RICH AMONG THE POOR:
CHURCH, FIRM, AND HOUSEHOLD AMONG SMALL-SCALE
ENTREPRENEURS IN GUATEMALA CITY
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Henri Gooren
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Utrecht
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the relations between church, firm, and household among small-scale entrepreneurs in a low-income neighborhood of Guatemala City, where I conducted fieldwork in 1993 and in 1994-95. Chapter 1 has six different sections. First I will present a key informant named Ramiro, who talks about his childhood spent in poverty, and how he managed to build up a successful plumbing firm. This is followed by the research questions and general themes I am concerned with: poverty, small-scale enterprise, the household, and the influence of church membership on each of these. Next there is a discussion of the principal sources of theoretical inspiration: Max Weber’s Protestant ethic thesis, the actor-in-context approach, and the rational choice approach. Then, after a description of the research location, the low-income neighborhood La Florida in western Guatemala City, there is an extensive section on data collection and methodology: the fieldwork in La Florida and surroundings, the Mormon and Neo-Pentecostal church case studies, the research group, the methodology, and the project. An outline of the book concludes the chapter.

1.1 A tale of two Guatemala Cities

Behind the black iron door of a humble, one-storey house painted in fresh yellow on dusty 11th Avenue of the La Florida neighborhood, a few blocks away from the main road, lives the family of Ramiro. The household consists of Ramiro, his wife Isabel and their four daughters, ranging from a newly-born baby to a tall eight year old. The door opens directly onto a modest living room: concrete floor, brick walls, pictures of Christ and a Mormon temple, simple wooden furniture covered with plastic for protection, color tv with cable, and two large refrigerators. The first impression is a sense of crowdedness: too many things and people in a small but comfortable room. It is the home of one of the major characters in this book.

Ramiro is a jovial, somewhat overweight ladino with a friendly open face and short-cropped black hair. Born in 1960 in a shantytown of Guatemala City, he started working for money at the age of seven. He has been a plumber since he was only 13, when he started as an apprentice with his

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1 All names of key informants (see appendix 1) are fictitious.
2 A basic definition of ladino: anybody who is not an Indian. See the part on ethnicity in chapter 2 for a more elaborate discussion.
uncle. Two years later he was already working as an independent plumber. He grew up in La Florida, the low-income neighborhood about ten kilometers west of the city center where he still lives in 1995\(^3\). This is what he says about his childhood:

Because we lived in extreme poverty, at seven we were already sitting at [my father's] side, working there on the bench. And like all children we liked to go out to play: to play skittles, to spin a top. We got out for a little while. But maybe it was for only five or ten minutes that we managed to get out to play, when he got out. [Imitating angry voice:] `Ramiro! Victor!' And once again back inside to go on working.[...]

We grew up quickly, because as children we understood that if we didn't work with our dad we wouldn't sell anything that day, hence we wouldn't have anything to eat that day.[...]

Well, my mother has been quite a responsible person. What affected them a lot was the very poor life they had, because my dad didn't have anything like a stable job.[...]

When my dad had the chance he really was a good father and that's why we love and respect him a lot.[...]

Well, I feel he set a good example and nowadays... Well, it has never passed my mind: `OK, if my dad hadn't been an alcoholic, if my dad had worked more, wouldn't we have been a little better off? We could have gone to school.' I always saw him with loving eyes. I admired him as a father.

I started to grow. My mind settled on wanting to make progress, on wanting to work to be able to help them get out of that blasted poverty. Because it is terrible to live with the fact that there's not enough for this, not enough for that. And sometimes you would like to grow up but quickly! to do your part, and then your time has come.

There are millions of Guatemalans who, like Ramiro, grew up in extreme poverty, had a father with a drinking problem, started working for money as a little child, did not finish primary school, found their vocational talent at fifteen, and started a small enterprise of their own in their twenties to try and get out of that `blasted poverty.' Ramiro is special, because after an out-of-control puberty and adolescence he managed to build up a very successful plumbing firm, together with his father and a cousin. Obviously, many factors are important in determining his business success, but Ramiro himself stresses his Mormon religion:

After we got married I still drank for a time. Maybe what made me reflect was when my first daughter was born and the responsibilities of the home became greater. We needed more money to live on and sometimes there wasn't enough and I felt a bit irresponsible. All of this made me reflect and think about improving my situation.

Because when you're in this environment you waste a lot of money. You're not particularly interested in the state of your family, you become rather irresponsible. But I [...] tried to correct this fault by becoming active in church. So there I started to improve my situation. There I started to work with the youngsters.[...]

The truth is that the church is a strong commitment if you want to be sincere.[...]

\(^3\) The year of reference in this book is 1995, unless indicated otherwise. Some informants talk about upcoming elections; they mean those of November 1995. The subsequent election of president Alvaro Arzú in January 1996 and the signing of a peace accord on December 29, 1996 are not taken into consideration.
[...] While in church I was backsliding: I went to church and I drank. But I felt bad, because I felt I wasn't doing things correctly, like the Lord wanted. So this made me experience my conscience; it was hammering into me that I wasn't behaving correctly. So I had to make this choice: either I went straight to the street to live my life, or I stayed in church and tried to use the principles which the church would give me [...].

I meet over fifty small-scale entrepreneurs like Ramiro during my fieldwork in and around La Florida in western Guatemala City in 1993-95, and become well-acquainted with a small group of them. Among these key informants are carpenters, a shoemaker, and a mechanic; they are Catholic, Protestant, or Mormon. Most can no longer be considered poor; a few are, in fact, doing quite well. But not all of them. The majority are in their thirties or forties, and most of them are men. This book deals with the Guatemala City they live in and know. But there also exists another Guatemala City...

For someone like Ramiro, walking along Reforma Avenue on a sunny afternoon toward the white semi-circular architectural fantasy called the Camino Real hotel, in the southern part of Guatemala City, would be a rather surrealistic experience. Choking on car fumes Ramiro would enter City zone 10 alongside the hotel and marvel at the strange parade of cars: they all seem to be shining new Range Rovers, Cherokees, Cameros, or Broncos, usually with tinted glass. Smartly dressed men and women with Ray-Ban sunglasses walk the streets, carrying attaché cases. Ramiro might also notice that the fashionable shops they enter all have guards armed with at least a heavy caliber revolver. More luxury shops and restaurants have guards armed with short, double-barreled riot guns. Most heavily guarded, not surprisingly, would be the many glittering bank buildings, all of which have at least one, but usually two, soldiers dressed in combat fatigues and carrying their standard Galil machine gun or M-16 assault rifle.

1.2 Research questions and central themes
The sharp contrast between rich and poor is evident while travelling through the country or through Guatemala City. Depending on the source, between sixty and ninety percent of a total population of over 10.5 million[^4] is living in poverty. Of the two million people in the metropolitan area of greater Guatemala City, two-thirds are poor, meaning their income is too low to cover basic needs such as housing, food, or clothes. Most of the poor live in the 'poverty belt': the slums, shantytowns, and low-income neighborhoods surrounding the central areas.

According to United Nations data, the informal economy in Guatemala, broadly defined as all small-scale unregistered economic activities, represented eight percent of GDP in 1977 and grew to

[^4]: I am using World Bank population data on Guatemala (see also appendix 2), because of widespread doubts about the reliability of the 1994 government census, which reports only eight million inhabitants.
twenty percent in 1990. One-third of Guatemala City's labor force was employed in the informal sector in 1991. FLACSO reports that about half of these people were self-employed, meaning the owner is the only worker. The remainder were employed in microenterprises as renumeration laborers, as unpaid relatives, or as owners. The microenterprise is usually defined as having a maximum of five to ten workers excluding the owner. I will use the terms microenterprise, microfirm, and small-scale enterprise or small-scale firm synonymously, as opposed to one-man firms or the self-employed.

The present research project originated with Dirk Kruijt and others at the Directorate-General of International Cooperation of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who wondered about the potential consequences of the growth of Protestant churches on small-scale entrepreneurs in Central America. Considering the spectacular growth of Protestantism all over Latin America as well as the increased emphasis on small-scale firms by Western donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations-affiliated organizations (especially the ILO), probing the connection between firm and church becomes even more relevant and not just in Latin America. During the course of the project, this policy concern was transformed into the following central questions: How does a person's membership in a particular household and church help or limit the operation of a small firm? And vice versa: what influence does being an entrepreneur have on one's being a church and household member?

The household refers to a group of people, usually relatives, who live together under the same roof and pool all or part of their resources (wages, labor, savings) to survive economically. The household is very important in the operation of the small-scale firm, since most are family enterprises which can only survive thanks to the (paid or unpaid) labor of relatives. Hence it becomes important to ask how the enterprise fits into the survival strategy of the household. Why

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6 Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) or Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, a United Nations-sponsored institute present throughout over Latin America which was a counterpart during this investigation.
7 Although the self-employed could be assisted by unpaid family workers, who made up six percent of the total informal labor force.
8 See chapter 2 for a discussion of the various definitions of microenterprise.
9 See for instance Kruijt in Alba Vega & Kruijt (1994: 23): ‘[..] a tacit religious revolution occurred in Latin America. The new churches attract so much popularity among the poor, that their rapid spread, occurring at the same time as the informalization of the Latin American society and economy, is more than pure coincidence. Is it the new doctrine of equality, of survival, of individual effort and mutual support? It is not by chance that we find the presence of the faithful of the new religion among the leaders of informal society and the organized small-scale entrepreneurs. Many of the NGOs in the small enterprise sector are of an evangelical character.’
10 ILO: International Labor Organization, part of the United Nations family.
11 Cf. Wilk (1996: 17-18): ‘the household is where people mix and pool all kinds of income from wages, crafts, farming, and small businesses; it is the place where the economic and the social interact every day, when food must
and how do people start their firm? What typical conditions have to be met in order to do so? Since I will follow an actor-oriented approach (which will be elaborated below), I am especially interested in identifying problems informants have in the operation of their firms and how they deal with these, because in this process people's life worlds, their agency and knowledge, and their (lack of) freedom to determine their own lives come forth most clearly.

Religion and church membership are important in Guatemala for various reasons, which will be explored in chapter 3. Guatemala is a profoundly religious society and religion is an important basis for social organization in churches. In Latin America, Guatemala stands out particularly for its high numbers of non-Catholic believers: 20 to 25 percent\(^{12}\) of the total population. The relatively recent growth of Protestantism in Guatemala has been extensively studied\(^{13}\) possibly even more so than poverty\(^{14}\) but attempts to systematically link religion to poverty, and by extension to small-scale enterprise, have been limited.

My second major theme is the informants' church involvement. Here it becomes necessary to know their religious backgrounds, to examine the origin of their current church involvement, to take stock of any problems that may drive the informants away from their church, and analyze their responses thoroughly. The extent of the church involvement of the informants and their households must be established. Church involvement is operationalized here by how much time the informants spend on church matters, how they carry out voluntary assignments, and whether they pay tithes to their church. Again, in all these questions, it is important to probe the connections of the church with the household and firm. For the firm I will look at four themes: the church discourse on business ethics, handling money, managing a firm, and the importance of church networks for the firm. Since the literature often stresses how church membership can increase people's self-confidence, this will also be a point of attention.

To analyze the connections between firm and church in Guatemala City is relevant for a great

\(^{12}\) In a June 1994 CID/Gallup poll, 21.6 percent of the population say they are Protestants; Johnstone (1995: 252) reports 24.1 percent Protestants; Rohde (n.d.) gives 20 percent Protestants based on a 1991 SEPAL (a Guatemala City-based evangelical research institute) sample. In Latin America, only Chile is reported to have a higher percentage of Protestants: 27.9 (Johnstone 1995: 160).


\(^{14}\) Poverty in Guatemala seems to be studied mostly by local research institutes such as FLACSO and by international organizations such as the ILO and the United Nations Economic Council on Latin America (CEPAL or CEPAL in Spanish). See for instance CEPAL (1990, 1991, 1992), Bastos & Camus (1992), CIEN (1992), Pérez Sáinz; Camus & Bastos (1992), and Menjívar & Pérez Sáinz (1993).
many reasons. First, because it fills a dearth of empirical information in the social science literature: most studies of small-scale enterprise are initiated by governments, NGOs or United Nations organizations and focus on economic aspects. Second, because a number of Guatemalans like Ramiro, for instance themselves explicitly recognize a connection between their church membership and their business: the *emic* factor. Third, because there are many organizations (state, UN, and NGO) aiding small-scale enterprise which could benefit from insights into the connection between firm and church. And fourth, because exploring the link between religion and enterprise is a theoretical quest which has yielded interesting results in the past: see Max Weber and the ensuing century-old controversy surrounding the Protestant ethic.

1.3 Theoretical approaches: Weber, actor-in-context, and rational choice

My principal sources of theoretical inspiration are Weber's Protestant ethic, an actor-in-context approach and a rational choice approach tailored towards religion. I will summarize and adapt all three to accommodate them to the demands of the study.

1.3.1 A Weberian approach: A Protestant ethic in Latin America?

In a study of household, entrepreneurship, and religion it is impossible to ignore the contributions of Max Weber\(^\text{15}\). Weber sees the 'Protestant ethic'\(^\text{16}\) as a rational method to achieve religious salvation. 'Innerworldly ascetism' is the term that he uses for this method and at its core are various elements: individual action and responsibility, a direct link between everyday life and the sacred (transcendentalism), work as a divine calling, a sober lifestyle (i.e. self-discipline), and success in business as a sign of divine favor.

Protestantism fosters individual action and responsibility because it requires personal study as a way towards individual salvation. So in Weber's view all action becomes rationalized: continuous evaluation of each act is necessary to probe its possible effects on one's salvation. All acts will thus take on a transcendental meaning. Work is one way to gain favor in God's eyes: the diligent will be blessed and rewarded. But the fruits of this work may not be wasted idly. They have to be invested in order to make more money and show that one is truly worthy of being chosen by God.

I will assess some applications of the Weber-thesis in research on Protestantism in Latin


\(^{16}\) The Protestant ethic thesis has been interpreted differently, attacked and embraced many times, but this is not the place to go into that. The best discussions and overviews of the Protestant ethic discussion are provided by Samuelsson (1964), Eisenstadt (1968), Green (1973), Davis (1978), Marshall (1982), and O'Toole (1984).
America. Turner writes that evangelical Protestantism introduced new values in a backward Tzeltal Indian community in Chiapas, which together with aid from the government helped the people to improve their situation of poverty, illness, and illiteracy. Some of these new values were optimism about the future, a sober lifestyle, hard work, punctuality, honesty, thrift, control over one's destiny, and more individualized social relationships. The same emphasis on new values and ideas we find in Lewellen, writing about Aymara Indians on the shore of Lake Titicaca in Peru. In an economy changing from subsistence to a market orientation the Seventh-day Adventists formed a remarkable elite, as was expressed in their political power and in their levels of education and income. For years, the Adventists had been stressing the importance of sobriety and education and now they simply were in a better position to prosper from the expansion of a market economy.

Turning to Guatemala, we find a similar situation in Sexton with regard to highland Indians. He describes them as `penny capitalists' par excellence and sees Protestantism as something which merely edifies and legitimizes this quality, through its ascetism and future-oriented world-view. Annis departs from the notion that the formerly egalitarian Maya highland communities are under severe strain because of land shortages and growing differentiation in wealth. Protestants were over-represented amongst the groups that either had no land or which had a small economic surplus, which they preferred to invest in business enterprises rather than in Catholic fiestas. Annis notes that in evangelical churches economic progress is seen as a sign of spiritual strength. 'Del suelo al cielo' [from the dirt floor to heaven] is the expression the believers themselves used to express this notion. He compares Protestant and Catholic female weavers and concludes that most Catholics simply sell their products to intermediaries, while the Protestants usually possess their own shop to sell their products. The problem, however, is that it is not clear whether this change is in part caused by conversion to Protestantism or whether the new religion has simply contributed to it.

Mariz is highly relevant because she compares Pentecostals and Catholic Base Communities with traditional Catholics and Afro-Brazilian spiritist groups. Her book `attempts to identify the influence of religion in the way people deal with poverty and to understand aspects of the religious

18 Turner (1979: 258-259).
19 Lewellen (1979).
22 This issue is also addressed in Martin (1990: 206): `What we need to probe are the complicated feedbacks whereby people perceive the possibility of change and so grasp and are grasped by religious ideas which can accelerate
transformations in Brazil and to see if the popularity of each religion in Brazil depends on the adequacy of the support each religion offers its population. She states that the strongest influence religion has on poor people is the motivations it provides them to survive, to endure poverty, and to aspire to move up economically. Both Pentecostal churches and Base Communities require a conscious choice, a high level of participation in group activities, and strong personal discipline. Both increase self-esteem among their members.

In general terms, only Mariz and Denton report some confirmation of material improvement among Protestants. However, Talavera & Beyer in Chile, Butler Flora in Colombia, and Aguilar et al. in El Salvador find no evidence to support the idea that Protestants are able to improve their economic situation. The Annis case makes a connection between religion (Protestantism) and economic actions or even progress highly plausible, but also shows that is is impossible to establish a causal relationship. Clearly, however, there are elements in Protestantism that influence economic actions. The findings of Turner, Lewellen, Sexton, and Annis suggest the following elements that are supposedly fostered by Protestantism: hard work, sobriety, honesty, thrift, education, entrepreneurism, and orientation towards the future. These constitute some of the factors that will be explored in the lives of my informants.

1.3.2 An actor-in-context approach

The essence of an actor-oriented approach is that its concepts are grounded in the everyday life experiences and understandings of men and women, be they poor peasants, entrepreneurs, government bureaucrats or researchers. A crucial complement to this is the concept of agency, which attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. The actor's strategies draw on a stock of available discourses (verbal and non-verbal) that are to some degree shared with other individuals, contemporaries and perhaps predecessors.

that change and/or help them to cope with it.

24 Quoted in Gaskill (1997: 77).
25 Butler Flora (1980).
26 Aguilar et al. (1993).
29 Ibid. (25). Compare this to Giddens (1984) 'structuration' theory and Bourdieu's 'habitus' concept. For another model of these processes, called 'connectionism', see Strauss & Quinn (1994).
The strategies to cope with life are strongly influenced by the actor's knowledge, which in turn is shaped by the actor's life world: his/her perception of the ordered reality of taken-for-granted everyday life. According to Arce & Long, everyday life is dominated by the pragmatic motive, that is, it is essentially oriented to solving practical problems. They continue:

The production and transformation of knowledge resides not in category systems or classificatory schemata per se but in the processes by which social actors interact, negotiate and accommodate to each other's life worlds, leading to a reinforcement or transformation of existing types of knowledge or to the emergence of new forms. These processes and outcomes are shaped by sources of power, authority and legitimation available to the different actors involved.

Long sees as the main future task for analysis, 'to identify and characterize differing actor strategies and rationales, the conditions under which they arise, their viability or effectiveness for solving specific problems, and their structural outcomes'. Indeed, the actor approach has been strongly criticized for its neglect of structure which is why I will pay much attention to the Guatemalan social context and try to connect my informants' experiences to it. This is often called the actor-in-context approach.

The unit of analysis will be the individual entrepreneur, also called the (firm) owner, who can be conceptualized as the actor. The actor is influenced by a particular life history and his or her personal character and temperament. Moreover, the entrepreneur is always a part of a primary attachment: the family (kinship) and the household. The owner's actions and business operation will be influenced by the demands of the household: the necessity of providing for the spouse, possibly other relatives, and most of all the children. Additionally, the owner's actions are influenced by secondary attachments: church, business, neighborhood, and friendship networks. So my final question is: How does the actor divide his or her time between all these various attachments? In other words: I am curious how my informants establish their priorities in order to make decisions.

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30 Defined by Arce & Long (1992: 211) as 'the ways in which people categorize, code, process and impute meaning to their experiences.'
32 Ibid. (214).
34 Long (1992a: 21) himself fully acknowledges this, and mentions it with two other shortcomings, including the mistake of adopting a 'voluntaristic view of decision-making and transaction strategies'.
35 Strauss & Quinn (1994: 295) maintain that '[...] we do not have to choose between theories that acknowledge actor's agency and intentions and theories that acknowledge the role of durable, shared cultural schemas: Intentions depend on schemas.[...] How can actors invent, negotiate, and contest their cultural worlds unless they have internalized motives for doing so?'
36 What I distinguish here as two different approaches, actor-in-context and rational choice, could be put under the same heading. Some might argue that together they constitute a practice approach, as described by e.g. Ortner (1984: 151): '[...] the dominant theory of motivation in practice anthropology is derived from interest theory. The model is that
1.3.3 A rational choice approach to religion

Because of the focus on the individual entrepreneur, a rational choice approach could contribute to the analysis of the priorities of the informants. Since there is abundant literature on rational choice, I will limit myself to recent applications to religion, since that is also a main theme here. Iannaccone\(^\text{37}\) summarizes the three basic assumptions of a rational choice approach in the following manner: \(\text{(1)}\) Individuals act rationally, weighing the costs and benefits of potential actions, and choosing those actions that maximize their net benefits. \(\text{(2)}\) The ultimate preferences (or "needs") that individuals use to assess costs and benefits tend not to vary much from person to person or time to time. \(\text{(3)}\) Social outcomes constitute the equilibria that emerge from the aggregation and interaction of social actions.

These assumptions have been criticized strongly\(^\text{38}\), especially the lumping together of various types of rationality—Weber's instrumental, affective, and traditional rationalities—under one general instrumentality umbrella, and the assumption of stable and unchangeable needs. Hechter provides additional necessary points and also better connects the approach to religion:

In choosing between alternative courses of action, then, the rational actor first must ascertain all potential consequences of a single course of action; second, he must assess the desirability of these consequences; and third, he must assign a subjective probability to each of these consequences.\[\ldots\] The rational actor will choose that course of action with which the highest expected value is associated. Under uncertainty, however, such rational calculation is precluded \[\ldots\]. For this reason, rational actors prefer risky to uncertain situations.

\[\ldots\] Religion can offer relief from existential uncertainties about the meaning of life, and about death and its aftermath.\[\ldots\] Religion can help resolve hard choices, however, because it provides an external criterion for ordering the values. To the extent that a religion enunciates a clear vision about the meaning of life by providing a hierarchy of values, it reduces actors' uncertainty in making critical life choices.\[\ldots\] the demand for religion should be highest among people who routinely face harder choices.\(^\text{39}\)

Young families, people of few resources and small-scale entrepreneurs in my eyes all qualify as 'people who routinely face harder choices.' Hence I will suppose that my informants constitute a group with a high need for religion, where the rational choice approach will be useful as a methodological aid. But `decisions \[\ldots\] are limited by people's perceptions, imperfect knowledge,

\[\ldots\]

of an essentially individualistic, and somewhat aggressive actor, self-interested, rational, pragmatic, and perhaps with a maximizing orientation as well. What actors do, it is assumed, is rationally go after what they want, and what they want is what is materially and politically useful for them within the context of their cultural and historical situations.'\(^\text{37}\) See Iannaccone (1997: 26).


and subjective feelings, to make the best of an imperfect world\textsuperscript{40}. Moreover, I will not assume that the informants' preferences (`needs') are a stable and unchangeable set. The concept of spiritually-based recruitment, mentioned in the literature on religion in Guatemala cited above, clearly suggest that religious needs do change over the course of people's lifetime and, moreover, that people are aware of this phenomenon\textsuperscript{41}. Besides, in this way it could be seen if there is a connection between increasing or decreasing church involvement and the operation and performance of the firm.

I will assume that, since their needs vary over time, the informants will also have different priorities at different points in time. Do their priorities simply shift among four different possibilities: themselves, their household, their firm, and their church? If so, that means that their involvement in household, firm, and church will change over time, making a long-term perspective necessary to allow ample room for the (emic) view of the informants themselves. This suggests an extensive use of life history interviews and standardized evaluations of business performance of the informants' firms. But first I have to decide on a research site.

1.4 Location

During my first fieldwork period in 1993, I visited and investigated various possible research sites. Between 1990 and 93, research counterpart FLACSO had conducted various extensive studies of small-scale enterprise and households in La Florida, a low-income neighborhood situated ten kilometers west of Guatemala City's center. FLACSO recommended La Florida, because of the many small enterprises there\textsuperscript{42} and because it was relatively safe. I often visited the neighborhood and indeed found it quite suitable. After conducting a survey of churches in the La Florida area, I visited six of them and interviewed members and leaders\textsuperscript{43}. These data suggested that La Florida would also make a good location for studying churches. Here I would visit my two church cases; here almost all of my informants would live and work. FLACSO never researched religion in La Florida, but Cleary mentions a possible Catholic revival here\textsuperscript{44}. Many years ago, Roberts found a surprising twenty percent Protestants in his samples of two popular neighborhoods that were similar to La

\textsuperscript{40} Wilk (1996: 65).
\textsuperscript{41} In Long's terms: people are `knowledgable' actors, expressing their agency.
\textsuperscript{42} According to Bastos & Camus (1993a: 100-101), one in every 3.4 houses in La Florida contained an informal enterprise. Without taking the La Florida market into consideration the number is one in every 4.9.
\textsuperscript{43} These included three big Holiness churches (Dios es Amor, Iglesia Emmanuel, Iglesia del Nazareno), two medium-sized Pentecostal churches (Iglesia de Cristo and Príncipe de Paz) and the Latter-day Saints or Mormon Church. See appendix 5 for a description of the various non-Catholic religious traditions in Guatemala.
\textsuperscript{44} Cleary (1992).
He concluded that religious networks are critically important for the newly-arrived city dwellers in low-income neighborhoods.

A significant number of Guatemala City's inhabitants share my informants' income, background, and type of residential area: in short: the informants' life world. One study estimates that in 1991, at least 700,000 people in Guatemala City i.e. half the population lived in low-income or `popular' neighborhoods. It rated La Florida as a `less precarious area'. Like all popular neighborhoods, however, La Florida is characterized by a high population density of low-income inhabitants, widespread social problems (for instance alcoholism, family disintegration, high levels of crime and violence) and low levels of urban services (water, electricity, telephone, sewer, garbage collection) or planning. But it is relatively old: the first squatters arrived in 1949-50. Nowadays La Florida is an established low-income neighborhood, with one-story adobe houses, many asphalt roads, many shops and enterprises, and relatively high rents. It is a neighborhood of poor people with decent jobs. It does not have a reputation for violent crime and it has no mara youth gang.

There are few apartment buildings and hardly any hotels in La Florida. So I begin my second fieldwork period in 1994 living in the same old apartment building in the city center (zone 1) which FLACSO had recommended in 1993 and where I lived before. By bus it takes twenty to thirty minutes to La Florida; by taxi only fifteen to twenty. But I want to live in my research neighborhood and as I get started with the Mormons I ask around for information on apartments or houses preferably with some furniture. Since I also plan to conduct interviews there I need some space, and a telephone would also be practical. Everyday I buy a newspaper and read the ads. As the months pass, my demands gradually decrease, but so does the quality of the establishments I visit, or so it seems to me. There are nice old landladies with cockroach breeding farms, nonchalant ladino machos who own tiny apartments located over dark bars, and nice families who offer me a spacious room between their kitchen and their toilet. Since I am a foreigner, rent prices instantly seem to double or triple. The only demand I am unwilling to compromise on is security: I need a place where my material and possessions can be locked up securely, where I can arrive after dark (i.e. after 6:00 PM) without being mugged, drugged, or murdered. Safety first. I never find such a place.

