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DOMESTIC GROUP ORGANIZATION AND PROCESSES

IN A RURAL COLOMBIAN TOWN

by

William Russell James*

*Assistant Professor of Anthropology at The State University of New York, Potsdam.

All views, interpretations, recommendations, and conclusions are those of the author and not necessarily those of supporting or cooperating agencies.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Circumscription: The Problem

The main purpose of this study is to present a descriptive analysis of the domestic household group in and around the rural Colombian town of La Guaca (a fictitious name). Special attention will be given to the general economic situation in this town and to certain organizational factors which appear to be particularly characteristic of low income level households.

The delimited or circumscribed field of this study is restricted to some of the organizational aspects of a sample of 500 households in an administrative "county seat" (cabecera) and four surrounding neighborhoods (veredas). There are two factors which directly resulted in the specific circumscribed problem which became the eventual focus of attention. First, it became apparent in the early stages of the fieldwork that the vast majority of individuals in La Guaca were living under what appeared to be severe economic circumstances. Wages were extremely low and there seemed to be a great deal of unemployment, especially during certain times of the year. It was also apparent that there was an absence of formally organized groups or associations such as labor unions or communal labor exchange organizations in the community. Besides these factors, the people of La Guaca exhibited a general lack of community cooperation, especially in the economic sphere. Behavior and expressiveness indicated a high degree of individualism and even distrust within the community. It became apparent that the domestic household constituted the central network of social organization for most persons in the town. It was apparent that this field of social relationships was directly connected with the fundamental issue of day-to-day existence.

While it was obvious that living conditions were harsh, the members of the town and the surrounding areas seemed to be coping with the problem of surviving under these circumstances. The question which presented itself was, how was this being accomplished? In what manner and by what kinds of resources and strategies were these people able to persist? The attempt to resolve this set of questions developed into the central concern of the field research.

The major points of concentration of the field research revolved, then, around the effort to describe and analyze some of the economic conditions of life in La Guaca and to observe and collect as much data as possible concerning the domestic household and its activities.

The actual analysis and the attempt to present the results of this research also resulted in a set of conceptual problems. In this study the conceptual problem is especially relevant where discussion of the household is concerned. The major issue associated with that unit of social organization with which this study is concerned involves the use of such concepts as "family," "nuclear family," "household," and "domestic group." Distinctions are made in this study between these units. Furthermore, one of the purposes of the study is to show that by focusing attention on various

domestic groups, their interrelationships, and their activities, it is possible to gain some insight into the issue of survival in this community.

Aspects of the Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out over the period of one year in an area of highland Colombia. Four months were spent in the city of Medellín, the capital of the "state" (departamento) of Antioquia. The remaining eight months involved research in the rural town which I call La Guaca. This town is located in a coffee-growing region of Colombia and is overwhelmingly populated by Spanish-speaking mestizos. In the early stages of the fieldwork, I obtained a mimeographed copy of a census of the town and several surrounding communities. This census had been conducted in 1966-1967 as part of a nutritional project being conducted in the area. Because of the availability of this data I decided to concentrate my efforts on a study of household composition using this material as a foundation. I was also given access to the nutritional project files which were associated with the raw household composition data. Working with these two sources I collected information on the following variables associated with the members of each household: 1) a listing of all persons in the household; 2) location of the residence; 3) indication of the household head; 4) dates of birth, i.e., ages for all members of the household; 5) sex determinations; 6) occupational specifics; and 7) levels of education and/or presence in school.

In 1967 administrators of the nutritional project had also published a mimeographed report on various aspects of economic, social, religious, and cultural life in the community. I was furnished with a copy of this generalized study, Estudio Socioeconomico del Municipio de "La Guaca," and from this I have been able to draw upon some of the information contained in this report.

II. ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

Antioquia

The fieldwork upon which this study is based took place in the mild, temperate, coffee-growing highland area of the department of Antioquia. Today the department of Antioquia is composed of 106 "counties" (municipios) each with its own administrative "county-seat" (cabecera) and secondary administrative village or corregimiento. The population of the department has, in the last few years, surpassed three million persons. As is the case in most other Latin American countries there has been a dramatic shift in the population from the rural areas to the urban sectors of the country in general and to the cities of the department of Antioquia in particular (Cf. Mendoza Hoyos 1968:11-25, Tables 4 and 5).

However, in comparison to other departments in Colombia, Antioquia still has a heavy rural orientation despite the emigration pattern to the urban areas which has taken place over the past few years. Even though coffee was introduced to this area by 1880 it did not become an economically important cash crop until after World War I. It was in this early part of



the twentieth century that a new economic era began for the people of Antioquia and the surrounding regions. Although small farmers became actively engaged in the cultivation of this cash crop, this apparently had little effect on the land tenure system. With the introduction and expansion of the importance of coffee as a cash crop there began a search for adequate land upon which to raise the new bush which was to become so important to Colombia's economy. Coffee, in a matter of decades, became the foundation of Colombia's single crop market system. "Since the early years of this century, as coffee has gone so has the Colombian economy" (Dix 1967:24).

Today much of Colombia's coffee is still produced by small, independent farmers on relatively small plots of land (minifundias). It has been reported that 78 percent of coffee farms have fewer than 20 hectares of land (1 hectare = 2.471 acres) (Censo Agropecuario, 1960). However, control of coffee on the national and international market is in the hands of a number of large growers and the merchants who dominate the national Coffee Growers Federation.

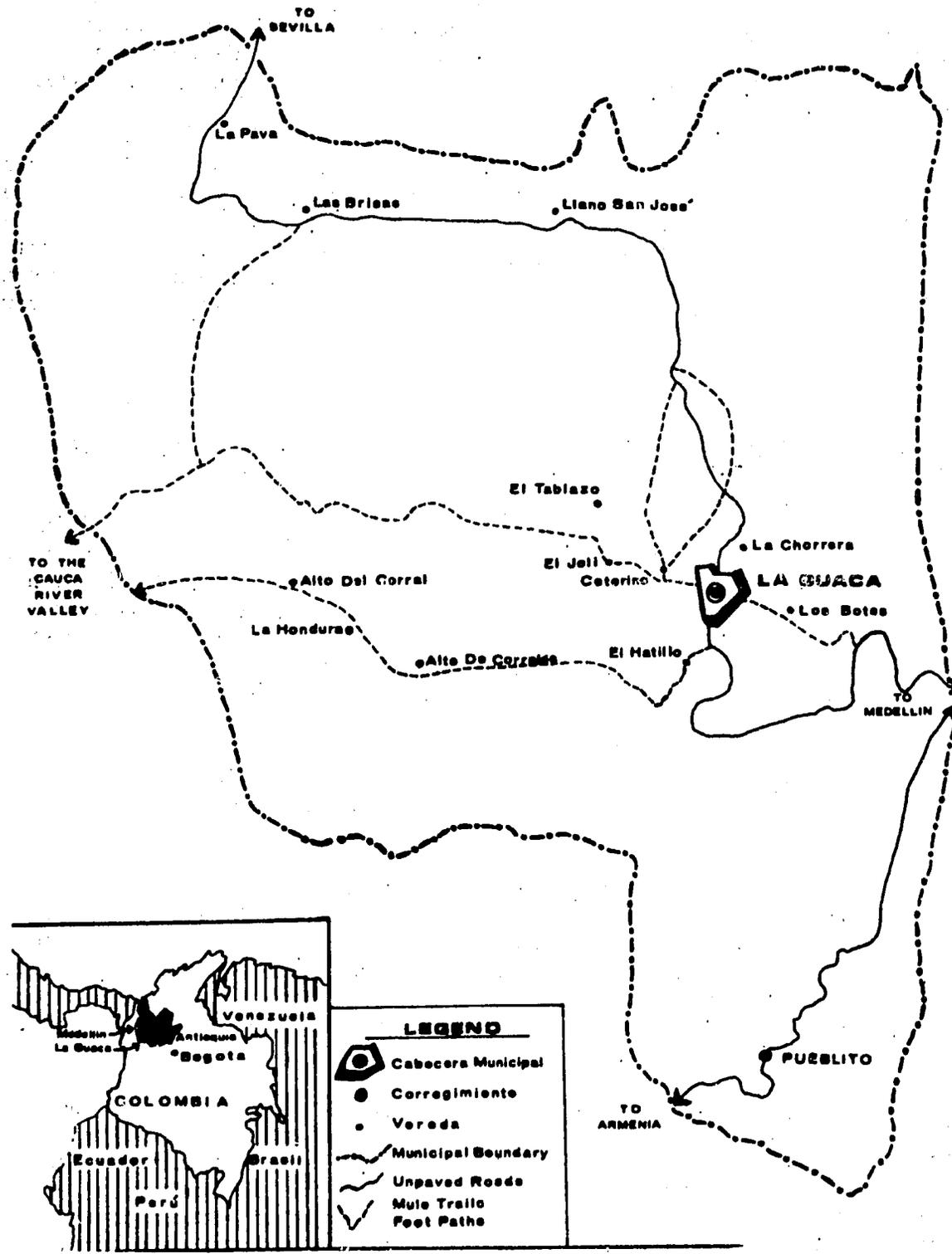
La Guaca

Geographical Location: La Guaca is situated some 40 kilometers (approximately 25 miles) southwest of the city of Medellín (see Map 1). The 170 square kilometers which make up the total area of the county encompass a region which is characterized by steep vertical mountainsides rising above the cloud cover. The rugged landscape is either denuded or covered by secondary growth which is a result of years of slash-and-burn cultivation. This is an agricultural activity which is still predominant and which can commonly be seen today. The majority of the county lies in the temperate zone. As a consequence, the climate of the municipio is mild and temperate and is especially favorable for the cultivation of coffee bushes.

