative activities with a daily to a weekly frequency (Fig. 9-1).

Daily food stuffs like milk and bread for example, are bought every day by 73% of shoppers. Seventy-two percent of shoppers do their "market" shopping once a week whereas 13% do "market" shopping every day. The main reason for this frequency is that they do not have a refrigerator or means of transporting large quantities of groceries.

Fifty-one percent of basketball players meet two times a week to practice the sport of basketball and 30% meets once a week. Forty-four percent of volleyball players meet twice a week and 41% once a week. Thirty-six percent of soccer players meets twice a week to play soccer and 42% meets once a week.

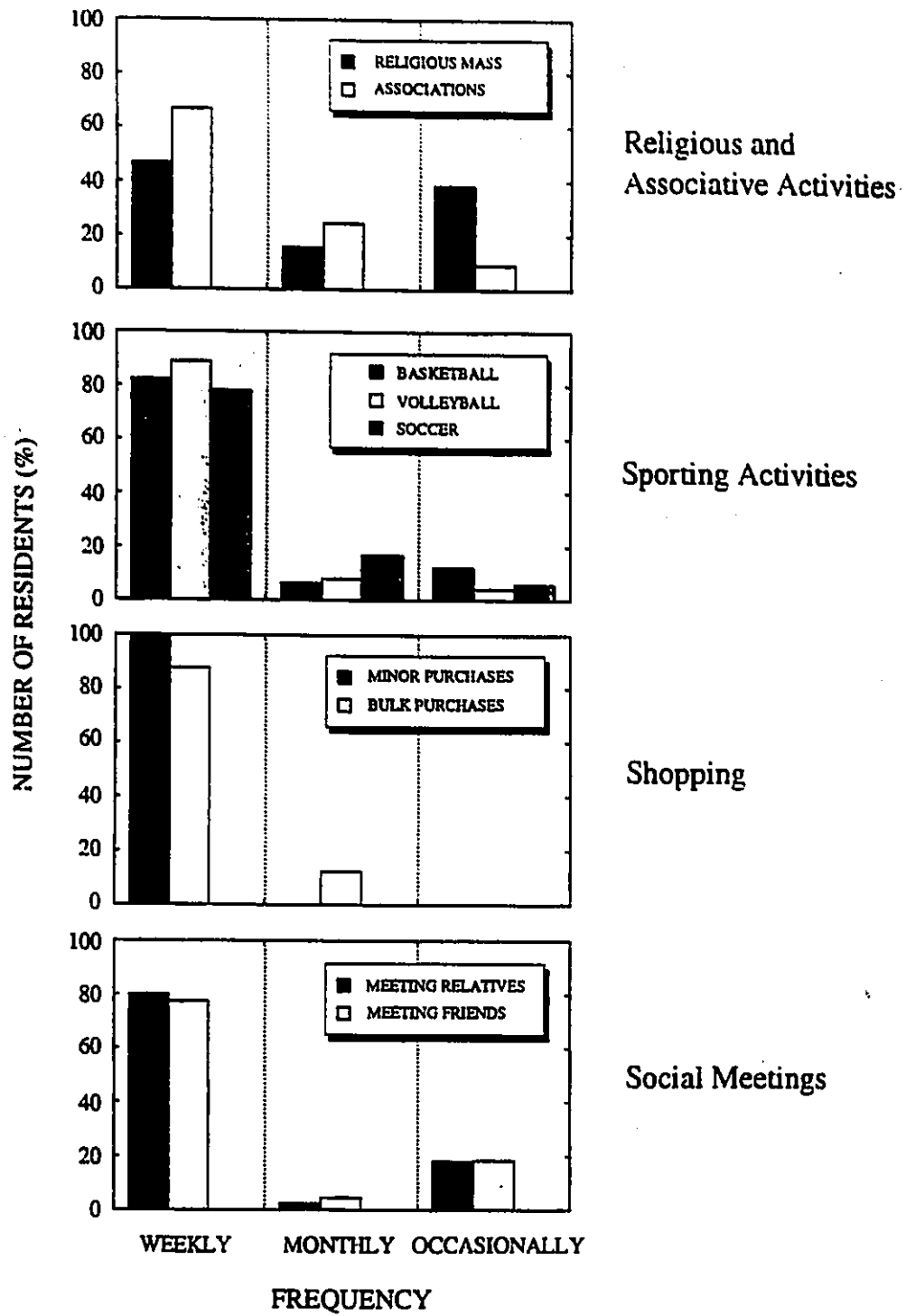


Figure 9-1. Frequency of socializing activities of residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro.

Table 9-11. Frequency of social interaction activities of *barrio* residents, by age and gender

	Mass	Basket- ball	Volley- ball	Soccer	Minor food shopping	Bulk food shopping	Associa- tions
Daily	-	-	-	-	73%	13%	-
Twice a week	-	51%	44%	36%	5%	-	-
Once a week	46%	30%	41%	42%	14%	72%	65%
Twice a month	-	3%	7%	17%	-	12%	23%
Once a month	15%	3%	-	-	17%	-	-
Occasionally	38%	12%	4%	6%	-	-	9%
Daily or twice a week	-	-	-	-	5%	-	-
Twice a month or occasionally	-	-	4%	-	-	-	-
Other	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-
No data	-	-	-	-	3%	3%	3%

THE SPATIAL PREFERENCES OF RESIDENTS FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Figure 9-2 shows the results of survey on the spatial preferences of residents for social activities. The answers given by residents included the following preferred places: the *barrio*, Cotocollao, "ciudad" (city), "el centro" (downtown) and "other". For purposes of analysis, these answers have been regrouped in four main geographical localities: "*barrio*", "vicinity", "city" and "countryside". Cotocollao, the city district where Mena del Hierro is located, has been defined as "vicinity". "Ciudad" and "centro" have been classified as "city".