1.5 Data collection and methodology
I spent the first fieldwork period, from June to December 1993, conducting 30 semi-structured interviews with small entrepreneurs and collecting background information on poverty, small-scale

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45 Roberts (1968).
enterprise, household and religion in Guatemala. Additionally, I conducted over 30 background
interviews with staff of NGOs, (semi-)governmental agencies, and international organizations. I
became a regular visitor at the microenterprise program SIMME\(^{47}\), which provided credit and training
to microentrepreneurs through the use of Non-Governmental Organizations. Confirming the social
force of religion in Guatemala, most of these NGOs had a religious background. I concentrated my
interviews on two Roman Catholic NGOs Fundemix in Mixco and *Fe y Alegría* in Guatemala City
and on Protestant FAPE. I was able to accompany their consultants as they went out in the streets
to visit the microentrepreneurs they were involved with. Through these three NGOs I met almost 30
small-scale entrepreneurs all over Guatemala City and in the center of its twin-city Mixco. I
prepared a topic list and conducted short standardized interviews with all of them, which provided
me with general information on possible connections between household, small-scale enterprise, and
religion. I also quickly noticed how hard it was to gain people's confidence in Guatemala. A lot of
patience was required.

This limited NGO sample of small entrepreneurs was clearly dominated by men (80 percent).
Three-quarters of all respondents were married; a fifth was single. The average number of children
was almost four. The average age of the entrepreneurs was 37.5. Their education was limited to
finishing primary (38 percent) or secondary (43 percent) school. The state of their firm was
generally stable, but growth was rare or greatly fluctuating. The average working week was long:
amost 51.5 hours, from Monday to Saturday. Hardly anyone worked on Sunday, even though
almost one-fifth said they had no religion. One third were active Catholics (averaging one mass visit
a week); 47 percent were non-Catholic believers\(^ {48}\), who averaged no less than almost 2.5 church
visits a week. A quarter of the total had a voluntary church assignment.

Several bits of information were especially noteworthy. The non-Catholics had been active
church members for eight years on average, while their firms had started seven years ago. They
invariably stated that being an active Protestant was beneficial for their firm, although they found it
hard to specify why: some talked about having a good reputation and being trusted by clients,
others stressed being self-confident, while some Neo-Pentecostals felt that God directly blessed their
work. The importance of religion was relativized, however, by the fact that 20 percent were not
religious\(^ {49}\). Since most were married and had quite a few children, the firms were very instrumental
to the survival of their households. But the opposite was also true: without the cooperation of the

\(^{47}\) *Sistema Multiplicador de Micro-Empresas* (SIMME) or Microenterprise Multiplier System: see appendix 4.

\(^{48}\) These included 'historical' Protestants, Pentecostals, Neo-Pentecostals, and one Jehovah's Witness. See appendix
5 for more information on the church currents active in Guatemala.

\(^{49}\) By way of a rough comparison: Johnstone (1995: 252) gives 1.8 percent non-religious for all of Guatemala, based
on church statistics; the CID/Gallup (1994) poll yields nine or ten percent of respondents who say they have no religion.
household, mostly in the form of unpaid labor, the firms could not operate. This led me to wonder: if they worked over 51 hours a week and went to church 2.5 times, how much time was left for the household (spouse and children) and themselves? Again this raised the question of how the entrepreneurs decided on their priorities.

From December 1993 to October 94 I was back in the Netherlands, critically processing and analyzing the above material. The main concern remained how to approach the connections between household, firm, and religion. In other words: how to select the research group? The above sample of NGO-sponsored entrepreneurs hinted at interesting possibilities to explore, but also contained many built-in biases. NGOs are selective in which entrepreneurs they choose to support with credit and advice. They prefer established firms (at least two or three years old) in industry or services, and a house or other goods as loan guarantees. That explained the high average age in the sample, the predominance of men and of industry and services (since most women were involved in trade), and the high average age of the firms: seven years. Since the NGOs reach only a small fraction of the huge number of small-scale enterprises in Guatemala (see chapter 1), approaching the research group of small entrepreneurs through these organizations was an easy way to gain access, but a sure way toward getting a skewed picture of the connections between household, firm and religion. I realized I had approached the problem top-down (from an NGO perspective), instead of bottom-up from a church and firm perspective. Therefore I decided to select all entrepreneurs present in two local church groups in a fixed area as cases for in-depth study: the Mormon Church, where I expected to find many entrepreneurs, and a small or medium-sized Neo-Pentecostal church that would probably have fewer.

1.5.1 Case one: The Mormons
I know from former research experience⁵⁰ that the Mormon or Latter-day Saints (LDS) Church stresses various traits that are reminiscent of Weber’s Protestant ethic: a strong work ethic, economic self-reliance, prudent budget administration, discipline in spending, and an emphasis on saving money. The LDS Church does not idealize poverty in any way. The literature seems to confirm the Mormons as prototypical of having a Protestant ethic⁵¹, which is why I expect to find many entrepreneurs among their members. On a more practical level, I had already met the leaders of the two LDS wards in La Florida in 1993 and both were very cooperative.

My second fieldwork period begins in October 1994 and lasts until late June 95. I am warmly

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⁵¹ See Martin (1990: 207-210), Mauss (1996b), and Yinger (1971: 399). There is surprisingly little literature on a possible Protestant ethic among members of the LDS Church. Perhaps analysts consider the issue less relevant, since
welcomed back in the two LDS ‘wards’ (congregations) which gather in the church building on La Florida’s 5th Avenue: La Florida and Santa Marta, the adjacent neighborhood north of 5th Avenue. The La Florida congregation will be the point of reference throughout this book. To investigate and analyze the church of my informants I engage in participant observation. For about four months I visit the Mormon church building on 5th Avenue every Sunday, attending all three meetings sacrament, Priesthood and Sunday school each of which lasts about an hour. I am able to conduct a small survey of 50 members in both wards, gathering general information (age, sex, education, and current job) as well as specific data on age of church membership and the importance and intensity of having a voluntary assignment (‘calling’). I also go to many other church meetings and gradually start visiting people at their homes as I get to know them better.

As expected, there are quite a few microentrepreneurs: five to be precise. I build up a good rapport with leaders, entrepreneurs, and members of the La Florida congregation. The fact that all the important leaders are in fact microentrepreneurs themselves contributes much to this, and seems to confirm a possible connection between the LDS religion and entrepreneurship. After several weeks of meeting them and getting invited to their homes I start to probe to see if they are interested in allowing me to conduct a life history interview with them. Most prefer to talk at night in their homes, saying the business is too busy a place to talk. The average length of the conversation is approximately one hour. The interviews are tape-recorded and transcribed by a local secretary, who has been recommended by FLACSO. I also interview the bishop’s wife, who has a tiny beauty parlor; a Mormon carpenter from Tierra Nueva who I met in his La Florida workshop in 1993; and one inactive Mormon printer who I meet through the LDS missionaries.

I start by asking general questions about their youth. Contrary to my expectations, this proves to be a sensitive topic. Almost all have bad childhood memories, affected by poverty, alcoholic fathers, domestic quarrels and often downright physical and verbal abuse by their fathers. Starting with questions about their profession and their firms proves to be much more fruitful, and almost all informants are comfortable and open during our talks.

1.5.2 Case two: Rains of Mercy

Because the literature on Pentecostalism far exceeds Neo-Pentecostalism my preference goes towards selecting a Neo-Pentecostal church. As my second case I want to find a Neo-Pentecostal church that is very other-worldly in its orientation, i.e. stressing salvation through being born-again

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the Mormons are not part of the Protestant tradition?

\[52\] There also exists a Nueva Florida branch, which meets on Sunday in the church building of colonia Primero de Julio, northeast of La Florida. Its members live in the eastern half of La Florida: all streets and avenues east of 5th
and evangelizing, instead of giving much attention to (material) problems in this earthly life. In contrast with the US-based Mormon Church, I prefer a local church. Neo-Pentecostal churches in Guatemala come in two types: the mega-church, radiating a corporate middle-class image, and the far less institutionalized small churches in low-income neighborhoods. This last type will be easier to find in a low-income neighborhood and should provide a clearer contrast with the Mormons. I make a list of possible Neo-Pentecostal churches I can study, based on my 1993 data and interviews with experts on Guatemalan Protestantism.

I select the local Guatemalan church Rains of Mercy (*Lluvias de Gracia*) in La Florida as second case study in March 1995. Gradually, I become aware of a power conflict between the pastor and some lay leaders in the congregation. The pastor prefers to put friends and relatives in important power positions. Other lay leaders resent this and feel their leadership capabilities are not being appreciated in church. They feel restricted and harshly condemn this nepotism. Both the pastors and his opponents are more than willing to talk to me. The pastor is obviously happy with the attention paid to him by a foreign student. He often explains why things are run in a certain fashion, at times almost sounding apologetic. Meanwhile a number of the other members say critical things about the pastor to me. It makes for a stimulating fieldwork environment. Each Sunday I am in church from 9:00 AM to noon: first one hour of Sunday school class for adults, next a long and intensive worship meeting full of music, singing, and clapping. I often stay longer, when they serve lemonade and snacks afterwards.

As expected in a church guided towards salvation and spirituality, there are far less small-scale entrepreneurs among members of Rains of Mercy than among the *LDS* Church: only three in total, out of a much larger group. One is the pastor's son, with whom I never manage to make an appointment, because he is always so busy. I conduct two life history interviews with members of Rains of Mercy: a middle-aged man who sells gas cylinders and repairs stoves, and the wife of the pastor's son, who is a lawyer. Like the LDS interviews months before, these also last about an hour on average, but both are held at the places of business. They are tape-recorded and later transcribed by the same local secretary who typed out the Mormon interviews.

I conceive of the remaining three life history interviews as a study in contrasts. They are all people I met while conducting the standardized interviews in 1993. The first is a single mother with

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53 Ross Rohde, the North American head of a Protestant research institute called *Servicio Evangelizador de América Latina* (SEPAL, or Latin American Evangelizing Service) in Guatemala City, and Heinrich Schäfer, a German theologian working at the *Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano* (Latin American Biblical Seminary) in Costa Rica, both include Rains of Mercy on their lists.

54 I do not think he is merely using this as an excuse. Being firmly entrenched in his father's camp he has every
two children who has a pottery firm and is an active Roman Catholic. The second is an inactive Catholic carpenter who lives in Guatemala City's twin city Mixco. The last person also lives in Mixco: he has a firm which builds, leases, and sells furniture for parties. He is an active member of the very popular Neo-Pentecostal church Elim. The block quotes throughout the book are all taken from these life history interviews, which were conducted between March and June 1995.

1.5.3 The research group

The research group is made up of thirteen key informants (see appendix 1). There are ten men and only three women. There are eight Mormons, three Neo-Pentecostals, and two Roman Catholics. The non-Catholics joined their churches on average fifteen years ago. Except for one Mormon and one Catholic, all are active in their churches, meaning they attend regularly, i.e. at least two or three times a month, and usually much more often. At least four Mormons and both Rains of Mercy members are important lay leaders in their churches. The average age is 42. Though most are in their thirties and forties, the youngest is 29 and the oldest 65.

Nine of the informants' firms are based in La Florida, two in Mixco, one in Santa Marta (next to La Florida), and one in zone 9 on the southern side of town. There are two carpenters, a car mechanic, a shoemaker, a pottery maker, a building contractor, a beauty parlor owner, a plumber, a printer, a party furniture supplier, a gas cylinder salesman, a manager of his parents' ironware store, and even a lawyer. That is: six are involved in services, four combine production and sales, the party supplier combines production, lease and sales, the gas man combines repairs and sales, and finally the ironware man, who is purely engaged in sales. The number of workers varies from zero (the self-employed shoemaker, gas vendor, and beauty parlor owner) to eight at the car-service station. The owner's average working week in hours ranges between 20 (the part-time beauty shop) and 60 or more (the pottery firm and the ironware manager); the average is a little over 48 hours, from Monday to Saturday. The firms have existed on average for twelve years, meaning these are established firms that have proven their durability.

A significant final consideration is that about half of the informants are highly active church

reason to want to cooperate with me, like his wife Ana.

55 The life history interviews have been slightly edited for clarity, by taking out only grammatical errors and interjections like ‘er’. If words have been removed within a sentence, this is indicated with [..]. In case entire sentences or paragraphs are left out, the symbol is [...].

56 Three firms and their owners are somewhat a-typical. First, Ana's law firm, which obviously cannot be considered a part of the informal sector. It yields a respectable middle-class average monthly income of 5,000 to 8,000 quetzales: roughly US$ 865 to 1390. Second, Mario as manager not owner of his parents' ironware shop on La Florida's 12th Avenue. He is a caretaker, rather than an entrepreneur. Third, Mario's wife Beatriz, who operates a new, tiny, part-time (20 to 25 hours a week) beauty parlor across from the ironware firm.
members and occupy important leadership positions there. These people strive to make religion a central theme in their lives as entrepreneurs, husbands, fathers and neighbors. In other words: I expect to find the strongest connections between church and firm precisely in this group of people. There are four exceptions: the inactive Mormon printer Miguel, the Mormon carpenter Bernardo, the Catholic pottery maker María, and the inactive Catholic carpenter Pablo.

1.5.4 Short description of methodology and project
From the start, this has been an explorative, inductive research project. The main aim is to explore connections between household, firm, and church. The use of Weber's Protestant ethic might suggest a comparison of various religious groups, but that is not an explicit goal. Comparisons made between members of Rains of Mercy, the Mormons, and the two Catholics will be speculative, because the research group is very small.

It is also a qualitative investigation, highly intensive, aiming to explore and analyze a number of themes and probe their potential connections, among a relatively small number of informants. The idea is to get under the informants' skin, to understand their actions and motivations, to explore their life worlds and their agency. From this attempt to understand them, certain patterns in their lives as persons, workers, fathers, and entrepreneurs will start to appear. The obvious disadvantage is a lack of information on the representativeness of the research group, and hence on the generalization of my findings. I can only answer with the anthropologist's axiom that it is better to have detailed information on a very small group than to know bits and pieces about a huge group of people. I make no pretensions at presenting a representative view of all small-scale entrepreneurs in Guatemala City.

While the aim is to get under the informants' skins, based on the life history interviews, I do not want to get into psychological analysis. Life histories have often been used in anthropology to study cultural change, including religious change. I consider as fundamental to this method the idea that: `In order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life story.' Rosenwald & Ochberg claim that life stories are formative of identity; that this identity may be constrained or stunted; and finally, that `discourse mediates between the fate of the

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57 Fiction writer Orson Scott Card (1996: 140) puts it like this: `... the truth is that no person ever understands another, from beginning to end of life, there is no truth that can be known, only the story we imagine to be true, the story they tell us is true, the story they really believe to be true about themselves; and all of them lies.'
58 See for instance Langness (1965: 22-25) for an overview.
59 Linde (1993: 3).
individual and the larger order of things. That is, people may become aware of the force of economic or religious constraints in their life worlds.

Central research question
How can membership in a particular church help or limit the operation of a small firm? What is the role of the firm owner's household in this process?

1.6 Outline of the book
In line with the actor-in-context approach, the next chapter is devoted to a rather extensive exposition of the Guatemalan social context. The emphasis is on its divided character, as expressed in a highly uneven economy, long-standing ethnic antagonisms, a violent political history, a fragmented social structure, and high indicators of poverty and small-scale enterprise. Chapter 3 describes and analyses religion in Guatemala: from traditionally strong Roman Catholicism to late 19th century Protestant missionaries, from historical Protestantism to Holiness and Pentecostalism; to the latest arrival: Neo-Pentecostalism, the branch to which the case study Rains of Mercy belongs. A section on Mormonism concludes chapter 3, which will provide a context for understanding the informants' experiences in the empirical chapters.

Chapter 4 deals exclusively with La Florida, the low-income neighborhood that is the principal location in this study and home to almost all informants. First, La Florida is positioned in a general framework of low-income neighborhoods in Guatemala City. After an exposition on household and family, the main social units, follows a full description of the third important social unit: the church. Three congregations in La Florida are described: the Mormons, Rains of Mercy, and the Catholic parish on 5th Avenue. Various types of religious affiliation by La Florida inhabitants are presented and analyzed: from non-involvement to low involvement to high involvement. A section on churches and poverty, an important element in the La Florida life world, ends the chapter.

The firm is the central theme in chapter 5. It traces the early work experiences of the informants, the process of discovering one's professional talent, the requirements for starting a firm and the main problems the informants encountered drinking habits, network building, business inexperience, labor recruitment, and always low or unstable income as well as their responses to these problems. It ends with an evaluation of the current state of firm and church membership by analyzing the church discourse on money, business success, and the management of household and

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60 Rosenwald & Ochberg (1992: 2).
firm, as well as by appraising the importance of church networks.

The next to the last chapter (6) presents the informants' perspective on their church: their early religious experiences, an account of their recruitment to a new church and the task of adapting to it, as well as their responses to various problems that can drive them away from their churches; again drinking, disillusionment and backsliding, serving in voluntary church assignments, and balancing time and money investments in church with those in the household and firm. It ends with a stock taking of the current state of church membership and the household, focusing on the involvement of actor and household in church, the relative importance of church networks, and the contribution of church membership to building self-confidence. In analyzing the church's influence on the firm, and vice versa, I try to be sensitive to both positive connections how church membership can help the informants in running their lives and their firms and negative influences. A discussion of the research findings in chapter 7 concludes the book, apart from five appendices and a bibliography.

By probing the connections within a household between church involvement and having a small enterprise I am looking for and attributing meanings to church involvement, practice, and experience that will doubtless sometimes be different than the informants' views. However, I am studying social processes and looking for social and cultural patterns, without making any evaluation of the contents, let alone the authenticity, of the doctrines of the churches. I do not expect this investigation to affect the informants' faith or enthusiasm. By presenting their inside perspective on religious practice and experience as `normal', I aim to express both respect and fascination for their way of life.

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61 See also Brusco (1995: 8-9).
CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT

This chapter sketches the socio-economic context of Guatemala, in order to put the empirical chapters 5 and 6, which delineate the life worlds and problems of the informants, into perspective. The Introduction showed the strong contrast between rich and poor in Guatemala. This theme is taken up directly below in the section on the highly uneven economy. Next, the ethnic divisions within the country are traced back to the 19th century and analyzed. The oligarchic and repressive state is put in historical context in the section on recent political history. This is followed by an analysis of the socio-economic, ethnic, and political inequalities which are the main causes of the fragmented social structure, as well as some of the major problems that have resulted from this fragmentation such as the war between the army and guerrillas, increasing crime, limited popular organizing, a weak and inefficient state, social disintegration and fragmentation, and increasing poverty. Poverty, the informal sector, and small-scale enterprise are the subject of a final expository section. Finally, the Guatemalan context as a whole is summarized. As stated before, the year of reference throughout the book is 1995.

2.1 A highly uneven economy

2.1.1 Current situation

The Guatemalan macroeconomy shows instability on many fronts. Although economic growth in the sixties and seventies was more than five percent and inflation relatively low by the early eighties growth slowed down and even became negative for several years in a row. The national currency, the quetzal, was devaluated from parity with the dollar in 1980 to the equivalent of 5.50 to a dollar in 1986 and 5.75 in 1995. Inflation stood at almost 19 percent in 1985, reaching a record 37 percent in 1986: the first year of the new civilian Cerezo government. Government cutbacks, as part of Structural Adjustment Programs sanctioned by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), were inevitable. The Christian Democrats tried to balance these with social programs, such as the SIMME program for microenterprise. Still poverty increased from at least 60 percent in 1980 to more than 75, and possibly 90, percent in 1993.

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1 CIEN (1992: 95).
2 SIMME: Sistema Multiplicador de Micro-Empresas or Multiplier System for Micro-enterprises. See appendix 4.
3 The issue of poverty and small-scale enterprise is dealt with in detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.
Economic growth in 1993-95 stands at a weak two to three percent, equalling population growth, and per capita GDP is still below 1970s standards. Terms of trade also continue to be unfavorable for Guatemala, making the value of imports much higher than that of exports and leading to a huge foreign debt of almost US$ 3,000 million in 1993. Since the return to formal democracy in January 1986, governments have been spending more than they received and borrowing money to cover for it. Already in 1989, the government deficit stood at over US$ 100 million. Inflation in 1993-95 is constant from 11 to 15 percent. In summary: Guatemala does not have a good macroeconomic climate for business investments, whether big or small.

Paradoxically, Guatemala is not really a poor country. Its exports are worth US$ 2,156 million. The traditional agricultural export products, coffee and bananas, account for almost 40 percent. Other important export products include sugar, cotton, vegetables, cardamom, and beef. After exports, tourism is the major source of foreign currency: already in 1991, more than half a million foreigners poured over US$ 250 million into the Guatemalan economy. The third important source of foreign currency are the remittances from an estimated half a million Guatemalans working in the United States, totaling almost US$ 350 million in 1995. These remittances directly help many poor households survive and finance many microenterprises. A last major source of dollars is the illegal drug trade and money-laundering business. Drug profits and money-laundering are largely held responsible for the construction boom, which started in 1991-92. The evidence is especially visible in the luxurious residential zones 9, 10, 13, and 15 of southern Guatemala City.

Like the drugs business, the tourist and agro-export sectors are dominated by very small groups of beneficaries. This is especially clear in the agro-export sector: 'Fewer than two percent of landowners own 65 percent of the farmland - the most highly skewed land-tenure pattern in Latin America'. In 1982, at least a third of the population had insufficient land to survive with their family. The big landowners are, of course, supposed to pax taxes to the government, but tax evasion is commonplace in Guatemala. In 1995, tax revenues account for 7.6 percent of the GDP, compared to 6.7 percent in 1994. In short: state and government hardly profit from the more lucrative business sectors. But neither do the workers. Labor costs in Guatemala are very low: the

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5 Barry (1992: 118).
6 During an interview in Guatemala City (April 3, 1995) Gustavo Porras, a sociologist working for ASIES at that time, estimated the real size of the remittances from the U.S. was over two times the official figure. He thought they were worth about US$ 800 million. He also thought much of this money, instead of being simply consumed, was in fact invested in small enterprise.
8 USAID (1982).
9 Montenegro (1998). In 1989 tax revenues also accounted for 7.7 percent of the GDP, up from 5.6 percent in 1984 (Keulen 1994: 51).
average monthly wages in 1991 were US$ 36 in agriculture, US$ 95 in industry and US$ 105 in commerce\textsuperscript{10}. Labor unions are weak and divided, and were repressed for many years. All these factors help to explain why the contrast between rich and poor is so very marked in Guatemala. Even official statistics, allowing for possible reliability problems, show just how uneven the situation really is. According to the 1989 income distribution figures, the lowest 20 percent of the population shared only 2.4 percent of total income. The highest quintile, however, absorbed no less than 63 percent. Apart from Brazil, it is the most uneven income distribution in all of Latin America.

In short: the Guatemalan economy is extremely uneven. On the one hand there are the elite business sectors mentioned above: agro-export, tourism, drugs which generate huge profits while paying little in taxes and labor costs. On the other hand there are many peasants who have insufficient or barely enough land to survive. They are forced to work for low wages on (coffee, sugar, or cotton) plantations, for medium-sized independent farmers or for fellow peasants. This is usually part of a double strategy for these rural actors, the main part being small-scale subsistence agriculture. The cultivation of corn is essential for many Indians all over the country\textsuperscript{11}.

Other rural actors, often forced by land shortages or the war between the army and guerrillas, migrate to Guatemala City as part of an alternative survival strategy. Here many survive in the informal sector: self-employed, working for others, or the fortunate ones as microentrepreneurs overseeing a few laborers. Between the elite and the poor stands a middle group of merchants, government employees, urban professionals, and those employed in the services economy. All of these sectors are affected negatively by the country's unstable macroeconomic performance.

2.1.2 History
The roots of Guatemala's extremely uneven economy go back to the Spanish colonization and to its integration into the world economy in the latter part of the 19th century. Spanish conquistadores received great land estates, including an Indian work force under their control. This laid the basis for the contemporary, highly uneven land distribution. After Independence new local landlords established themselves, leading ultimately to a division within the 19th century elite. The Conservatives mostly hacendados (big cattle owners), finqueros (independent farmers), and clergy wanted to change as little as possible from the colonial political and economic structures. The Liberals, mostly merchants, on the other hand saw a great future for Guatemala as a producer

\textsuperscript{10} Barry (1992: 96).

\textsuperscript{11} See for instance Siebers (1996) on the central role of corn production for household consumption among Q'eqchi' Indians in the northern Verapaz departments.
of cash crops for the world market.

English merchants helped the Liberals to victory over the Conservatives. Starting in 1871, the Liberal governments succeeded in annexing land from the Catholic Church and from the Indian villages. Communal lands were used for coffee plantations. Indians were forced by a variety of legal means (the infamous 'vagrancy laws') to work for the landlords. The oldest oligarchic group in Guatemala was made up of medium-sized and large coffee producers.

At the turn of the century, however, a second major cash crop became important: bananas. This situation was exploited by North Americans, who founded the United Fruit Company (UFC) in 1901. The UFC acquired huge lands in Guatemala, which it generally used very extensively. Economic interests in bananas became one of the main reasons for North American military interventions in Central America. The banana oligarchy was represented by UFC officials, who invariably had great clout with the various weak governments.

Government taxes forced people in the countryside to work for money on plantations or on large cattle ranches, or to move to Guatemala City. Another important consequence of the expansion of cash crops like coffee and bananas in the latter half of the 19th century was in the field of ethnic relations. The 'ethnic question' lies at the very heart of many contemporary problems in Guatemalan identity and social structure.

2.2 The ethnic question: Indians and ladinos
The economic and political changes described above caused important changes in the Guatemalan social structure. In the colonial era, the Guatemalan economy had already depended on unpaid or cheap Indian labor, controlled through various legal systems. That is: from the start the Indians were the subjugated ethnic group. 'The cruel treatment of the Indian was not a sporadic phenomenon, but inherent in the social structure of the colony, absolutely necessary to maintain a mass of serfs with enormous numerical superiority subjected to incredible forms of exploitation'. However, it is also true that Spanish control differed greatly from one location to the other. Some researchers stress the element of continuity rather than change in Indian villages where the Spanish colonial presence was weaker.

Although the Indian labor force was supervised and controlled in colonial times, it also enjoyed legal protection. With the expansion of first coffee and later banana production, Indian lands were annexed and land scarcity increased. Contacts between indígenas and ladinos started to change. Whereas earlier in the 19th century both ethnic groups had sometimes rebelled together against

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12 See for instance Aybar de Soto (1978) and Immerman (1982).
abusive (white) landlords, and fought together with warlord Carrera, now the plantation economy caused class differences to coinicide more and more with ethnic differences. Ladinos became the typical middle-men between government and landlords on the one hand, and the various Indian populations on the other. Typically, ladinos were merchants, policemen, tax collectors, and military officers. Landless ladinos exploited Indian labor and paid little for Indian agrarian produce, a situation that in many parts of Guatemala has remained the same until today.