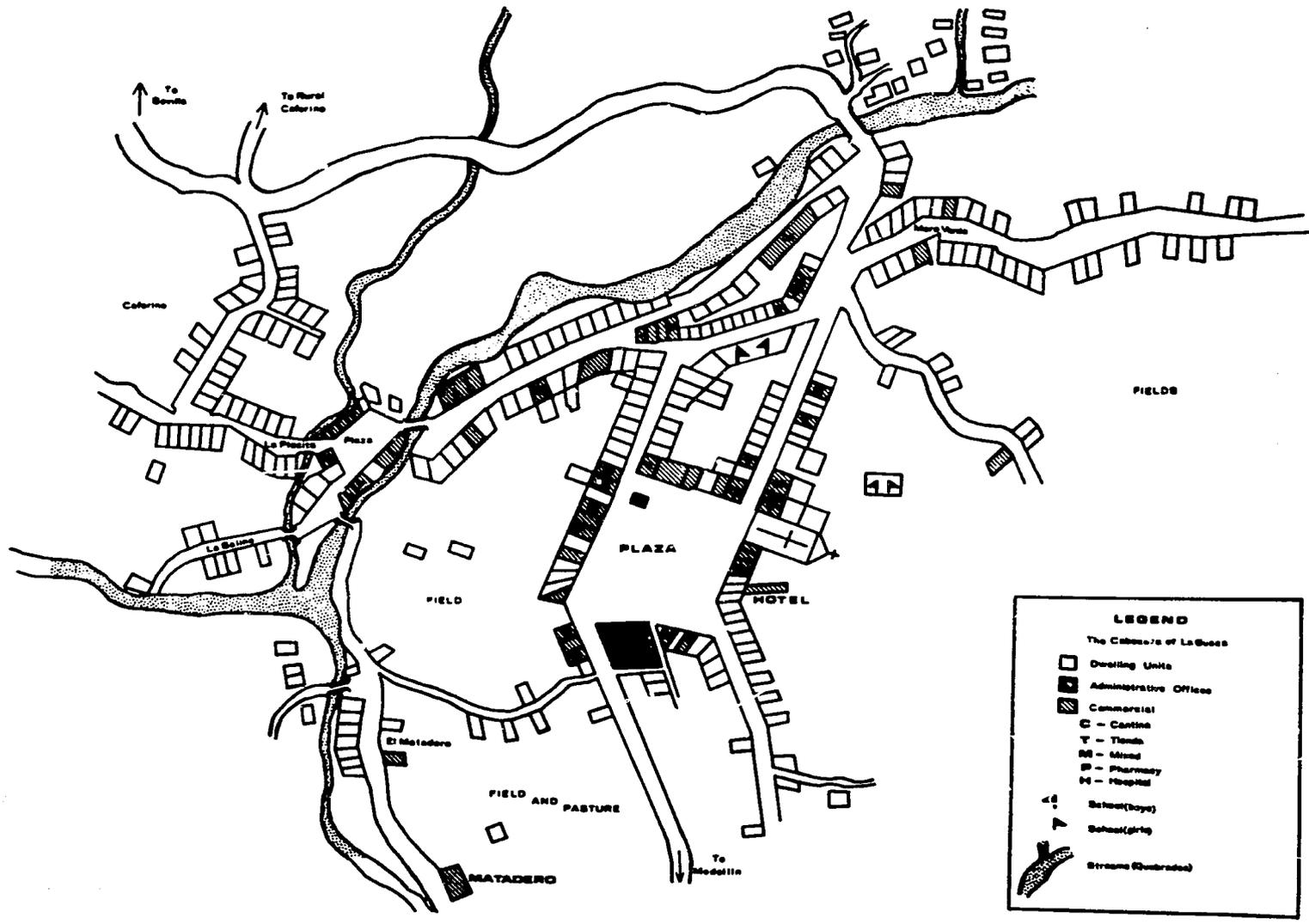
La Guaca has alternating seasons of wet and dry periods. The rainy season usually occurs between the months of April and June and again between October and January. During these months there are frequent thunder storms and torrential downpours throughout the general region.

The town of La Guaca (see Map 2) is located in the east central portion of the municipality and is situated in an angle formed by two streams known as La Aburreña and La Sucia. To reach the town from Medellín one must pass through two suburban towns before coming to a narrow, winding, mountainous, dirt road which, in the dry season throws up a cloud of choking dust. This road eventually descends into the valley which is the location of the county-seat of La Guaca.

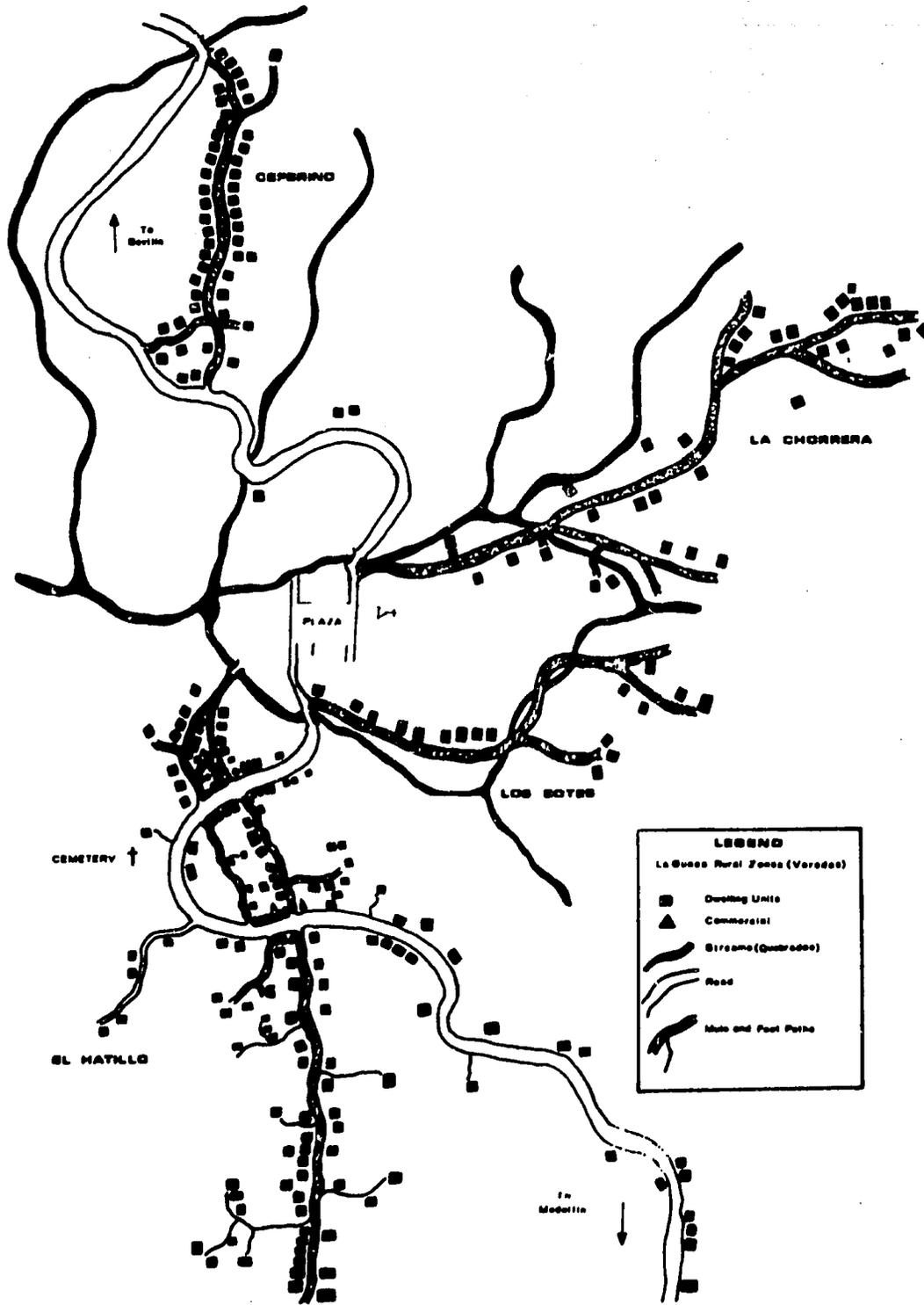
The Economy: The principal economic activity of the county and the town of La Guaca, which was officially recognized as an administrative unit in 1831, is coffee production. While there are no plantations or large haciendas, most of the ownership of the land is in the hands of a few individuals, some of whom live outside of the county and others of whom own bars and stores in the town. While coffee is the primary cash crop, sugar cane, plantains, beans, and yucca are also grown for commercial purposes



Map 1. The County of La Guaca



Map 2. The Village of La Guaca



Map 3. Selected Neighborhoods Surrounding La Guaca

as well as local consumption. The vast majority of the population which makes up the sample of this study are wage laborers who own only subsistence plots or more commonly no land at all.

Population: The people of La Guaca, as with the general population of the highlands of Antioquia, can be categorized as mestizo. The people of La Guaca, however, refer to themselves as campesinos or more specifically as Guaqueños, i.e., those who inhabit the town or county of La Guaca. Spanish, in a rustic dialect, is the only language spoken throughout this region and the people participate, however tenuously or sporadically, in the major institutions of the nation, e.g., the political and economic structures and the Catholic Church.

The county's population has grown from 6,099 persons in 1938 to 7,525 persons in 1951 to the figure of 8,524 presented in the 1964 census (see Table 1). Fifty percent of the reported 1964 population in La Guaca was below the age of fifteen. Another 10 percent of the total population was made up of those between the ages of fifteen and twenty years, yielding a figure of fully 60 percent of the population below twenty years of age.

Most of the county's population expansion is occurring primarily in the rural areas, i.e., outside of the county-seat. (See Table 2.)

La Guaca has the majority of its population living outside of the urban county-seat. Eighty-five percent of its 1964 population inhabited the hinterland of the county while only 14 percent lived in the county-seat, which is distinguished by its governmental-administrative, religious, police, health, market, and service functions.

The Sample Population: The population as categorized by age and sex with which this study is concerned is shown in Table 3. This sample includes all persons who live in the county-seat (i.e., 1,220) plus 2,270 persons who live in several surrounding settlements. The sample was drawn primarily from the nutritional project census mentioned earlier but has been corrected for the period 1968-1969, the year in which the field work took place. The population of this study displays the characteristic predominance of a high percentage of youth: over 46 percent of this sample are below the age of fifteen years and 65 percent are below the age of twenty-five years.

The Town and its Neighborhoods: Reserving the detailed discussion of the household, domestic groups, and their activities for later chapters, the following presentation will deal with some of the general physical, social, and economic characteristics of the county-seat and the surrounding neighborhoods.

La Guaca* is the administrative center of the county. It is also looked upon by most of the population as an urban center in contrast to other communities in the county.

*Henceforth La Guaca will refer specifically to the county-seat, unless otherwise noted.