Table 9-12. Spatial preferences for social activities of *barrio* residents, by age and gender

	<i>Barrio</i> Mena del Hierro	Vicinity (Coto- collao)	City	Country -side	<i>Barrio</i> + Vicinity	<i>Barrio</i> + City	<i>Barrio</i> +Vicinity +City	Vicinity + City	No Data
Mass	39%	29%	16%	6%	5%	2%	2%	-	-
Easter	67%	11%	6%	11%	2%	1%	-	1%	-
Christmas	62%	11%	6%	16%	3%	-	-	1%	-
Basketball	70%	18%	6%	3%	-	3%	-	-	-
Volleyball	81%	-	7%	-	7%	4%	-	-	-
Soccer	47%	39%	11%	-	-	-	-	3%	-
Minor Shopping	87%	6%	-	-	3%	-	-	-	3%
Bulk Shopping	52%	22%	-	9%	10%	-	-	4%	1%
Associations	59%	15%	23%	-	-	-	-	-	3%

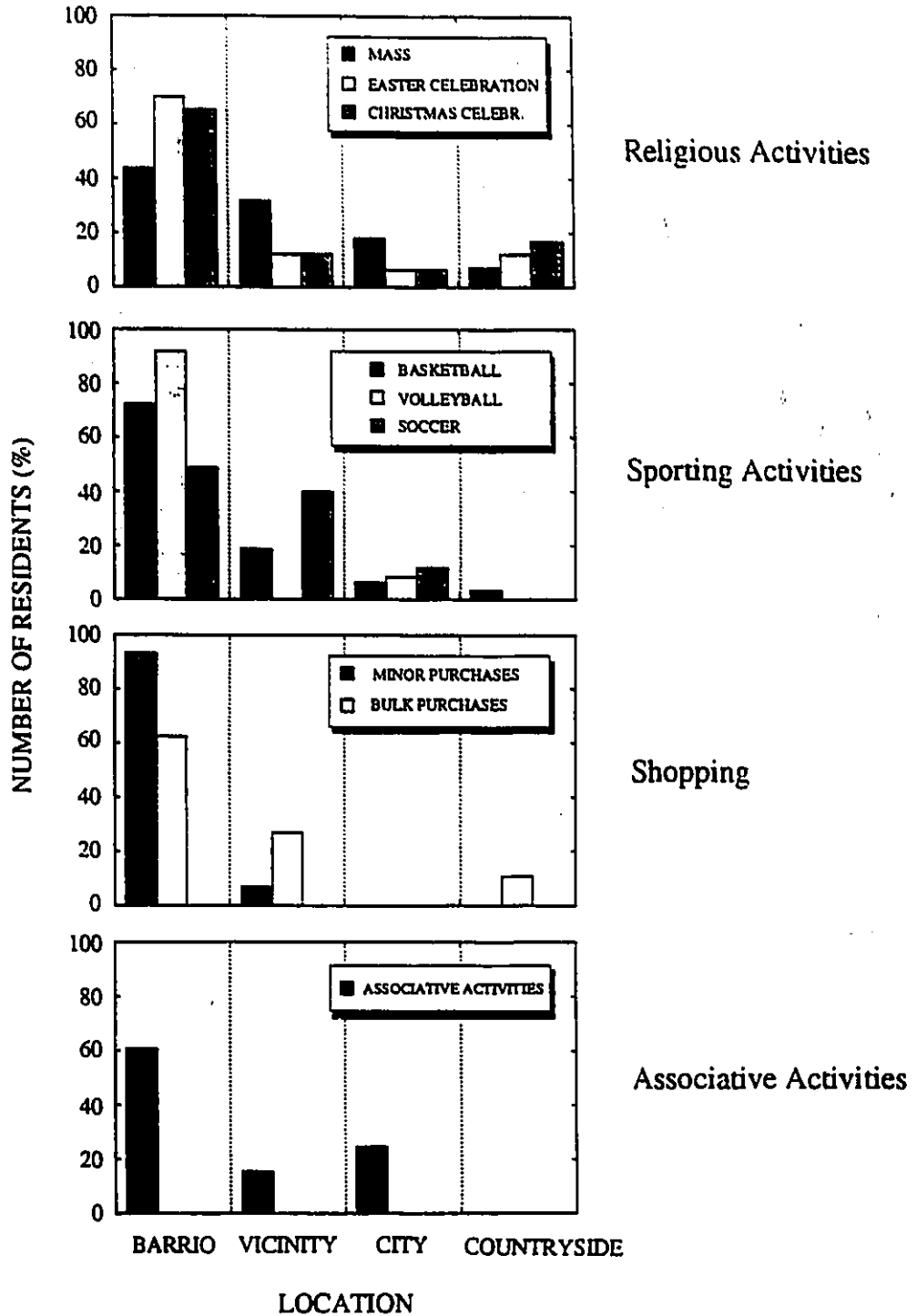


Figure 9-2. Spatial preferences for social activities of residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro.

The order of importance of preferred localities for social activities by residents of Mena del Hierro is as follows:

- (1) For the large majority of residents, the *barrio* is the preferred location for all social activities;
- (2) The "*barrio* vicinity" ranks second in importance for all social activities, except for volleyball and associative endeavours. The "city" is the second most preferred locality in the case of volleyball and associative activities;
- (3) The "city", "countryside" and the "vicinity" are third in rank of importance for the following activities: the "city" for Mass and sporting activities; "countryside" for Easter, Christmas and "market" shopping activities; the "vicinity" for associative activities.

If we consider the frequency of use by *barrio* residents of these individual locations we obtain a threefold picture of preferred localities for social activity: (1) the *barrio*, (2) the vicinity within walking distance, and (3) the countryside. As far as frequency of use is concerned, the *barrio* is without doubt the preferred location of residents for their social activity. In contrast, the city of Quito has a marginal importance. Figure 9-3 shows the threefold geographical configuration of the residents' preferred places for social activity.

Residents have several reasons for preferring the countryside over the city. For example, the countryside is more important for "market" shopping than the city because of its social and economic links with the province. As explained in Chapter V many residents who have immigrated from rural areas still have their families in the countryside, some of them have kept their farms, and others work as intermediaries bringing agricultural products to the city. They regularly visit the province and bring back groceries in bulk quantities. "Market" products from the province are practically cost-free for them. Table 9-13 shows the origin of foodstuffs consumed by residents of Mena del Hierro. The importance of the province as a provider of foodstuffs for residents clearly appears on this table.

Family and friendship networks in the province also explain the higher importance of the province over the city for Easter and Christmas activities. But tradition is also a ground to perform religious activities in the countryside. Several residents of Mena del Hierro have great religious faith in the "Virgen del Quinche", the most important virgin for inhabitants of the rural areas to the northwest of Quito. There is an annual pilgrimage to visit this virgin and many residents of Mena del Hierro participate. They walk in a procession from Quito to El Quinche for over ten hours praying and carry candles in their hands for part of the journey.