This growing exploitation of Indians by ladinos was accompanied by many myths that each group held about the other. The stereotypical ladino view of Indians stresses their superstition, laziness, child-like character, and backwardness. The Indians on the other hand came to see ladinos as dominating, overbearing, authoritarian, and rude. In modern Guatemala, ladinos are often stereotyped as consumerist, elitist, extremely calculating, and prone to corruption. Courtesy and friendship are used as exclusion mechanisms; violence as exclusion mechanism is not uncommon either. The extreme exploitation of Indian labor is a common practice. Even today, many Indians quite literally fear ladinos. Based on past experience, they try to avoid having to deal with them. But the isolation of many Indian villages and the lack of transport facilities make them utterly dependent on ladino merchants.

Many ladinos are quite conscious of the fact that they are treating Indians badly and exploiting Indian labor. This results in a great fear of Indian culture and religion among many of them. On a more practical level, ladinos who live in predominantly Indian regions are aware that the Indians may rise up against them some day. The ethnic question shows up in all major Guatemalan historical events: the Liberal takeover in 1871, the Revolution of 1944-54, the military governments of 1954-85, the various guerrilla groups, and the democratization process starting in 1985-86.

The annexation of Indian communal lands and subsequent pressure on arable land, the laws aimed at controlling Indian labor and the heightened presence of government officials (especially the army) in the Indian highlands transformed ethnic relations between Indians and ladinos. The ladinos became the dominant ethnic group. The war and land shortages forced Indians to go to Guatemala City. Between 1980 and 1995 the number of Indians in Guatemala City tripled. However, in the city many Indians started dressing like ladinos and imitating ladino culture, in which favorism, clientelism, and family loyalties are important elements. They also had to learn Spanish in order to

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15 See Smith (1990b: 72-95).
16 Siebers (1996: 191-195) describes the various mechanisms by which Q'eqchi' Indians are exploited and cheated by ladino landlords and merchants.
18 See Handy (1989a) for a good description of how ladino fears of peasant organizing among rural Indians affected decreasing support for the reform-minded Arévalo and Arbenz governments. The military especially saw major security problems in allowing the Indians to organize themselves freely.
get a job in Guatemala City. This whole process of ethnic change is often called *ladinization*.

Talking about ethnic relations in Guatemala raises many problems of definition. The terms *Indian* and *ladino* are based on auto-definition, which is always in flux and difficult to quantify. The ethnic definitions of Indian and ladino in Guatemala are not racially-based, but cultural. This phenomenon also accounts for the confusion surrounding the number of Indians in Guatemala, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population. In 1995, Indians probably still make up the majority of the population, albeit a small majority.

The problem, however, is that terms like Indian, as well as the more politically correct equivalents *indígena* and Maya, suggest a unity among the indigenous peoples which does not exist. There are at least twenty different Indian groups in Guatemala, each with its own language, customs, history, and dress. They are often incapable of understanding each other, unless both speak Spanish. Only about half of all Indians are thought to be bilingual. Identification is primarily with their own household, village community, and people (Q'eqchi', Quiché, Mam, etc.). The Q'eqchi' term for outsider refers to the fact that one can only communicate with him or her in Spanish. This includes everyone who is not Q'eqchi, whether ladino, foreigner, or someone from another Indian group! Under such conditions it is hard to imagine a unified indigenous (Maya) movement.

However, the shared experience of being repressed, brutalized, and expelled during the war contributed to the formulation of a common Indian identity. Between 1979 and 1983, brutal anti-guerrilla campaigns by the army destroyed whole Indian villages and forced many inhabitants to flee to Guatemala City or Mexico. The end of military rule in 1985 and the subsequent civilian governments provided room for the development of a modest `civil society', in which labor unions, human rights groups, NGOs, and Indian organizations could participate. Indian organizations became even more prominent after Rigoberta Menchú was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1992, which also was the United Nations Year of Indigenous Peoples. In such an international climate, indigenous groups can increase their clout by stressing a common identity. Successful Indian merchants, selling and travelling all over the world, have been deliberately stressing their Indian identity. There is a revival of various indigenous languages, as expressed in books, newspapers, and

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19 See also Hawkins (1984).
20 Most journalists and researchers refer to a 50-50 situation. In the government census the percentage of Indians has steadily gone down, from 78 percent in 1778 to 65 percent in 1893 to 65 percent in 1921 to 54 percent in 1950 to 43 percent in 1973 and 42 percent in 1981. Roberts (1973: 20) explains this by Indian-ladino intermarriage and by Indian migration to the cities. Recently, however, the Mayan Language Academy reports that Indians make up 70 percent, while the Council of Mayan organizations claims 65 percent: see Barry (1992) and Keulen (1994). Two newspaper articles also estimate that about two-thirds of Guatemala's people are Indians: see *Siglo XXI* (March 24, 1995: 12) and the *New York Times* (August 12, 1996: A5).
radio programming. Researchers and journalists are talking about a 'Maya renaissance' in Guatemala.

Maybe the old ethnic stereotypes will gradually break down, or take on new meaning, in the future. But the freedom of Indians in Guatemala to organize themselves and try to improve their socio-cultural position will always be influenced by the political context.

2.3 Recent political history

2.3.1 Dictators and reformers

From the colonial era to the long Ubico (1931-44) dictatorship, the Guatemalan state was always dominated by a rural oligarchy. Differences were discernable in the groups that dominated the government at a certain time (small versus big landowners; coffee versus banana producers; greater or lesser U.S. influence), the way they were supported by or opposed to the Catholic Church, and their tendency to try and control Indian labor by judicial means. Elections were routinely held and just as routinely falsified. Under Ubico, local authorities were restricted in their power: mayors were directly appointed by the central government in Guatemala City. Debt peonage was abolished, but a stable labor force was guaranteed by the new vagrancy laws\(^\text{22}\). Intellectuals could not criticize Ubico openly; most critics lived in exile.

The first organized countermovements started to appear in the twenties, with the introduction and subsequent spread of socialism and communism, and the formation of labor unions. Under Ubico these were brutally repressed, but gradually reformist thought reached the lower officer ranks of the army. In October 1944, a rebellion of progressive army officers and cadets, supported by prominent exiles and city dwellers, forced Ubico to resign. A three-man junta, consisting of one civilian and Majors Arbenz and Arana, organized the first free elections in Guatemalan history, which were won in March 1945 by the respected pedagogue Arévalo.

The Arévalo government (1945-50) passed a new constitution, which emphasized democratization: press freedom and the unrestricted organization of political parties and labor unions. Ubico's vagrancy laws were abolished. The government cut back on military spending and greatly increased spending on literacy, education, and health care. Conservative sectors of the army and the oligarchy were appalled. There were over thirty coup attempts, but army leaders like Arana and Arbenz were loyal to Arévalo and none of these succeeded. In 1949, however, the first real crisis situation occurred, when Arana became active in politics himself, saying Arévalo had moved too far to the left. That same year Arana was killed in an ambush. Rightist groups claimed that the killers worked for Arbenz and a new coup d'état could hardly be thwarted. But in 1950, Colonel

\(^{22}\text{Adams (1970: 175-176).}\)
Arbenz won the elections without resorting to fraud.

Arbenz (1950-54) was even more progressive and reformist than Arévalo. In the U.S., at the height of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, he was considered a communist. The land reform program, which he started in 1952, annexed only arable land which was not being used, and paid compensation to the owner. Hardest hit was the United Fruit Company. Arbenz was worried about the UFC monopolies in transportation, electricity, and banana exports. Landlords saw the land reform laws and the organization of peasant unions as serious threats to their social and economic position, as did the conservative part of the armed forces. They joined with the Catholic Church and the UFC in opposition to the Arbenz government, and appealed to the Eisenhower government for assistance. The U.S. foreign secretary, Dulles, had major interests in the UFC himself.

In June 1954 a rebel army led by Colonel Castillo Armas, sponsored by the CIA, invaded the country from Honduras. Arbenz, his government, and their military supporters went into exile. The land reform was abolished and 90 percent of the land was returned to the former owners. The new government cracked down hard on peasant unions; thousands of people were killed.

2.3.2 Thirty years of military governments
The armed forces, however, were not without internal divisions and factions. In 1957, Castillo Armas himself was killed during violent confrontations between army groups. Progressive young officers and cadets found the atmosphere in the army stifling and resented the U.S. political and military influence in their country. Four lieutenants, together with over 3,000 soldiers, organized a coup d'état on November 13, 1960. They failed miserably and were forced to flee to the northeastern Izabal province. In 1961 the first guerrilla group was formally organized: the 13 November Revolutionary Movement (MR-13). The Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) followed in 1962. For many years direct violent confrontations were successfully avoided, until the devastating counter-insurgency campaign 'Operation Guatemala' of 1966-67, ironically during the civilian government of Méndez Montenegro. The campaign was based on models used in Vietnam and organized by Generals Osorio and Arriaga, with the assistance of the CIA. Thousands of peasants and many guerrilleros were killed. The escalation of the armed conflict had begun.

In the seventies new rebel groups appeared. First ORPA (Organization of the People in Arms),

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23 The U.S. government ordered the Central Intelligence Agency to organize, train, and pay the counterrevolutionary army led by Castillo Armas. See Immerman (1982) and Schlesinger & Kinzer (1982).
24 Torres-Rivas estimates that 8,000 peasants were killed in the first two months of the Castillo Armas regime (Flora & Torres-Rivas 1989: 40).
25 It is common to speak of a ‘civil war’ in Guatemala, but this term would suggest involvement of the entire population. In fact, most people in the cities and most of the Indians in the highlands did not take sides. It cannot be denied, however, that the Indian villages in the highlands paid the highest price in the counter-insurgency campaigns of the late 1970s and early 1980s.
founded in 1971. Second came the EGP Guerrilla Army of the Poor (with former FAR leaders) in 1972. In spite of its all-ladino leadership, EGP and ORPA were especially successful in making contact with and mobilizing Indian communities and recruiting Indian fighters. In the late seventies the Sandinistas defeated Somoza and the FMLN seemed close to victory in El Salvador, which strengthened the determination of the guerrilla groups and made the military more nervous. The various Guatemalan guerrilla groups started coordinating their war efforts in 1980 and formally founded the URNG (National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity) in 1982.

The founding of the various guerrilla forces was a consequence of the fiercely anti-communist military governments of the fifties and sixties. All expressions of what is nowadays called `civil society' were routinely, and often brutally, repressed. The only institution allowed to organize and instruct people was the Roman Catholic Church, which did not begin to oppose the military until the late sixties and early seventies. In 1957, the business sector organized itself in CACIF. Politically, CACIF was very conservative and usually maintained good relations with the various military governments.

These military governments concentrated on national security, hence on surveillance and repression of popular organizing. Economically they proposed a laissez-faire liberalism, which greatly benefitted the coffee and banana oligarchies. Government spending on defence was always about ten percent of the total budget. Meanwhile, the Guatemalan state was only weakly involved in the areas of agriculture, education, infrastructure, health care, and social security. Tax returns were also very low.

Even with high economic growth in the sixties and seventies, the Guatemalan state remained modest in size. National security, embodied in counter-insurgency campaigns against various guerrilla forces, was the main focus of the military governments. In the early seventies, certain parts of the national economy were deemed of vital strategic interest and appropriated by the armed forces. These included apart from a small weapons industry the electricity company, the geographical institute, Aviateca airline, Aurora international airport, the telephone company, the channel 5 television station, and large plots of land in the so-called Northern Transverse Strip (Petén and Alta Verapaz departments). Starting in 1954, the state literally became the instrument of the military in their struggle to save Guatemala from communism:

The armed forces have long assumed for themselves the role of society's guardian protecting the established order against communists, socialists, rebellious workers and peasants, and all other left-of-the-center dissident groups

26 A country's civil society consists of all autonomous citizen associations, ranging from organizations of professionals and businessmen to trade or peasant unions, to NGOs and churches.

and individuals. Its political-security apparatus relies on the systematic use of torture, death threats, and assassination to check opposition groups. In the military's view, its long traditions of nationalism, patriotism, and anticommunism qualify it as society's ultimate arbiter and most honorable defender. Justifying the pervasive army presence in both external and internal affairs, the military high command cites the national constitution, which charges the army with maintaining Guatemala's "independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity" and enforcing "internal peace and security."\(^{28}\)

Political dissidents were harassed, threatened, and often murdered by death squads. Guatemala has a long history of paramilitary right-wing groups. Death squads were particularly active in the repression following the Castillo Armas coup (1954-55), during the counter-insurgency campaigns between 1966 and 1973 and from 1978 to 1983. Since 1986, their victims have been mixed up with drug traffickers, street children, and members of youth gangs.

The military's iron rule from 1954 to 1985 forced many intellectuals abroad. Others joined the guerrilla forces. Room for a civil society was extremely limited: only business groups (CACIF) and religious groups (like Catholic Action and the new Protestant churches) were allowed to organize themselves. Labor unions, peasant unions, cooperatives, progressive Catholic Base Communities, and left-wing intellectuals were all repressed. They went underground or abroad, or joined the guerrillas.

The February 4, 1976 earthquake served as a catalyst for popular organizing. Over 25,000 people died in the rubble and 1.25 million lost their homes. Shantytown organizations appeared in Guatemala City, while rural organizations were formed to rebuild devastated communities. A huge number of international organizations arrived to offer relief, aid, or credit. Foreign missionaries and Catholic Action leaders contributed to a revival of popular organizing. Repression, however, also increased. In 1978 hundreds of Q'eqchi' Indians were killed in a demonstration for land rights in Panzós (Alta Verapaz) and many labor union leaders were murdered in Guatemala City. Also in 1978 CUC\(^{29}\) was founded: a peasant union which was to become one of the strongest popular organizations\(^{30}\).

After more devastating counter-insurgency campaigns between 1978-81 and 1982-83, the guerrilla movement was left seriously weakened. A stalemate developed between the armed forces and the URNG guerrillas: the army could never hope to completely eradicate the rebels, while the URNG would always be incapable of defeating the army. Incompetent or corrupt military governments kept the country in a crisis-like situation. The economic recession of the early eighties

\(^{28}\) Barry (1992: 45).

\(^{29}\) Comité de Unidad Campesina or Peasant Unity Committee.

\(^{30}\) Barry (1992: 125-127) is the main source of this paragraph.
made things even worse. The military opted for a return to civilian rule, hoping to improve Guatemala's blighted international image and attract more foreign aid. But the army would continue as national arbiter to safeguard the integrity of the nation.

2.3.3 Return to civilian rule
Between 1986 and 1995 there were three civilian governments: Cerezo (1986-90), Serrano (1991-93) and de León (1993-95). The Christian Democrat Cerezo inherited the legacy of the severe economic crisis of the early eighties, and had to deal with the high democratic hopes of popular movements. In 1995, people in La Florida and newspaper accounts remember his government as weak and corrupt, dominated by the constitutionalist faction of the army in the person of General Gramajo. The elections of late 1990 were won by the Protestant businessman and politician Jorge Serrano. From the start in 1991, this independent conservative had to make deals with various parties to support his government. He was more successful than Cerezo in initiating peace negotiations with the URNG. Serrano's government, however, also soon became bogged down in corruption and incompetence. In May 1993, Serrano sent the national congress home and curbed press freedom in a so-called auto-golpe (self-coup) by the president. Popular protest and international pressure caused the business sector (CACIF) and the armed forces to take sides against him. After Serrano fled to Panama, human rights ombudsman Ramiro de León Carpio was appointed by the National Congress to complete Serrano's presidential term to the end of 1995. De León was a very effective fighter for human rights, and popular hopes once again soared. Politically, however, de León was much more a conservative than a liberal. The peace process dragged on and macroeconomic performance remained weak. In spite of the abolition of the hated military service, de León was unable or unwilling to control the army. In 1995, Guatemala is considered by newspapers and politicians alike to be 'ungovernable' and in a severe economic, political, and social crisis.

2.4 Social structure and fragmentation
I will identify five major problems that Guatemala faces in 1995: the continuing war between armed forces and guerrillas, widespread violent crime, a weak and inefficient state, limited popular organizing, and an explosive growth in poverty.

War. The first major problem facing Guatemala in the period of my fieldwork is the continuing 'low-intensity' conflict between the armed forces and guerrillas, which has claimed at least 150,000
deaths, over 50,000 disappearings and more than a million displaced people since 1960. With the end of the Cold War in the late eighties, the URNG changed its goal from national socialist revolution to a ‘democratic revolution’ vanguarded by guerrilla and popular organizations. From over 10,000 fighters in 1981 the number of combatants went down to no more than 1,000 or 2,000 in 1995. The URNG strategy of the nineties was called hacer presencia or making a presence. It entailed sporadic ambushes of military patrols in the highlands, the sabotage of electricity and oil networks, the destruction of bridges and roads, a war tax imposed on landlords and tourists, and occasional propaganda pamphlet bombings in Guatemala City. The object was to show that the armed forces could never control the entire country and would never be able to eradicate the guerrilla's military capacity. This ensured the political clout of the URNG at the negotiating table. It caused much cynicism among the war-weary population, who were left without bridges or electricity, and who openly talked about a violent conflict between two dinosaurs. It also gave the army a perfect excuse to militarize the country, repress dissident political views, and commit human rights violations for the sake of national security.

Crime. It is highly likely that violent warfare also triggered Guatemala's second major problem: criminal violence. The transition from military to civilian rule in 1986 led to an easing of surveillance and repression. During the Cerezo years, the first complaints about the rise in crime could already be heard. By 1995, the country is affected by a crime wave of armed robberies, kidnappings, murders, and theft. Elements (some, but not all, renegade) from both the guerrilla and armed forces, not to mention death squads and the regular under-paid police, are probably responsible for a substantial part of this. Decreased surveillance, a great number of firearms among the population, and the absence of an effective judicial system (resulting in impunity for most criminal offenders) generally make crime a lucrative undertaking. Death squads and paramilitary forces who used to kill 'subversives' are killing drug dealers and young members of street gangs instead.

Every 50 minutes somebody is assaulted on the streets, at home or in a bus; every 80 minutes a car is stolen; and every 40 hours someone is kidnapped in 1997. There are 900 kidnappings in Guatemala in 1996: together with Brazil, the country ranked third after Colombia (4,000) and Mexico (1,900). In 1994, 72 police agents were killed in office, usually in firefights with criminals.

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32 See FLACSO (1997).
33 Siglo xxí (July 20, 1998) reports that according to the Department of Arms and Ammunition Control (DECAM) there are 120,130 arms and 37,359 licences registered. However, it estimates there are over two million illegal arms in criminal hands.
34 In other words: Colombia has roughly one kidnapping for every 9,200 inhabitants; Guatemala one for every
or members of youth gangs. There are 85 mara youth gangs active in the metropolitan area and over 50 groups specialized in bus assaults in 1995\(^{35}\). The levels of violence and crime are causing anxiety bordering on paranoia among all of the population: from the poor to middle sectors and the elite\(^{36}\).

In 1995, the de León government reacts to popular demand for greater urban security with an international search for funding, in order to improve police and judicial performance. As in 1992, the army is sent out to patrol the streets of Guatemala City to protect people against crime, effectively militarizing the City. In 1994 and 95 the first criminals are lynched by angry mobs in highland villages. The structural weakness of the Guatemalan state, however, is not only obvious in the field of urban security. State schools, health care, infrastructure, the electricity company, the water company, the telephone company— all are described as being in crisis. Hospital workers and teachers are often on strike for better wages or better facilities.

**State.** The third major problem, the inability of the state to provide its citizens with basic services, is the main cause of the explosion of the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the late eighties and early nineties. NGOs are an important part of Guatemalan society\(^{37}\). They usually have specific social or economic objectives in the fields of education, literacy, agriculture, infrastructure, rural banks, credit and training for small enterprise, or the organization of women. In line with political culture in Guatemala, many NGOs are funded by middle or upper class professionals, who tend to run them in a rather paternalistic way. NGOs that support community development or education are often foreign sponsored. The explosion in the number of NGOs working in Guatemala has sparked complaints about their lack of coordination, lack of outside monitoring, inefficiency, and even corruption. Two major NGO umbrella groups are USAID-sponsored ASINDES\(^{38}\) and the more progressive COINDE\(^{39}\).

The success of NGOs is both a reflection, and in part also a cause, of the general resurgence of

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\(^{35}\) Sources for this paragraph: Siglo xxi (March 4 and 29, 1995); Prensa Libre (April 14 and July 10, 1997); and Gutiérrez (1997: 1). More information about maras can be found in chapter 4.

\(^{36}\) According to data presented at a criminology conference in Amsterdam in August 1997, three-quarters of city dwellers in Latin America had been victims of crime. Women were especially vulnerable to criminal violence and rape. See De Volkskrant of August 27, 1997.

\(^{37}\) According to Siglo xxi (October 7, 1997) there are about 1,200 NGOs active in Guatemala. Only 200 of these publish reports on their activities and only 20 are financially self-sufficient. Prensa Libre (September 16, 1997), however, reports only 800 NGOs.

\(^{38}\) ASINDES; Asociación de Entidades de Desarrollo y de Servicio de Guatemala or Association of Development and Services Entities of Guatemala.

\(^{39}\) COINDE; Consejo de Instituciones de Desarrollo or Council of Development Institutes.
civil society after the transition to civilian rule in 1986. The first national popular organizations were formed between 1978 and 1985: the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC), the Confederation of Guatemalan Trade Union Unity (CUSG), the Mutual Support Group (GAM), and the Union of Guatemalan Workers (UNSTRAGUA). CUC, CUSG, and UNSTRAGUA are trade unions; GAM is a human rights group that consists mostly of relatives of disappeared persons.

These early examples were followed in the second half of the eighties by the General Confederation of Guatemalan Workers (CGTG) and the new alliance of popular and labor organizations (UASP). In spite of the great number of trade unions in Guatemala, few workers actually belong to them. Two new Indian organizations also emerged: the Runujel Junam Council of Ethnic Communities (CERJ) and the National Coalition of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA). In 1990, displaced communities hiding in jungle and mountain areas organized themselves into the Popular Communities in Resistance (CPR). Particularly the success of Indian groups GAM, CERJ, and CONAVIGUA is seen as proof of the Maya renaissance mentioned before.

These new leftist, progressive elements in civil society complement long-existing business organizations, like CACIF and the coffee producers union ANACAFE. But the great number of different popular organizations, and especially the boom in trade unions, is in itself indicative of the overall lack of coordination in what is called ‘popular organizing’. There is no single popular movement; instead there are at least ten. They are organized on the divisive bases of gender, ethnicity, and profession. All have different ideas and strategies, but none has a unified political program. Their best and charismatic leaders were killed in the repression of the 1980s. Leadership styles are often paternalistic and exclusive; few organizations are democratically organized. Foreign funding has led to problems of accountability and even corruption.

Some negative traits of the dominant ladino political culture appear in most forms of social organization. An anonymous Guatemalan social scientist noted a strong tendency towards sectarianism in almost all sectors of society: army, government, URNG guerrilla groups, political parties, churches, civil organizations from the left and right, schools, and universities. They share the belief that their own view is the only truth, therefore they shun cooperation with other even similar organizations. Internally they are undemocratic, hierarchical, and paternalistic, which provides great opportunities for corruption. Above all, they are unaccountable.

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40 According to Prensa Libre (September 15, 1997) there are about 480 trade unions active in Guatemala, although almost 1,250 are legally registered. Of the legal ones, most are from private enterprise (78 percent), far fewer are in the public sector (22 percent), the privatized and semi-state sector (13 percent), and nine percent represent central government employees.

41 See Bastos & Camus (1993b) for an overview of (the demands of) Indian organizations that were founded between 1986 and 1992.
Popular organizations. The issues discussed above are all reasons why popular organizing is so limited, a fourth problem. Organized civil society, however, did play a part in the peace process between 1993 and 1995 in the form of the Civil Society Assembly (ASC)\[^{43}\]. But the sectors of civil society mentioned, whether left or right-wing, actually represent only a fraction of the total Guatemalan population. Of course, thirty years of repression have discouraged people from social activism. Besides, most Guatemalans are poor and much too busy trying to survive with their families.

The state of crisis in the country reflected in poverty, weak government, divided popular movements, criminal and political violence, and the continuing armed conflict makes people wary of all forms of cooperation. There is little faith in either government or guerrillas, in business or popular organizations. Trust between people is also very low. Even people living together on the same street or in the same neighborhood often maintain only limited contact. Neighborhood committees only exist in new shantytowns; in more established neighborhoods they have disappeared because of a lack of leaders, funds, or cooperation, because of corruption or because of high intracity migration.

The newspapers often write about social disintegration and even atomization. Characteristically, people are withdrawing from society, turning to the closest social circles they have: family and household, and often their church. That is why these two social units feature so prominently in this study. The household constitutes the basic unit for economic survival, either through wage labor in the formal sector or through labor in the unregistered and unregulated informal sector.

Feelings of crisis and pessimism make the business climate in Guatemala very bleak. Many factors are contributing to this: upcoming elections in November, high inflation, unstable macroeconomic growth favoring only a few sectors, neoliberal cutbacks on government spending, and huge rural and urban subsistence sectors. Exports keep performing well, meaning income differences and hence social inequality are increasing. The result is an explosive growth in poverty, the country’s fifth major problem.

2.5 Poverty, the informal sector, and small-scale enterprise

2.5.1 Poverty

The major causes of the great contrast between rich and poor in Guatemala are the highly uneven

\[^{42}\] The preceding two paragraphs owe much to Barry (1992: 130-135).
national economy consisting of a very profitable export sector versus a marginalized subsistence sector, the recession of the early eighties, and low macroeconomic growth between 1987 and 1995. Official unemployment is high at around 40 percent\(^{44}\). All poverty statistics and indicators, irrespective of method and scope, show a marked increase in poverty between 1980 and 1995: see the table below. In 1980, 60 to 70 percent of the total population was reported poor. From 1985 to 1989 the percentages varied between 68 and 89 percent. In 1993 the variation was between 75 and 90 percent. In summary: poverty in Guatemala has always been high, never below 60 percent. It rose strongly in the eighties\(^{45}\) and according to some affected up to 90 percent of the Guatemalan population in 1993.

Table 2.5.1.

Percentages of poverty and extreme poverty in Guatemala, 1980-1993

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Prensa Libre</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEGEPLAN</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INE</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FLACSO</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPAL</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
<td>89%</td>
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Most of these income poverty indicators are based on census figures, on sweeping national surveys, and on house-to-house calls. It seems unlikely that Guatemalans in general will cooperate with government or even foreign (NGO) investigators, given the recent history of repression and the

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\(^{44}\) Barry (1992: 96).

\(^{45}\) Not just in Guatemala, but all over Latin America poverty increased strongly, especially between 1980 and 1986. See also Feres & León (1990: 146).
widespread reluctance to pay taxes. It is also important to remember that production for own household or family use is not represented in official statistics. Subsistence agriculture, a basic element of Indian culture and economy, is not counted. Urban informal economic activities can only be estimated.