Table 1. Population of the County by Age and Sex (1964)

Age	Number			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-1	177	202	379	2.0	2.4	4.4
2-4	692	632	1,324	8.0	7.4	15.4
5-9	734	688	1,422	9.0	8.0	17.0
10-14	606	531	1,137	7.0	6.0	13.0
15-19	419	417	836	5.0	5.0	10.0
20-24	279	286	565	3.3	3.4	6.7
25-29	188	258	446	2.2	3.0	5.2
30-34	204	224	428	2.4	2.6	5.0
35-39	180	206	386	2.1	2.4	4.5
40-44	151	186	337	1.7	2.2	3.9
45-49	154	154	308	1.8	1.8	3.6
50-54	144	130	274	1.7	1.5	3.2
55-59	100	87	187	1.2	1.0	2.2
60-64	105	90	195	1.2	1.0	2.2
65-69	48	47	95	0.5	0.5	1.0
70-74	43	45	88	0.5	0.5	1.0
75-79	26	19	45	0.3	0.2	0.5
80-84	19	22	41	0.2	0.3	0.5
85-	11	20	31	0.1	0.2	0.3
Totals	4,280	4,244	8,524	50.2	49.4	99.6

Source: Dirección Departamental de Estadística.

Table 2. Population Changes in La Guaca, 1938-1964

	1938	1951	1964
Urban	1,706	1,211	1,228
Rural	4,393	6,314	7,296
Totals	6,099	7,525	8,524

Source: Dirección Departamental de Estadística.

Table 3. Population of the Study by Age and Sex (1968-1969)

Age	Number			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	211	234	445	6.1	6.7	12.8
5-14	608	563	1,171	17.5	16.1	33.6
15-24	341	322	663	9.7	9.2	18.9
25-39	229	298	527	6.6	8.5	15.1
40-54	168	180	348	4.8	5.1	9.9
55-69	103	107	210	2.7	3.0	5.7
70-	33	61	94	0.9	2.3	3.2
Totals	1,693	1,765	3,458	48.3	50.9	99.2

The main plaza is the focal point of the governmental and religious institutions and most of the commercial establishments of the town. The landmark and most conspicuous physical structure in the town is the Catholic Church. The church is the most prominent of a complex of buildings which belong to the parish and incorporate the various functions and quarters of the local priest and the six nuns who reside in La Guaca. The nuns are engaged mainly in teaching. The other buildings which face onto the main plaza are almost all concerned with commercial services. The most common of these are the bars which do most of their business between Friday and Sunday evening.

La Guaca also has a hospital but it is poorly staffed and medical equipment is deficient and scarce. It serves the community mainly in emergency cases and as a maternity ward.

The town, sometimes referred to as La Urbana, contains the following barrios or neighborhoods: 1) La Urbana Central; 2) Moro Verde; 3) La Placita; 4) La Salina; and 5) El Matadero (see Table 4). Of the 500 households with which this study is concerned, 190 are located in the county-seat itself (see Table 4) while the other 310 households are located in the four nearby neighborhoods (see Table 5) which are commonly known as veredas.

It is important to recognize that the county of La Guaca is both similar to and distinct from most other rural antioqueño communities. Like all counties in Antioquia, La Guaca has a county-seat which serves as the administrative, religious, and commercial center for the municipality. Unlike most surrounding counties La Guaca was not directly involved in the devastating upheaval known as "la violencia" which began with the "bogotazo" in 1948 and lasted in many regions of the country until the creation of the National Front in 1957 (Guzman Campos 1968; Fals Borda 1962:361-381; Fluharty 1957; Dix 1967:360-388).

La Guaca shares with Colombia in general and especially with the department of Antioquia, Catholicism as the dominant religion. Catholicism pervades both the formal institutions and many of the informal activities

Table 4. Neighborhood Membership in the County Seat of La Guaca - 1969

Neighborhoods	Households	Number of Persons		Total
		Males	Females	
La Urbana	103	367	377	744
Moro Verde	32	99	75	174
La Placita	24	67	78	145
La Salina	7	18	20	38
El Matadero	24	54	65	119
Total	190	605	615	1,220

Table 5. Membership in Neighborhoods Surrounding La Guaca - 1969

Neighborhoods	Households	Number of Persons		Total
		Males	Females	
Ceferino	68	214	256	472
Los Botes	17	70	53	123
El Háttillo	162	598	596	1,194
La Chorrera	42	167	165	332
Miscellaneous	21	75	74	149
Totals	310	1,124	1,146	2,270

of the people and is a prominent and influential force in the general cosmological orientation of almost every person. Aspects of religious ideology are used by both the "haves" and the "have-nots" as justifications and rationales for what is and what will be.

Another characteristic of La Guaca which is not typical for all rural communities in Antioquia but which nevertheless is commonly found, involves the atomistic nature of life styles. La Guaca has no formally constituted economic groups or organizations. There are no unions, syndicates, or communal labor exchange groups. In fact, the general social circumstance is one of extreme individualism. This situation is highlighted by an obvious general distrust among most members of the community, including neighbors. In many cases distrust and suspicion are most acute among those who live close to one another. There are, for example, numerous accusations of thievery, especially with regard to such things as clothing, animals, money, and food. Personal or inter-familial conflicts, disputes, and "hard-feelings" are not soon forgotten and there are neighbors who have systematically avoided each other for years.

In conjunction with the atomistic qualities of interpersonal relationships of communities such as La Guaca there also exist integrative forms of organization. The nuclear family is clearly the most important social entity. In this study, however, discussion will center around that I consider to be a more appropriate and accurate unit, the domestic group.

Although, given the very limited scope of this study, it is not possible to deal more extensively with the probable root causes or complexities of atomistic-type societies it can be noted that some have placed emphasis on ecological factors. One suggestion seems to apply especially well to the situation in La Guaca and that is in regard to, "the growth and expansion of great national systems, prior cooperative patterns have been replaced by a network of impersonal contractual relationships" (Levy 1968:231). In order to establish the applicability of this and preceding points it is necessary to present some of the major factors characteristic of the economic dimension of life in La Guaca.

Aspects of Economic Life in La Guaca

The primary economic activity of the county is the cultivation, processing, and marketing of coffee. Other economic activities include the cultivation of sugar cane, yucca, and plantains, the raising of cattle, and the various commercial and service occupations which find their locus in the town.

Occupations: 1. Agricultural. Close to 75 percent of the male population of this study is involved in agricultural work of one kind or another (see Table 6). Of the 546 persons who constitute this agricultural category only 11 are clearly identified as large landowners; they constitute 1.5 percent of all the adult males whose occupations are known. There are, of course, other landowners who reside on their farms (sometimes more or less permanently but usually only occasionally) or who are absentee landowners who place the management of their land in the hands of foremen (mayordomos).

The vast majority of those involved in agricultural activity, however, can generally be identified with reference to one and very often more than one of the following categories:

1. Agriculturalists (cosecheros, propietarios, agricultores).
2. Sharecroppers or share-renters (cosecheros, aparceros, compañeros).
3. Wage laborers (jornaleros, oberos, peones, trabajadores).
4. There are also those known most commonly as agregados or vivientes, i.e., individuals or families who work for a landowner and in return and as partial remuneration are given subsistence plots and living quarters on the owner's land. In this study I am not directly concerned with this latter type of agricultural worker.

Those who own small to medium parcels of land and who cultivate crops for the cash market as well as for subsistence are usually called agriculturalists or cosecheros propietarios, i.e., they harvest their own crop.

Table 6. Occupational Distribution for the County Seat and Selected Neighborhoods, 1969

Occupations	Number of Persons	Percentage ^a
1. Commercial (Store owners, bar owners, etc.)	30	4.1
2. Professional (Doctors, teachers, priests, etc.)	27	3.7
3. Agricultural (Large and small landowners, tenants, and wage laborers)	546	74.7
4. Services (Public employees, laborers, drovers, butchers, bar tenders, etc.)	128	17.5
5. Not known	81	
Totals	812	100.0

^a Calculated on basis of known occupations only.

The most common term used for sharecroppers is cosechero, which means that a person harvests a crop but must share from one-quarter to one-half of it with the individual from whom he is "renting" the land. The arrangement may vary: in some cases the landowner furnishes such items as seed, tools, and other resources along with the land; in other situations the cosechero may have to furnish all of the resources. Many cosecheros enter into more extensive patron-client relations with the landowners, especially those who are also the owners of stores in the town.

The agricultural wage laborer is commonly known as a jornalero. The term "jornalero" is also used in reference to non-agricultural, part-time, day laborers, but these individuals are generally called oberos or trabajadores.

In La Guaca many men engage in more than one of the agricultural activities just described. For example, some men who are small landowners may also be renting or sharecropping other plots of land and may occasionally hire themselves out as wage laborers.

A number of individuals are cosecheros part of the time and jornaleros part of the time. Some men work as jornaleros during the eight- to ten-hour

day and then return to devote some work to their "own" sharecropping plot. Others, and probably the great majority, are simply wage laborers who own no land and who do not have the minimal resources (including the confidence or backing of a landowner) to enter into a contractual tenant relationship.

As a result of this situation, the career trajectories of particular individuals are not bounded by the more rigid occupational categorizations presented here. Men may move in and out of certain occupations depending on individual circumstances and situations.

Four hundred and twenty-four of the 546 adult males directly engaged in agricultural occupations consider themselves to be jornaleros (see Table 7). This is over 75 percent of all those men in agricultural categories and well over 50 percent of all the male occupations for those included in this study.

Table 7. Agricultural Occupations For Males in La Guaca and Vicinity

Occupations	Number	Percentage
Large landowner (hacendado)	11	2.0
Small landowner (cosechero propietario)	35	6.4
Tenant or sharecropper (cosechero)	76	13.9
Wage laborer (jornalero)	424	77.7
Totals	546	100.0

Occupations: 2. Service. Service occupations refer here to all of those full-time or part-time jobs which are clearly not applicable to the other occupational categories listed in Table 6. This general category includes a wide diversity of specific occupations, including secretaries, cattle drovers, construction workers, policemen, butchers, clerks, and bar tenders.

Women do not normally hold full-time occupational positions in La Guaca. There are only two women who are public employees, for example. There are fewer than one-half dozen female clerks in the town. The most common occupation for women from the lower socio-economic levels of the community is probably that of domestic servant. There are close to 50 of these domestic workers who are employed by people from the commercial and professional sectors of the population and by large landowners and the local priest. There are from six to eight women who are regularly

engaged in prostitution and who reside in La Guaca. They have been included in the service sector of Table 6.

Part-time occupations which engage the female sector of the population include seamstress, laundress, cook, midwife, rezandera (those who are paid to pray at certain crisis periods, e.g., funerals), and various kinds of wage labor.

Occupations: 3. Professional. These are occupations which require some formal higher education and which carry prestige in the town.

Included in this occupational category are the local priest, the mayor, the judge, two doctors, three male teachers and four female teachers, the bank manager, and a dentist.