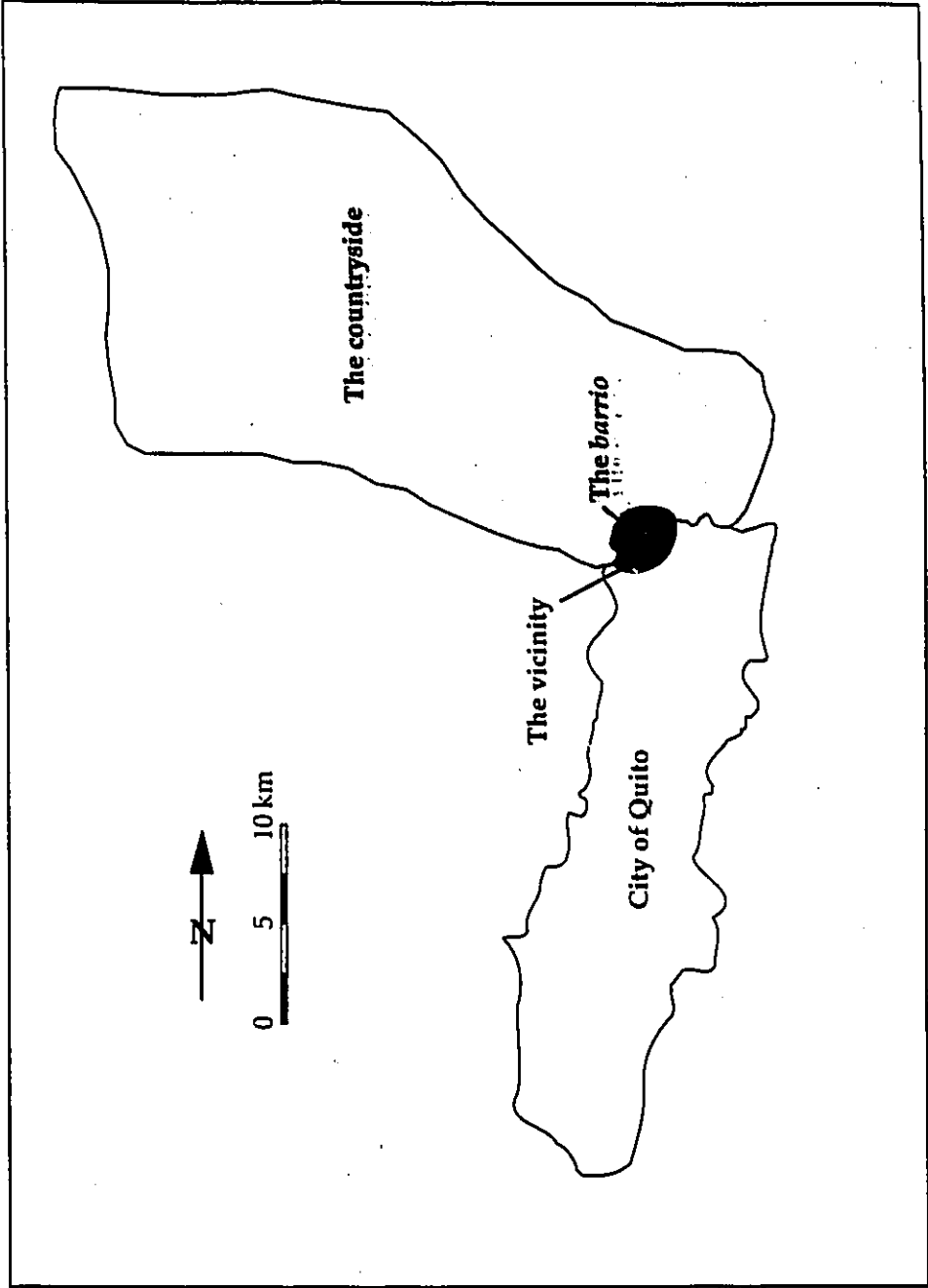


Figure 9-3. Geographical spaces of regular social activity for residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro

The province also plays a role as place for sporting activities. Although this preference did not come out very clearly in the survey ethnographic work showed that several residents, specially young and adult men, have many links with sporting groups in the countryside. Sports, particularly volleyball, is the main means to socially interact with other people in the countryside. Some residents of Mena del Hierro travel to the countryside during sports competitions to play for the local team of the area where they were born.

Table 9-13. Provenance of foodstuffs consumed by *barrio* residents

	FEMALES				MALES				TOTAL
	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	Children	Youths	Adults	TOTAL	
Countryside	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	3
(%)	0	16.7	4.2	5.5	0	0	0	0	2.8
Home-grown	2	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	4
(%)	10.5	8.3	0	5.5	0	5.6	0	1.9	3.7
Purchased	13	8	17	38	11	9	17	37	75
(%)	68.4	66.7	70.8	69.1	73.3	50.0	81.0	68.5	68.8
Countryside & home-grown (%)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	5.3	0	0	1.8	0	0	0	0	0.9
Countryside & purchased (%)	3	0	4	7	2	2	3	7	14
	15.8	0.0	16.7	12.7	13.3	11.1	14.3	13.0	12.8
Countryside, home- grown & purchased (%)	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	3
	0	8.3	0	1.8	0	11.1	0	3.7	2.8
Home-grown & purchased (%)	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	3	5
	0	0	8.3	3.6	6.7	5.6	4.8	5.6	4.6
No data (%)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0	1.9	0.9
Interviewee does not know (%)	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	3	3
	0	0	0	0	0	16.7	0	5.6	2.8
TOTAL	19	12	24	55	15	18	21	54	109
	17.4	11.0	22.0	50.5	13.8	16.5	19.3	49.5	100

RESIDENT'S MOTIVES FOR SELECTING PLACES FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

According to survey results there are five types of reasons for the spatial choice of residents regarding their social activities:

- (a) Social reasons: people to meet; shop owner/priest's personality; solidarity of the others; habit/tradition/hobby; associative requirements
- (b) Economic reasons: low cost; credit availability; product variety; technical quality of installations
- (c) Geographic reasons: closeness to a place
- (d) Aesthetic reasons: beauty of a place
- (e) "Other" reasons

As seen in Figure 9-4, the dominant reasons for the spatial preferences of residents are social. The choice of geographically close locations for social activities is not explained by the traditional geographical model of the friction of distance. Neither is it explained by the visual quality of the physical environment, as postulated by the semiotic models. Three main social reasons that motivate *barrio* residents in their preferences for a specific geographical location are: (a) the existence of social networks; (b) traditional practice and (c) solidarity with other members of the community.

Food shopping is, however, an exception to the above pattern. According to survey results the main reasons of preferring the *barrio* for food shopping are economic: (a) product price; (b) product variety; (c) offer of credit. These results are somewhat suspect, however. During my time of field work I found that prices in the shops of the *barrio* were often higher than elsewhere in the city. Credit was granted to several residents by shop owners even if they purchased only small quantities of food. It seems to me that this is the principal reason for residents to choose *barrio* shops for buying foodstuffs. Given the problem of income regularity that affects many residents, being able to have credit for food products represents a very flexible system. Although credit facilities may seem as an economic reason for residents to prefer *barrio* shops for food shopping, it is in essence a reason of a social nature. Credit is only granted by shop owners when a relationship of trust exists.

THE RESIDENTS' SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BARRIO

Residents of Mena del Hierro live in a geographically isolated neighbourhood with dirt roads, no sewerage, and drinking water available only at certain times of the week. Despite this situation of material limitations, survey results on the meaning of the *barrio* show that residents have a strong personal attachment to their neighbourhood. They perceive it as a place of friendship and mutual support which plays a very important part in their lives.