2.5.2 The informal sector
The term ‘informal sector’ is first used by Hart (1973), who develops a dualist model of the economically active urban population based on the distinction between people who receive wages (the formal sector) and the self-employed. According to Portes, the ILO bureaucracy subsequently started to equate the informal sector with poverty, i.e. they saw it as a survival strategy of people who do not have access to regular wage labor.\(^{46}\)

The informal sector is thought to have the following characteristics:\(^{47}\) easy accessibility, based on family enterprises, small-scale, labor-intensive production with outdated technology, unregulated and highly competitive markets. In contrast to the ILO view, Hernando de Soto (1991) and others see the informal sector as the dynamic expression of popular capitalism, seeking refuge from bureaucratic government interference. I will follow Feige’s (1990) definition of the informal sector: ‘those actions by economic agents that fail to adhere to the established institutional rules or are denied their protection.’ This definition is extremely broad and heavily influenced by economics, not by the social sciences, which is typical for the concept of the informal sector in general. Most authors reject it or attempt to refine it.\(^{48}\) In the eighties, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) started to use microenterprise, or more broadly small-scale enterprise, instead of the static and confusing term informal sector.

2.5.3 Small-scale enterprise
According to FLACSO studies, one-third of Guatemala City’s labor force was employed in the informal economy in 1990. FLACSO surveys reported that about half of these people were self-employed, although they might be assisted by unpaid family workers, who made up six percent of the total informal labor force. The remainder were supposedly working in microenterprises. The microenterprise is usually defined as having a maximum of five to ten workers excluding the

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\(^{46}\) Portes (1994: 427).

\(^{47}\) Portes (1994: 427).


owner. Only one in every six people (16 percent) were microenterprise owners. They earned on average 1.5 to three times as much as their renumerated workers, who made up a little less than a third of the informal labor force, according to FLACSO.

One study suggests there were at least 380,000 microenterprises in Guatemala in 1991: 200,000 in commerce, 130,000 in manufacture, and 50,000 in services. These supposedly employed 260,000; 400,000; and 140,000 people respectively: a grand total of 800,000. Most microenterprises could be found in commerce (40 to 53 percent), followed by manufacture (28 to 34 percent) and services (13 to 18 percent). A third of all microfirms were located in the metropolitan area.

There are many ways to classify small-scale firms. A common criterion is by business sector (industry, commerce, and service) or by specific trade (carpenters, mechanics, bricklayers, shoemakers, etc). Lawyers are more inclined to look at the judicial arrangements, since the informal sector supposedly deals with unregistered economic activities, without labor contracts or tax revenues.

Economists tend to look at business performance: stagnation, stability, or growth. Some studies suppose that capital accumulation was limited to microenterprises only. This distinction is based on a classification of informal enterprises according to which they either accumulate (accumulation sector) or remain relatively stable or stagnate (subsistence sector). Less than a quarter of all informal enterprises made a profit and hence are part of the accumulation sector. Differences between microenterprises and one-person enterprises, however, were not that marked.

Since I will focus on the individual entrepreneur, a relevant way to classify my informants and their firms is to distinguish four different labor arrangements. First, three informants are self-employed. Since they have no paid workers, they are not dependent upon other people's labor at all and can make business decisions according to their own desires. Second, three family firms, which employ only paid relatives, usually children or spouses. I suspect that household authority patterns might be transplanted to the functioning of the firm. Third, there are two mixed labor firms among

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50 According to Wesselink & van Zwieten (1991: 1) definitions of microenterprise usually set the upper limit at five paid workers, though SIMME had an upper limit of eight. The new SYME (Consejo Nacional 1994: 17a) sets an upper limit of six workers. However, Dutch International Cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs n.d.: 11) gives microenterprise a maximum of ten and small enterprise a maximum of 25 employees. Chinchilla (1994: 4) defines a small enterprise as having between five and twenty workers and a net capital of between US$ 3,500 and US$ 17,500. Microenterprise will then have a maximum of four paid workers and US$ 3,500 in net capital.

51 Pérez Sáinz & Menjívar (1991: 31) give three times as much; Wesselink & van Zwieten (1991: iv) give only 1.5.


my informants, which combine relatives and outsiders as employees. The resulting mixture makes business operation more complicated. Fourth, there are five enterprises that work exclusively with hired labor.

The social basis of informal enterprise, whether microenterprise or one-person firm, is always the household. Its primary function is to keep families fed and clothed, to pay children's school money or health expenses. Business accounting and planning are often rudimentary. A vague separation between household and enterprise budget is typical for informal economic activity. Apart from flexible, and often unpaid, labor inputs of household members, the social networks they belong to are important in the operation of the enterprise. Start-up money usually comes from the owner's savings or from relatives, friends, or fellow church members. The workfloor is almost always located in the family home. Most microentrepreneurs have little or no formal education: sixth grade primary was when they often stopped going to school because they had to work. Most entrepreneurs would gladly follow courses: night or adult education. But they lack the time and the money. Training is usually sought through non-governmental (development) organizations, NG(D)Os. NGOs often provide credit conditional upon following classes in accounting or general skills.

There are at least twenty NGOS working in the field of small-scale or microenterprise. Many of these are (or were) associated with SIMME: the huge semi-governmental program for microenterprise in Guatemala. The ILO is actively trying to bring small-scale entrepreneurs together at local, national and even international level. Because of the feelings of crisis, social fragmentation and lack of trust in Guatemala, organizations of small-scale entrepreneurs are also small. Moreover, they suffer from the same problems as described for the popular movements: sectarianism, division, leadership troubles, a lack of representativity, corruption, and unaccountability.

The microenterprise is extremely vulnerable, forcing owners to be creative and even ingenious. The firms which, through trial-and-error, do survive the first four years often continue to expand both in investments and in workers. The main problems are acquiring credit and paying interest,

56 According to a large sample survey of SIMME microenterprises and one-person firms (Wesselink & van Zwieten 1991: 10), 69 percent operated their firm in their home. Of these, 65 percent owned the house and 35 percent were renting.

57 See appendix 4.

58 Of course, medium-sized and big (formal) enterprises in Guatemala have very similar start-up problems. Even in the Netherlands, for instance, half of the 20,000 to 30,000 new enterprises that start each year go bankrupt within four
insufficient market knowledge, lack of technical and accounting skills, insufficient business planning and evaluation, and high job rotation among workers. Most workers, when given half a chance, would gladly start their own enterprise. Competition is stifling, although here differences are great from one sector to another.\footnote{Gooren (1996: 51-54) discusses various problems and creative solutions of small entrepreneurs.}

In the absence of state regulation, clients of microenterprises are basically at the mercy of the firm owners. Informal production may be full of risks, but the same is certainly true for informal demand. How do clients protect themselves against fraud and low quality? The answer lies in the social relations between customer and seller: networks form the basis of trust. Powell calls the informal economy the network variant of economic organization, characterized by a vague separation between business and personal roles. He identifies ‘enforceable trust’ as the social mechanism which supports informal transactions: “The sanctioning power of the community, its ability to confer status on individuals or exclude them, is the key force guaranteeing individual compliance.”\footnote{Powell (1990: 317).}

Many microentrepreneurs work in the safe social circles of their household and their church community, which are also the main themes of this study. Why is church membership such an important social force in Guatemala? And why are there so many Protestants in the country? These questions, and many others, will be addressed in chapter 3.

\section*{2.6 Summary}
Guatemala's uneven economy is the basis of the extremely uneven distribution of wealth in the country. The economic crisis of the first half of the eighties led to a rapid growth of poverty. Even as the economy is recovering growth was two to four percent between 1986 and 1995 and inflation is stable around 11 percent, poverty indicators remain high. The agricultural economy is marked by extremely uneven land distribution. Large agro-export companies export millions of dollars worth of products, while many poor rural families mostly Indians have insufficient land even for subsistence agriculture. The rich hardly pay taxes and labor costs are very low. The origins of the dual economy go back to land tenure in the colonial era, the victory of Liberals over Conservatives in the second half of the 19th century, and the subsequent expansion of coffee and banana production. Plantations encroached on the communal land of Indian villages, and ladinos became the typical middlemen between landlords and Indian workers. Many analysts see the

\footnotetext{\textit{De Volkskrant}, August 17, 1996: 2.}
plantation economy as the main cause for ladino racism against Indians.

The Guatemalan state was historically dominated by oligarchical groups, whether Conservatives and Liberals or coffee and banana producers. Repression of newly formed trade unions and socialists increased under the Ubico government (1931-44). A coup by progressive army officers made the first genuinely free elections possible, which were won by Arévalo. His 1945-50 government democratized the constitution and greatly increased social spending on education and health care. The Arbenz government (1950-54) extended these policies with moderate land reform in 1952, to give peasants more land and break the power of landlords and the United Fruit Company. These elements of the political right, however, made an alliance with the Roman Catholic Church and the Eisenhower government in the U.S. A successful invasion by Colonel Castillo Armas ushered in an era of thirty years (1954-85) of increasingly corrupt and repressive military governments. Anti-communism was their creed, as expressed in counter-insurgency campaigns against various guerrilla groups and reformist popular organizations.

The return to civilian democracy in early 1986 brought about a surge in popular organizing, in which Indian groups were especially prominent. The popular sectors, however, suffered from a lack of good leaders (the best had been killed), internal divisions, and problems of clientelism, corruption, and unaccountability. The various civilian governments of Cerezo (1986-90), Serrano (1991-93), and de León (1993-95) have not succeeded in reforming the weak Guatemalan state or in controlling the armed forces. NGOs are taking on many of the state functions in education, infrastructure, and poverty alleviation. SIMME, the semi-state program for microenterprise, was a mixed success. The armed conflict dragged on, human rights violations continued, and crime exploded in the 1990s. Although civil society gradually is gaining strength, the dominant feelings of Guatemalans in 1995 are of pessimism and crisis. Poverty is widespread, possibly affecting up to ninety percent of the population.

Land scarcity, poverty, and warfare have forced many Guatemalans to migrate to Guatemala City, or even to the United States. Low-income neighborhoods house one-third of Guatemala City's inhabitants. The informal sector grew strongly after 1980, both in respect to its share in GDP and in its number of workers. A third of all the country's microenterprises, with a maximum of five to ten employees, are located in Guatemala City. Most households in Guatemala City can only survive because of a small enterprise. The household is a basic social unit in a country divided by ethnic, income, gender, social, and religious inequalities. The other basic social unit is religion, which features prominently in Guatemala, and therefore in this study too. Thus, religion and churches are the subject of chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3

RELIGION

In a highly politicized and polarized country like Guatemala, church and state are closely connected. The state has continuously sought to control churches, while the churches have tried to cultivate good relations with the various governments. The emphasis in this chapter is on church history, organization, growth, doctrine, and leadership. These are addressed for the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant and Pentecostal churches, Neo-Pentecostal churches like Rains of Mercy (the first case study), and the Mormon Church (the second case study). The Catholic Church is treated extensively, because almost all informants have a Catholic background. The success of the Neo-Pentecostal churches is sketched after a lengthy exposition of mainstream Protestantism and of Pentecostalism. A brief summary of churches and religion in Guatemala concludes the chapter.

3.1 Roman Catholicism

The Roman Catholic Church was closely associated with the Spanish colonial government in Central America. Institutionally, however, the Catholic Church was weak during the colonial era. There were very few priests or friars, and they rarely spoke Indian languages. The political power of the church was connected to its influence in colonial government and education, and to the size of its landholdings. After Independence from Spain in 1821, little changed at first. The church maintained its privileged position in Guatemalan society during the long Conservative governments of Carrera (1839-65). But when the Liberals came to power with Barrios in 1871, the consequences were serious. The Catholic Church was formally separated from the state, and its properties, mostly buildings and land, were confiscated. In 1874, Barrios expelled the religious orders from the country and closed seminaries, seriously weakening the institutional power of the church in Guatemala. Barrios even went personally to the United States to invite Protestant missionaries to come to Guatemala. The dictatorial government of Estrada (1898-1920) followed the strongly anti-clerical Liberal tradition.

Archbishop Mariano Rossell, a fervent anti-communist in office since 1939, gradually built up a good relationship with General Ubico, who ruled from 1930 to 1944. In 1924 there were only 85

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1 A detailed analysis of non-Catholic church statistics and growth can be found in Gooren (1998a), while the view of the two church case studies on poverty and entrepreneurship is described and analyzed in chapter 4.

2 Described by Adams (1970: 278) as "Perhaps the longest and most severe restriction that the Catholic church has
priests in the entire country; in 1942 the number stood at 114\(^3\). A few foreign priests and friars were allowed to enter the country and stay in the late thirties. After the coup against Ubico by progressive army officers and city dwellers, Arévalo won the free elections of 1945 and continued the permissive state policy towards the Catholic Church. More foreign clergy started to arrive\(^4\).

Archbishop Rossell's anti-communism became an important factor in Roman Catholic development after Colonel Arbenz won the elections of 1950. Even more than Arévalo, the government headed by Arbenz followed a reform-oriented course, and continued the 19th century Liberal policies that had restricted the political and educational role of the church. The nationalist Arbenz government put severe limitations on the arrival of foreign missionaries both Catholic and Protestant. The land reform of 1952 and the perceived growing influence of the PGT\(^5\) convinced Rossell that Arbenz was a communist, who had to be brought down by whatever means possible. Hence Rossell played an important part in the campaign sponsored by the CIA and landowners to organize the opposition, followed by an invasion by Colonel Castillo Armas in 1954\(^6\).

In 1954, the Roman Catholic Church regained its former position as a juridical entity. This enabled Rossell to greatly strengthen the organizational structures of the church. The Armas government made the influx of large numbers of foreign church personnel, mostly diocese priests and religious men and women, possible. In 1959 there were already 115 diocese priests, 231 priests from the orders, and 364 monks and nuns: a grand total of 710, or more than triple the 1950 number. In 1965 the grand total was 1,360\(^7\). In the late fifties and early sixties, new churches and schools were built, new missions and dioceses were founded, and church social assistance programs were expanding\(^8\). The Roman Catholic Church was still essentially an urban-based church, but now this was slowly changing. The founding of Catholic Action\(^9\) played an important part in this.

Catholic Action (CA) started in the late thirties\(^10\) as 'a mode of involving laymen more profoundly in the work of the church and against the ideas stemming from humanism, Protestantism, rationalism, autorevelation, historical materialism, and laicism\(^11\). Researchers\(^12\) often analyze it as a reform-

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\(^3\) Dussel et al. (1985: 288) use a similar phrasing.
\(^5\) PGT: Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo, or the communist Guatemalan Workers Party.
\(^6\) Later, Rossell was highly decorated by the Armas government, and in turn the archbishop named the colonel a 'legitimate saint'. See Barry (1992: 190) and Samandú et al. (1990: 28).
\(^7\) Samandú et al. (1990: 34).
\(^8\) Barry (1992: 190).
\(^9\) In Spanish: Acción Católica (AC).
\(^10\) According to Handy (1989a: 113) it started in 1946.
\(^12\) For instance Green (1993: 170) and Handy (1989a: 113). Handy quotes Archbishop Rossell, who said: 'Our
oriented and clergy-controlled response to poverty and inequality by Archbishop Rossell, aimed at curbing communist influence. The success of CA depended heavily on the capacity and enthusiasm of the priest leading the local group. An important element was the training of catechists as `delegates of the Word': lay leaders who could celebrate `Meetings of the Word' with believers in areas that priests hardly ever reached. This was especially the case in the Indian highlands. The catechists were always young and were educated in orthodox church doctrine. Hence their position, age, discourse, and actions clashed heavily with the older civil-religious organizations: the cofradías and hermandades. Many conflicts resulted, which sometimes led to violence and even the expulsion of Catholic Action from some villages.

But the social and political impact of Catholic Action went much beyond its intentions. In part this because of to its leadership: after 1954 priests increasingly came from abroad. Foremost among them were Spanish Jesuits and religious men and women from a progressive order in the United States called Maryknoll. They did not have any relations with the local elites and were shocked by the state of misery of the Indian population in the highlands. Young catechists passed through a similar awareness-raising process. In spite of its start as a movement controlled by the hierarchy to spread doctrinal orthodoxy and curb communist influence through legal reforms, many people in Catholic Action gradually developed more radical political views and organizational forms. The Christian Democratic Party (DCG), the cooperative movement of the 1970s, the peasant union CUC, and many popular organizations have their origins in Catholic Action. When political repression increased in 1978, many religious men and women from the progressive orders were persecuted and killed. In this climate of strong and violent repression, the influence of Liberation Theology and its popular expression: CEB's or Base Communities remained limited.

Meanwhile, the church hierarchy was becoming increasingly involved in Guatemalan society. The structure of the Roman Catholic Church was strengthened by the formation of the Conference of Religious Orders in Guatemala (CONFREGUA) in 1961 and the Guatemalan Bishops Conference (CEG) in 1964. Although Archbishop Rossell is always, and justly, labelled conservative in the literature, he became increasingly critical of army violence in its counter-insurgency campaigns against guerrilla forces. Rossell died in 1964 and was succeeded by Spanish-born Mario Casariego, who never became very popular among believers. Also politically conservative and

small Catholic Action was one of the greatest comforts in those hours of enormous distress in the presence of Marxist advance that invaded everything.

13 See e.g. Falla (1978) and Warren (1978).
14 See especially Handy (1989a: 113-115) and Samandú et al. (1990: 28-33; 75-77).
15 'By the early 1980s, the entire diocese of Quiché was closed and 13 priests had been killed' (Barry 1992: 192). The killings took place between 1974 and 1982.
16 See Barry (1992: 190) and Dussel et al. (1985: 375-376).
fiercely anti-communist, Casariego established good relationships with the military governments of the sixties and seventies. Even so, several progressive pastorals letters were produced by bishops. When the Bishops Conference in 1977 called for greater social justice, the government of General Langerud promptly claimed the Catholic Church was acting as a vehicle for communism\textsuperscript{17}.

Under the current archbishop, Próspero Penados del Barrio who took office in 1983, the church has gradually become better organized. Politically, it has moved to the left or rather more towards the center. The clearest example is the pastoral letter The Clamor for Land in 1988\textsuperscript{18}, which analyzes the causes of the extreme inequalities in Guatemala, putting special emphasis on the uneven distribution of land. The Bishops Conference Plan for 1988-92 severely criticized the Cerezo government for its counter-insurgency campaigns and for allowing poverty to grow. The bishops declared that both government and guerrilla suffered from a loss of credibility. This caused a rupture between the Bishops Conference and the Christian Democratic Party, led by President Vinicio Cerezo. The Catholic Church began to actively support indigenous peasants in land conflicts. In 1990, the Bishops Conference established the respected human rights office ODHA\textsuperscript{19}.

Meanwhile, however, the church hierarchy speaks for fewer and fewer Catholics: from 95 percent of the population in 1970, the percentage of Catholics decreased to between 67 and 71 percent in 1994\textsuperscript{20}. A very large portion of these were nominal Catholics, who rarely went to church. The church also became increasingly divided: between nominal Catholics and lay-leaders, between ordinary members and priests, between prelates and priests, between diocesan priests and religious men or women, between politically conservative and progressive groups, between Catholic Action and the brotherhoods, between ordinary parishes and Charismatic Renewal groups.

Since its arrival with missionaries from the United States in 1973-74, Charismatic Renewal constituted an anomaly within the Guatemalan Roman Catholic Church. The carismáticos stress the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a spiritual life. Their services are emotional and full of music, swaying, and clapping. However, ordained priests make up the leadership, instead of the lay leaders common in Pentecostal churches. Though dubbed a “middle-class movement”\textsuperscript{21} in Guatemala City, Charismatic Renewal seems to be expanding to other sectors: they grew from about 5,000 in 1980 to an estimated 30,000 in 1993 (almost 60,000 if one includes all people visiting charismatic services). The hierarchy reluctantly supports Charismatic Renewal, but fears that its success will ultimately benefit the (Neo)Pentecostal churches. Hence their warnings against fundamentalism and the

\textsuperscript{17} Barrett (1982: 341).
\textsuperscript{18} See Barry (1992: 193-194) and Samandú et al. (1990: 152-158).
\textsuperscript{19} ODHA: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala or Human Rights Office of the Guatemala City Archbishopric (Barry 1992: 39).
\textsuperscript{20} See Johnstone (1995: 257) and CID/Gallup (1994).
division between faith and life’ in the above-mentioned CEG Plan for 1988-92. Other perceived dangers are a decrease in the importance of clergy due to the emphasis on individual religious expression and the threat of greater internal division within the church\textsuperscript{22}.

Although the Catholic Church greatly expanded its organization between 1954 and 1995, its institutional presence in many parts of the country (like the northern Petén frontier department and the isolated highlands) is still quite weak. One reason for this is the division and lack of coordination between the various groups, parishes, orders, dioceses, and missions which make up the church in Guatemala. Each has its own objectives, principles, organization, and sometimes even its own funding, which makes some quite autonomous. A complicating factor to achieving more unity is that over two-thirds of the clergy are foreigners, although all bishops are Guatemalans.

A second reason for its weakness is the fact that the church is still essentially urban, \textsuperscript{23} with about one-third of the total clergy based in Guatemala City\textsuperscript{23}. Administratively, the parishes of Guatemala City belong to the department of Guatemala, which together with the departments of Sacatepéquez and Santa Rosa, belongs to the archdiocese of Guatemala\textsuperscript{24}. Catholicism in Guatemala City has many faces, including regular and Charismatic Renewal dominated parishes; lower, middle and upper-class parishes; and a few Base Communities (CEBs).

A third and final reason for the weakness of the Roman Catholic Church in Guatemala is the increasing competition it faces from the various Protestant churches. The Catholic Church went from its initial fierce opposition to Protestantism to a working relationship (sometimes almost approaching ecumenism\textsuperscript{25}) in the fifties and sixties to increasing hostility in the seventies, eighties and nineties. To a great extent, this was due to the success of new Protestant groups in the seventies, particularly various Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches. The Catholic Church reacted to this Protestant success by trying to increase its personnel, by trying to expand geographically and socially, by promoting a variety of religious movements (including Charismatic Renewal and family groups) and by trying to improve church organization and communication\textsuperscript{26}.

As the number of Protestants in Guatemala shot up exponentially, the attacks on Protestantism by the clergy became increasingly stronger. The Central American Bishops (SEDAC) published their first warning against Protestant fundamentalism in the region in the eighties. SEDAC subsequently commissioned an investigation of (Protestant) fundamentalism in Central America\textsuperscript{27}. The

\textsuperscript{23} Barry (1992: 195).
\textsuperscript{24} Samandú et al. (1990: 16).
\textsuperscript{25} See Calder (1991: 5-6).
\textsuperscript{27} SEDAC (1992).
Guatemalan bishops, like the Latin American bishops in general, analyzed the Protestant growth as part of an international conspiracy by the United States government and other proponents of global neo-liberalism:

The sects break the harmony, take away the credibility of and weaken the popular religion. The most noteworthy cultural change produced by the sects is in the field of social unity and identity. We can no longer refer to the one and only religious faith as a factor of national unity. The social fabric has been torn apart in myriad pieces, in religious groups which fight among themselves and all together against the Catholic majority. The Guatemalan character is now being impregnated with features of fanaticism, intolerance, individualism and plain aggressiveness.[...]

The sects form part of the offensive of the neo-liberal system, which needs religion to justify its presence and increase its influence in a profoundly religious society.28

Here all Protestant churches are consistently called `sects' and get blamed for a whole array of social vices. What accounts for this growing hostility of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy towards the Protestant churches? Who are these Protestants and where do they come from? The older Protestant churches and the Pentecostals are the subject of the section below. Next, the Neo-Pentecostals are introduced, with special emphasis on the Rains of Mercy case study. The other special case, the Latter-day Saints or Mormon Church, is treated in a later section.

3.2 Protestantism and Pentecostalism

Six periods can be distinguished in the history of Protestantism in Guatemala. First, the time of its introduction by foreigners among the Liberal business elite (1882-1916). Second, the initial efforts with moderate success at targeting ladinos and Indians (1916-35), which included the very successful 1921 campaign of the Latin American Mission. Third, the time of early institutionalization, literacy programs set up with the Arévalo government, and increased cooperation in the Evangelical Synod and Alliance (1935-54). Fourth, the period of increasing anti-communism among Protestant mission agencies, the growth and institutionalization of Pentecostalism, and the nationalization of the Protestant leadership (1954-76). Fifth, the Protestant boom years following the earthquake (1976-86). Sixth, the period of decreasing growth and stagnation for some churches (1986 onwards).

After gaining Independence from Spain, the new 1824 Constitution declared Roman Catholicism to

28 CEG (1992: 18): `2.2.2 El desafio de las sectas' or `The challenge of the sects'. This explanation for the Protestant explosion in Latin America is usually referred to as the `conspiracy theory' in scholarly literature.
be the official religion. In 1846, the government of the pro-Catholic Conservative Carrera expelled the English sailor Frederic Crowe, who had been evangelizing for two years and had succeeded, if not in making converts, at least in making contact with the Liberal business community in Guatemala City.

This proved to be important when the Liberals returned to power in 1871. The Catholic Church was severely restricted in its operations. President Justo Rufino Barrios (1873-85) wanted to attract immigrants from countries like Great Britain, Germany, and the United States in order to 'modernize' Guatemala and stimulate international trade. Hence he declared freedom of conscience and freedom of worship. Barrios came to see Protestantism as an agent for change: as a counterbalance to Catholic worldly power and as a possible way to create division among the Indian communities in the highlands that opposed his Liberal reform measures.

John Clark Hill, the first Protestant missionary in Guatemala, entered the country in November 1882 under the aegis of President Barrios. Between 1899 and 1950, scores of missionaries from 16 churches arrived in Guatemala, representing at least three different traditions: mainstream Protestants, Holiness churches, and Pentecostal churches. The first Protestant groups, the Presbyterians and the Holiness Central American Mission, had moderate success between 1916 and 1935. They organized a few schools and clinics and published magazines. When Protestants succeeded in coordinating their efforts, their growth greatly increased. Henry Strachan's evangelization campaign of 1921, carried out by his Costa Rica-based Latin American Mission,
proved to be extremely successful in boosting church growth\(^\text{36}\). Missionary activity slowed in the late 1920s, because of the economic crisis in the United States. In the thirties it almost came to a stop, during the rather brutal dictatorship of General Jorge Ubico (1931-44). His supposedly nationalist stance brought him into an alliance with the conservative Catholic hierarchy. In 1940, after sixty years of proselytizing, still only two per cent of the population considered itself Protestant\(^\text{37}\). Most converts came from the lower classes; some were opportunists expecting material gain from conversion\(^\text{38}\). Protestantism's puritanical demands seemed a barrier to success among the people, in part because this was so very different from the low-level demands of Catholicism that they were used to. Missionaries and Catholic priests were fierce antagonists: the latter often accused the former of being a vanguard for North American imperialism\(^\text{39}\). All missionaries came from the United States and most saw themselves, like the Liberal governments ruling until the 1920s did, as 'pursuers of American values and prosperity'\(^\text{40}\). Many had close ties to newly arrived US companies, like the United Fruit Company. They saw no contradiction in a combination of proselytizing and pursuing business interests\(^\text{41}\).