None of these individuals are indigenous to La Guaca although most of them are Antioqueños. A few now reside permanently in the town but many of them, e.g., the lay teachers, the nutritional project doctor, the mayor, and the judge, usually return to Medellín on the weekends. In other words, most of the formal institutional positions are occupied by persons who are transients in the community.

Occupations: 4. Commercial. There are 30 persons in the town who own and operate stores or bars as well as one woman who runs what passes for the local hotel. Most of these establishments are owned by men who are also large landowners or who own parcels of land which they rent out to cosecheros. Of the 30 people in this category, five are women.

Occupations: 5. Summary. The distribution of occupations given in Table 6 shows that 74.7 percent of adult males whose occupation is known are involved in agriculture. Table 7 reveals how clearly these men form a rural proletariat. As a result, La Guaca shares some important characteristics with other areas of Latin America.

There are no "plantations" in La Guaca. At least not to the same extent as are found in the banana regions of Central America, the sugar producing islands of the Caribbean, and the henequen (sisal) area of the Yucatán peninsula. Still, the following characteristics and relationships enumerated by Mintz (1953-1954) can be identified in La Guaca:

1. The primary agricultural activity is linked entirely to the national and international market.
2. Locally, there is a seasonal need of a fairly large working class population.
3. There is a scarcity of land. (In the county of La Guaca only a few individuals own the larger arable tracts of land.)
4. There is a standard medium of exchange, i.e., the peso.

5. There are standardized rates of pay. (In La Guaca, these are set by the large landowners; there are no unions or syndicates in this area.)
6. Relationships between employers and workers are, for the most part, impersonal.
7. Extension of credit (e.g., in retail stores) is frequently used as a means of control.
8. Home industries and crafts are almost non-existent.
9. There are developing agencies of control and service, e.g., religious, educational, military, police, political, and medical.
10. No member of the rural proletariat is a primary producer (i.e., those who are laborers in either the agricultural or the service sectors of the population).

In the Fields: Coffee, Wage Labor, and Subsistence

One must grow and process a large quantity of coffee before it becomes remotely profitable. This necessitates a sizeable work force. Also, the matured beans have to be picked within a short time so they will not rot and this means hiring a temporary but large labor force, a large cash expenditure. As a consequence, only those who have some capital resources or backing can expect to participate profitably in the economic production of coffee.

Picking coffee beans is a tedious and exhausting activity especially since many of the plants are located on steep slopes separated by ravines. Some of the bushes are quite high and one must either climb through the bush or use a ladder. Cogiendo la cosecha (collecting the harvest) is piece-work labor. One is paid by the quantity picked. During the harvest an experienced adult male may be able to make as much as 25 pesos in a day (ca. \$1.50 U.S.).

Because of the number of people who are involved in the harvest and the rapidity with which the bushes are cleared of their matured red beans, there are only a few days when the picking is really profitable for the workers. Between the two harvest seasons work is extremely scarce for a majority of the population and there are about three months during the year (especially in June and July) when there is absolutely no work of any kind for the great percentage of these campesinos.

Many Guaqueños supplement their low and sporadic wages with subsistence gardening, the raising of a few chickens, or the cultivation of some lesser cash crops such as cabuya, beans, or yucca. They may also hire themselves out as laborers, either full- or part-time.

Land for house plots is obtained free from the municipality although there is a small yearly tax which is assessed. Each of these plots,

especially in the veredas, has enough land attached to it to provide for a garden. Also most household plots have some coffee bushes and plantains growing more or less wild on the land. The coffee beans from this small number of bushes are usually harvested and processed to bring in a few pesos, while the plantains are used for the household diet. Various types of subsistence crops are also planted adjacent to many of these dwellings or, in some cases, small parcels of land may be rented and/or share-cropped from larger landowners. Produce from these crops is used by the individual households but in some cases certain items may be sold locally in the Sunday market or in the smaller Saturday market which is held in La Plaza Colón.

There appears to be little "love for the land" among the rural proletariat in La Guaca. Cooperation among field workers or agriculturalists is also the exception rather than the rule. Asked if they are content with working in the campo (the field) a great majority will respond negatively. Personal success in life is usually felt to be a matter of "luck" (suerte) or of individual effort and tenacity. Only a small minority of campesinos believe that success depends on the cooperation of friends and other campesinos. When asked their opinion regarding the trading of labor in activities such as harvesting or house building, the overwhelming majority answer that there is no such thing and that it is always better to work for cash. The people in La Guaca have heard that in Medellín a worker in the factory can earn between 25 to 30 pesos a day along with certain fringe benefits and a great many of them would rather work at this kind of an occupation, if they had the skill and the opportunity, than continue working in the fields.

In terms of the economic aspects of life in La Guaca the following situation emerges. Almost 70 percent of the adult males in the town who are "economically active" are either agricultural wage laborers or common day laborers. It should be understood that the term "economically active" must be used with a certain amount of caution because even though there are very few adult males in the community who will not state some occupation for themselves, the fact of the matter is that the amount of unemployment and underemployment is extremely high. In terms of agricultural wage laborers this situation is directly related to the ecological aspects of coffee cultivation. During the two harvest seasons there is a "euphoric high" and in between the harvest there is "dysphoric unemployment" for all but a few who have more permanent employment (Cf. Horowitz 1967:101). The situation is much the same in the rest of this highland area and therefore labor migration does not present any better possibilities. Only a few individuals have emigrated to the city of Medellín in search of other occupations and most of these eventually return to La Guaca. For a vast majority of the inhabitants of La Guaca the economic situation is bleak. This holds true for both agricultural wage laborers and wage earners in the service occupations of the population. Here, too, full employment is sporadic and wages are low in comparison to what the peso will buy. It was often reported that the wages for common laborers and service occupations had not increased more than two or three pesos (12 to 18 cents U.S.) in the last few years. At the same time the cost of such items as food stuffs, clothing, electricity, etc., has increased tremendously.

A fairly high population in relation to the amount of available cultivable land compounds the overall problems in La Guaca. As indicated previously there are a few large landowners, a number of small cash crop farmers, and a large number of landless wage laborers who may do some subsistence gardening. La Guaca represents essentially an area of minifundia.

In Colombia and Latin America in general, it is apparent that neither the agricultural nor the urban industrial sectors of the economy have provided sufficient economic opportunities to absorb the constantly growing rural labor force. No alternative to underemployment in the already overpopulated service occupations of the cities or continued underemployment and bare subsistence living in the rural areas appears to be forthcoming.

However, most discussion of the general economic conditions of Latin American peoples does not take cognizance of the more informal activities engaged in by individuals. Individuals in communities such as La Guaca are very often engaged in a number of economic activities at any one time, e.g., many men in the town may have small farm plots, be sharecropping, and also hiring themselves out as agricultural wage laborers, all at the same time. Besides this kind of situation, most men in the community when they complete one type of occupational activity will attempt to engage themselves in almost anything else that happens to come along. Hence, despite the fact that La Guaca is tied to a national and international market system because of the cash-cropping of coffee there is still a great deal of ordinary subsistence cultivation carried on in the town. For these reasons, it is impossible to categorize La Guaca in any specific way: it shares some of the characteristics of many peasant societies, as these have been described by numerous anthropologists working in Latin America; at the same time, the involvement in a cash-crop economic system and the large numbers of landless agricultural and non-agricultural wage laborers suggests placement in some form of a "post-peasant" type of category.

Finally, it is not just the adult male members of the population who must be considered in regard to economic activity. Recognition must be taken of the more informal activities of various persons in the community. For example, a great deal of scavenging is carried on by children in La Guaca, especially those from the lower socio-economic sectors of the town. Wives and other female members of households often engage in various activities which provide some kind of economic contribution to the household. The relevance of these diverse and informal economic activities to the survival of lower income households will be discussed more fully in the chapter on domestic groups.

The various aspects of life in La Guaca presented in this portion of the paper relate to the central issue of this study. Given the situation of underemployment and unemployment, the low wages paid when one is working, the lack of cooperative labor exchange, and the atomistic nature of the community: what do the majority of people do in order to survive? For a mass of people who are essentially landless and without capital resources, what resources do they have which can be exercised in the attempt to persist? It follows from the preceding discussion that the place to begin to look for the answer to this question is the household.

III. HOUSEHOLDS AND THEIR COMPOSITION

In La Guaca the family is not coterminous with the household. The family and the household are both logically and empirically distinct. This is so because the referent of family is kinship (biological or jural) while the referent of household is residence.

A household is defined here as a unit of residence inhabited by one or more individuals. The residential unit, i.e., the physical structure, may be a house, an apartment, a room, or a space which has its own cooking and sleeping facilities. The member or members of the household did not have to be present at the time the census was actually taken as long as they were recognized by their co-residents as being part of the household. Although a household normally consists of persons who are kinsmen it may also include servants, lodgers, and other non-kinsmen.

A second set of distinctions must also be made before proceeding. Following M. G. Smith's discussion (1962), it is necessary to recognize the difference between household head, household principals, and household dependents.

Dependents are those members of household groups who do not exercise leadership roles. Most dependents will be junior members, but many are persons of quite senior age. Principals are the leaders of the household group, and they may include the head's adult children or resident mate. An absent mate or child whose contributions serve to maintain the group is an absent principal. The household head is ipso facto a principal, and in many units the only one. There is no necessary limit to the number of household principals or dependents, although naturally there can be only one head in each household (Smith 1962:15).

As is the case in most of Smith's West Indian sample, the households in La Guaca whose principals are conjugal pairs are almost entirely headed by males. In this study the household head was identified as that member of the residential group who was so regarded by both the household itself and the members of the community. The basic factor involved in these determinations was economic, i.e., that person who was a member of the household, who "owned" the dwelling, the land, or both, and who was the primary economic supporter of the residential group was considered the household head.

Sample Households and Household Heads

Table 8 shows that of the 500 sample households 406 (81.2 percent) are headed by males while 94 (18.8 percent) have female household heads.

The distribution of household headship of the sample population is presented in Table 9 and here it can be seen that the majority of males over 25 are household heads.