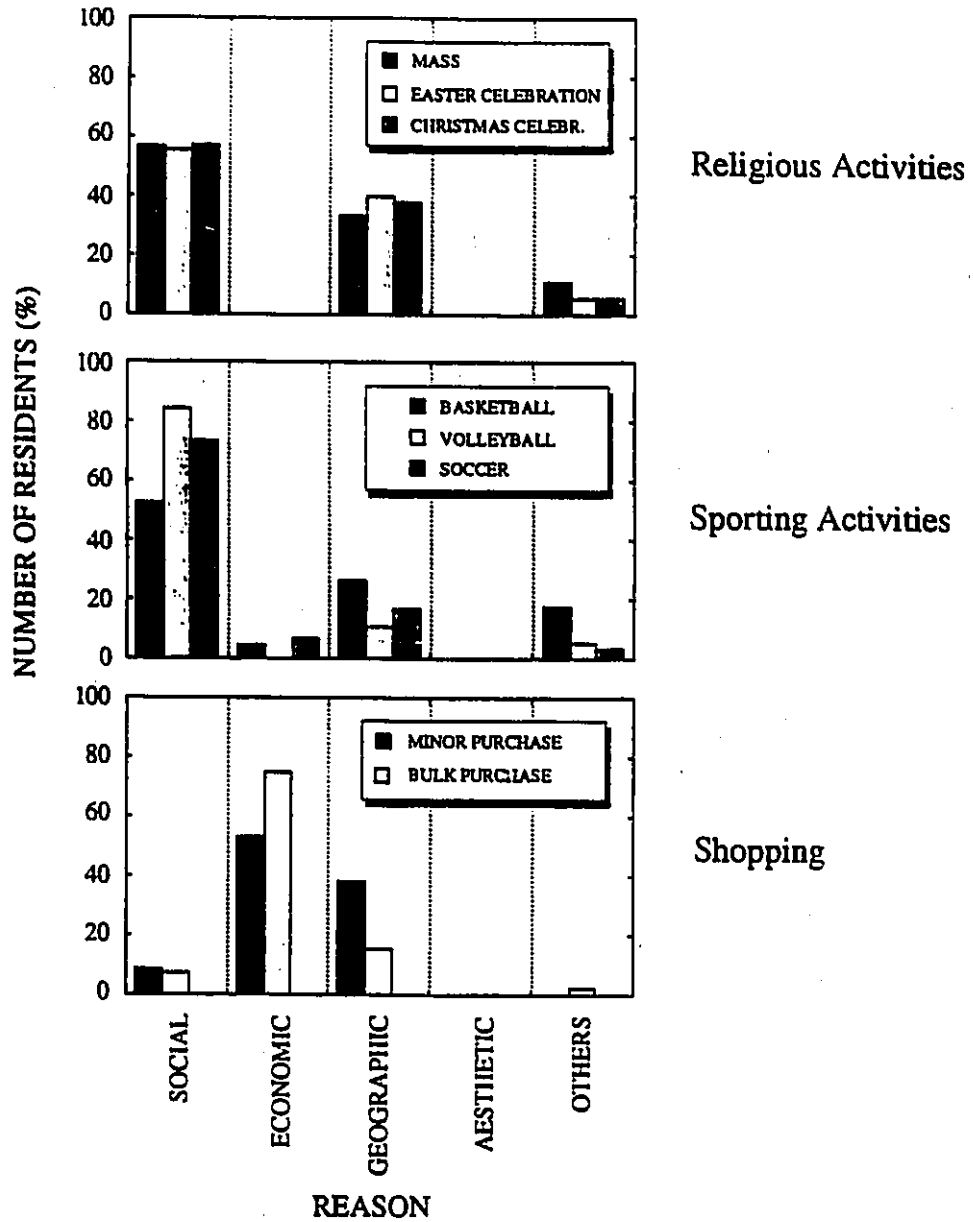


Figure 9-4. Reasons for the spatial preferences for social activities of residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro

When asked what the neighbourhood means for them the great majority of residents, of all age groups, respond very homogeneously. In their words the neighbourhood is perceived as "pretty", "secure", "friendly", "with good people", "a place of support", "solidarity", "sharing", "love", "a home", and "a part of my life". Some residents also appreciate their neighbourhood for being "clean" and "large" (my first impression of Mena del Hierro was that it is small and dirty!)

These findings contrast with the semiotic approach which postulate that the individual acquires a great feeling of emotional security when he or she has a positive image of the visual quality of the physical elements in his or her urban environment. A positive image of the *barrio* in the present case is evidently not created by the quality of the physical environment but by the quality of the social environment.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has examined the geographical characteristics of the social interaction patterns of the residents of Mena del Hierro. A survey of the residents by structured interviews has provided new field data on their preferred geographical locations for social activity, their reasons for spatial choices, the frequency of their social activities, and the symbolic meanings that they ascribe to their *barrio*.

The residents of the *barrio* are involved in multitude of activities which provide chances for social interaction: religious services and ceremonies, sports, meeting with friends and kin, common interest associations, and shopping for food. Religious activities attract the highest number of participants from all gender- and age-groups, whereas common interest associations are attended mostly by male residents. Superimposed on these general trends, each gender- and age-group in the *barrio* has a specific focus of social activity: girls and young women socially interact principally by playing basketball; boys and young men prefer soccer over other social activities; adult men meet mostly by playing volleyball, and adult women socially interact with others mainly during their shopping for food.

Barrio residents socially interact outside their work- and schooling-hours in four geographical localities: (1) the *barrio* (the immediate neighbourhood); (2) the vicinity of the *barrio* (the surroundings within a radius of approximately 1.5 km); (3) the countryside (the hinterland northwest of Quito from where many residents have migrated); and (4) the city. Each of these localities is characterized by its own frequency of routine use. The neighbourhood turns out to be the most important place for social activity, with everyday or even more frequent use. The neighbourhood vicinity ranks next in importance as the reference for social identity. There are several places in nearby Cotacollao and in the northwestern *barrios* where the residents of Mena del Hierro conduct activities with weekly frequency. A further site of

social reference is the rural village, to which young and adult residents travel monthly or bimonthly to play sports, visit relatives, and bring agricultural produce to the city. Places elsewhere in the city are periodically visited to participate in associations, and the centre of Quito is visited annually for reasons of religious tradition.

No major social networks have been identified within the city, other than the *barrio* and its vicinity. Hence, from both objective and symbolic points of view, the city does not constitute a social space for the residents of Mena del Hierro. Rather, their social space is limited to the networks in the *barrio* itself, in the vicinity, and in the countryside.