Missionaries and church leaders wanted their religious communities to have their own institutions (like schools, clinics, and seminaries), which would lessen dependence on Catholic institutions and possibly attract more new members. In 1935 the five major Protestant groups (Presbyterians, Central American Mission, Quakers, Nazarenes, and Primitive Methodists) formed an 'Evangelical Synod' to improve coordination and cooperation, which started to function in 1937\(^\text{42}\). This heralded a new era of coordination among the various Protestant churches. In the forties the first Protestant radio stations were set up. In 1953, seventeen Protestant churches, including the five which made up the Synod, formed the Evangelical Alliance (Alianza Evangélica), which is still the most important interdenominational organization in Guatemala. It is a form of cooperation which allowed

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\(^{37}\) See Nelson (1982: 86) and Burnett (1989: 133), quoting from the National Census of 1940. Over half of the Protestant community lived outside Guatemala City. It should be noted that other sources give different percentages (see Gooren 1998a). In any case, Núñez (1979: 6) is right when he writes that '[...] before World War II, the Protestant presence was barely noticeable in Guatemalan history.'

\(^{38}\) Nelson (1982: 77).

\(^{39}\) This is the origin of what is nowadays called the conspiracy theory in social science literature, which explains Protestant growth in Latin America by referring to the political and economic backing it received from the United States government.

\(^{40}\) Burnett (1989: 132).

\(^{41}\) In part, because they were influenced by so-called Gospel of Wealth ideas that had emerged in the US at the turn of the century. Simply put, 'wealth was God's way of rewarding the diligent and honest, while poverty was punishment for idleness and sin' (Burnett 1989: 133).

\(^{42}\) See Nelson (1985b: 550).
the participating groups much autonomy. Protestant churches and missionaries supported the democratic revolution of the Arévalo (1945-50) and Arbenz (1950-54) governments. The new 1945 Constitution explicitly confirmed religious freedom in Guatemala. Presbyterians, the Central American Mission, Lutherans, Quakers, Nazarenes, and Primitive Methodists were all actively involved in education and literacy programs, coordinating their efforts with the Arévalo government. The nationalist Arbenz government, however, came to regard Protestant missionaries as “agents of imperialism”. Visa requirements for foreign missionaries were tightened and legislation was begun that would take education out of the hands of the missionary agencies and place it more firmly under state control. Arbenz's anti-Americanism in turn alienated the Protestant missions, which became increasingly worried about his supposed ‘communist leanings’. In 1952, US-based missionary agencies began to withdraw their personnel from Guatemala, foreseeing future violence with the introduction of land reform. But it seems that many Guatemalan Protestants, who were mostly lower-class and poor, actually supported the Arbenz government. The Lutheran Church was the only church to do the same.

The Castillo Armas counter-revolution restored the Roman Catholic Church to its full juridical standing in 1954. Protestant missionaries, however, were still allowed to arrive in Guatemala, which they did in great numbers. Almost all of them came from the United States. In 1959, 25 percent of all personnel of US missionary agencies was stationed in Latin America. Ten years later this percentage had increased to 32 percent. To ensure smooth relationships with the various military governments, and in line with prevailing Cold War sentiments, the missionary agencies gradually moved to the political right.

Besides, most missionaries in the fifties and sixties came from Pentecostal churches, which unlike Presbyterians and Lutherans stressed evangelization and spirituality. Pentecostal churches existed in many varieties, and they became even more divided with the emergence of Neo-Pentecostalism in the sixties (see below). The Pentecostals also became increasingly dominant in the Guatemalan Protestant community. Some Pentecostal churches managed to cooperate to coordinate their evangelization efforts, while others preferred to work on their own. The bigger

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49 In 1935, the Pentecostals made up a scant three percent of all Protestants; in 1950, 13 percent; in 1960, 20 percent; in 1970, 31 percent; and in 1978, 52 percent (Holland 1981: 71). Valderrey (1984: 17) claims they represented...
Pentecostal churches started building their own institutions: seminaries, schools, radio stations, clinics. A possibly even more important phenomenon was that most churches with roots, and often mother organizations, in the United States started to seek increased autonomy. In the forties, fifties and sixties, Guatemalans gradually assumed leadership of the Protestant churches and became involved in various evangelization campaigns.

The evangelization campaigns and rallies of the sixties and seventies mainly boosted Pentecostal growth. The Evangelical Alliance also became increasingly dominated by Pentecostals. In the sixties and early seventies, the Alliance was still somewhat dormant. It became dynamic in organizing relief efforts after the 1972 earthquake in Nicaragua, and especially by coordinating help after the devastating earthquake which struck Guatemala itself in February 1976.

The year 1976 is usually regarded as a watershed in the history of Protestantism in Guatemala. After the quake, over 25,000 people were dead and over 1.25 million had lost their houses. A huge international relief effort by governments, international organizations, and NGOs including many with Protestant roots started. The earthquake served as a catalyst to Protestant growth, in combination with other processes: the oil crisis and subsequent economic recession of 1973-74, increasing poverty, an upsurge in popular organizing along with increased repression, and a flaring up of the war between guerrillas and the armed forces. Before 1976, annual Protestant church growth rate was about six or seven percent; between 1976 and 1986 it was 12 to 14 percent. The result was clear. By 1980, 14 percent of the total population were Protestants; in 1985, the percentage had risen to no less than 20 percent.

For the first time in Guatemalan history, Protestantism became highly visible. Churches multiplied rapidly, campaigns were organized continuously, and Protestant believers could be seen in busses in Guatemala City, flocking to their churches. The celebration of the Protestant centennial in November 1982 brought together over 200,000 people to listen to Argentinian preacher Luis 84 percent in 1983, but that seems too high. Johnstone (1995: 252) reports 66 percent Pentecostals for 1993.

The Central American Church had already detached itself from the Central American Mission in 1927. In the LDS Church and the Neo-Pentecostal churches, however, the nationalization of leadership started in the 1970s and 1980s.

Palau and their new head of state, retired General Efraín Ríos Montt. A convert to the Neo-Pentecostal Church of the Word (Iglesia del Verbo) in 1979, Ríos Montt was the first Protestant head of state in Latin America.

Protestantism now became directly involved with national politics. Ríos Montt had important advisors from his own church and actively tried to mobilize both Protestant leaders and believers in supporting him. In weekly tv broadcasts, the general talked about Guatemala being a ‘New Jerusalem’. Supported by a part of the military, the Ríos government (1982-83) used Protestant churches and pastors in its counter-insurgency campaigns in the war zones. While Catholic priests and lay leaders (catechists) were often persecuted or even killed, many Protestant leaders cultivated good relations with the military\textsuperscript{55}. Consequently, being a Protestant was safer than being a Catholic. This is one explanation for the Protestant explosion.

My thesis to explain the Protestant growth boom between 1976 and 1986\textsuperscript{56}, is that a great many factors, both external and internal to the churches themselves, came together to create a synergetic effect.

First, already in the 1960s, population pressure and an extremely uneven land distribution caused many people to go to the cities, where they were cut off from traditional religious expressions and free to find new religions.

Second, between 1976 and 1986, Guatemalans experienced a special brand of anomy\textsuperscript{57} caused by poverty, political and criminal violence, the war and its counter-insurgency campaigns, and the earthquake. Protestant churches, with their strict morality, could help people cope with these problems, especially in urban environments\textsuperscript{58}. (Neo)Pentecostal churches in particular provided a protective environment and a sense of purpose and meaning, with their dualistic black-and-white worldview, millennial warnings, and closely-knit congregations. Guatemala was being tried by God in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This also explains why the Protestant growth explosion was mostly a (Neo)Pentecostal growth explosion.

Third, by 1976 Protestantism had already been present in Guatemala for almost ninety years. It


\textsuperscript{56} An extensive consideration and analysis of non-Catholic church growth in Guatemala can be found in Gooren (1998a).

\textsuperscript{57} The anomy concept is derived from Durkheim (1966 [1897]). Anomy refers to the disintegration of society through the erosion of widely-accepted norms, with the subsequent danger, in Durkheim’s eyes, that human needs and passions could no longer be kept under control by society (Durkheim 1966: 253). Although the anomy concept is considered outdated by many social scientists, I think it can clarify the Guatemalan situation (see Gooren 1997a).

\textsuperscript{58} Willems (1967) and Lalive (1969) develop these structural explanations for Protestant growth for Chile and

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had a strong institutional basis in churches, mission agencies, schools and colleges, a university, seminaries, evangelization organizations, and a national leadership. When growth began to occur, various organizations came together to coordinate efforts, which created favorable momentum for establishing even higher growth. The stakes were high: the 1984 *Amanecer* campaign aimed at having 50 percent of the total population Protestant by 1990. International aid, mostly through US-based evangelical organizations, also played a part.

Fourth, the Protestant churches offered many forms of voluntary organization. All believers could participate by carrying out voluntary church tasks, like teaching, organizing campaigns and other activities, administrating money and tithings, leading children, and studying the Bible. A direct and personal relation with Jesus Christ was the ideal in contrast with the Roman Catholic Church, where priests, monks, nuns, saints, or Mary mediated between God and ordinary believers.

Fifth, dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church, or simply a lack of direct contact with it, doubtless also played a part in Protestant growth. Harrased by anti-clerical Liberal governments, the Roman Catholic Church remained institutionally weak and heavily urban. It is also possible that Protestant membership became a means to avoid traditional payment of revenues, to brotherhoods and *cofradias*, for the organization of feasts for patron saints. With the expansion of cash crops and commerce in the Indian highlands, differences in wealth increased and the newly rich sought new religious expressions.

These five general trends came together between 1976 and 1986. By 1986, however, the situation in Guatemala had changed. The war between the army and guerrillas acquired a 'low-intensity' character and the country returned to civilian rule and formal democracy. The evangelical zeal of the Protestant community began to wane and conflicts arose between the various currents. Without much international aid or evangelical ardor, Protestant growth was at best moderate between 1986 and 1990. In 1987, six progressive Protestant churches organized themselves in CIEDEG. It

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59 See especially SEPAL (1983).

60 This element is obviously emphasized by conspiracy theorists, who could be heard especially in the eighties with the Protestant explosion during the Ríos Montt regime. Conspiracy theory is popular among some Catholics (especially the hierarchy) and among reformist intellectuals. See for example the Newsletters of the Netherlands Guatemala Committee, Valverde (in Samandú 1991), García-Ruiz (1985), Valderrey (1984), and CELAM (1989).

61 Martin (1990) and Stoll (1990) both strongly emphasize this point. In an upcoming publication, John Hawkins and Walter Adams argue that direct Protestant access to the Bible symbolically implies literacy and access to the wider horizon of the whole nation, whereas Catholicism retains, symbolically, tradition and thus fails to access modernity (Hawkins, personal communication).

62 See for instance Annis (1987) and Steigenga (1994) for elaborations of this theory.

63 CIEDEG: Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas de Guatemala or Council of Guatemalan Evangelical Churches.
included Mennonites, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Primitive Methodists, Nazarenes, and even a Pentecostal church: the Full Gospel Church. Though representing only a small minority of Guatemalan Protestants, CIEDEG concentrated on social projects and showed a willingness to cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church.

Around 1990-91, the Guatemalan Protestant churches began to stagnate and even lose members. Everybody who was potentially interested in becoming a Protestant had probably been one if only for a couple of months. The circulation of believers between various non-Catholic churches was now much higher than the number of new Protestant converts with a Roman Catholic background. The Evangelical Alliance and the Protestant research institute SEPAL turned their attention to church consolidation, education and training, and the creation of new leaders and new church structures. Moral lapses and financial fraud by Protestant leaders tainted the image of the churches. The installation of a new civilian government in early 1991 headed by the conservative Jorge Serrano, a member first of the Elim and later of the Shaddai Neo-Pentecostal Church, could not change that. Increasing corruption within the Serrano government and the failed `self-coup' by the president damaged the Protestant especially the Neo-Pentecostal image. Serrano's failure showed that Protestants were just as capable of clientelism, corruption, and law-breaking as Catholics.64

There is a huge variety of non-Catholic churches, and they exist in great numbers.65 All five traditions are represented: mainstream Protestants, Holiness churches, Pentecostals, Neo-Pentecostals, and independent Christian churches. Between 20 and 25 percent of the total population claims to be Protestant.66 However, second-generation Protestants are often only nominally Protestant; there are many inactive Protestants, just like there are inactive Catholics. Some non-Catholic churches are still growing in 1995.67 These include Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses (independent Christian churches) and the youngest Protestant current, Neo-Pentecostalism, to which the first church case study, Rains of Mercy, belongs.

3.3 Neo-Pentecostalism and Rains of Mercy

In the literature, the founding in 1951 of the `International Full Gospel Business-Man's Fellowship'

64 See Similox (1993: 11-14 and 15-21) for an excellent analysis of the attitude of Protestants towards the Ríos Montt and Serrano governments. See also Stoll (1990: 207-212).

65 Zapata (interview, February 1995) estimates there are over 17,000 churches in Guatemala.

by Demos Shakarian is often seen as the start of the Neo-Pentecostal movement. Shakarian left the Assemblies of God disillusioned, because as a layman he was denied a leadership position. The first self-proclaimed Neo-Pentecostal church emerged in 1960 out of charismatic prayer groups in an Episcopalian congregation in Van Nuys, a middle-class neighborhood of Los Angeles. From the start, faith healing played an important part in the movement. The prefix _neo_ refers to the fact that these churches originated from schisms in established Protestant, Holiness or even Pentecostal churches (like the Assemblies of God).

Partly through the influence of North American missionaries, Neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala had already been introduced in 1962. The first organized churches were Calvario with links to the US Calvary churches and Elim, which separated itself from the Central American Church. Elim had 50,000 baptized adult members in 1993, which made it the seventh largest church. In 1968, Monte Basán separated from the Primitive Methodists to become the third Neo-Pentecostal church, followed in 1972 by Bethania, which originated in a Presbyterian church schism. After the 1976 earthquake, the Church of the Word (Iglesia del Verbo) arrived through the Gospel Outreach relief agency. Though its number of believers has always been small, less than 2,000 in 1986, it had great political clout through its most famous member: retired General Efraín Ríos Montt. In 1979, Jorge López and several prayer groups left the Calvario Church to found _Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala_, which by 1993 was the country's tenth largest church with 30,000 baptized adult members.

The eighties saw the foundation of Shaddai and subject of the first church case study: Rains of Mercy. It is officially founded in Guatemala City in 1984 by Edmundo Madrid, a former Presbyterian pastor, under the name _Misión Cristiana Evangélica Lluvias de Gracia_ (Evangelical Christian Mission Rains of Mercy). Around 1980 or 81, Madrid is inspired to begin a new church based on the `gifts of the Holy Spirit'. The 14 articles of faith of Rains of Mercy are representative of Neo-Pentecostal churches in general. They acknowledge the Holy Trinity, the Holy Scriptures, the fall of man through sin and the possibility of Salvation by accepting Jesus Christ, the importance of baptism by full immersion in water, the gifts of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues, prophesying, the seeing of spirits, healing), the Last Supper, the imminent Second Coming of Christ, the urgent

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67 See Gooren (1998a).
68 See e.g. Schäfer (1992: 59), Poloma (1982), and Quebedaux (1983). Stoll (1990: 50) says: `Starting in the 1960s, numbers of North American Catholics and mainline Protestants began to have their own pentecostal experiences. Calling themselves neopentecostals or charismatics (again, after the Greek for the pentecostal gifts or _charismata_), such Christians did not join pentecostal congregations. Instead, they vowed to remain in their old churches and renew them, hence the charismatic renewal.'
69 See e.g. Poloma (1982) and Quebedaux (1983) for more information.
70 See Pédron (1995) for a more detailed analysis of faith healing in Rains of Mercy.
evangelization of the world and, for number 13: `Absolute respect and loyalty to the civil government and its institutions'.

Much of the controversy surrounding Neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala has to do with its increasing involvement in political activities in the 1980s and 1990s. The Church of the Word became involved in national politics in 1982-83 through one of its members, retired General Efraín Ríos Montt. Elim member Jorge Serrano Elías had an important position in his government and later ran for president himself, losing the 1985 elections to Christian Democrat Cerezo. Five years later, however, Serrano won the 1990 elections; he then switched churches from Elim to El Shaddai. Serrano and Ríos are considered typical of the upper-class membership of Neo-Pentecostal churches. Schäfer offers the following explanation:

For the majority of upper-class Neo-Pentecostals, it is an authoritarian neo-liberal model of society in which, parallel to the economic freedom of the entrepreneurs, a more or less authoritarian state protects the stability of the social order, repressing social protests or trying to neutralize them through social pacts that have little to offer to the marginalized sectors. Nowadays, because of the opposition to the old upper-classes and the general political situation, rather than openly dictatorial regimes the formally democratic legitimation of a strong state is preferred, such as [...] the Christian Democratic and neo-liberal governments (the latest of Neo-Pentecostal Jorge Serrano Elías) in Guatemala.

But not all Neo-Pentecostal churches are dominated by upper-class members, as will become clear in the Rains of Mercy case. The total registered membership of Rains of Mercy was 2,400 in 1989 and 3,000 in 1990, which put the annual growth rate at an impressive 25 percent at that time. No recent official membership figures are available. Observations and estimations suggest that Rains of Mercy is a small church of between 8,000 and 12,000 baptized adult members, experiencing strong growth. The central church building, located on 39 Avenida in zone 11 of Guatemala City, is still led by the reverend Edmundo Madrid. Average Sunday attendance in the huge auditorium is around 2,500. There are eight other congregations in Guatemala City and 31 more in the country.

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71 See Rains of Mercy (1987: 2-4). The 13th article reads in Spanish: `El absoluto respeto y lealtad al gobierno civil y sus instituciones.'

72 Similox (1991: 19) describes Neo-Pentecostal members as `in some cases almost the aristocracy of society.'


75 Some calculated estimations: 40 congregations, with a theoretical average of 100 members results in a national total membership of almost 6,500 (2,500 + 40 x 100). An average size of 200 in each congregation yields 10,500 (2,500 + 40 x 200). An average size of 250 results in 12,500 (2,500 + 40 x 250). A continuous 25 percent annual growth rate would result in 9,155 members in 1995. If one assumes that the annual growth rate would fall to 20 percent in 1992, 15 percent in 1993, and 10 percent in 1994, then the result would be 6,545 members in 1995.
The forty congregations each send six or more representatives (always including the pastor) to the General Assembly, which meets once a year. However, these local congregations are highly autonomous. The La Florida Rains of Mercy congregation is described in detail in the next chapter, together with the other case study: the Latter-day Saints (LDS) or Mormons.

3.4 Mormonism

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, usually called LDS or Mormon Church, is an independent Christian tradition, formally founded in 1830 by young prophet Joseph Smith in Fayette (New York State). Smith received plates of gold from an angel, which he subsequently claimed to translate with divine help into the *Book of Mormon*. Since its founding, Mormonism claims to be the only true Christian church in the world. The early history of the Mormon Church provides a fascinating study in charismatic leadership; its later history is almost a case study in the routinization of charisma.

Central to LDS doctrine are the inevitability of Adam's fall in the quest for humanity and God's Plan of Salvation for men through Christ's atonement. To achieve Salvation, human beings must have faith in Christ, show repentance for their sins, be baptized by full immersion in water by an appointed Priesthood elder and be active in the LDS Church: go to church regularly, obey the biblical commandments and the so-called `Word of Wisdom', pay their tithes and generally lead a righteous life. Other Christian churches reject the Mormon claim of authenticity, its additions to the Scriptures, its `Work for the Dead', and especially its belief (called `exaltation') that the ultimate purpose of man is to become like God. Until 1890, the practice of polygamy also made the Mormon Church extremely controversial. Since then, leaders of the church have made a deliberate attempt to move it closer to American mainstream society, but without compromising its distinct rules, doctrines, and organization.

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76 See e.g. Arrington & Bitton (1979), Shipps (1985), and Leone (1979).
78 This section is primarily based on *Gospel Principles* (Latter-day Saints Church 1988).
80 The Mormon canon includes the Bible and three other books: *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrines & Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*.
81 `Work for the Dead': LDS members can get baptized in the temple on behalf of deceased ancestors, who never had the opportunity to hear the `true Gospel' during their lifetime. This is the rationale behind the vast genealogical archives in Utah and at LDS units all over the world.
82 Captured in the phrase: `As man is, God once was. As God is now, man can one day become.' See also Latter-day
In the 1960s, the LDS Church administration entered an era of greater bureaucratic control and regulation. Persons who were professional managers in their civilian occupations were increasingly recruited as local leaders, leading to the typical corporate management style which is still pervasive in the church, especially in the United States. In the US, the church increasingly took active conservative stances against for instance the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment for women) in the 1980s and against prominent liberal intellectuals within the Mormon Church itself in the early 1990s.

The LDS Church boasts a very strong top-down organization. At the top stands the church president, with his two counselors. They form the so-called First Presidency. They are chosen from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which is ‘equal in authority and power’ to them. Together, these 15 men are called ‘prophets, seers and revelators’, capable of receiving direct instructions from God. They delegate part of their responsibilities to the First Quorum of the Seventy (50 members, 36 from the US) and the Second Quorum of the Seventy (23 members, 18 from the US). Other important leaders are the Area Representatives of the 23 geographical LDS areas of the world. In turn, these areas are administratively divided into stakes (fully organized provinces), wards (fully organized congregations), missions (mission provinces), and branches (mission congregations).

A ward is directed by a bishop, together with his two counselors. They supervise the functioning and organization of the member quorums, the assignment of callings, and take care of the membership administration: all administrative and financial records. However, the bishop is also a ‘judge in Israel’, meaning he watches over the moral and spiritual well-being of members and

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Saints Church (1988: 290): ‘We can become Gods like our Heavenly Father.’


85 Political economist Richard T. Ely writes in a 1903 essay on the Mormon Church in Harper’s Magazine: ‘So far as I can judge from what I have seen, the organization of the Mormons is the most nearly perfect piece of social mechanism with which I have ever, in any way, come in contact, excepting alone the German army’ (quoted in Stark 1990: 205).

86 Since March 12, 1995 Gordon B. Hinckly. He succeeded Howard Hunter, who only served as president for nine months. Before Hunter, Ezra Taft Benson was church president from 1985 to 1994 (Deseret News 1996: 14, 42).

87 Richards (1979: 136).

88 Guatemala is headquarters to the Central American Area, which covers seven countries.

89 Until the change of callings in June 1995, the entire La Florida bishopric consists of small-scale entrepreneurs. Mario, who manages his parents’ ironware store, is bishop. Construction firm owner Patricio is first counselor; plumber Ramiro is second.

90 A calling is a rotating voluntary church assignment. For example: ward administrator, Sunday School teacher, bishop, stake president, president or counselor of the Relief Society committee or the elders quorum, etc.
disciplines them if necessary. A bishop is supposed to know all the members well. He makes frequent house-calls, which he should coordinate with the president and members of the adult priesthood quorum.

The *priesthood* quorum consists of two groups: the Aaronic priesthood (males aged 12 to 17) and the Melchizedek priesthood. The lower, Aaronic priesthood is responsible for things like the preparation and distribution of the sacrament (small cups of water and pieces of bread) and sometimes the performance of baptisms. The Melchizedek priesthood, organized in the *quorum of elders*, consists of men over 18 years old and holds ‘the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church’\(^91\). They are involved in mission and genealogical work, making house-calls as *home teachers* and visiting the sick, and in the economic welfare of ward members. There are also quorums for women and children, separate from the others. The women are organized in the *Relief Society*, but they are unable to perform blessings or hold the most important leadership positions, since these are always connected to the priesthood. Just like the priesthood classes, the Relief Society deals both with teaching doctrine and giving practical advice on things like household budget management, cooking, making clothes, etc. They make house-calls, which also implies visiting inactive members and trying to win them back. Finally, there are Sunday School classes for *investigators* (potential converts), adult members, and various age groups.

Gradually, the US-based LDS Church is becoming a worldwide church. It has almost 9.5 million members in late 1995. Half of these live in the United States, but a full one-third are Latin Americans\(^92\). An important reason for the spectacular international boom in Mormonism is its global evangelization program: in 1995 it has almost 50,000 volunteer missionaries between 19 and 23 years old\(^93\). In late 1993, there were about 580 missionaries in Guatemala. A clear majority (almost 60 percent) were Latin Americans, usually Guatemalans or Central Americans, the others North Americans.

The first LDS missionaries from the US to Guatemala arrived in 1947; one year later the first Guatemalan national was baptized. The LDS Central American Mission was founded in 1952. The 1950s and 1960s were characterized by local church building — the founding and consolidation of branches and wards — as the number of Mormons kept growing strongly. In 1966, there were still

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\(^{91}\) *Doctrine & Covenants* 107: 18 (Latter-day Saints Church 1989b: 216).


\(^{93}\) Shepherd & Shepherd (1996: 39).
only 10,000 members in Guatemala. The latest figure, from year-end 1995, gives 148,000 baptized
Mormons or about 1.4 percent of the total population\(^94\).

These figures, however, refer to the number of registered baptized members. According to LDS
insiders in Guatemala, the drop-out or inactivity rate in 1993 was 45 to 75 percent\(^95\). Taking a low,
conservative estimate of 50 percent, this would mean there are only about 75,000 active members in
all of Guatemala. Assuming the membership statistics of other churches in Guatemala are accurate,
the LDS Church in 1993 ranked sixth among the biggest non-Catholic churches. Even with the huge
inactivity rate, its number of active churchgoers is among the highest in the country.

The metropolitan area of Guatemala City counted between 35,000 and 70,000 LDS Church
members in December 1993\(^96\). This means that between 23 and 47 percent of all church members
lived there: somewhat more than the 20 percent of the population concentrated in greater
Guatemala City. These percentages seem to confirm Knowlton's assertion that the LDS Church in
Latin America is essentially urban-based\(^97\), making research on the Mormon Church in urban
settings like Guatemala City all the more desirable.

3.5 Summary
Religion is important in Guatemala for a great many reasons. First, religious organizations (Catholic
and Protestant; indigenous and Christian) are strong among Indians and ladinos alike. Second,
religious leadership is important in civil society; especially the role of the Catholic Church in the
peace process and in issues of human rights and land cannot be ignored. Third, the Guatemalan state
has been directly involved with organized religion ever since its Roman Catholic colonial beginnings
and the late 19th century Liberal sponsoring of Protestantism. Fourth and most important: religion
in its organized form—both church membership and organizational structure—is a focus of self-
identity and a major social unit, together with the household\(^98\). Moreover, organized religion is


\(^95\) Costa Rica had 50 percent inactive members in 1990; the Netherlands had 65 percent (Gooren 1991: 58). By
contrast, the percentage of LDS members who go to church weekly steadily increased from under 15 percent in 1915
(Utah Mormons only) to 35 percent in the 1930s and 1940s, 48 percent in the 1970s to over 56 percent in 1987 (Philips

\(^96\) According to sources in the LDS Central America Area Office.

\(^97\) See Knowlton (1996a: 169), who correctly notes that Martin (1990: 96) has a contrasting opinion based on
literature dominated by rural studies.

\(^98\) In my eyes, the ultimate religious symbol of Guatemalan society is Maximón, a deity of rural popular Catholicism
who incorporates both Spanish and indigenous elements. Maximón, also called Saint Simon, is a practical problem-
solver who represents both good and evil: he can be good to me, while doing harm to my neighbors. A rather grim doll
wearing ladino clothes and hat and smoking a cigar, Maximón vaguely resembles a Spanish conquerer. Three different
affected by the same sectarian tendencies which some see as typical of Guatemalan society.