Table 8. Heads of Households by Age and Sex

Age	Number			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-24	4	1	5	0.8	0.2	1.0
25-39	130	14	144	26.0	2.8	28.8
40-54	153	27	180	30.6	5.4	36.0
55-69	93	25	118	18.6	5.0	23.6
70-	26	27	53	5.2	5.4	10.6
Totals	406	94	500	81.2	18.8	100.0

Table 9. Distribution of Household Headship Among Adult Members of the Population by Age and Sex

Age	Total	Male		Female		
		HHS	% HHS	Total	HHS	% HHS
15-24	341	4	1.2	322	1	0.3
25-39	229	130	56.7	298	14	4.7
40-54	168	153	90.9	180	27	15.0
55-69	103	93	90.3	107	25	23.4
70-	33	26	78.8	61	27	44.2
Totals and Percentages	874	406	46.4	968	94	9.7

Among women, the highest incidence of headship occurs in the 70 years and above category. Nineteen of these women or 70 percent are widows, which probably reflects the fact that some men tend to marry younger women who outlive them.

The fact that there are so few households headed by males below the age of 25 is a reflection of the pattern of the developmental cycle of the conjugal family in La Guaca. While males begin to experiment sexually in their teens and to mate in their later teens, marriage does not often occur until the individual has passed 20 years of age. A common pattern after marriage for these younger members of the community is to remain attached to the family of orientation for a period of time before establishing an independent residence. By the time male members have reached their late 20s a majority have set up their own residences and have become household heads.

It is during these middle years that the prolific Antioqueño conjugal family begins to flourish. Table 10 shows the variations in household size according to households with heads of different sexes. The range includes units containing one to eighteen persons. The average size of a household in La Guaca is 6.96 persons. Although it is not uncommon for conjugal pairs or, in some cases, single women to have children either

Table 10. Households Classified by Sex of Head and Number of Persons

Number of Persons	Sex of Head			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male HHs	Female HHs	Total
1	5	11	16	5	11	16
2	25	17	42	50	34	84
3	30	20	50	90	60	150
4	37	9	46	148	36	184
5	40	6	46	200	30	230
6	44	8	52	264	48	312
7	44	5	49	308	35	343
8	26	4	30	208	32	240
9	29	5	34	261	45	306
10	32	1	33	320	10	330
11	30	2	32	330	22	352
12	19	2	21	228	24	252
13	15	2	17	195	26	221
14	15	1	16	210	14	224
15	7	1	8	105	15	120
16	3	0	3	48	0	48
17	3	0	3	51	0	51
18	1	0	1	18	0	18
Totals	406	94	500	3,039	442	3,481

annually or with not more than a two-year interval, reaching family sizes of ten to eleven children in the most productive years, a number of these larger households reflect the occurrence of various forms of extended households. The fecundity of Guaqueños is all the more remarkable when one is reminded of the fact that for every ten children who survive to the age of five, about five die.

The marital and parental status of the 500 household heads (see Tables 11 and 12) demonstrate the congruence with the normative aspects of Antioqueño culture dealing with religiously sanctioned marriage. Fully 87 percent of all household heads have been legally married. This figure includes both male and female household heads as well as those persons who have been widowed or who are separated. Divorce, of course, is not possible in this Catholic region and in the case of conjugal conflicts which become serious, separation is the only alternative. A separated male will usually establish a unión libre ("free union") with another female. Free or consensual unions, however, are a rarity in La Guaca, constituting less than 5 percent of this sample. Only 20 households headed by males and only three with female household heads involve unmarried mates.

The occupations of female household heads (Table 13) shows that well over half of these 94 females have no definite occupation.

Table 11. Male Household Heads Classified by Age, Marital Condition, and Parental Status

<u>Mating and Parental Status</u>	<u>-24</u>	<u>-39</u>	<u>-54</u>	<u>-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Single persons, parental status not known						
a. mating 1968-69 N/K	0	1	3	4	0	8
b. probably never	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. previous to 1968-69	0	0	0	0	0	0
d. mating in 1968-69	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	0	1	3	4	0	8
2. Single parents						
a. mating 1968-69 N/K	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. previous to 1968-69	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. mating in 1968-69	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Free unions						
a. mating in 1968-69	0	9	6	5	0	20
b. separated, childless	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. separated, w/children	0	0	0	0	0	0
d. widowed, alone	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	0	9	6	5	0	20
4. Married persons						
a. spouse present	4	119	138	80	26	367
b. spouse absent	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. separated, alone	0	0	2	0	0	2
d. separated, not alone	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	4	119	140	80	26	369
5. Widowed persons						
a. widowed, alone	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. widowed, not alone	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>
Totals	0	1	3	5	0	9
Grand Total	4	130	152	94	26	406

Note: The determination of these variables is based on the actual status of individuals in the year 1968-1969.

Table 12. Female Household Heads Classified by Age, Marital Condition, and Parental Status

<u>Mating and Parental Status</u>	<u>-24</u>	<u>-39</u>	<u>-54</u>	<u>-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Single persons, childless						
a. mating 1968-69 N/K	0	0	1	3	1	5
b. probably never	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. previous to 1968-69	0	0	0	0	0	0
d. mating in 1968-69	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	0	0	1	3	1	5
2. Single parents						
a. mating 1968-69 N/K	0	0	2	3	0	5
b. previous to 1968-69	0	0	2	8	4	14
c. mating in 1968-69	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>
Totals	1	5	6	11	4	27
3. Free unions						
a. mating in 1968-69	0	1	1	0	0	2
b. separated, childless	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. separated, w/children	0	1	0	0	0	1
d. widowed, alone	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	0	2	1	0	0	3
4. Married persons						
a. spouse present	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. spouse absent	0	1	1	0	1	3
c. separated, alone	0	0	1	0	1	2
d. separated, not alone	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>
Totals	0	3	7	0	3	13
5. Widowed persons						
a. widowed, alone	0	0	0	1	2	3
b. widowed, not alone	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>43</u>
Totals	0	4	12	11	19	46
Grand Total	1	14	27	25	27	94

Note: The determination of these variables is based on the actual status of individuals in the year 1968-1969.

Table 13. Female Household Heads by Age and Occupation

Occupation	Age					Total
	15-24	25-39	40-54	55-69	70+	
Not known	0	1	1	3	2	7
Wage laborer	0	3	5	1	0	9
Share-cropper	0	0	1	1	0	2
Small land owner	0	0	1	0	2	3
Non-agricultural	0	3	8	4	2	17
Beggar	0	0	0	1	0	1
No work	1	7	11	15	21	55
Totals	1	14	27	25	27	94

Analysis of the occupation of male household heads (Table 14) shows that at least 60 percent of these men are engaged in the agricultural sector of economic activity. While there is no pattern according to age for agricultural wage laborers who are household heads, it does seem significant that 73 percent of the small farmer/tenant group are above the age of 39. This seems to indicate that before the age of 40 most men are not economically capable or do not have the other resources to rent or buy land, thereby becoming small farmers or tenant farmers. Only 37 percent of the 424 agricultural wage laborers are household heads, while 65 percent of the known sharecroppers and small land owners are household heads. The remainder of these adult male agricultural workers must obviously be attached to residences as dependents and/or principals, meaning that at least 300 adult males in the agricultural sector are not household heads.

Table 14. Male Household Heads by Age and Occupation

Occupation	Age					Total
	-24	-39	-54	-69	70+	
Large landowner	0	0	4	5	2	11
Small farmer/tenant	0	21	30	20	6	77
Agricultural laborer	3	57	58	34	6	158
Non-agricultural						
1) commercial/professional	1	13	18	4	0	36
2) services	0	28	33	19	2	82
No work	0	1	3	7	4	15
No information	0	2	2	3	6	13
Totals	4	122	148	92	26	392

Note: Twenty male-headed households are not included in these tabulations because of faulty information.

The normative belief in La Guaca is that men should head their own households whenever possible. Thus, in the case of the 314 conjugal or nuclear households in the sample (see Tables 15, 16, and 17) almost 87 percent are headed by males. Those that are not are really "denuded" (Cf. Clarke 1957)¹ nuclear residences headed by women who are separated, widowed, or mating extra-residentially.

Table 15. General Composition of Households

Households	Number	Percentage
Single member	18	3.6
Nuclear	314	62.8
Extended, paternal	22	4.4
Extended, maternal	54	10.8
Extended, 3-4 generations	88	17.6
Siblings	4	0.8
Totals	500	100.0

Table 16. Male Household Heads by Age and Type of Household

Type of Household Composition	Age of Male Household Head					Total
	15-24	25-39	40-54	55-69	70+	
Single member	0	1	2	2	0	5
Nuclear	2	98	107	51	12	270
Extended, paternal	0	6	7	6	1	22
Extended, maternal	2	23	18	7	2	52
Extended, 3-4 generations	0	1	16	29	11	57
Totals	4	129	150	95	26	406

¹ Edith Clarke (1957:100, 107-108, 125) appears to have been the originator of the classificatory term "denuded household." Following Clarke the term is used here to refer to those nuclear households with only one parent present. Other terminology which is used here, and which will be discussed and developed more fully in the following pages, includes: 1) nuclear household, which indicates a unit with both members of a conjugal pair who are either childless or have unmarried children living with them; and 2) various forms of extended household, e.g., a) paternally extended households made up of some type of nuclear unit and including various lineal and/or collateral kinsmen of the male household head; b) maternally extended households which include a nuclear unit along with other kinsmen related to either a male household head's spouse or to a female household head; and c) households which have a three-four generational composition and which may include lineal and/or collateral kinsmen. Single-member and sibling household forms are self-explanatory.

Table 17. Female Household Heads by Age and Type of Household

Type of Household Composition	Age of Female Household Head				Total
	25-39	40-54	55-69	70+	
Single member	0	2	4	7	13
Nuclear (denuded)	13	18	4	9	44
Extended, paternal	0	0	0	0	0
Extended, maternal	0	1	1	0	2
Extended, 3-4 generations	1	5	14	11	31
Siblings	0	1	1	0	2
Totals	14	27	24	27	92

In summary, there are two basic types of households characteristic of the La Guaca sample: 1) those containing a co-habiting conjugal pair; and 2) those headed by adult women. That is to say, male-headed and female-headed households. There are a number of possible developmental cycles through which households in La Guaca may pass. Here we are only concerned with that cycle which pertains to household headship. In La Guaca a man who enters into a marital contract or a consensual union and becomes detached from his residence of orientation assumes the role of household head. A man may assume headship in his father's house if the latter is deceased and he is the oldest male sibling and is the major economic means of support for the household. Once a man has established a household he remains the head of that residence until his death unless he becomes economically incapacitated in some way. This is true even though a man's spouse's senior consanguineal relatives come to live in the household. On the other hand, a man who resides uxori-locally remains a dependent, although perhaps, a principal, in the residence of his father-in-law.