The social importance of the *barrio* for its residents is confirmed by their symbolic perceptions of their surroundings. Despite the poor quality of Mena del Hierro's urban environment, the residents have a strong personal attachment to their neighbourhood. They perceive it as a place of friendship, of mutual support, and where they are "at home". This finding contrasts with semiotic approaches to the study of urban environments, which maintain that individuals acquire emotional security when their visual image of their physical environment is positive. In the case of Mena del Hierro, it is evidently not the physical environment but the social environment that imparts the important positive image.

Although the order of importance of the residents' spatial preferences for social activities follows the principle of geographical proximity, the dominant reasons for their spatial choice are not economic. Some residents of the *barrio* are relatively mobile yet they prefer close locations for their social activities. The reasons they give for this choice are that (1) most of their friends and relatives reside nearby, (2) they like to maintain their traditions, and (3) they value solidarity with other members of the community. Thus, the choice of proximal locations is not explained by the traditional geographical model of the friction of distance, nor by the semiotic model of the visual quality of the urban environment. Rather, the choice is explained by social factors: cultural values and social networks.

From the above results, the *barrio* clearly emerges as a social space of crucial importance for the daily social interaction patterns of its residents. The importance of this space has been demonstrated from both objective and subjective points of view. Direct observations show that the majority of residents prefer the *barrio* for their social activities, and that the frequency of their meetings in the *barrio* is either every day or several days of the week. The subjective evidence for the importance of the *barrio* lies in the positive symbolic meanings that residents attribute to their *barrio*.

Previous geographical studies have established the objective and subjective dimensions of social space. The objective dimensions are usually identified by the weekly routines of urban residents. This study has shown that this means of identification may be misleading. The countryside plays a very important subjective role for residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro

even though they do not frequent it on a weekly basis. Thus, it is not frequent use which makes a place socially meaningful, but rather the perceived quality of social networks in this location. Studies on social space which exclusively focus on weekly routines overlook monthly and yearly activities which may be equally or even more significant for the residents. As shown in Chapter VIII of this study, although festivities may not take place on a weekly basis they play a crucial social and existential role in the lives of *barrio* residents.

The findings of this chapter have several implications for the planning of urban facilities. The objective of traditional planning is to maximize investments. As a result of this economic approach, social and recreational facilities tend to be centralized in certain areas of the city. However, this contradicts the documented social practices of *barrio* residents. Most of the residents perform a large part of their daily activities, aside from work and study, within a 1.5 km radius of their *barrio*. Daily relations with the "city" are mostly confined to work and study. Thus, urban facilities for sports, religious activities, shopping for food, social meetings and associations need to be provided at this geographical scale, rather than in central places of the city where residents have no social reasons for going there. This change in planning approach is even more necessary if we consider that not all the residents of the *barrio* work outside the neighbourhood. As shown in Chapter IV (Economics), several *barrio* residents run businesses within the neighbourhood, while many others, such as taxi drivers, return to the *barrio* several times a day in order to pause from work. Social and recreational facilities for urban residents must be planned at the micro-scale of neighbourhoods at not at the macro-scale of city sectors.

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CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

New insights into the social geography of *barrios* from a detailed case study

This thesis has provided new field data on the social interaction patterns of residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro in Quito, Ecuador, with the aim of understanding their spatial behaviour and spatial choice. The examination of urban social interaction patterns has focused on the spatial behaviour of residents during daily social activity, on social networks, on the spatial preferences of residents for social activity and on the residents' personal images of their *barrio*. Participatory research was the main methodological approach taken to explain the geography of social activities from the small-scale upwards and, at the same time, to empower the studied population. The principal methods to collect field data were participant observation, structured interviews, social cartography, mental maps, photography and videotaping. A social typology of *barrios* in Quito was established based on factors which initially influence social interaction patterns (original lot size and pre-*barrio* social organization). According to this, Mena del Hierro is typical of nearly a quarter of all *barrios* in Quito. Therefore it is assumed that the findings of this case study have some validity for at least this fraction of the city's *barrios*.

The following summary is presented in three sections: conclusions pertaining to the social interaction patterns of *barrio* residents, conclusions pertaining to the methodological approach, and finally some planning recommendations.

SOCIAL INTERACTION PATTERNS OF BARRIO RESIDENTS

The Context for Social Interaction

Mena del Hierro emerged from the illegal subdivision of the *Hacienda La Concepción* in the early 1970s. Now legalized, the official administrative neighbourhood of Mena del Hierro contains two distinct social areas differentiated by settlement age, socioeconomic level and lifestyle. The lower income area, which was settled first, comprises approximately 800 inhabitants and has been chosen as the subject of this study. Herein it is referred to as the "*barrio*" Mena del Hierro.

Mena del Hierro is a special case among Quito's low-income *barrios*. Houses are of good quality and the income of residents is closer to that of Quito's middle-class, rather than the working-class in normal low-income *barrios*. Despite its somewhat elevated economic level, Mena del Hierro is not a middle-class neighbourhood. Apart from beginning as an illegal land subdivision without infrastructure, the employment of residents is irregular and social security is either temporary or non-existent. The residents need each other's help to make ends meet. In terms of sociodemographic characteristics, the *barrio* residents are a relatively homogeneous group. This is apparent in their common geographic origins, kinship ties, life-cycle interests, urban experience, residential permanency, and need for mutual assistance. From a physical point of view, Mena del Hierro is still evolving. Housing density is low and there is much scope for densification in the future. Several residents use their land for housing and for informal businesses and thus spend much of their working time in the *barrio*.

Although the *barrio's* density is low, its small size, the unstable economic situation of residents, the homogeneity of their sociodemographic characteristics, and the spatial overlap of residential and economic activities, all provide in combination a potentially favourable context for social contact between residents.

Spatial Behaviour and Choice of Residents for Social Activities

The residents of Mena del Hierro are a remarkably sociable group. Outside their work and schooling hours, they socially interact through a multitude of activities such as religious services and ceremonies, sports, meeting with friends and kin, common interest associations, and shopping for food. These activities are conducted in four geographical localities: the *barrio* itself, the vicinity within approximately 1.5 km of the *barrio*, the countryside (the rural northwest hinterland) and the city of Quito. Each locality is characterized by a certain degree of preference by residents and by a certain frequency of routine use.

The *barrio* is the most preferred place of the residents for social activity, with *barrio* spaces being used with daily or even shorter frequencies. Ranking next in preference is the vicinity, an area comprising several places in nearby Cotacollao and the northwestern *barrios* where the residents of Mena del Hierro conduct social activities with weekly frequency. A further site of social activity is the countryside, which *barrio* residents frequent monthly or bimonthly to play sports, visit relatives and bring agricultural produce to the city. Places elsewhere in the city are periodically visited for associative activities, and the centre of Quito is visited annually for traditional religious practices.