Paradoxically, however, at least until the 1950s, organized religion remained rather weak and in any case was heavily concentrated in Guatemala City. This applies both to the Roman Catholic Church and to the various Protestant churches. The first Protestant missionary arrived in the late 19th century, but success did not come until the 1930s, and only in 1976-86 was there a real non-Catholic growth explosion.

My thesis to explain this rapid growth of non-Catholic churches is that five factors occurred simultaneously, creating a synergetic effect

First, non-Catholic churches, with their strict morality, could help people cope with urban problems in a period of intense urbanization. Second, between 1976 and 1986, Guatemalans experienced a special brand of anomy caused by poverty, political and criminal violence, war and counter-insurgency campaigns, and the catastrophic 1976 earthquake. (Neo-)Pentecostal churches especially could provide a protective environment and a sense of purpose and meaning. Third, non-Catholic churches had already been present for almost a century and enjoyed a strong institutional basis in churches, mission agencies, schools, evangelization organizations, and a national leadership. Coordinating efforts created a favorable momentum for establishing even higher growth. Fourth, non-Catholic churches offered forms of voluntary participation, which were open to all members. Fifth, dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic Church, or simply a lack of contact with it, also played a part in non-Catholic church growth.

Both Rains of Mercy and the Mormon Church benefitted from this growth. Rains of Mercy is a relatively new church, which started in 1984 and belongs to the Neo-Pentecostal current. Neo-Pentecostalism distinguishes itself from older Pentecostal churches mainly by its emphasis on the imminence of Jesus Christ's Second Coming, by being involved directly in Guatemalan politics through General Ríos Montt of the Church of the Word and Jorge Serrano of El Shaddai, and by a supposed overrepresentation of the middle and upper-classes in its membership composition. The Rains of Mercy case study, however, will show that not all Neo-Pentecostal churches are dominated by the elite. I estimate the total baptized membership of Rains of Mercy at between 8,000 and 12,000. Its forty local congregations are highly autonomous.

The Latter-day Saints (LDS) or Mormon Church, on the other hand, is part of a highly centralized

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99 My thesis on non-Catholic growth in Guatemala is developed fully in Gooren (1998a), which is why I deal with it here only briefly.

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dolls are adored at three sites: in San Andrés Izapa (Chimaltenango department), Zunil (Quetzaltenango department), and in Santiago Atitlán (Sololá) — the most powerful and enigmatic of the three. The dolls are guarded, maintained, and regularly carried around by their cofradías. Maximón is well-known all over Guatemala and, though repudiated by the Catholic Church hierarchy and Protestant churches, is visited by Catholics and Protestants alike. Sources: personal observations in Santiago Atitlán (January 1994), Chiappari (1997), Nash (1994), Dary (1989), and a September 1993 interview with an anonymous Guatemalan social scientist in Guatemala City.
top-down administrative structure, with strong ties to the Central American Area Office and to its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. It has at least three features which set it apart from Protestantism. First, the belief that the ultimate purpose of man is to become like God. Second, an expanded canon, which includes not only the Bible but also the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*. Third, the fact that its supreme 15 leaders (the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) in Salt Lake City are seen as prophets, capable of directly receiving instructions from God. The first Mormon missionaries from the US to Guatemala arrived in 1947. By year-end 1995, there are almost 150,000 baptized members, who are somewhat overrepresented in the metropolitan area of Guatemala City. However, at most about half of these are currently active, meaning they go to church regularly and comply with the church's food restrictions.

Both church case studies have in common a claim of divine authenticity and the correct path to salvation (both feel especially chosen by God), a strong organization (although Rains of Mercy stresses congregational autonomy, while LDS wards are part of a unified system), a strong emphasis on tithing (members are expected to donate ten percent of their income to the church), and both show millennial tendencies (although these are much stronger in Rains of Mercy). One important difference, however, seems to concern poverty and work: the LDS Church actively advises its members on how to work harder and generally improve their lives, in order to try to get out of poverty. Rains of Mercy, on the other hand, is more concerned with the moral aspects of poverty and with achieving salvation. These differences will come out in the next chapter.
La Florida is the principal location in this study and an important part of the life world of almost all informants. First, La Florida is positioned within the general framework of low-income neighborhoods in Guatemala City. La Florida’s principal social problems are an overall lack of trust between people, youth gangs and crime in general, alcoholism, disintegrating families, and poverty. The principal social units, household and family, are delineated and various economic survival strategies are analyzed. The next section presents a full description of the third important social unit: the church. Three congregations in La Florida are described in detail: the Mormons, the members of Rains of Mercy, and the Catholic parish. Various types of religious affiliation by La Florida inhabitants are presented and analyzed: from non-involvement to low involvement to high involvement.

A section on churches and poverty ends the chapter. In low-income neighborhoods like La Florida, the relationship between religion and poverty, a classic theme in the social sciences\(^1\), acquires new relevance. I will limit myself to the two church case studies: Rains of Mercy and the Latter-day Saints (Mormon) Church. How do these churches view poverty? Do they help the La Florida poor with charity? Do they train and educate their members to improve their position in the urban labor market? Do they perhaps urge members to work hard, save money, or even start a small firm? A summary ends the chapter.

4.1 Popular neighborhoods in Guatemala City: La Florida

By Third World standards, Guatemala is a moderately urbanized country: the urban population makes up 42 percent of the total population. Guatemala City, the uncontested center of political and economic power, grew from a mere 55,000 inhabitants in 1880 to almost 175,000 in 1940\(^2\). Growth continued explosively, until by 1990 one million people lived in Guatemala City. The metropolitan

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\(^1\) The relationship between religion and entrepreneurship, including Max Weber’s Protestant ethic thesis, is addressed in the Introduction.
area is estimated to have 1.7 million inhabitants, living on 470 square kilometers\(^3\). The urban growth rate continued to be high in the eighties\(^4\), because of the ongoing armed conflict and growing land shortages and poverty in the highlands. Recent migrants to the city usually built their own shacks, the latest arrivals often in hazardous areas, like in the many chasms splitting Guatemala City and along railroad tracks. In 1990, almost a third (30 percent) of the total population of Guatemala City lived in low-income neighborhoods\(^5\). The official housing deficit was 840,000 units. So where do the poor, specifically the small-scale entrepreneurs, in Guatemala City live? In most cases, home and business location are the same: a small house sometimes rented, but often owned in a low-income neighborhood of Guatemala City.

The choice for the term low-income neighborhood is a conscious one. The problem with terms like slum, shantytown, or popular neighborhood is that they all clearly refer to the poorer parts of town, but it is hard to distinguish one conceptually from the other. Slum and shantytown also have a rather negative ring to them. Low-income neighborhood is the most neutral term, which I prefer. Popular neighborhood, barrio, or colonia will also be used at times as synonyms. The terms refer to a neighborhood which is clearly dominated by low-income households and which is characterized by a lack or low state of basic urban facilities, such as: the quality of housing and infrastructure, the presence of running (potable) water, electricity and sewers, and garbage collection, as well as civil security and health care.

I am writing mostly, however, about one specific low-income neighborhood, which needs first to be introduced. The general point of reference in this study is La Florida. On a map it is indicated as zone 19, roughly ten kilometers west of the city center. The first squatters trickled in between 1949 and 1952, and the neighborhood continued growing steadily in the sixties, seventies, and eighties. La Florida is currently the most densely populated area of Guatemala City, with over 37,000 people living in one square kilometer\(^6\). The houses are joined together in long treeless avenues and shorter streets. Like the houses, the plots are fairly big, but it is not uncommon for ten to twenty people to share a single plot of land. The first houses were made of adobe or sun-dried earth. In 1995, however, La Florida is an established low-income neighborhood: most of the houses are made of

\(^3\) Gellert (1994: 65).
\(^4\) According to Gellert (1992: 32), the average annual growth rate of Guatemala City was 6.2 percent for 1940-50, 7.2 percent for 1950-64, 2.5 percent for 1964-73, 1 percent for 1973-81, and 5 percent for 1981-89, FLACSO (1997: 8-9), however, notes that other urban centers especially Flores (Petén), Cobán (Alta Verapaz), Chimaltenango, San Marcos, Totonicapán, and Quetzaltenango also grew strongly between 1973 and 1994.
\(^5\) Barry (1992: 96). SEGEPLAN/UNICEF/CRITERIO (1992: 11, n4), however, reports that 702,100 people (47 percent) out of the total of 1.5 million in the metropolitan area are poor.
\(^6\) Bastos & Camus (1993a: 100) and Bastos & Camus (n.d.: 1). The La Florida population grew from about 26,000
stone bricks and all the main streets are paved. Many busses go to La Florida, because its market is one of the biggest in the western part of Guatemala City. The Calzada San Juan and 12th Avenue are important commercial arteries full of shops, restaurants, and small-scale enterprises.

In 1984 La Florida contained almost 6,000 houses, suggesting an average of almost six persons per house. Almost 42 percent of all inhabitants were house owners, 10 percent rented an apartment, and 41 percent rented one room or more in a house. Over 90 percent of all houses had electricity, 80 percent had running water, and 57 percent had sewerage. All of these services, however, are interrupted frequently without any prior announcement. Because houses are solid and plots big, the rents are relatively high, especially compared to adjacent neighborhoods like Santa Marta or Montserrat.

La Florida is undoubtedly a low-income neighborhood, but the inhabitants would be offended if outsiders called it a slum. People are poor, but not among the poorest in Guatemala City. Their incomes are probably about or just below the official minimum wage. Many houses in La Florida contain small enterprises, sometimes identifiable only by the sound of machines or hammers. Small-scale informal enterprise is an important source of income for many people: whether as owners, as paid laborers, or as unpaid family workers. Other typical lower-class jobs in the colonia are truck-driver, bricklayer, washing-lady, domestic servant, maquiladora worker, and shop assistant. Typical lower middle-class jobs would be primary school teacher, carpenter, skilled worker, secretary, clerk, and plumber. Many people, however, are out of work or hold highly unstable jobs.

A short walk east from the main road along 5th Avenue, La Florida's northern border, reveals many of the neighborhood's problems. The road is asphalted, but it has many holes filled with dust or mud. It is the only part of the barrio with a few thin, dust-covered trees. After about fifty meters there is a cheap night-club on the left, featuring strip-tease and prostitution. Scarcely-clad young women with a disinterested look on their faces are hovering around the entrance, talking to male passers-by and sometimes trying to touch them. However, they often shout profanities at men, who could be potential customers, dissatisfied customers, or even their employers. Violence sometimes breaks out: a slap on the cheek of a prostitute, or a drunken man

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7 Pérez Sáinz (1991: 32). The figures are only given as indications. They come from the 1984 census, conducted by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE).
8 Pérez Sáinz (1991: 32). In the SEGEPLAN/UNICEF/Criterio (1992: 61) survey of all 232 low-income neighborhoods of Guatemala City, La Florida is identified as a 'less precarious area' (ranking 168 out of 232), based on criteria such as quality of housing, ownership, potable water, sewers, electricity, health, education, and recreation.
9 In 1986, 82 percent of the La Florida inhabitants earned between an average of 300 and 800 quetzales (equivalent to US$ 55 to 145) per month (Pérez Sáinz 1991: 37).
wielding a knife to ward off other men. Soon there is the broad entrance to Juan's workshop on the right, the big, creamy-colored Latter-day Saints church building on the left, and, diagonally opposite, Juan's adobe house—one of many in a single row. Walking on along 5th Avenue it is customary to find grimy old drunks on the next streetcorners, talking to themselves, shouting insults to passers-by, occasionally following women and trying to touch them. Many people feel slightly uncomfortable on 5th Avenue. It is the avenue which marks the border between La Florida and Santa Marta, the much poorer northern _colonia_ with its own _mara_ youth gang.

The main social problems of La Florida's inhabitants are: rampant crime, alcoholism, disintegrating families, a lack of mutual trust, and above all low income. Relations between people are affected by the general atmosphere of distrust and fragmentation in Guatemala. The neighborhood associations gradually vanished after they had accomplished such goals as sewerage, water, electricity, road pavement. Many of the original squatters of the 1950s moved away to better, or sometimes worse, neighborhoods. Corruption and a lack of trust among people are often mentioned as the main reasons for the virtual absence of social organizations at the _barrio_ level. Most of my informants limit themselves to a neutral `Buenos días' (`Good day') when they see their neighbors. Social control, however, can be strict and social relations are often used very instrumentally.

High crime levels contribute to making people feel insecure about trusting others—whether strangers or neighbors. All my informants have been assaulted at least once in La Florida, and many women have been sexually harassed after dark. Like in the rest of Guatemala, kidnappings are on the rise since 1993, especially on the Calzada San Juan and in colonias in adjacent zone 7, like Belén and Jardines de Tikal. Many people are quite literally afraid to let their children play in the street. The street is seen as the domain of rebellious adolescents, drunks, and criminals.

Popular neighborhoods like La Florida are the main operating ground for juvenile street gangs, called _maras_ in Central America. Some _maras_ consciously try to copy the Los Angeles ghetto model, with its tribal leadership, blood oaths, drive-by killings, and drug trade. La Florida does not have a _mara_ of its own, although adjacent _colonia_ Santa Marta does. According to my informants, most crime originates in the youth gangs. Many criminal offenses are perpetrated under the influence of drugs, most often liquor. Somewhat to my surprise, alcoholism also appeared as one of the main problems of male informants during my fieldwork. According to official figures, 12 percent

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10 The phenomenon of a high level of organization during the early years of a low-income neighborhood is confirmed by the literature: see for instance Lomnitz (1977: 184-187). For Guatemala, see Roberts (1973: 332): 'Organization develops most effectively at those times when families are placed in situations that give them a collective identity: such was the case in the early years of the shantytown's foundation [...]'.

11 To give an example: some informants note that as soon as they do better economically, their neighbors get more friendly. They start stopping by for informal visits and soon they start asking for money, loans, gifts—anything.
of the Guatemalan population are alcoholics. Significantly, there are three Alcoholics Anonymous signs in La Florida alone.

In summary: social relations in La Florida are overall quite weak. The basic social units are the family, which is the basis of economic survival in the household, and the church. The role of the churches in La Florida will be addressed in a subsequent section. First I will describe and analyze the importance of the household and family in La Florida. The other two main social problems mentioned above, family desintegration and low income, will be dealt with as well.

4.2 Household and family in La Florida

In a society riddled by feelings of crisis, social fragmentation, and distrust, family and household are the basic units of social organization. Historically in Guatemala, kinship ties have been very important and a source of trust. The ideal of harmonious family life is very strong in Guatemala. Family in this case is usually defined as a middle-class nuclear family, consisting of husband, wife, and children. The husband is family patriarch and breadwinner; his domain is the outside world. The wife's role is traditionally limited to taking care of the home and the children. This is the family ideal, as expressed by the Catholic and Protestant churches through the mass media.

All over the world, however, the practice of family relations is usually very different from the ideal society puts forward. Parents are supposed to love and educate their children, but among my informants quite the opposite often seems true. Under the harsh conditions of poverty, machismo, and alcoholism, the male children have to start working for money at a very early age. Gender is an important concept here: the socially-constructed beliefs, personality traits, expectations, attitudes, and activities that define masculinity and femininity. Gender socialization by peers and colleagues at work reproduces the strong influence of machismo: the cultivation of male autonomy, as expressed in egoistic behavior, quarrels, alcohol consumption, and womanizing.

Brusco thinks the concept of machismo has contributed to making women invisible, to confusing machismo with male dominance, and to rendering it static, whereas it is in fact highly changeable. She says:

[...] machismo is a useful concept in describing an aspect of sex-gender systems characterized by the alienation of men from the household (including the attenuation of their roles as husbands and fathers) and their identification with the world outside rather than with their household group. Key to the emic understanding of what we are

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12 *Prensa Libre*, August 1996.
14 See e.g. Stevens (1973: 90).
calling machismo is an extreme divergence of men and women from common goals and understandings.\textsuperscript{15}

Machismo fosters male bonding, precisely through the abundant use of alcohol: `The act of getting drunk together creates a bond that implies both interpersonal trust and a release from formal matters'\textsuperscript{16}. Male friendship, drinking, and machismo are mutually enforcing. Together, they imply an orientation towards the outside world, which is expressed by spending large amounts of time and money on mates and not on the household.

The economic crisis of the eighties, in many cases combined with financially irresponsible machista behavior of the husbands, forced many women to start working for money to help their households survive\textsuperscript{17}. Poverty pushed many men to go to the United States to work and send money home. The result was that children were left alone more often, or were cared for by other relatives or neighbors. Supervision of children went considerably down and many of them, especially the boys, enjoyed their newly-found freedom with their peers in the streets. The explosion of mara youth gangs is sometimes seen as a consequence of this\textsuperscript{18}. Many Guatemalans say that families are disintegrating, but few can agree on the causes. Female wage labor, male migration, machismo, and alcoholism all put limits on the disciplinary capacity of low-income households in La Florida. Church membership is important exactly because it can help people cope with these social problems\textsuperscript{19}. Church involvement can be seen as one possible response.

A household commonly refers to a group of people, usually relatives, who live under the same roof and pool all or part of their resources: wages, labor, savings. In low-income neighborhoods, pooling resources in the household becomes the essential mechanism for economic survival. There are various types of households in La Florida. Based on my own material, I will distinguish four major categories.

\textsuperscript{15} Brusco (1995: 79-80).
\textsuperscript{16} Lomnitz (1977: 176). See also Roberts (1973: 175), who writes on male friendship: `having friends means trusting oneself to the company of others, drinking with them, being too open in one's confidences, and spending more time with them than with one's family.'
\textsuperscript{17} `An analysis of information on six cities (Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Bogotá, San José, Montevideo and Caracas) shows that during the 1980s there was a considerable increase in the participation of married women and common-law wives in the labour force [...], and this was particularly marked in the case of mothers between 25 and 39 years of age with children under five years of age in nuclear families (at the end of the period, their participation rate was between 33\% and 57\%)' (Katzman 1992: 82).
\textsuperscript{18} According to Siglo xx\textsuperscript{1} (March 29, 1995), the first mara youth gangs were organized over ten years ago. Among my informants, Bernardo said: `Then some fathers started neglecting their children and left them to their own devices. Some went to the United States and left the children alone with the wife. So these children don't obey the wife; they go out into the street[...]. It's a very complicated problem, because the criminals are youngsters, sons of your own friends. And I can't go against your son, because you're my friend.'
\textsuperscript{19} This is the central thesis of e.g. Mariz (1994) and Brusco (1995).
The first household type is the nuclear family: husband and wife sharing a house or room with their children. Among the informants, this is by far the most common form: nine out of thirteen correspond to this type, including Raúl. The second type single mother household is made up only of a single mother and her children, after the husband has abandoned them. This type is rare among the informants, which is logical because it is harder for single mothers to operate a microfirm; instead they tend to be self-employed. Miguel's birth household in Zacapa department provides the only example. Because of problems concerning income and child care, single mothers are often forced to live with other relatives: often their mother, grandmother, or an aunt. This constitutes type three: the extended single mother household. María is the typical example among the key informants, although hers is not a case in which the husband has left her fiance died before they had children. Later, María consciously decided she would become a single mother. The household living in the large house on 12th Avenue includes María (40), her daughter and son, her mother (65), and her grandmother (85).

The fourth and last household type is a miscellaneous category, which includes all other combinations of relatives: siblings living with their children, their parents, or grandparents, and possibly even uncles or aunts and nephews and nieces, under the same roof. Guillermo, who is unmarried, provides a case in point among my informants. Guillermo, his mother, three sisters, and five of his nephews and nieces are living in shacks around a muddy courtyard in Santa Marta, the poorer colonia north of La Florida. They share it with four chickens, two parrots, and Guillermo's big shepherd dog. One sister is working illegally in the United States and they have not heard from her in over two years although the household is taking care of her two children.

What survival strategies are utilized by households in La Florida and the surroundings? I will distinguish five: wage labor, migrant labor, trade, reshuffling debts, and finally criminal activities. In an urban setting, wage labor remains the most important source of income. However, unemployment is high and jobs are often temporary and unstable in La Florida. Working for money in general starts at a tender age, often between seven and twelve. Most people never finish primary school, so jobs requiring much reading and writing are simply unattainable for them. Craftsmen (like carpenters, plumbers, potters, etc) are respected and generally have well-paid jobs. Other men work as low-paid laborers in factories or in all sorts of microenterprises. Women might work as domestic servants, in maquiladora sweat-shops or provide child care for neighbors, friends, or fellow-church
members. Many people are self-employed, surviving on the earnings of a tiny one-man firm\textsuperscript{20}.

A second category is those who have migrated to the United States and work as wage laborers, usually undocumented\textsuperscript{21}. I mentioned earlier that the remittances sent by Guatemalans living in the US to their households equal almost US$ 350 million. According to CEPAL (ECLAC), almost all of this money is used for food, clothing, education, and health expenses, while only about ten percent goes into savings\textsuperscript{22}.

Entering into trade or reshuffling debts to people in a wide social network, the third and fourth options, are doubtless restricted to a smaller group of people, but there are some examples among my informants. Finally, criminal activities are an important source of income for many, judging by Guatemalan crime statistics. One of the informants is a former member of a mara criminal youth gang. Nevertheless, all informants stress the importance of morality, both in their personal lives as spouses, entrepreneurs, and fathers, \textit{and} of course in their religious lives.

Religion was mentioned above as a possible response to poverty, disintegrating families, alcoholism, and \emph{machismo}. Can church membership also be part of an economic survival strategy, comparable to those practiced at the household level? It is now time to present the La Florida church case studies in detail.

\section*{4.3 The La Florida church case studies}

The two main church case studies in La Florida are the Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormons) and Rains of Mercy, while the Roman Catholic Church constitutes an implicit third case.

\subsection*{4.3.1 Latter-day Saints}

I visit two LDS congregations, known as wards, which gather in the church building on La Florida's 5th Avenue: La Florida and Santa Marta, the adjacent \textit{colonia} north of 5th Avenue. Both wards belong to a larger stake, also called La Florida, which was founded in 1986. The stake covers ten, \textit{

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\textsuperscript{20} Among the informants, gas vendor Raúl, shoemaker Guillermo, and beauty parlor owner Beatriz are all self-employed.

\textsuperscript{21} I am surprised to find that out of my ten male informants, two (Patricio and Raúl) had worked for two years in the US. Three other households (Guillermo's, Bernardo's, and Miguel's) had other members working there at a certain time.

\textsuperscript{22} CEPAL (1991). Among my informants Patricio and Raúl could not have started their firms without the money they earned in the United States. Likewise, Kruijt (in Alba Vega & Kruijt 1994: 24-25) says these savings \textit{[...]} could be harnessed for productive reinvestment and generation of employment with a minimum of legislation \textit{[...]} This means that in 1991, in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua respectively, 76, 25 and 6 million dollars could have been available for small-scale and micro-enterprise, amounts which for the moment exceed considerably the total of national and international contributions allocated to the informal sector in the three countries mentioned.'
mostly low-income, neighborhoods\textsuperscript{23} and counts about 3,500 registered members. Of these, only 800 to 1,000 (i.e. 23 to 29 percent) are active. Of the active members only 250 are judged fully orthodox in faith and activities by their leaders, which makes them eligible for a temple recommend\textsuperscript{24}.

The La Florida ward has 300 (75 percent) inactive members and only 100 (25 percent) active members, roughly corresponding to the stake average. The active membership consists of 65 adults and 35 children under age 12. About 70 percent of the active adults have a temple recommend, which means they pay their tithes, obey Church moral standards, and regularly go to church on Sunday. Average church attendance on Sunday is 76 people (roughly 65 to 85) somewhat less than the number of active church members\textsuperscript{25}. Average attendance between October 1994 and March 1995 is going slightly down: new members appear regularly, but many leave within a couple of months. They are often young families parents in their twenties with babies or even adolescents.

The Santa Marta ward also has about 400 registered members. Around 100 to 130 members (25 to 33 percent) are active, but only about 30 of these have a temple recommend, corresponding with 35 to 45 percent of the active adult members. Average Sunday church attendance is 110 to 120. These figures are a bit higher than those of the La Florida ward. In 1993, both bishoprics cooperated with a membership survey of the La Florida and Santa Marta wards\textsuperscript{26}. The two wards showed a huge majority of established church members: people who had belonged to the church for over ten years\textsuperscript{27}. These are the ones with important callings and a temple recommend.

The Latter-day Saints Church case study involves the La Florida ward. The huge cream-colored church building dates from 1971-72 and looks a bit shabby, though the garden is well kept. The sacrament meeting hall has room for over 200 people. There are two small adjacent rooms, with standard LDS folding partitions for Relief Society and Priesthood meetings. When the partitions are opened, a huge hall is created for stake conferences. The benches are made of fine tropical wood, as

\textsuperscript{23} These include La Florida, Santa Marta, Nueva Florida, Monte Verde, Montserrat, Colinas de Minerva, San Juan, La Colonia, Tierra Nueva, and Primero de Julio.

\textsuperscript{24} A temple recommend is a computerized access pass with a photo of the bearer. Source of all stake figures: La Florida stake conference, March 5, 1995.

\textsuperscript{25} This discrepancy will be analyzed and explained in chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{26} The survey was held on November 28, 1993. N = 50, so the response rate was about 25 percent. This is fairly low, but the results hinted at some differences between the wards. Santa Marta seemed to have a younger membership (average age 31, against 39 for La Florida) with a high turn-over. Half of all members were singles, compared to only 12 percent in La Florida. Santa Marta members were more highly educated.

\textsuperscript{27} According to the November 1993 survey, over 80 percent of the La Florida members and 64 percent of the members in Santa Marta had been in church for over ten years. However, these results are biased by the fact that these established members were also more likely to follow the bishop's recommendation to participate in the survey.
is the raised platform where the bishopric and speakers are seated. The microphone rarely works.

Women make up a majority of 55 to 60 percent of all attending La Florida members. Church members in general belong to the lower or lower-middle class. According to the November 1993 survey, about half of the women were housewives. Among the other half that were working for wages, most were either primary school teachers or secretaries. Over 25 percent of the men were self-employed as traders, car mechanics, plumbers, carpenters, tailors, or shoemakers. There were three skilled factory workers and two computer programmers. Three men worked for the government: one as teacher, one as employee at a ministry and one at the National Congress. Two men were retired. Of course, everybody lived in La Florida or Santa Marta.

LDS members all over the world, including those in Guatemala, spend three hours in church every Sunday morning. In 1995, the schedule for La Florida ward is: 8:00 to 9:00 AM, Sacrament meeting; 9:00 to 10:00, Sunday School; and 10:00 to 11:00 the meetings of Priesthood, Relief Society, and the age-based groups. During my visits to the La Florida ward (roughly from October 1994 to March 1995) I analyzed the main themes of the Sacrament, adult Sunday School classes and Priesthood meetings. Sacrament meetings usually have three lectures. Over two-thirds of these are presented by common members; about one in every six by a missionary, and one in every seven by a local leader. Sacrament meeting discourses often have non-religious or general Christian themes; only one-third of all themes can be considered ‘typically LDS’. These include for instance stressing the responsibilities of Mormon membership, the importance of the Book of Mormon, or appeals to take better care of new members. Priesthood meetings have roughly 40 percent typically LDS themes; Sunday School classes about 56 percent. The most frequent (82 percent) expression of LDS themes can be heard at stake meetings, which characteristically stress the importance of temple visits and the Work for the Dead. Stake meetings supposedly form the core of Mormon life, but they are not well attended. This suggests a difference between belonging to a church, being an active member, and being a leader. These themes will be addressed in a later section.