Most women become household heads because of the desertion or death of their spouse. Even though a separated woman or a widow may have adult males in the household she usually remains the head and dominant figure in that residence. Female heads, most of whom have no regular employment, either enter into extra-residential mating liaisons which are economic transactions as well as sexual affairs if they are young enough, or they rely on other sources of income. A woman who has become separated or widowed is extremely reluctant to move in with a son and his spouse and put herself under the authority of her daughter-in-law.

The preceding discussion and presentation of relevant data regarding household headship is important for a number of reasons as noted by M. G. Smith:

For structural or functional analysis of domestic units alike, headship provides the natural and the most appropriate reference point. By this means we can classify populations systematically in terms of their individual relations to the household head; such systematic classification is essential if we

are to develop a uniform morphology of domestic groups for comparative study. It is also prerequisite for the analysis of family structure within sample populations, or for the study of factors which influence the development and change of domestic units. Either of these analyses presupposes an exact and systematic breakdown of the kinship composition of household samples by means of a uniform and economical system of categories. Such a system may only be possible by reference to some simple universal feature such as household headship (1962:20).

Household Forms

For the purposes of ordering and for the analysis of household composition various limited groupings may be developed (thus Tables 16 and 17 showed the association of household headship and general household composition).

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to deal with household composition based on the genealogical information gathered from the census data and to focus on the kinship relationships within the various residences. The success of this operation necessitates, I believe, the correct identification of household headship.

The genealogical composition of each household was arranged in the following major categories: 1) single member households which are further sub-divided into male- and female-headed; 2) childless conjugal couples and conjugal pairs with children, i.e., simple nuclear households; 3) households which include only one parent with children, sub-divided into those with the mother and those with the father, i.e., denuded nuclear households; 4) households having extended lineal and/or collateral kinsmen, which are further divided into those with patrilineal kinsmen (i.e., a male head's kin) and those with matrilineal kin (i.e., those kin related to a male head's spouse or to a female household head); 5) three-to-four generational households which are divided into households with both grandparents, with only the grandmother, or with only the grandfather.

This categorization results in five basic types having 11 sub-types. Table 18 shows this classification in relation to the distribution of the population. Adult males and females are considered to be all those persons 15 years and over while children are taken to be those under 15. Four cases of simple sibling households (i.e., without offspring) and several indeterminate households are not included in the typology.

Some of the interesting features which can be determined from a preliminary analysis of the household types and the distribution of their members which should be kept in mind are:

Table 18. Household Types and the Distribution of the Population

Household Types	No. of H.H.	%	Adults		Children		Total Members	%	Average No. of Members
			Male	Female	Male	Female			
1. Single member									
a. Female	13	2.6	0	13	0	0	13	0.3	1.0
b. Male	5	1.0	5	0	0	0	5	0.1	1.0
	<u>18</u>	<u>3.6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>1.0</u>
2. Nuclear									
a. With Children	250	50.0	469	418	505	512	1,904	55.5	7.6
b. Childless	26	5.2	26	26	0	0	52	1.2	2.0
	<u>276</u>	<u>55.2</u>	<u>495</u>	<u>444</u>	<u>505</u>	<u>512</u>	<u>1,956</u>	<u>56.7</u>	<u>7.0</u>
3. Denuded nuclear									
a. Mother-child	35	7.0	33	68	39	25	165	4.8	4.7
b. Father-child	3	0.6	4	8	3	1	16	0.5	5.3
	<u>38</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>5.3</u>	<u>4.8</u>
4. Extended									
a. Matrilateral	54	10.8	98	138	109	100	445	13.0	8.2
b. Patrilateral	22	4.4	47	48	31	34	160	4.6	7.3
	<u>76</u>	<u>15.2</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>186</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>134</u>	<u>605</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>8.0</u>
5. Grandparent									
a. Both	53	10.6	140	149	104	86	479	14.0	9.0
b. Grandmother	31	6.2	29	71	36	31	167	4.8	5.4
c. Grandfather	4	0.8	12	10	3	7	32	0.9	8.0
	<u>88</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>181</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>143</u>	<u>124</u>	<u>678</u>	<u>19.7</u>	<u>7.7</u>
Totals	496		863	949	830	796	3,438		6.9

- 1) While 56.7 percent of the population live in nuclear households, a large number of persons (37.3 percent) also live in the major types of extended households (i.e., Types 4 and 5).
- 2) Only 0.4 percent of the population live alone.
- 3) Nuclear households with children (Type 2a) are extremely large (7.6 persons per residence) and account for half of the 500 households in this sample. In addition, a large number of adult males and females reside in this household type.
- 4) There is an adult sex ratio of 110 females to every 100 males.
- 5) The predominance of adult females is clearly shown in the matrilineal extended family (Type 4a) and in the grandparent household (Type 5b).
- 6) The average number of members in the two types of extended household, with the exception of Type 5b (headed by grandmothers), is higher than for all other household types.

This chapter has dealt primarily with the tabular and descriptive presentation of 500 households in and around the county seat of La Guaca. A number of characteristics or features associated with Guaqueño households in general have been pointed out. These include: 1) the fact that individuals in La Guaca do not live alone, generally speaking; 2) there is a negligible occurrence of childless nuclear households; 3) large nuclear units with large numbers of adult children predominate; 4) there are a small number of married sons and/or daughters living in the residences of their parents; and 5) marriage and/or the establishment of an independent household does not occur, usually, until late in life.

Although this chapter presents some general characteristics of the household and its diversity of forms we are still left with the question: is there anything about household structure which sheds light on the issue of how people persist and sustain themselves within the context of difficult economic conditions?

The following chapter will deal with this question by discussing the household as a domestic group engaged in a variety of economic and social activities which have definite implications for the continuity and survival of this rural population. It will also be shown that there are other significant social relationships external to the domestic group itself which play a prominent role in regard to this issue of sustenance.

IV. DOMESTIC GROUPS

It is worth making the point here that:

The basic feature of 'domestic' activities is not that they are necessarily associated either with

families or with co-residential groups, but that they are concerned with the day-to-day necessities of living.... (Bender 1967:499).

In La Guaca the "day-to-day necessities of living" are clearly a matter of survival. This chapter will show how the issue of survival is related to the functioning of domestic groups, which are the crucial units of social and economic organization in La Guaca. The primary objective in the following pages will be to demonstrate how various domestic groups are functionally related and to what extent they are able to mobilize particular human resources.

In order to accomplish this objective the following discussion will concentrate on: 1) the various forms of the domestic group as they relate to phases in the developmental cycle*; 2) the differing human resources available to and utilized by domestic groups; and 3) the general economic circumstances of households in different phases of the developmental cycle.

The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups

Meyer Fortes in his introduction to The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups (Goody 1958) noted that, "the developmental factor is intrinsic to domestic organization and to ignore it leads to serious misinterpretation of the descriptive facts (1958:3)." In La Guaca the single most prominent household form or domestic group has been shown to be the nuclear or elemental household. The establishment and maintenance of an independent nuclear household conforms to a definite cultural norm.

The following discussion of the various phases in the developmental cycle of domestic groups will be employed primarily as a method for demonstrating how these different households manage to sustain themselves. An important underlying assumption is that households in different phases of the cycle will be faced with slightly different kinds of problems and will have varying resources at hand.

Fortes (1958:4-4) has delineated three main phases in the developmental cycle of the domestic groups: 1) the phase of expansion which covers the period of time (approximately 20 years) from the marriage of two people to the completion of their family of procreation; 2) the phase of dispersion or fission which often overlaps the first phase and begins with the marriage of the oldest child and continues until all the children

*The discussion of the developmental cycle in domestic groups, which follows, is derived from the frequency distribution of household types (the cross-sectional method of Chapter III) as well as from a number of adult life histories. In arriving at some conclusions regarding the developmental cycle of domestic groups the household composition as represented in the 1967 census taken by the nutritional project was compared with the household composition two years later when the fieldwork was carried out.

are married; and 3) the phase of replacement which occurs with the death of the parents and the replacement of their family by families of their children. These major phases, with some necessary elaborations, will be used as the frame of reference for the following discussion of domestic groups in La Guaca.

The Phase of Expansion: Guaqueños, almost without exception, attempt to conform to the cultural and religiously sanctioned value of a Catholic wedding and the establishment of an independent family of procreation. However, for a large number of people this ideal situation is either difficult or in some cases impossible to achieve. The most serious obstacle facing a couple contemplating marriage concerns their economic circumstances or more precisely the occupational and economic situation of the man.

The groom is faced with a number of immediate financial obligations. The approximate total costs for a "proper" wedding are in excess of \$3,000 pesos (\$180.00 U.S.). This is the equivalent of almost a year's pay for most men in La Guaca if they worked five days a week for 52 weeks. These costs range from the cost of the wedding (clothing, food, drink, etc.) to the buying and furnishing of a modest two-room hut.

It is worth noting that because of the general economic circumstances of most households in the town a man can expect but little financial assistance in meeting these costs. Although these financial obligations are representative of the ideal situation and can only be met by a very few individuals in La Guaca they nevertheless give an indication of what is involved in attempting to meet the marriage standards of the community. Some of the effects and consequences of this set of financial obligations will be discussed more fully in regard to the second phase of the developmental cycle.

A man, in order to marry and establish his own domestic household, must have some fairly secure employment. Usually this means that he holds a position as one of the more permanent wage laborers working for one of the larger coffee growers. It is also possible that by this time a man will have made arrangements to share-crop a piece of land. The various crops cultivated on this land will ordinarily be used to supplement the household diet although some attempt might be made to sell certain items in the local marketplace.

Regardless of whether the circumstances are as desirable as the one just described or, as in most cases, less secure, this phase in the developmental cycle of the domestic group is the most precarious. For the first several years of their married life this elemental domestic group usually has only the labor resources of the husband and, on occasion, the wife. At the same time children are being born at the rate of about one every two years and sometimes more often than that. This entails some expenses for the assistance of midwives and in a few instances for hospital care.

It is impossible here to present a household budget with complete accuracy and it would be especially difficult to present one that would be totally representative of all the households in the town. However, the

following table will give some idea of the weekly food expenditures for a household containing a conjugal pair and one child.