On a daily and weekly time scale, the routine social activity of the residents is evidently confined to the small geographical area of the *barrio* and its vicinity. The individual reasons that residents give for this spatial choice are that (1) most of their friends and relatives reside nearby, (2) they like to maintain their traditions, and (3) they value solidarity with other members of the community. Thus, despite the fact that the mobility of the residents is not constrained, owing to their relatively elevated economic level, they prefer close locations for regular social activity because that is where their social networks operate.

Social factors play an equally important role in the residents' choice of a place to live in the city. Although the prospect of economic advantages originally attracted the immigrants to Quito, many chose Cotacollao as the first place of residence because it was traditionally familiar, with its long-standing kinship, religious and business ties with the adjacent countryside. Land lots subsequently became available in many *barrios* around Quito and this prompted a second relocation of residence. The reason that some people chose Mena del Hierro over other localities was their desire to be close to their kin. The result of this culturally-motivated decision is manifest today in the density of kinship ties in the *barrio*. Moreover, many *barrio* youths who marry decide to remain in the *barrio* because they appreciate its social environment.

The spatial behaviour and choice of residents is thus seen to be linked to a choice of lifestyle which values familiar surroundings and the quality of networks of kin and friends. Clearly, the long-established models of immigrants choosing the city centre as their first site of residence, because that is where they find cheapest accommodation, do not always apply to *barrio* immigrants. It is true that economic factors set the constraints on decisions of individuals regarding spatial behaviour. However, the ultimate decisions they take are not necessarily motivated by economic considerations. As this case study has shown, the improved economic situation of residents allows them to be spatially mobile for social activities of religion, meeting, sports, association and shopping. Despite this liberty, residents choose close locations to conduct these activities because they value the quality of their networks. Consequently, geographical models invoking the friction of distance and viewing the motives of spatial choice as purely economic require reevaluation in their application to *barrios populares*

The *Barrio* as the Preferred Location for Regular Social Activity

Social Activity in Public Outdoor Space

Everyday life in the *barrio* Mena del Hierro is characterized by a remarkable degree of social activity. Since the beginning of the *barrio*, outdoor spaces have been the preferred location of

social activities and have played a key role in the development of the residents' social networks. Outdoor space is intensively by residents every day. By the end of the afternoon peak in activity on weekends, over a third of the entire population is out on the *barrio's* streets and sports fields, playing, conversing, drinking and eating. Residents strongly desire to be outdoors, to the point that social activity on the streets continues into the night despite the prevailing cold climate of the altiplano and the 6 p.m. equatorial nightfall. Except for adult women, sports is the preferred activity of residents for social interaction. Given the scarcity of sports fields in the *barrio* residents appropriate every available corner for this activity: from streets to private vacant land. Every age and gender group has a preferred sport: girls and young women prefer basketball; boys and young men prefer soccer and men prefer volleyball. Women socially interact outdoors mainly through shopping although their meetings are usually brief. Housework leaves them little free time and the clustering of extended families within individual land sections limits their social contacts to the private sphere.

The importance of outdoor space in the social interaction patterns of residents is also revealed during public festivities. One of the characteristics of the residents' lifestyle is their passion for public celebrating. Residents organize numerous religious and social celebrations throughout the year which invariably take place on the streets or on sports fields. People from all age and gender groups, and also from neighbouring *barrios*, flood outdoor spaces on these occasions. Residents take great pride in organizing these festivities, and even compete with each other to do so. In general, youths are responsible for social festivities, and adults for religious celebrations. The public festivities play an important social role in establishing the public status of individual residents and groups in the *barrio*. For these residents who are largely excluded by the wider society of the city, the public open space in their own *barrio* serves as their arena for self-affirmation.

Intra-barrio Social Networks

The extent and perceived quality of social networks was cited above as one of the main explanations for the residents' marked preference for the *barrio* as the site of their regular social activity. The residents take part in more than sixty self-organized and locally-based formal and informal networks such as kin, neighbour, *paisano* (immigrants from the same region), common-interest and community improvement groups. These networks are responsible for the dynamic social life that characterizes Mena del Hierro, for the satisfaction of moral and material needs of the residents through the system of reciprocal exchange, and for the significant improvements in infrastructure and services that the *barrio* has achieved over the past ten years. However, not all networks are "visible". Kin, vecino and *paisano* groups, for example, operate at a small scale, are aimed at household survival

and are not obvious to the eyes of the casual observer. As a consequence, social life in the *barrio* has two realms: public and private. There is marked difference in gender roles between the two. Men are responsible for the vitality of public networks whereas women maintain the private networks.

Sense of Community and Place

Residents of Mena del Hierro experience a strong sense of community and a sense of place in their *barrio*. The three main factors which have permitted to identify this sense of social and spatial belonging are: (a) the perceived quality of social networks in the *barrio*, (b) the frequency of social activity with other community members, and (c) the residents' positive perceptions of their living environment. In fact, the *barrio* Mena del Hierro constitutes a stable and well-integrated community. The fabric of this community is woven from the elements of residential permanency, common geographical provenance, common material needs, long-term cooperation, membership in local social networks of mutual support, a homogeneous lifestyle, and a history of collective achievements within the confined area of the *barrio*. A sense of distinctness from the "formal" city also reinforces this sense of local community. Indeed, these factors have contributed to the emergence of a sense of place in a location previously void of any social or spatial significance. The sense of place that residents experience in Mena del Hierro obviously explains their preference for the *barrio* for social activities.

The strong personal attachment that residents have to their neighbourhood is confirmed by their symbolic perceptions of their *barrio*. Despite the poor quality of Mena del Hierro's urban environment, residents perceive it as a place of "friendship" and of "mutual support" which plays "a very important part in their lives". This finding contrasts with semiotic approaches to the study of urban environments, which maintain that individuals acquire emotional security only when their visual image of their physical environment is positive. In the case of Mena del Hierro, it is evidently not the physical environment but the social environment that imparts the important positive image to residents.

The Geographical Boundaries of the Community: Perceived versus Administrative

A method has been developed to delimit the geographical boundaries of the community. The difference between official and perceived boundaries of the community was assessed from mental maps of the *barrio* drawn up by its residents. An independent map of social networks was also compiled, showing residences of the members of various social groups. The limits of two maps match perfectly, illustrating that the community members are well

aware of their effective territory, and that the two geographical definitions of the *barrio*, official and perceived, are both tangible and distinct.

Social Activities Outside the *Barrio*

Social Networks

Although most of the social networks involving residents are confined to the *barrio* itself, some also extend beyond the *barrio* boundaries. The residents have strong social ties with other *barrios* in the northwest of Quito, which are co-ordinated by a grassroots organization (*Federación de Barrios del Noroccidente*) to promote *barrio* improvement, sports, social and cultural activities. For children and young people, these networks provide a means of developing and publicizing their musical and artistic talents; for women they offer day-care programmes; for men the soccer networks offer recreation, public recognition and social mobility. The vitality of networks in the vicinity is the result of grassroots initiatives but also of the support of several external bodies in Quito, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and *barrio* sports leagues.

The residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro also sustain social links with the countryside, especially in the area to the northwest of Quito. Networks with kin and *paisanos* allow members, in both the city and the rural hinterland, to obtain mutual support in case of moral and material need, to maintain traditional sports and religious customs, and to develop economic activities of mutual profit. The contacts with the countryside are very much alive, even for second generation immigrants in the *barrio*, such that the youths generally feel they belong as much to the countryside as to their urban environment.

Therefore, from the point of view of extent and perceived quality of social networks, the residents of *barrio* Mena del Hierro have three socially meaningful spaces in their lives: the *barrio*, the vicinity, and the countryside. These are the three geographical locations where residents experience a sense of social and spatial belonging, a sense of "being at home". Social space and sense of place is thus not restricted by the *barrio* boundaries but has a threefold geographical configuration. From both objective and subjective points of view, the city of Quito plays only a minor role in the social lives of residents of the *barrio*. Places in the city are frequented only occasionally for purposes of social interaction, and no significant social networks were found to exist.

The literature has shown that patterns of social space vary with economic status. The social space of upper-middle class people is characterized by distance, glamour and public performance, whereas low-income populations are believed to socially interact in private

and local worlds with little variation of settings. Contrary to these ideas, this study has demonstrated that such generalizations do not apply to the social interaction patterns of residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro. *Barrio* residents socially interact and publicly perform in a variety of settings which include their immediate surroundings, the vicinity and the distant countryside.

Belonging to the threesome of social worlds, and the "social health" of individuals

Before concluding this section, it is worthwhile reflecting on the remarkable "social health" that prevails in *barrio* Mena del Hierro. Youths in Mena del Hierro suffer from unemployment problems. Most adult workers are affected by problems of lack of social security. To a certain extent *barrio* residents are socially and politically excluded from the wider Ecuadorian society. Despite these social problems, there is no evidence in Mena del Hierro of public problems of drugs, alcoholism, violence or crime. The social stability and cohesiveness of male youths in Mena del Hierro is one of the most striking features of the *barrio*. Despite their limited access to social opportunities, and in contrast to their counterparts in other *barrios* with comparably marginal positions, they are not split in gangs or *galladas* and have not resorted to crime. In contrast, they play an important role as organizers of the many *barrio*-based social and economic activities.

The triangle of social worlds of the residents, made up of the *barrio*, the vicinity and the countryside, seems to promote and sustain this social health, both at the individual and collective levels. Belonging to this threesome of social worlds evidently bestows a positive sense to the life of the residents. They thereby achieve social respect, a sense of community and a sense of place, three essential factors for the social health of urban populations. These are social needs which in the case of *barrio* populations are not readily satisfied within the context of the larger society.

The long term stability of the community

Some speculations have been made in this study on the long-term stability of the community of Mena del Hierro. The future densification of the *barrio*, the arrival of new populations, the increased integration with the city are all events that may potentially destabilize this community and the sense of place with which it is associated. Nevertheless, economic and social factors seem to favour continued stability. The future economic situation in Ecuador is unlikely to solve the current problems in the *barrio* of irregular employment, and thus the residents' need for mutual social support will continue. The relative location of the *barrio* is continuously improving as Quito expands, and this will facilitate informal job creation by the residents. As a result of these trends, the residents will probably become even more permanent. Social networks in the *barrio* are already characterized by their high degree of

connectivity. These linkages are only likely to increase in the future: current intra-*barrio* marriages are already reinforcing kinship networks and the persistent immigration of relatives and friends is strengthening *paisano* networks.

Outdoor spaces have been crucial throughout the history of the *barrio* for the development of social networks. However, the shortage and temporary nature of public outdoor space in the *barrio* threatens the long-term stability of social interaction. As the *barrio* densifies, the possibilities for appropriating private vacant land for sports fields will eventually disappear altogether, and with them, the key settings for the social encounters of the residents.

CONCLUSIONS ON METHODOLOGY

The choice of an individual case study for the examination of the social interaction patterns of urban residents has proven most justified. As shown in this study, generalizations on the social interaction patterns of residents cannot be made using large-scale, "top-down" methods of analysis, which attempt to characterize specifics of places by examining broad city patterns and census statistics. These studies are not scientifically representative as they do not reveal the real dimensions of social life in *barrio* communities. Instead, a local-scale, "bottom-up" approach is needed. However, in order to understand the social complexity of the *barrio* universe, many more case studies must be conducted along the lines of the present investigation – based on participant observation, interviews with locals and spatial analysis of social networks. Useful generalizations can then be drawn.

The approach of examining spatial behaviour from the perspective of the social group has proven highly suitable for *barrios populares*. As shown in this study, residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro do not live their daily lives on an individual basis but always in groups. Thus, the widely applied analysis of the spatial behaviour of individuals artificially removes them from the context in which they live. Clearly, a multidisciplinary approach is indispensable for a study of social interaction patterns. Participatory research and the examination of the objective and subjective dimensions of social space require the combined use of field methods from the disciplines of geography, anthropology, sociology, communication and planning.

The methods of participatory research and participant observation have been extremely powerful in revealing the extent of *barrio* residents' social networks and the "visible" and "invisible" dimensions of community, in providing insight into the reasons for the residents' spatial behaviour and choice, and in conducting socially responsible research. They are, however, complex and lengthy undertakings. Further, given the variety of the cultural

characteristics of communities they cannot be implemented everywhere with the same facility, and hence it is difficult to know beforehand how long it will take to become accepted in a target community.

Researchers willing to use the method of participatory research and participant observation also must be aware of the power structures existing within a community. Selective work with one group might lead to conflict with other groups and hence to the failure of research efforts. Collaborating with locals with a wide range of interests and motives for research may lead to the delay of research activities and to clashes between the researchers and community members. The approach of participatory research and participant observation also requires special abilities on the part of the researcher. It requires an ability for direct and indirect negotiation with the various parties involved and a balanced and cheerful character that facilitates social interaction with locals.

Defining the nature of community in individual *barrios* is fundamental in any participatory approach. Whereas the public and the private community are equally important in Mena del Hierro, public community might not exist in other *barrios* (as is the case of neighbour San Rafael). Thus, involved individuals will be constrained to identifying and working with the private community. In practice this is much slower and more complicated than working with the public community.

Previous geographical studies have established the objective and subjective dimensions of social space. The objective dimensions are usually identified by the weekly routines of urban residents. This study has shown that this means of identification may be misleading. The countryside plays a very important subjective role for residents of the *barrio* Mena del Hierro even though they do not frequent it on a weekly basis. Thus, it is not frequent use which makes a place socially meaningful, but rather the perceived quality of social networks in this location. Studies on social space which exclusively focus on weekly routines overlook monthly and yearly activities which may be equally or even more significant for the residents. As shown in this thesis although festivities may not take place on a weekly basis they play a crucial social and existential role in the lives of *barrio* residents.