4.3.2 Rains of Mercy

The building on La Florida’s 8th Avenue dates from 1990; before that time meetings were held in

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28 These percentages are similar to the `80-90 males per 100 females (as of 1990)’ reported by Bennion & Young (1996: 28) and to the 52 percent women in Santa Marta ward and 60 percent women in La Florida ward in my November 1993 survey. See also note 33.

29 Two men did not specify their job, which probably meant they were out of work.

30 La Florida and Santa Marta switch timetables each year. Hence in 1994, La Florida’s Sacrament meeting started at 10:00 AM, followed by Sunday School at 11:00 and other meetings at 12:00 (ending at 01:00 PM).
members' homes. The large structure is made of concrete and bricks and still looks very new and clean. A sign above the iron gate reads *Iglesia Evangélica Refugio de Salvación  Misión Lluvias de Gracia* 31. Inside is one big room, about seven by twelve meters, with a big raised stage at the rear, covered with a huge wine-red carpet. Left and right there are ten rows of plain, white benches. The floor and walls are painted white as well. In the far rear there is a stairway that leads to the roof, which offers a great view of La Florida and surroundings. In 1995, construction is underway to create an extra floor with classrooms. The projected costs are high: 60,000 quetzales or over US$10,000. It has to be paid by all La Florida members together. The regular tithings money stays in the congregation; only a small percentage goes to the national church. Separate donations go to charity: helping ten widows in La Florida cope with the cost of living.

Every Sunday there are two services, visited by between 100 and 125 people each. I always go to the morning meetings, when Sunday School classes are held between 9:00 and 10:30 and the main service is from 10.30 to noon. Afterwards there is often a social activity with food typically tortilla corn pancakes with chicken, meat, and sauce and soft drinks or home-made lemonade. Total church membership on record is 250, including children. This suggests an activity rate of between 40 and 50 percent 32. Almost all members come from the northern and western part of the metropolitan area. Typical professions are upper-lower class, for instance carpenter, bricklayer, shoemaker, or cashier. The men usually wear light-colored formal slacks and white shirts; the women typically don flowered dresses or skirts.

As with the Mormons, women make up a clear majority, roughly 60 to 70 percent, of all attending church members 33. So use a head-shawl as a kind of veil, which the pastor says is required, based on a Biblical passage. Most women use (abundant) make-up and some wear jewelry. Men are expected to have short-cropped hair. However, the pastor says these rules are flexible: members have to make a voluntary choice whether to comply or not, based on their own reading of the Bible 34. Smoking and drinking alcohol, however, are strictly prohibited.

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31 In English: 'Evangelical Church Sanctuary of Salvation  Rains of Mercy Mission'. The first time I visit the music and singing can be heard over fifty meters away (Fieldnotes of March 19, 1995).

32 According to the pastor the actual percentage of active members was much higher, because 100 to 125 people also went to the early morning meeting at 06:00. Interview Marco Antonio. March 21, 1995.


34 This flexible dress-code seems to be typical for Neo-Pentecostal churches: members of Elim and *Fraternidad Cristiana* also wear expensive clothes, while the women wear make-up and jewelry. Sources: interviews with adolescent Elim members in La Florida (December 23, 1994 and January 4, 1995) and personal observation in *Fraternidad Cristiana* in Guatemala City (November 5, 1992). Mariz & Machado (1997: 50-51) observe something
An important feature of the congregation is the high-volume music group, consisting of keyboards, drums, electric guitar, and electric bass. Youth groups for study and prayer are a big success, and are key to the church’s attractiveness to young people. These youth groups form part of the total of ten family groups (grupos familiares): ten to fifteen people, mostly friends and neighbors, who come together once a week to study and discuss the Bible.

The leader of the La Florida congregation is Marco Antonio, a 55 year-old chemist who used to work in a pharmaceutical enterprise. Since 1990 he has been a full-time pastor. Two members describe a smouldering conflict between him and other lay leaders, called deacons. In 1989 this church had over 300 visiting members on Sunday. The pastor and his son, together with some of their trusted friends, acquired a power monopoly. Their leadership style was authoritarian. A group of young people felt restricted in their church participation and gradually became disillusioned. Many of them left the church, which severely weakened the church organization and the involvement of lay people.

The Rains of Mercy congregation in La Florida is run by the pastor and five elders (ancianos). The execution of various tasks like evangelization, collection of tithings, charity activities for ten poor widows, Sunday School organization is delegated to twenty deacons (diáconos), who are subject to the authority of pastor and elders. Pastors, elders, and deacons have authority over (the leaders of) three societies (sociedades), consisting each solely of either men, women, or children. The music group is an autonomous organization. It is also the only one where young people are represented. The pastor, deacons, and leaders of the three societies are all in their forties and fifties.

Generally, however, members are quite young: usually in their twenties or thirties, which suggests a rather recent recruitment to the group. Typically, young families are recruited as a whole. It is, however, hard to find these new members: the La Florida Rains of Mercy congregation is stagnating. I get to know a timid young family with a two-year-old daughter. The husband is a carpenter. They visited various Protestant churches in the last three years or so, but are unable to provide the names of the churches. The first time they came to this church with a workmate of the husband, and they liked the people and the music. They always go to Sunday School, but like other members are silent and never ask questions. The husband says he wants to find God and belong to a church which promotes solid moral values. This will help his family. When I ask which values he means, he says honesty and a strong work ethic. He is happy with the assistance of the deacons since their baptism, and says they have a lot to learn, because they do not know the Word of God (the Bible) well.

similar among Brazilian Neo-Pentecostals.
I would like to nuance the claim that members of Neo-Pentecostal churches feel especially chosen and privileged by God, by analyzing the contents of sermons and Sunday School classes. In his sermons, Pastor Marco Antonio often stresses the difference between born-again Christians and others, the central position of Jesus Christ, the futility of clinging to material belongings, and the importance of Salvation. He also talks about the fact that Guatemala belongs to the Devil and he stresses the importance of spirituality. More or less mirroring the pastor's emphasis, the Sunday School classes also deal with the difference between born-again Christians and others, and the central position of Jesus Christ in our Salvation. Other classes analyze the current state of corruption of the world, the importance of surrendering to God, the administration of money, and again the futility of clinging to material belongings. Rains of Mercy offers a clear perspective on who will be saved: those who have surrendered themselves to Christ which includes most of its own members and most of the other (Neo-)Pentecostals. The others are doomed unless they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior before his Second Coming.

4.3.3 Roman Catholic Church
The La Florida parish is located two long blocks away from Rains of Mercy, on a compound that occupies part of a block on 8th Avenue, between 5th and 6th Streets. It contains a large parking lot, a one-story parish building and a big church building, with room for more than 500 people. The priest leading this average, lower-class parish is a burly ladino in his early sixties. Born in a rural village in Chimaltenango department, he studied for seven years in Guatemala City and four years in New Orleans, in the United States. He became a priest in 1958 and has been working in La Florida since 1966, regularly going to Houston, Texas to visit friends and preach there. The La Florida parish did not have a high participation rate until 1989-90, when they started a new educational program and home visits. The parish also organizes about 35 open house meetings (casas abiertas), where people study and discuss the Bible in groups of ten to fifteen, as part of an integrated evangelization program. There are adult literacy groups, because many people in the neighborhood cannot read or write. A group of about sixty elderly people is aided with food and money. Many people in La Florida have problems with paying rent and with school money for children. Church attendance during the four Sunday masses is high; the priest estimates the number of active Catholics in the parish at about 1,500. A few ex-Protestants have returned to Catholicism, but these only counted three in 1994 and meanwhile he is still losing people to Protestantism.

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36 This paragraph is based on my Rains of Mercy fieldnotes. March through June 1995.
37 Source: interviews with La Florida priest, 21 November and 8 December 1994.
The information from the priest in part supports Cleary’s impressions on religion in La Florida\textsuperscript{38}, especially about a revitalization of parishes in low-income neighborhoods. Cleary attributes this to the enthusiasm, and growing importance, of lay leaders. That is probably correct; the Roman Catholic Church has copied various methods and organizational models from Protestantism. However, my interviews with the La Florida priest hint at two important handicaps of institutionalized Catholicism in low-income neighborhoods. First, the priest is very much in the center of all activities: during the interviews we are interrupted every three minutes or so by lay leaders and members with very practical questions: How shall we do this? What about that? Where is the money for this? Catholic lay leadership here seems very much subjected to clerical control. Second, the social distance between the priest and the people in the parish is large: the priest is educated and middle-class, with connections all over the country and many friends in the US. People address him very respectfully as ‘padre’ and show respect in all the properly humble ways customary in Guatemalan society.

But who are these parish members anyway? First of all: they are only a very small minority of all baptized Catholics in La Florida. Based on the percentage of 72.5 mentioned above, there should be about 26,825 Catholics. In that case, the 1,500 active Catholics reported by the priest represent only 5.6 percent, in contrast to 94.4 percent inactive Catholics. How many of these still consider themselves Catholic is an open question; many of them are probably Protestants by now and hence doubly-counted in the statistics. The issue of church affiliation and involvement in La Florida will be examined more extensively below.

4.4 Religious affiliation and practice in La Florida

I have already mentioned that La Florida is full of churches. Apart from a big Roman Catholic parish on 8th Avenue, just about every other block seems to have a Protestant, usually Pentecostal, church. In 1980, the PROCADES (1981) research project counted 25 churches in La Florida. Catholic lay leaders counted 46 in 1991, but noted with satisfaction that many were quite empty on Sundays\textsuperscript{39}. An analysis of the results of various FLACSO surveys, carried out in 1990-91 in Guatemala City and in various low-income neighborhoods, yields some interesting results\textsuperscript{40}. Guatemala City as

\textsuperscript{38} Cleary (1992: 183-184).
\textsuperscript{40} Thanks to Santiago Bastos and Manuela Camus for making these raw data available to me. N = 85 for the Guatemala City sample; N = 284 for the Milagro/Primero de Jullo/Tierra Nueva sample; N = 723 for the Belén sample; and N = 149 for the La Florida sample.
a whole scores 62.4 percent Roman Catholics, 29.4 percent Protestants, and 8.2 percent other or no religion. There are about as many Catholics as expected from the national averages for 1990 and 91 (60 and 64 percent), but the percentage of Protestants is considerably lower than the reported national averages of 19 and 22 percent.

Turning to the low-income neighborhoods, there are some additional surprises. All have more Catholics than the City average: Milagro/Primero de Julio/Tierra Nueva 66.9 percent, Belén 73.6 percent, and La Florida 72.5 percent. The number of Protestants is lower than expected, ranging from 25.7 percent in Milagro/Primero de Julio/Tierra Nueva to only 20.1 percent in La Florida. Finally, the Mormon Area Office reports that the LDS Church in La Florida has three units with about 950 members, but only a little over a quarter of these are currently active in church: see table 4.4 below.

### Table 4.4

**Calculated estimations of La Florida church membership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population La Florida (1995)</th>
<th>Estimate 37,000 (100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Roman Catholics</td>
<td>Active 1,500 (5.6% of all Catholics) Inactive 25,325 (94.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Protestants</td>
<td>Active 6,173 (83% of all Protestants) Inactive 1,264 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>Active 265 (28% of all LDS) Inactive 685 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Remaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Within the structures of churches, believers have greater or lesser freedom to put their own emphases on doctrine, to construct their own religious symbols and meanings, to express their own religious experiences, to give religion a place in their family and working life. How do typical believers in three of La Florida's churches express their church commitment? I will give brief profiles

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41 Mostly Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses.
42 See Gooren (1998a).
of ‘typical’ La Florida Catholics, Rains of Mercy members, and Mormons respectively. This will allow for a clearer perspective on the lives of the informants later on.

The characterization of church membership in this section is based on a simple typology of religious affiliation. I will distinguish four ideal-typical membership categories in the churches in Guatemala City. First, inactive members: people who are baptized but have discontinued their church membership and attendance (which in many cases means they have switched to another church). Second, less active members: those who still identify themselves as members of a particular church, while actually visiting it only rarely (a few times a year). Third, more active members: their identification is stronger and fed by regular church participation (visiting a few times a month) and a church assignment. The third type constitutes in the eyes of leaders probably the ideal active member. Fourth and last: lay or voluntary leaders, whose church identification, participation, and dedication are strongest.

4.4.1 *Latter-day Saints*

Turning to the first church case study, the Mormons, the picture is mixed. La Florida ward is the point of reference. It has 400 members on record, but only about 100 of these (25 percent) actively visit church\(^44\). According to the November 1993 survey, three-quarters of all active members had a calling. However, there are only five to ten really important leadership positions at ward level. These include: the bishop, his two counselors, the president of the elders' quorum, the members of the stake high council, and the president and her two counselors of the Relief Society. The top-down authority model with rotating voluntary callings is probably very well suited to the United States, with its high levels of organization, education, and prosperity. However, the situation of LDS members in a Guatemalan low-income neighborhood like La Florida is radically different. A hard life, marked by poverty and health problems and low schooling, makes performance in callings generally sub-standard. New members often find it hard to handle a calling and many shirk responsibility.

Bishops and stake presidents are simply unable to imitate the North American managerial leadership model\(^45\). Young people lack the necessary experience and maturity to perform as leaders. Those few leaders who do function well often stay in office too long, because there is nobody to replace them. This sometimes makes good leaders complacent, thus destroying leadership

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\(^{43}\) The La Florida and Santa Marta wards, as well as the branch Nueva Florida.

\(^{44}\) As mentioned in chapter 3, there are at least 75,000 inactive Mormons in Guatemala. It is unclear whether these people still identify themselves as Mormons. Among my informants, Miguel is an inactive Mormon who still considers himself LDS. His children are active churchgoers.

\(^{45}\) Reynolds (1978: 16).
dynamism. Good leaders often find it hard to delegate responsibilities to church organizations like the quorum of elders or the stake high council\textsuperscript{46}. They lack confidence in ordinary members.

The basis for this lack of confidence is also quite clear: most members in La Florida can only be considered active because they go to church regularly (usually weekly), but their participation in church activities is generally low. In fact, the La Florida stake is reported to be passive and stagnating in early 1995: there are few church activities of either a purely social or even of a spiritual or missionary nature\textsuperscript{47}. Some of the younger leaders are openly criticizing this situation\textsuperscript{48}. I will end with a brief characterization of a typical type 3 La Florida LDS Church member: Beatriz.

Beatriz (34) is married to Mario, the La Florida bishop. They have three children, aged 13, 8 and 7, who have been raised within the LDS Church. They have also lost two children, the last a baby boy in 1994. She became a Mormon in 1986, some years after her marriage, because she says she gradually came to see the truthfulness of it. She likes the church, because it teaches you many things (like home and budget management, genealogy, the welfare program) and gives sound advice, for instance on raising children. In 1995, she has a calling as teacher in the primary (school) group. She is so busy taking care of her home that little time is left for herself, her calling, and her work. The church stimulates members to start a small firm. In 1993, Mario and Beatriz invested some 2,000 quetzales (US$ 350) in a two square meter beauty parlor. She only has time to work 20 to 25 hours a week. It's extra income they can use very well.

4.4.2 Rains of Mercy

By contrast, the Neo-Pentecostal church Rains of Mercy only has 250 members on record in La Florida. At least 40 to 50 percent of these (100 to 125), and probably 70 to 80 percent, are active. Most of the active members are in their twenties or thirties, and were recruited to Rains of Mercy one to three years before. There is much pressure on the active members to be, indeed, very active: both in participation and in volunteer work in church. Whether they actually are very active is hard to gauge. Like most church leaders, the pastor claims that many members are involved in a somewhat 'lukewarm' way and continuously need direction and guidance. However, that is the way

\textsuperscript{46} Tullis (1980: 72) sees hierarchical and machista elements in Latin American culture as important factors here: 'Cultural inclinations [...] have led to some ecclesiastical and leadership atrocities in Latin America.[...] As it is the most prepared and qualified people who tend to speak up against abuses of the kind described above, they find their own membership status placed in question. They are either cowed or driven underground. The Church is therefore not able to enjoy the benefit of its most able people because they are afraid to become involved. Such behavior turns counselors and advisors into 'yes men' who refuse to voice a disagreement with their leader even in private council.'

\textsuperscript{47} I should add that, based on two short visits to middle and upper-class parts of Guatemala and 1990 fieldwork in San José (Costa Rica), La Florida is quite badly organized by general Central American LDS standards. Middle-class Vista Hermosa ward has a great many social, spiritual, and missionary activities, as does lower to middle-class Los Yoses ward in San José.

\textsuperscript{48} The new La Florida bishop, a 33 year-old computer programmer who will begin his calling in June 1995, is one of these. He says that most members are in a deep 'spiritual sleep', forgetting that their salvation ultimately depends upon their active participation in church. He traces the origins of the current state of malaise to the 1990 changes in the stake leadership.
most leaders in most churches all over the world talk. In fact, almost all members (I estimate over 90 percent) have voluntary assignments in church.

Some of these tasks, however, are fairly basic, such as maintenance and cleaning of the building, arranging flowers and decorations, etc. But there are almost 45 voluntary leadership positions, involving no less than 35 to 45 percent of all active members! These include the five elders, twenty deacons, the leaders of the three societies (groups made up exclusively of men, women, or children), the five rotating Sunday School teachers and the ten leaders of the family groups. All of these qualify for the type four lay leader category. Among the life history informants Raúl provides a case in point. After a life dominated by personal indulgence and liquor, Raúl felt a need for discipline in his life and started going to church with his born-again wife. He converted to Rains of Mercy as late as 1994, when he too felt spiritually born-again. Entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ helps him cope with life’s problems, Raúl says. He has an assignment as deacon. Ana is a typical informant in another category.

Ana (35) provides an example of a type three active member with a church assignment. Her case is atypical, however, because she is married to the pastor’s son and because her social class is higher than that of most members. Ana grew up a Roman Catholic in the countryside and went to Catholic boarding schools in Guatemala City. The terrible earthquake of 1976 made her reconsider her religion, because at 15 she was not altogether sure if she would go to heaven when she died. She visited various Protestant churches, prayed everyday to God, and experienced a spiritual rebirth. A university friend introduced her to the La Florida Rains of Mercy congregation in 1985, where she met Henry, whom she married in 1988. Like most members she receives a different assignment each year; she is currently teacher and counselor of the young singles (fifteen years and older). Ana and her husband strive to live according to the Bible and Rains of Mercy doctrine, which for instance means that she refuses to take on divorce cases as a lawyer. They raise their children, a natural son aged six and an adopted boy aged one, similarly and go to church several times a week. Ana says they are self-confident and happy, knowing they live according to God’s laws. Her family life and professional career are deeply influenced by church-inspired morality. For instance: in late March 1995, she interprets a minor car accident without serious injuries as a clear sign of God’s grace.49

4.4.3 Roman Catholic Church

According to the typology, four types of Roman Catholics can be observed in La Florida. The biggest group, about 94 percent according to recent data and estimates, are the nominal or inactive Catholics. An older, but very succinct description from the literature is still valid, though it refers to nominal Catholics in the village of Jauca in Puerto Rico:

The ‘average’ Jauca Catholic, if a male, has not been confirmed, has never taken communion, has never gone to

49 She passes through a green light, when another car from the right ignores a red light and crashes into hers. Her car is wrecked, but ‘praise God!’ she is only lightly wounded and ‘praise God!’ neither her children or her husband are accompanying her that morning. Fieldnotes. Sunday April 2, 1995.
confession, is not married in the church, and has an attitude toward official Catholicism which is neither enthusiastic nor violently critical. [...] The walls of his shack are decorated with saints’ pictures, a cross, and bit of palm from the preceding Holy Week. He has his children baptized, though the official baptism may take place years after the children are born. He has no objection if his wife goes regularly to church so long as it does not interfere with her household duties though the likelihood of her going is slight.  

I noted earlier that the number of people going to mass, especially women, seems to be increasing. The second group of Catholics consists of people who occasionally go to mass and occasionally participate in parish activities. The huge size of the La Florida parish makes it easy to lead a fairly anonymous life here. The boundaries between this group and the next are admittedly vague. The third group, then, consists of people who regularly go to mass and who are involved in parish activities either as organizers or as participants. Most active Catholics in La Florida fit the description of this group. One good example is María, one of my key informants.  

María (40) was born in La Florida. She goes to mass every Sunday, and though she does not have any church assignment, she used to be a very active parish member. She says she feels God’s presence strongly in her life, especially during crises. María acknowledges the Roman Catholic church hierarchy though she does not know the La Florida priest personally! and the importance of sacraments such as baptism, Eucharist, and matrimony. However, she has always been and continues to be an unmarried mother with two children, which goes directly against official Roman Catholic doctrine. She says the Catholic church is important for providing the children with a religious education; they are both at a Catholic school. María feels that children must be instructed in how to relate to God, how to avoid sinning, and how to lead a righteous life. Faith in God helps her deal with life’s insecurities and problems. Her Catholic affiliation strongly increased after her children were born; before she was a type two occasionally active Catholic. Her father was a type one nominal Catholic; her mother still is.  

The fourth and final group of Catholics consists of parish lay leaders, which I estimate at a maximum of fifty, corresponding to roughly three percent of all active Catholics. These include administrators, preachers, the leaders of various classes, and the presidents of the 35 casas abiertas (prayer groups). Of course the combined total of these second, third, and fourth groups cannot exceed the total number of 1,500 active Catholics in La Florida.  

Almost all church members in La Florida, irrespective of the church group they belong to, have a low income. What does this imply for their church membership and involvement? The next section examines the connections between religion and poverty, by taking a closer look at Rains of Mercy and Mormonism in La Florida.

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4.5 Religion and poverty

Chapter 2 stated that society in Guatemala is highly fragmented and characterized by a lack of trust between people, which helps explain why household and church emerge as the principal social units. Hence, the position of their church on poverty and assistance to needy people is important for believers in Guatemala. The classical theme in the social sciences of the relationship between religion and poverty acquires extra relevance in low-income neighborhoods like La Florida. I will concentrate on the two church case studies: Rains of Mercy and the Latter-day Saints Church. How do these churches view poverty? What concrete help do the Mormon Church and Rains of Mercy offer members in their daily lives? Do they help the poor with charity?

4.5.1 Latter-day Saints

The Latter-day Saints Church has been selected as a case partly because of its extensive program to address both spiritual and temporal welfare among its members. The LDS Church sees poverty primarily as a problem of individuals, who are part of families. Providing for the family is the task of the breadwinner, typically the husband. If he is a practicing Priesthood holder, doing his part in Church and keeping his covenants with the Lord, he will surely be blessed by Our Heavenly Father. Hence, economic well-being is seen as a counterpart to spiritual progress towards Salvation. Being poor is then a sign of insufficient faith or of insufficient discipline; being rich can be considered a blessing in return for keeping your covenants.

However, the Mormon Church has two contradictory discourses on poverty, just like Rains of Mercy (see below) and other Christian churches. First, the view mentioned above that poverty is caused by certain individual vices, like laziness, idleness, alcoholism, lack of discipline, and wasting money on non-essential goods. Second, the inverse view, dating back to Jesus Christ, that the poor are spiritually blessed and will enter the Kingdom of Heaven more easily than the rich. Wealth only serves to distract people from God's laws and make them proud and rebellious. The official church view emanating from the manuals for leaders is that faithful active members will be able to find a good job. Through working hard and continuously trying to do better, they can attain a lifestyle which will fulfill at least their basic material needs and generally more. To accomplish this, the

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51 This was already expressed by former Church President Joseph F. Smith around the turn of the century: "It has always been a cardinal teaching with the Latter-day Saints that a religion that has not the power to save people temporally and make them prosperous and happy here cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually and to exalt them in the life to come." Quoted in Gottlieb & Wiley (1986: 125).

52 See e.g. Matthew 19: 23-24. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."
concept of self-reliance is introduced.

Members are taught to be self-reliant: to strive for economic independence and to solve their problems at the household level. They are even encouraged to start a small enterprise, if they have the capacity. To help LDS members achieve self-reliance, church manuals stress six points. First, the importance of a good education to develop their intelligence and abilities. Second, taking good care of their health, through obeying the 'Word of Wisdom', doing exercise, keeping themselves and their homes clean, and by acquiring medical insurance. Third, having a good job, that comes through preparation, education, high morality, and hard work. Fourth, making sure they have sufficient shelter, food, and clothes. Fifth, administering their money well at the household level, through avoiding debt, paying tithes and fast offerings, saving money, being frugal, and by using time wisely. Sixth and last, acquiring and maintaining social, emotional, and spiritual strength, through studying the Scriptures, obeying God's commandments, having faith in Jesus Christ, praying daily, maintaining good family relations, setting worthy goals, and by avoiding degrading or morally questionable behavior. Of course, the church recognizes there may still be times when people encounter economic hardship sometimes because of their own errors (in judgment or in morality); sometimes because of adverse circumstances. Financial problems must be solved first of all by the breadwinner himself, second by the breadwinner's household, and only in the third and final resort by seeking assistance from the LDS Church. However, church welfare assistance can never last for more than three months, so as not to destroy members' self-reliance. This assistance is part of the church Welfare Program, which started officially in the United States in 1936: the pre-war decade of economic depression and Roosevelt's New Deal policies.

The LDS Welfare Program is present at all levels of church organization: central church level (Salt Lake City), area presidency level (Guatemala as part of Central America), stake level (La Florida and surroundings), ward level (La Florida), and among members (informal mutual help). Starting at the top: the central Welfare and Humanitarian Services are both located in the LDS Church Administration building in Salt Lake City. Welfare activities are specifically targeted at LDS members, whereas Humanitarian activities may also benefit non-members. For instance, relief aid after the February 1976 earthquake in Guatemala was mostly organized through the Humanitarian service. The Humanitarian service is supporting various agricultural projects in cooperation with local NGOs, especially in the highlands where LDS members are more scarce than in the metropolitan

than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."53

area of Guatemala City. These projects are supervised and monitored by the church Welfare and Humanitarian agent, stationed at the Area Office in zone 13.

In November 1993, the central LDS Welfare Service started a three-year pioneer project at the area presidency level in Guatemala City, called the Self-Reliance Resource Center\textsuperscript{54}, which greatly expanded the older, badly-functioning job center\textsuperscript{55}. Based in the heart of Guatemala City (zone 1), the SRRC has eleven employees: four retired missionary couples from the US, two adolescent missionaries, and the 30 year-old Guatemalan director. The SRRC is designed as a Third World version of North American employment centers, where members may get in contact with enterprises seeking personnel. Returned missionaries in Guatemala City, estimated at about 1,500, are the prime target group. However, since most people in Guatemala have little formal education and few practical skills, the SRRC has a very broad task to fulfill for church members in the greater Guatemala City area.