Table 19. Weekly Food Expenses for a Household of Three^a

Items	Quantity	Price (pesos)	Total (pesos)
Sugar cakes	4 lbs.	\$2.70 ea.	\$ 5.40
Beans	1 box	8.00	8.00
Rice	2 lbs.	2.70 ea.	5.40
Potatoes	4 lbs.	0.70 ea.	2.80
Corn	4 boxes	2.10 ea.	8.40
Sugar	2 lbs.	1.20	2.40
Butter	1/2 lbs.	2.50	2.50
Chocolate		2.50	2.50
Coffee		1.40	1.40
Flour	1 lbs.	2.00	2.00
Milk	2 litros	2.10 ea.	4.20
Spices		5.00	5.00
Plantains		4.00	4.00
Meat	3 lbs.	9.00 ea.	27.00
Misc.			20.00
Total			\$101.00

^aA typical weekly food budget for a small nuclear household in which only the husband works. However, he earns close to \$200 pesos a week as a civil employee in the county seat. Thus, both his wages and the diet of this household are not typical for the majority of persons in the town.

Even though a number of adjustments are made by most households in comparison to the fairly adequate diet represented by Table 19, such as buying cheaper kinds of food (e.g., cuts of meat and intestines and poorer quality beans) and making use of subsistence gardening, the plight of the independent nuclear household for at least the first ten years of its existence is severe. This is mainly because there are so few internal human resources associated with this form of the domestic group.

As a consequence of this situation the domestic group in this phase of the developmental cycle must rely to some extent on various kinds of economic input derived primarily from the family of orientation of the male household head. This external economic assistance may take a number of forms depending on the particular economic circumstances and potential resources of the male household head's father. During periods of crisis a man may have to go to his father for financial assistance. If the father owns some land or is share-cropping, a son who is without land might be allowed to cultivate a small plot for subsistence crops. If a new nuclear household is particularly destitute it very often receives quantities of food donated by other members of the family.

This phase of the developmental cycle also finds a number of lineal and collateral relatives attaching themselves to the primary domestic group. The pattern in La Guaca, as indicated in Chapter III, is towards matrilineal extension. In most cases these additions to the domestic group provide another economic asset. For example, in 26 of the instances of matrilineal extension either one or both of the wife's parents are present. Regardless of age, in La Guaca the father will be economically active in some manner or other, at least part of the time. The wife's mother may also be engaged in some economic activity such as laundress, cook, midwife, part-time work in coffee processing, etc.

The problems, and especially the problem of simply surviving, faced by a newly formed independent nuclear household in the first half of the expansion phase of the developmental cycle are certainly the most critical in comparison to any other time in the various phases. These problems are usually met, as suggested above, either by maintaining external links with the larger family unit, by extending the nuclear domestic group to include relatives who almost always add another economic dimension to the household, or by combining both of these possibilities.

After about the first ten years the problems of maintenance and survival for households in this phase of the developmental cycle normally become less acute. This is especially true for those domestic groups containing large numbers of children, many of whom are above the age of 15, and some of which contain extended kinsmen in addition.

In the sample population with which we are concerned, children become an economic asset to the domestic group as early as nine to ten years of age. Children, primarily boys, from this age and older almost always take some part in the coffee harvests which occur twice a year. Many young boys are also used as runners, as beggars for indigent parents, and as occasional help in certain stages of coffee processing.

There are also a number of other reasons why children above the age of ten are not necessarily an economic liability to the household. A great deal of informal activity is engaged in by young people which is beneficial to the domestic group. Although it is not possible here to quantify this activity or translate it into monetary terms some examples can be given.

Boys are often used as assistants or helpers in a number of activities in which their fathers are engaged. This includes helping in small stores, assisting a father who is a butcher, working at various chores on a subsistence plot of land, gathering and processing small amounts of coffee beans taken from the land on which they reside, collecting fruits and plantains from the countryside, gathering wood, and so on. As the boys become older they begin to engage in more formally recognized occupations, i.e., they become agricultural wage laborers. Girls assist the mother in household chores or help in other kinds of economic activity.

It is not uncommon for a domestic group to have ten or more children by the end of the expansion phase. About half of these will be adults

ranging in age from 15 or 16 to their late 20s and even their early 30s. Taking a general case we can get some notion of the internal human and economic resources of this kind of a domestic group. A household with a father and three adult sons working as agricultural wage laborers will earn approximately \$260 pesos in a five-day week. At the same time, it is almost certain that the father, with the help of his sons, will be share-cropping a plot of land. During the coffee harvest seasons it is very likely that at least four other members of the household will be added temporarily to this labor force. This could include the wife and one of the adult daughters and perhaps two of the children under 15.

Not all households will conform to this particular illustration but the important point is that in these extremely large households, which are typical of the community, every adult male and many adult women along with some of the children will be engaged in some kind of economically productive activity as often as they can. The domestic group at this point in the cycle usually has a significant and very broad range of internal human resources which can be utilized. In this regard it should be noted that of the 424 adult males who gave their occupation as agricultural wage laborer only 37 percent are household heads (see Table 7; also p. 23). This means that about 300 adult males in the town are agricultural wage laborers living in households of which they are not the head.

The major consequence of the generalized situation just presented, and the point which should be emphasized, is that domestic groups in the later period of the phase of expansion usually have a number of human resources (in the form of a labor force) which are utilized for the sustenance and maintenance of the domestic household. As a result the domestic group at this stage tends to exhibit the characteristics of independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency.

To conclude the discussion of this phase of the developmental cycle in domestic groups the following points can be made: 1) in its early stages the problems facing the domestic group are acute, internal resources are extremely limited, and there tends to be a continuing reliance on external familial assistance; and 2) in the later stages of this phase of the cycle the issue of survival becomes less serious mainly because there are a wide variety of human resources which are internal to the household. As a consequence, there tend to be few external familial ties and financial commitments.

The Phase of Dispersion: This phase in the developmental cycle of domestic groups overlaps the preceding one in the sense that older children in the domestic group may be entering marriage before their parents' family of procreation is completed.

What has been said about later stages of the phase of expansion in the domestic group applies also to domestic groups in the phase of dispersion. That is, large numbers of internal human resources are available. However, the domestic group in this particular phase takes on some different forms and this will require some further discussion.

As noted previously, a couple contemplating marriage is faced with financial responsibilities which are difficult to meet. Consequently, a man will spend a number of years saving money for the necessary costs of a wedding. Males in La Guaca tend to marry at a fairly advanced age, i.e., in their late 20s and early 30s. This is one of the reasons why households generally have a number of older sons present. Even when enough money is saved for the wedding expenses, the newly married couple will usually not immediately establish an independent residence.

Analysis of household composition in Chapter III indicated that there were a number of households containing more than one nuclear unit. There were three instances where a newly married son and his spouse were living with his family of orientation and five cases where a married daughter and her spouse were in the household of her parents. In addition, there are 29 cases in which married couples with children reside in the household of one set of parents or the other. These kinds of households constitute what are usually called joint families.

The joint family is usually a temporary stage in the cyclical phases of the domestic group in La Guaca. It is the most common alternative chosen by those who wish to marry but who cannot afford to set up their own household. The decision on whether to reside with the husband's or the wife's relatives depends on a number of variables, e.g., the economic circumstances of the older household, the structural composition of either of the spouses' family of orientation, or the affective relations between the married couple and other members of their various families.

Newly married couples will generally reside in the household of one of their parents for about a year, or until the first child has been born. In some cases the period of co-residence may be extended depending on the economic situation of the individuals involved. The general rule, however, established by the cultural norms of the town, is that a married couple will attempt to establish their own independent household as soon as they have accumulated sufficient funds. This is what really constitutes the phase of dispersion.

Although economically speaking this is not the most difficult phase of the developmental cycle in the domestic group it is probably the most trying time socially and emotionally. The domestic group in this particular phase is normally very large and usually includes, besides the newly married couple, a number of other offspring and possibly other lineal or collateral relatives. Space in the household is scarce and privacy almost non-existent. Besides these factors, relationships between in-laws are almost always strained and are a prominent source of conflict. This is especially true in regard to the wife/mother-in-law relationship.

The alternative to a "proper" wedding and a period of co-residence with a family of orientation is consensual or free union. Social and religious sanctions against consensual unions mean that anyone entering into such a union must be prepared to set up his own household immediately. Consensual unions are uncommon in La Guaca and are usually entered into by persons who have been married and then separated for one reason or

another. In these cases free unions are seen to be the only alternative in the absence of any possibility of divorce.

As already noted, the domestic group at this particular phase of the cycle has a relatively large number of internal human resources which contribute to maintenance of the household. However, some of the newly married offspring may need occasional economic assistance. This is especially the case during crisis situations (e.g., illness or funerals) or if a married son happens to become unemployed. Some attempt will usually be made to assist an offspring and his domestic household and this will necessitate a reallocation of resources. As a result, households in the dispersion phase tend to be less economically stable or secure than those in the later stages of the phase of expansion.

Finally, some consideration should be given here to domestic groups which are headed by females. These households are headed by women who are widows, have been separated, or who have only mated extra-residentially. The problems and possible resources associated with these domestic groups are somewhat diverse and depend on a number of variables. It should be noted that we are considering women who are between the ages of 30 and 55.

Women who become widowed during this phase of the cycle or whose mates have left them usually are in a very difficult economic situation unless they have a number of employed adult sons in the household. Some women will try to make do using any "legitimate" means available. Such is the case with one widow in the town who has 11 children living in the household. One son (22 years old) works as a clerk in a store and one of the daughters (19 years old) works in another shop in the town. The other children are younger and economically inactive. The woman who heads this domestic group began to fix meals for some of the people in the town who are only part-time residents, e.g., the mayor, school teacher, the Peace Corps worker, and the anthropologist. This "home-restaurant" operation brings in perhaps \$250 to \$300 pesos a week and together with the wages brought home by the son and daughter this domestic group can manage to subsist on its own. This particular household represents a firm commitment to the proper values and standards as expressed by "respectable" people in the community.

Such is not the case with all female-headed households, however. Some, perhaps because they have very limited internal human resources upon which to draw or because they are from the very lowest and poorest sector of the population, must rely on other alternatives. This involves one or more of the following possibilities. A female household head will very often receive some kind of assistance (such as packages of food, etc.) from other members of her family. Help such as this will continue unless a woman enters into a mating relationship.

These extra-residential mating relationships are another alternative chosen by a number of female household heads in La Guaca, especially if the woman is below the age of 40. The stability and longevity of these relationships is variable but there is almost always some degree of continuity associated with them. Relationships of this kind, called "friending" by Rodman, have been described in the following way:

The friending relationship is one in which a man visits or meets a woman at intervals for sexual intercourse, and in which he has certain obligations to the woman and to any children of his that she may bear. In friending, the woman is expected to be sexually available to the man at his leisure, while he is expected to contribute to the support of the woman and to any children of his that she may bear. Although it is true that the relationship is usually a casual and temporary one, this is not always the case, and a friending relationship may endure over a long period of time, with the man and woman living in separate households (Rodman 1971:48-49).