Regarding the utility of social cartography for mapping spatial behaviour, it should be realized that the method yields no more than numerical support for facts and trends that are already qualitatively obvious after having been immersed in the field for some time. One can almost guarantee that no qualitatively new results will emerge from social cartography. Social cartography of spatial behaviour does not provide insight into the reasons for the social and spatial behaviour of residents in the way that participant observation does.

However, from the point of view of planning recreational facilities, it does provide useful statistics.

Social cartography has proved most useful in this study when combined with participant observation. The maps of the *barrio's* social networks which have been produced by these combined techniques yield fascinating qualitative results. They reveal the complexity of the spatial structure, density and extent of individual networks.

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Several conclusions have arisen from this study which are pertinent to planners and agencies dealing with *barrios populares*. First, individuals promoting the participation of *barrio* residents in social or infrastructure programmes must be aware of the existence of diverse social areas within neighbourhoods. The definition of their spatial boundaries is of utmost importance if implementation is to be successful.

Second, municipal authorities responsible for urban density policies in the *barrios* need to take account of the importance of kinship in *barrio* communities. Enforcing laws that restrict the size of lots in the community of *barrio* Mena del Hierro, for example, will disrupt the social and spatial basis of kin groups and thereby dislodge the keystone of the community. Similarly, the intervention of municipal administrators in the administration of water resources may disrupt communities. After fifteen years of water management by *barrio* residents, official authorities are connecting the *barrio* to the city-wide water network without any involvement of *barrio* residents. As a result, the community is losing a large investment of effort and capital as well as the sense of pride in a major collective achievement. This example thus underscores the need to include locals in implementing improvement programmes.

Third, it is clear that urban renewal and upgrading programmes need to give more attention to daily interaction in public outdoor *barrio* spaces. Such spaces are vital for the social stability of *barrios*. The scarcity of sports fields within the *barrios* cannot be redressed solely through self-help initiatives of the residents. The active initiative and joint efforts of community members, government agencies and the private sector to acquire land for sports fields within the *barrios* is urgently needed. Another possible solution is for the state to give special incentives (e.g. credit, tax reduction) to private businesses to set up sports fields in the *barrios*. However, a condition of running the business for a minimum number of years should be imposed as a condition to ensure continuity.

Fourth, spatial specialization has been a widespread aim of "zoning" efforts by the planners of Latin American cities. However, this aim is at odds with the cultural practices and economic needs of *barrio* residents. The economic survival of *barrio* residents hinges on their capacity to mix housing, agriculture and informal businesses on the same properties, and the spatial concentration of these activities reinforces their social networks and hence communal stability. The practice of mixed land use needs to be encouraged rather than outlawed.

Last, the new findings on the spatial preferences of *barrio* residents for social activities have several implications for the planning of urban facilities. Traditional planning strives to maximize investments. As a consequence of this economic bias, social and recreational facilities tend to be centralized in certain areas of the city. However, such a spatial configuration contradicts the documented social practices of *barrio* residents. Most of the residents perform a large part of their daily activities, aside from work and study, within a 1.5 km radius of their *barrio*. Daily relations with the "city" are mostly confined to work and study. Thus, urban facilities for sports, religious activities, shopping for food, social meetings and associations need to be provided at this geographical scale, rather than in central places of the city where residents have no social reasons for going there. This change in planning approach is even more necessary if we consider that, in the case of *barrios* like Mena del Hierro, not all residents work outside the neighbourhood and many others, such as taxi drivers, return to the *barrio* several times a day in order to pause from work. Social and recreational facilities for urban residents must be planned at the micro-scale of neighbourhoods and not at the macro-scale of city sectors.

EPILOGUE

Many individuals in western societies suffer from social disorientation, frustration, and a sense of social insignificance, manifest in drug and alcohol addiction, violence, and crime. Perhaps part of the blame for these problems should be placed on the individualistic lifestyle predominant in these societies, which isolates individuals and makes them socially unstable. Individualism has been the foundation of capitalist philosophy and of the wealth of the West, but it seems to have reached its limits. Individualism in industrialized nations needs reassessment. These nations could perhaps learn from other forms of social organization where individuals achieve social respect and social stability. Perhaps a case like the *barrio* Mena del Hierro, despite its small size, can provide some clues towards the achievement of "social health", especially for the young.

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APPENDIX

DESCRIPTION OF ANNEXED VIDEO CASSETTE: *UNA PARTE DE MI VIDA*

Purpose

The annexed video entitled "*Una Parte de Mi Vida*" (in Spanish language) was produced for various reasons: (1) to facilitate the researcher's integration in the *barrio* community; (2) to provide a means by which local residents could participate in the thesis research; (3) to increase the residents' awareness of their own achievements in *barrio* improvement and of the quality of the social life they have created; (4) to provide the residents a means of publicizing the history of their social organization as well as their problems of infrastructure; (5) to allow local youths to acquire technical training in video-making, both to improve their skills in community-improvement work and to aid their chances of earning income. As such, the aim of this production has not been technical perfection, but rather the process of video-making itself as a means of social empowerment.

Contents

The video contains interviews with residents of the neighbouring *barrios* of Mena del Hierro and San Rafael, and with a nephew of the former owners of *Hacienda la Concepción*, who lives in the original *Hacienda* homestead in the lower part of Mena del Hierro. The interviews are interspersed with narrated urban scenery of Mena del Hierro and San Rafael, and of the *barrios* of Quito in general.

The scenes, narration and interviews deal with the following themes: the process of urbanization of Quito and the emergence of the peripheral *barrios populares*; the history of the urban development of the *barrios* San Rafael and Mena del Hierro; the self-help social organization of residents to improve their *barrios*; the daily social life of residents in public outdoor areas; the problems caused by the lack of public space in the *barrios*.

Production

"*Una Parte de Mi Vida*" was conceived and planned in a series of workshops with members of the "S-20" youth group in Mena del Hierro, including Pablo Cañar, Marcelo Cargua, Oswaldo Gallegos, Paulino Hidrobo, Laureano Nastul, Raúl Solís and Wilson Solís. Filming was carried out in Quito in 1991 by Yvonne Riaño and workshop members. Technical direction was by Yvonne Riaño. The commentary was scripted by Yvonne Riaño, Laureano Nastul, and Pablo Cañar, and the narration is by Laureano Nastul (the field assistant for this thesis research). The Centro de Investigaciones Urbanas CIUDAD provided viewing equipment and a forum for discussion. Editing was done by Yvonne Riaño and Laureano Nastul at the Centro de Educación Popular (CEDEP), Quito, with the technical assistance of Ataulfo Escobar.

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