Most of the men who become involved in these kinds of extra-residential mating relationships are married and have domestic households of their own. At the same time they must provide some form of economic assistance to the household of the other woman with whom they are mating. Men in this situation, then, are really involved in two or more domestic groups but reside in only one.

Female-headed households then, which very often occur during this phase of the developmental cycle, will usually take two basic forms. They will either be essentially self-contained or they may have to rely on external sources of assistance. The latter alternative will involve help from other family members or some economic support as the result of extra-residential mating.

In conclusion, one of the most significant things to recognize about this phase of the developmental cycle is the problems involved in attempting to establish and maintain an independent nuclear household. The exact nature of these problems will not be the same for every person. Nor will the methods used to solve these problems be equivalent.

The preceding discussion has indicated some of the more common problems and some of the resources used in the attempt to reach the ideal, i.e., the establishment of a nuclear household. Some make it through the first critical years by using a wide range of available human resources, some make the attempt and fail then return to their parents' household, and some never leave their family of orientation until, in a sense, it leaves them.

The Phase of Replacement: Theoretically the phase of dispersion continues until all of the children in a household have been married or have left. The marriage of the offspring or their departure marks the beginning of the phase of replacement. In La Guaca, however, rarely will the parents be left entirely alone. There are a number of ways in which the situation of older parents can be handled in the town.

Because many individuals in the community are never able to establish their own household, they live out their lives as members of the domestic

group of their parents. If one or more adult males is included in this domestic group the situation may not be too critical, provided they have some type of employment. In this way the parents will have some means of subsistence even though they may be incapacitated.

Where there are no adult sons in an older person's domestic group the alternatives which are present are similar to those for some female-headed households. That is, aged parents can expect some economic assistance from married sons with their own residences. This amount of aid (in the form of money, food, or both) depends on the economic circumstances of the married children. Where there are adult females residing in the household of aged parents an extra-residential mating relationship may be established.

There are two other common methods for providing for parents in their later years. One technique is for a son or daughter to marry and establish either virilocal or uxoriocal residence. The other possibility is for aged parents or a single parent who has no children left in his domestic group to move in with one or another of their children's domestic groups. In La Guaca, this would more likely involve a wife's mother and/or father.

There are three important points which should be made in regard to a discussion of this particular phase in the developmental cycle.

- 1) The cultural value system in La Guaca promotes a strong sense of obligation towards the members of one's family of orientation. This is particularly true in terms of the responsibility which males are supposed to assume with regard to their mothers and their sisters. Brothers are often a major source of economic support for their female siblings who may be in difficult situations. With respect to mothers, the fact that Mother's Day is generally considered to be one of the most sacred days in the year, after Good Friday and Easter, attests to their high position of esteem.
- 2) The effect of the phase of replacement and the phase of dispersion on household composition produces similar structures, but for different reasons. Both phases are associated with a joint family containing the parent's nuclear family and the nuclear unit of one of the children. In the dispersion phase, the parents are an essential asset to the newly formed nuclear unit. Conversely, with the replacement phase the younger nuclear group becomes an asset to the parents.
- 3) Finally, it should be noted that the major concern of individuals from the lower socio-economic strata is with mutual assistance. Usually only close lineal and collateral relatives will be involved in this system of mutual aid. As a consequence there tends to be a strong emphasis on the functional and affective relationships between close kinsmen, little development of ties with distant collateral relatives, and almost no concern with the issues of descent and inheritance. In this sense, the phase of replacement essentially reflects a different set of interests for the majority of Guaqueños in comparison to the wealthier land-holding households in the community. Although the phase of replacement is a critical juncture for both the wealthy and the poor it is critical in different ways.

For the wealthy the inheritance of land and other property is crucial. The landless and the poor have other things to be concerned with in their older years. In the one case kinship is important as an ideology of descent, in the other, kinship is the basis of immediate mutual aid.

The discussion in this chapter has focused on domestic groups in relation to their various phases in the developmental cycle and has shown that the individuals who constitute the membership of domestic groups are faced with differing sets of problems in the common effort to survive. Furthermore, it has been suggested that these domestic groups, depending on which particular phase they happen to be in, will ordinarily rely on a certain set of human resources for economic assistance. Again, depending on the phase in the cycle, these resources will be either internal to the domestic household group, externally located, or some combination of both. A table summarizing these various possibilities is presented below.

Table 20. Structural Characteristics of Domestic Groups

Phase in the Developmental Cycle	Household Forms	Structural Characteristics
1. Expansion	Nuclear and extended	Early stage--minimum autonomy; maximum amount of external links. Late stage--maximum autonomy; minimum amount of external links.
2. Dispersion	Nuclear, extended joint, and some female-headed	Maximum autonomy with exception of some female-headed households. Some external economic commitment to married children.
3. Replacement	Nuclear, extended joint, female-headed (widows)	From relatively autonomous to some reliance on external links.

The major conclusions which can be drawn from the situations described in this chapter are:

- 1) Even though the overall economic circumstances in La Guaca are deplorable, the vast majority of individuals in the town manage to subsist.

2) This is possible because:

- a. no household in the lower socio-economic sector of the population exists solely on the support of one person's economic activity;
- b. there are a number of individuals engaged in a broad range of informal and part-time activities which result in some kind of economic advantage;
- c. depending on one's point of view and one's position in the social structure (e.g., regarding such variables as age, sex, relative class position, or phase in the developmental cycle of the domestic group), an individual can usually rely on the assistance of his or her family of orientation or family of procreation.

Survival, in a concrete sense, is a constant issue for most peasant and post-peasant communities in Latin America. This is especially true for those communities, such as La Guaca, which can be typified as "atomistic" and which are involved in the seasonal harvesting of such crops as sugar cane and coffee, which lead to a pattern of "euphoric high employment" and "dysphoric unemployment."

This chapter has shown that a diversity of economic activities and social relationships are centered around the domestic group. These discrete social units are the hub of a flexible network of economically active human resources which contribute to the survival of this rural population.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study has presented the empirical data drawn from observations of certain aspects of the economic conditions and social organization in and around the town of La Guaca. Specific analysis has been directed towards a delineation of household composition and a discussion of some of the activities associated with domestic groups.

In the attempt to gain a necessary perspective, the community was first discussed in terms of its ecological and economic context. The fact that the economy of the municipality of La Guaca is involved in external market transactions extending into the national and international spheres is an issue of primary consideration with respect to the general mode and style of life in this rural highland region of Antioquia. Members of the community are involved in a monetarized economic system which places a premium on cash transactions and individualistic control over basic capital resources such as land. Control over most of the arable and pasturing land in La Guaca is in the hands of a few wealthy families. This situation combined with other issues results in the predominance of landless campesinos.

The ecological demands of coffee as a cash crop and the agriculturally unproductive use of other arable lands also leads to a condition of chronic underemployment and unemployment in this rural area.

Given the overall circumstances of life as described in Chapter II, the principal concern of the later chapters was to determine how the majority of the inhabitants of La Guaca manage to exist. That is, in the face of high unemployment and underemployment, low wages, lack of capital resources, the absence of communal or cooperative groups, and the general atomistic quality of life in La Guaca, a fundamental issue arises as to how the members of such a community survive.

In the attempt to provide at least one plausible answer to this problematic question of survival in La Guaca, this study has focused on a particular dimension of social organization--the domestic household. Taking the household, then, as the initial focus of attention, Chapter III presented the results of an analysis of household composition.

The observations and the classification of household composition, while instructive, were a necessary but not sufficient step toward the final objective of this study. Rather than just dealing with two distinct social units--families and households--it is necessary to be aware of three analytically separate social phenomena: families, households (co-residential groups), and domestic functions.

Chapter IV was devoted to a consideration of the various domestic groups with respect to their processes of formation and some of their more important activities. By considering domestic groups in relation to their various phases in the developmental cycle a number of important observations emerged. For example, one significant fact revolves around the issue that adult males ordinarily marry at an advanced age. As members of the domestic group of their parents they usually are economically contributing members of that group. When a son does marry he most often settles for a period of time with either his family of orientation or that of his spouse. The decision-making process involved in this set of choices is influenced by a combination of cultural, social, and economic facts. In most cases, it is economically impossible for many newly married couples to accumulate the necessary funds to cover the costs of both the wedding ceremony and the establishment of a new residence. In some cases a new nuclear unit will reside either virilocally or uxorilocally in order to provide some economic assistance to older relatives or to assume the headship of a household which is at the end of its developmental cycle.

The most important point for the purposes of this study which results from a consideration of the domestic group is the range of human resources which are made use of in certain ways depending on a household's position in the developmental cycle. With regard to the normative and modal household form in La Guaca, the large nuclear unit, the domestic group is wholly self-contained and in this sense, the household and the domestic group are equivalent. In this particular household the economically functional group will normally include all or most of the following: a male household head, his spouse, children above the age of nine or ten, adult offspring, various lineal and/or collateral kinsmen, and affinally connected individuals if the domestic group has entered the phase of dispersion in the developmental cycle. These individuals constitute a true domestic group and can be conceived of as resources who by means of varying degrees of participation in different economic enterprises contribute to the sustenance of the whole.

However, other types of households, e.g., newly formed nuclear groups, some female-headed households, and some residences headed by older persons, are not so independent as the large nuclear and joint households. In these instances great reliance is placed on outside sources of economic assistance. The group which carries out domestic functions, in this case the economic function, is not equivalent to the household. Certain individuals such as parents, brothers, and extra-residentially mating males who contribute to the economic support of a domestic group should be considered to be at least quasi-members of that group.

The conclusion of this study, then, is that the people of La Guaca, the majority of whom are at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy, manage to survive and exist not as individuals but as members of social groups. While every person is part of a neighborhood and the community, the most significant social unit in terms of day-to-day existence is the domestic group and the members of one's primary family. As we have seen, these may or may not be entirely equivalent.

Large nuclear households with a number of economically active adults are advantageous. However, there are what might be considered "culturally induced drains" on the cash resources of domestic groups in the middle stages of the developmental cycle. The two most significant are the periodic assistance given to younger married couples and the aid which one is obliged to provide aged parents. This assistance is part of a familial mutual aid system with reciprocity being a basic principle.

In these ways, then, the vast majority of people in La Guaca are able to sustain themselves. Their life is not easy, indeed it is often problematic, but it is possible.

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