The Self-Reliance Resource Center is involved in seven main activities. First, to maintain contact with many enterprises as an employment center. Second, to organize courses in practical skills (English, job interviews, home repair). Third, to organize vocational training, e.g. making clothes or trading goods. Fourth, to develop courses in ‘family resource management’ i.e. household budgeting. Fifth, the center offers advice on career planning: setting realistic goals and figuring out how to reach them. Sixth, a project for small-scale enterprise is underway, which includes both training and credit facilities. The credit part is executed through two established NGOs with solid experience in small enterprise credit (Génesis Empresarial) and setting up village banks (FINCA). Village banks are savings groups of people who trust each other for instance family members, neighbors, or fellow church members and who pool their resources collectively. These savings will then be matched by outside sponsors. Seventh and last, the SRRC will train and advise stake and ward welfare committees\textsuperscript{56}.

The La Florida stake welfare committee\textsuperscript{57} addresses individual welfare needs, which cannot be

\textsuperscript{54} The Spanish name is Centro de Oportunidades.

\textsuperscript{55} The Oficina de empleos put members and enterprises into contact with each other. Various people (among them Patricio) report very bad experiences with it.

\textsuperscript{56} The target is to get 450 heads of households a job, to train 300 heads of households, and to help 100 members start an enterprise by late 1996. In December 1994 they had already helped 75 new entrepreneurs, which was only 25 short of the 1996 target. The information in this paragraph comes from various interviews with people at the Self-Reliance Resource Center and the Area Office, between 1993 and 1995.

\textsuperscript{57} According to the welfare manual (LDS Church 1990: 13-24), the stake welfare committee consists of the stake president and his two counselors, the stake council of 12, the president of the stake bishop council, the president and her two counselors of the stake Relief Society, and the stake secretary. The eight bishops of the stake make up the council of the peace bishops, which the La Florida bishop (Mario) is presiding over.
solved at the ward level. However, like most stake committees in Guatemala it does not function well. That is exactly the reason why the Self-Reliance Resource Center is taking over part of its tasks and has training of ward and stake welfare groups as its seventh core activity.

In fact, almost all welfare activities are carried out at the ward level. Here too a welfare committee exists, which is supposed to meet at least once a month under the direction of the bishop. Its task is similar to that of the stake committee: teaching the principles of self-reliance to all members, gathering information on needy ward members, administering ward welfare resources, and deciding how these resources should be distributed.

The La Florida welfare committee at the ward level is made up of only five people: the bishopric and the presidents of the elders quorum and Relief Society. In practice, the bishop makes almost all decisions by himself. He reports that there are five or six families that occasionally receive welfare assistance, usually in the form of money or (canned) food. However, the idea is to give only the minimum that people need and ask for some sort of compensation: often volunteer work in or around the 5th Avenue church building. Bishop Mario on poverty in the La Florida ward:

We are taught that we have to be self-reliant, that we have to obtain what's necessary to bring well-being to our family. So it's hard for a member to come and say: I don't have anything to eat now. But cases do exist.[...] We try to see to it that nobody in our wards, in our units, is badly off. When there's a strong need we help a person to overcome it. We pay rents, we pay food, we pay school, bus, water, whatever's necessary for them to be well. These cases occur when somebody loses a job and hasn't foreseen it. However, the majority of those who work, almost all save money. It's rare for them to ask for help from the Church.

Another needy group consists of travelers, who often claim to be church members in Honduras or El Salvador. As president of the stake bishop council, Mario has to take care of these cases. Sometimes he tries to get information by phone from membership records at the Area Office in zone 13, on the other side of Guatemala City. He asks the travelers about Mormon doctrine and church organization. Occasionally, i.e. if they have sufficient resources, they help non-members who only need a bus ticket to San Salvador. The procedure is to go with them to the bus station and buy them the tickets, emphatically not simply handing over the money. Often people do not even show up at the agreed time, but sometimes whole families arrive. LDS Church leaders make a conscious effort

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58 According to the manual, the ward welfare committee is made up of the bishop and his two counselors (bishopric in Mormon jargon), the president of the quorum of elders, the president of the single men's group, the ward mission leader, the president of the Relief Society and her two counselors, and the ward secretary.

59 Source of information on the La Florida welfare activities: interviews with La Florida stake president, bishop, and various members.

60 Five or six families equal about 25 to 30 people, out of a total of about 100 active members. See also Gooren (1996: 56).
not to publicize this type of assistance, since it only strengthens the image people have of Mormons as being rich. They do not want people converting to Mormonism for material motives. The resources for all these welfare activities are kept in the so-called Lord's Storehouse. These resources include the fast offerings of all members donated on fasting and testimony Sunday. In La Florida, most donations are made in cash, but some people contribute (canned) food or goods. The bishop confirms that the ward does not have abundant resources for welfare activities. Members are poor and even paying tithes is a struggle at least for the 30 percent of the adult members who have a temple recommend, which implies they have paid their tithes. Wealthier members, maybe five to ten or so, are encouraged to donate additional money or goods whenever they can.

Wealthier members generally are aware that their socio-economic position could be a reflection of their spiritual progress towards Salvation. This raises their self-esteem, but it also makes them aware how vulnerable their situation is. Like Guillermo (29, shoemaker) says:

I think that if I go on like this with the enterprise, if I go on respecting the covenants with the Lord, He will make me prosper. Because I am only a steward here, He is the owner and being the manager I am His worker. Of course, if I fail he will take it away from me.

LDS Church leaders in La Florida directly encourage members to start an enterprise, both in speeches during sacrament or stake meetings and in concrete assistance offered by the Self-Reliance Resource Center. There are four small-scale entrepreneurs among the members of the La Florida ward: the manager of a family ironware shop (Mario), a car mechanic (Juan), a plumber (Ramiro), and a construction company owner (Patricio). All have been Church members for over fifteen years, three for over 25 years, though they have all had long periods of inactivity. Most remarkable is the fact that all small entrepreneurs are important church leaders: Mario is bishop or ward leader, Juan is president of the quorum of elders (Priesthood organization), Patricio is the bishop's first counselor, and Ramiro is second counselor. As expected there are far fewer small-scale entrepreneurs among the members of Rains of Mercy than among the Mormons. In fact, I count only three: Henry (the pastor's 34 year-old son), Ana, and Raúl.

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61 The same reason is given by the central LDS Church in Salt Lake City when asked why the church refrains from starting a concerted Latin American welfare program, now that a third of all Mormons live in that continent.
62 In Spanish: Almacén del Señor.
63 All over the world, LDS members are supposed to refrain from eating and drinking on the first Sunday of each month and donate the expenses they thus avoid to the ward welfare committee.
64 I never manage to interview Henry, because he is always too busy. I don't think this is an excuse to avoid me, as we get along very well in church. He has a small truck company with two drivers. He simply works incredibly hard and spends a lot of time on the road.
4.5.2 *Rains of Mercy*

Rains of Mercy has a discourse on poverty that is very implicit. Only one page in the church's Constitutive Charter and Study Guide\(^{65}\) directly addresses the theme ‘most common financial problems’, after a section of four pages detailing the virtue, obligation, execution, and Biblical foundation of the practice of tithing. Which financial problems can cause members to deny God his rightful part? First, pride can give them an aversion to work. Second, they spend more than they earn. Third, they try to acquire ‘easy money’ by gambling, participating in lotteries, or even stealing. Fourth, they borrow too much. Fifth, they want to have what other people have. Sixth, they do not pay their debts. Seven, they take on responsibility for other people’s debts. Eight, they are afraid to give.

What stands out here is how poverty is traced back to individual moral lapses, such as pride, theft, jealousy, or lack of discipline. Elementary budget management is also stressed: don’t spend more than you have, don’t waste money on gambling, and be cautious about entering into debt. One Sunday School class was entirely devoted to budget management; it stressed moral principles (righteousness, honesty, fairness, impartiality), avoiding debt, and leading a thrifty lifestyle. If believers follow this advice, paying their tithes to church will be easy\(^{66}\).

Rather than talking about poverty, it is the themes of wealth and excessive dedication to material goods that are addressed, and usually in explicit terms. Pastor Marco Antonio twice refers to them at length during his Sunday sermons. The first time he stresses that members should be able to bear economic hardships like Job: unfailing in their faith and devotion to God. The second time he warns against Satan’s temptations, seducing us with material goods. Only our conduct and our morality matter to reach salvation; material goods should, indeed, be considered immaterial\(^{67}\).

Such a discourse does not make the existence of a welfare service in Rains of Mercy, aimed at assisting needy members, likely. Needy members are attended to by the pastor, occasionally together with deacons, on a case by case basis. The pastor says that jobless members have a number of places they can go to find work: either through other pastors or the Evangelical Alliance, or by using the Protestant Directory of Enterprises or even by offering themselves as employees during special parts of Protestant radio programs\(^{68}\). He gives the impression that few of these cases exist. However, the pastor acknowledges that about ten elderly widows in the La Florida congregation receive charitable economic assistance. The money comes from individual donations by church members. The tithings money stays almost entirely in the congregation; only a small part goes to the

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\(^{67}\) Fieldnotes. April 2 and 9, 1995.
central church offices. There is no central social service either. In summary: hardly any institutional arrangements exist within Rains of Mercy, either at the central or at the local level, to take care of needy members.

Summary. Rains of Mercy and the Latter-day Saints Church have in common two contradictory discourses on poverty. First, the view of poverty as a problem caused by individual vices like laziness, alcoholism, lack of discipline and wasting money on immoral things. Second, the inverse view, expressed by Christ, that the poor are spiritually blessed. The main difference between the two churches is that the LDS Church actively advises its members to strive for economic independence by encouraging them to be self-reliant (to work hard, get an education, save money, administer their resources well, and generally lead a righteous life). The Church has an extensive welfare program at the international, area, and stake and ward levels. The Self-Reliance Resource Center in Guatemala City started an area welfare project in 1993, aimed at offering courses in English, vocational training, career planning, household budget management, and at providing training and credit for small-scale entrepreneurs. Local welfare activities are carried out by member quorums; La Florida ward helps five or six families. Rains of Mercy, on the other hand, only provides charity to about ten elderly widows and has no programs to stimulate members' economic performance.

Another difference is that the Mormon Church encourages well-to-do members to enjoy their riches, provided they pay their tithes and offerings. Rains of Mercy, on the other hand, puts more emphasis on warning the well-to-do against the temptations of materialism.

4.6 Summary
The metropolitan area of Guatemala City is estimated to have around two million inhabitants. By 1990, one-third of them lived in low-income neighborhoods. Here, the point of reference is La Florida: an established (since 1949) popular neighborhood with almost 37,000 inhabitants living in one square kilometer. The main socio-economic problems of La Florida are: rampant crime, alcoholism, disintegrating families, a lack of mutual trust between people, and above all low income. The key social units are church and the household.

[69] Roberts (1973) describes highly similar characteristics of the two low-income neighborhoods of Guatemala City he studied in the late Sixties. Concerning trust Roberts (1973: 10) writes: "[..] secure information about the identities of others is found mainly when a group is small and interacts intensively. Trust thus develops by first extending small favors and then greater ones within a small group and by creating a bond within this group that causes its members to recognize a common identity separating them from others in their immediate environment.[...] People cooperate with
The household commonly refers to a group of people, usually relatives, who live under the same roof and pool all or part of their resources (i.e. wages, labor, savings). The household is the basic social unit in the fragmented Guatemalan society, marked by ethnic, economic, and social inequalities. I encounter four different household categories in La Florida: nuclear family, single mother, extended single mother, and miscellaneous. Nine out of 13 correspond to the nuclear family type.

Kinship ties, historically important in Guatemala, form the basis of the household. Low income, however, forces many households in La Florida to send their children out to work for wages at an early age, between seven and twelve, as part of their survival strategy. Gender socialization by workmates reproduces machismo: the cultivation of male autonomy, expressed in high alcohol consumption in bars, quarrels, and womanizing. Maldonado summarizes the situation in a very bleak manner:

At the level of subsistence, children have no childhood nor youth any adolescence. They work hard from childhood with no benefit to themselves and generally under conditions of permanent exploitation.[...] Unemployment strikes at the root of personality and family life: self-esteem deteriorates, domestic violence increases, alcoholism finds a fertile ground, family and social relations are destroyed. The most frequent channels men choose for overcoming their frustration or for affirming their masculinity seem to be alcohol, sexual adventures, or, in the best of cases, political activity, trade-union involvement, or religious experience.70

The household survival strategy forces many women to work long days for money and stimulates many heads of households to work for wages in the United States. Female labor, male migration, machismo, and alcoholism all put limits on the disciplining force of low-income households in La Florida. Church membership is important exactly because it can help people cope with these social problems. It can be seen as one possible response.

In La Florida, the results of the non-Catholic growth explosion are quite evident. There are at least forty non-Catholic churches with an estimated total of 8,400 members. I have constructed a typology of religious affiliation with four categories. First, inactive members: people who are baptized but have discontinued their church membership and attendance (which in many cases means they have switched to another church). Second, less active members: those who still identify themselves as members of a particular church, while actually visiting it only rarely (a few times a year). Third, more active members: their identification is stronger and fed by regular church participation (visiting a few times a month) and a church assignment. Fourth and last: lay or

70 Maldonado (1993: 222).
volunteer leaders, whose church identification, participation, and dedication are strongest. Most of the informants fall into category three.

The two church case studies are the Mormons and members of the Guatemalan Neo-Pentecostal church Rains of Mercy, although I often refer to Catholics as well. The two cases have very different discourses regarding poverty and church assistance to needy members. Rains of Mercy traces poverty back to individual moral lapses, such as pride, theft, jealousy, or lack of discipline. Elementary budget management is also stressed: don't spend more than you have, don't waste money on gambling, and be careful about going into debt. One Sunday School class is entirely devoted to budget management; it stresses moral principles (righteousness, honesty, fairness, impartiality), a thrifty life-style, and avoiding debt. Rather than talking about poverty, however, the themes of wealth and excessive dedication to material goods are addressed, and usually in explicit terms. Needy members, mostly elderly widows, are handled by the pastor on a case by case basis.

The LDS Church was selected as a case partly because of its extensive program to address both spiritual and temporal welfare among its members. It sees poverty primarily as a problem of individuals, who are part of families. Providing for your family is the task of the breadwinner, usually the husband. If he is a practicing Priesthood holder, doing his part in Church and keeping his covenants with the Lord, he will surely be blessed by Our Heavenly Father. Hence, success with the firm is seen by some as a counterpart to spiritual progress towards Salvation. Being poor could then be a sign of insufficient faith or of insufficient discipline; being rich could be considered a blessing in return for keeping the covenants with God.

Like Rains of Mercy and other Christian churches, however, the Mormon Church has two contradictory discourses on poverty. First, the view mentioned above that poverty is caused by individual vices, like laziness, idleness, alcoholism, lack of discipline, and wasting money on non-essential goods. Second, the moral view, dating back to Jesus Christ, that the poor are blessed spiritually and will enter the Kingdom of Heaven more easily than the rich. Riches only serve to distract us from God's laws and make us proud and rebellious. The official church view emanating from the manuals is that faithful active members should be able to find a good job. Through working hard and continuously trying to do better they can attain a lifestyle which fulfills at least their basic material needs, and generally more. To accomplish this, the concept of self-reliance is introduced.

LDS members are taught to be self-reliant: to strive for economic independence and to solve their problems at the household level. They are even encouraged to start a small enterprise, if they have the capacity. To help members reach self-reliance, LDS Church manuals stress six points: education; good health; having a good job; making sure they have sufficient shelter, food, and clothes; solid
household budget management; and acquiring and maintaining social, emotional, and spiritual strength.

Of course, the church recognizes there may still be times when people encounter economic hardship—sometimes because of their own errors (in judgment or in morality); sometimes because of adverse circumstances. Financial problems must be solved first of all by the breadwinner himself, second by the breadwinner's household, and only in the third and final resort by seeking assistance from the LDS Church. However, church welfare assistance can never last for more than three months, so as not to destroy members' self-reliance. The LDS Welfare Program is present at all levels of the church organization: central (Salt Lake City), area (Guatemala/Central America), stake (La Florida), and ward (La Florida). Central welfare activities are coordinated at the area level. In 1993, the Self-Reliance Resource Center (SRRC) started an ambitious program, which included a job center, courses in practical skills (like English), vocational training, household budget management, career planning, and a project aimed at stimulating village banks and small-scale enterprise among members. It also featured training of stake and ward welfare committees, which in general function very badly.

Both church case studies have a relatively young membership, mostly of upper lower-class and lower middle-class background. However, I find more small-scale firms among the LDS members than among the members of Rains of Mercy, which may be a result of the dominant LDS Church discourse on self-reliance and entrepreneurship. The next chapter looks into the functioning of the firm among the informants in Guatemala City's La Florida. Why and how do my informants start their firms? How does the enterprise fit into the survival strategy of the household?
CHAPTER 5

FIRM

To examine the influence of church and household on the firm it is necessary to describe and analyze the whole process that resulted in the informants starting a firm of their own. The first two sections of this chapter look at how work experiences as a child, or alternatively acquiring higher education, affects the informants' career choices. How do they discover their particular professional talent? When do they first consider the possibility of setting up a firm? A subsequent section deals with the informants' puberty and adolescence, as a prelude to their establishing a household of their own. Under what circumstances do they found their own household?

The next section addresses the process of actually starting a small-scale firm and the conditions that have to be met in order to achieve this. Based on the research data, I distinguish psychological, professional, financial, organizational, and social demands upon the entrepreneur. The last three categories also apply to the firm owner's household.

Starting a new firm is a difficult and lengthy process, with many obstacles. I describe and analyze five that come up with nearly all informants: peer drinking, labor recruitment, market contingencies (like competition, inflation, or devaluation), and paying taxes. The main problem is always low and unstable income. The origins of money shortages can be related to the individual or the household, chance-related (for instance unexpected repairs or medical bills), or firm-related. How do the respondents deal with the problem of a temporary lack of money? Basically, there are three strategies, which are described and analyzed in detail. What is the role of the church the informants belong to in responding to these problems? Finally, there is a section that provides a typology for evaluating the state of the informants' firms. As usual, the chapter ends with a summary.

5.1 Child workers and students

With only a few exceptions, the informants started to work for wages between seven and twelve years old. Their fathers had jobs like truck driver, carpenter, day worker, peasant, or weaver. However, they were often unable to hold these low-paying jobs and at least four had alcohol problems. In those cases, the mothers also worked for money, usually cleaning and doing laundry for richer families, to make sure there was enough money for basic expenses, like rent, food and clothes. But in most cases, the children had to do their share too.

5.1.1 Eight child workers: 'We grew up quickly'

Out of my thirteen informants, eight had been child workers. They typically stress the necessity of having to work as a child to help their parents, as Ramiro did earlier:

Because we lived in extreme poverty, at seven we were already sitting at [my father's] side, working there on the bench.[...]. We grew up quickly, because as children we understood that if we didn't work with our dad we wouldn't sell anything that day, hence we wouldn't have anything to eat that day.[...]

As a kid I had the chance to work in a smithery, I worked in car repairs, I worked in painting, I worked in truck-body production, and I worked as an assistant bricklayer, too. And none of this ever caught on with me, I didn't feel motivated.
Ramiro stated before that he never felt sad that his father's alcoholism had kept them from getting a good education (he never finished primary school). Earlier Ramiro stressed that he loved his father, but that his mother was really the only responsible adult in the household. Ramiro performed in at least five different jobs, none of which he liked. Pablo, Guillermo, and Luis all have similar stories. Juan had his own view on loosing out on education by growing up in a poor household:

Hardly getting to the sixth grade of primary school used to be sufficient here, and they gave you work anywhere. So the goal was to finish the sixth year of primary. Nowadays it's not like that, they need at least to have had something more, or university studies.

Some words of my father were: 'This one doesn't have the head to study.' That was the way of thinking. It was certainly to hide his low income, which was not enough to pay for the education of three children. I started to work.

In fact I was working when I was in primary school, being scarcely eight years old [...]. Till I finished the sixth year of primary I always worked half time. Unloading trucks, loading trucks, cutting iron, running errands, collecting garbage, polishing shoes, distributing newspapers. If someone wanted me to clean windows I did that too and I earned my monthly pennies. In that way I bought notebooks, pencils. Getting out of the sixth year of primary I worked full days and I had various jobs.

So because his father could not pay for his primary education, Juan worked halftime in at least six different jobs and paid for school all by himself. Pablo, Guillermo, Juan, and Luis all had jobs that were quite different from their fathers'. On the other hand, Mario worked long hours in his parents' grocery store and Ramiro, at age 14, had already started working as a professional plumber in partnership with his father.

In summary, the fact that many informants started to work between seven and twelve years old meant first of all that they missed out on school, which they did not seem to mind very much at the time. It also implied that little time was left to play. Working for wages was a big responsibility that clearly shaped their childhood experiences, especially between the ages of seven and twelve. Most had at least five different jobs, which they rarely liked. Ramiro, Mario and Patricio, however, did like to work with their fathers and earn their own wages, without the danger of being exploited by third parties. I will contrast the stories of the eight child workers with the three students to shed light on the influence of very early work experiences on the adult professional careers later in life.

5.1.2 Three students: 'We never lacked anything'
Three informants grew up under less strenuous economic circumstances: María, Raúl, and Ana. Since the stories of Raúl and Ana are similar, I will concentrate on María. Various differences in comparison to Ramiro stand out. Though she describes her home of birth as poor, the family had a few resources and her father had a mid-level education. María was born in 1955 in La Florida; her parents were among the first inhabitants in the area. María's
grandmother (born in 1909) and mother (1935) were from Antigua. María's father (1923-1983) was a truck driver from Nicaragua. These are some of María's early childhood memories:

I remember of my childhood... A rather poor little house, like a small farm house or hut you could say. My grandmother and mother were midwives, assisting at births. So she worked and around here it was rather uninhabited.

My mother says there were many sugar cane fields. A little house here, a little house over there like rather separated. They were one of the first who lived here.[...] I remember we all helped to bring adobe bricks. Because the house was made of adobe, sun-dried bricks and stones. We helped with everything that's needed in the construction. I remember it cost us dearly.[...] So there's a little bit of every one in the construction of the house.[...]

I remember when I was maybe six years old we always stayed at home alone at night, [when] my mother and grandmother brought in water. My father worked out of here in Puerto Barrios, or in Cuilapa. They moved him to distant places.

My father was Nicaraguan. He died twelve years ago, a long time ago already. He had left two sons in Nicaragua. But he came to Guatemala, he met my mother and here they fell in love. But his wife never wanted to allow him a divorce. She got another husband, she has more children and in short my father only lived in free union with my mother for 35 years. My dad was a bookkeeper, but [...] he worked at INFOM¹ the last ten or twelve years of his life. Before he had worked as a truck-driver and a driver of social security ambulances.[...]

My dad, may he rest in peace, had a bad character. He was very dry [serious]. So when he was around he didn't like laughter at the table or anything. Very bad-tempered. A very good dad, because we never lacked anything. Anything. Of my childhood I remember the best of everything. He took you to amusement parks, great toys, anything you liked. A very good dad, very responsible, but with a very bad character. But everyone has his shortcomings...

María's childhood household consisted of six children (three boys and three girls), two parents living in free union, and María's grandmother. All in all, María does not consider hers a bad childhood. She values her father for being an excellent provider for his household, but hints that he was a weak educator. Though he spoiled his children and made sure that they had all they needed materially, he was incapable of giving emotional support. 'But everyone has his shortcomings.' He was a stern man who took his responsibilities as breadwinner very seriously and who encouraged his wife to start a pulpería (small grocery store) around 1965. María's brothers were still young when they left the home to study and get married. Hence the bond between the five women in the household grandmother, mother, María, and her two sisters became even stronger. They all worked together in the grocery store.

María did well at secondary school, graduating in bookkeeping and secretarial skills in 1973. That same year, aged 18, she began working as a secretary. She worked in a second-hand car shop, a cake shop, and the Ministry of Agriculture. From 1975 to 1983 she worked in a decentralized state enterprise for dairy products, called Prolac. She went to San Carlos

¹ INFOM: Instituto de Fomento Municipal or Institute for Municipal Support.
University for two years to study law at night, but she did not like it at all.

María was earning well as an executive secretary at Prolac, and spent much money on clothes, shoes, and cosmetics. She met her fiancé at a pottery course, which she had started as a hobby. They had only been engaged to get married for about ten months, when two traumatic experiences shook up María's life. First her father died of diabetes at 60. A little later her fiancé was killed in a car crash. María was devastated. However, a year later she became pregnant by a friend. When she was subsequently fired at Prolac, she put her energy into building up her pottery firm. As the single mother head of a household consisting of herself, her mother, her grandmother, and her two children, María very much continued to keep control of her own destiny.

Coming from a lower middle-class household, there was never any doubt that María could finish both primary and secondary school. Hence she only started working at 18, and quickly discovered that she very much liked being a secretary. At Prolac she rose to executive secretary and enjoyed high wages. She could take up an expensive hobby like pottery, which she later turned to her advantage when life's circumstances forced her to develop her pottery firm into the economic basis of the household (see below). Supported by her mother and grandmother, she was able to have two children as a single mother, and provide them with good material conditions and a formal education. The freedom she had to pursue her own choices provides a clear contrast with the child workers. Although she hints at some differences of opinion with her mother (who at first disapproved of her spending so much money on pottery and who also seemed to be wary of a daughter who had two children, but no husband), in the end she managed to do exactly what she wanted.

The child workers were restricted in playing and getting an education, but they acquired a lot of work experience, either in a single trade working with their fathers, or working for strangers in a great many different trades. The students, on the other hand, had toys to play with and eventually finished secondary school, or higher. Their freedom to plan their own career according to their own preferences was already noted. Questions that arise now are: How do the informants discover their professional talent? Is there a difference between the child workers and the students, or between the children who work for strangers and those who work with their fathers? How do they build up their professional skills? And finally: When do they first start to think about having an enterprise of their own? The next section will deal with the informants' career choices.

5.2 Finding a career
The central question here is: How do the informants discover the kind of work that they are
good at and want to make their profession? I will again follow the three groups distinguished above: the child workers employed in various jobs, the child workers employed with their fathers, and finally the three students. The situation for each group will be treated in three parts. First, I address job satisfaction as a child. Second, the process of discovering one's professional talent and gaining sufficient experience. Finally, the process of starting to think about an enterprise of one's own.

5.2.1 Early job satisfaction: "I didn't like it"

As was mentioned above, the children who worked for third parties in general had a great many different jobs; five seems to be about the average. At best, they describe these jobs in a rather neutral fashion, as Juan did above. Typically, however, they have a very negative view of these early work experiences. They were often exploited. Moreover, they were rarely free to choose their own job. Instead their fathers usually arranged work for them. Guillermo was very resentful of this:

I worked as a taxi assistant, as a microbus assistant I started to work. After that I started to learn various crafts, but I didn't like any of them, until one time a friend of mine took me to a shoemaking workshop. [...] What you like you do [best], and that was the problem with me: that I wanted to learn to be a car mechanic. That is, I wanted to learn car mechanics. I liked to put together motors and all. But he [my dad] never put me in that, he arranged to have me in whatever he wanted.

The second group consists of children who worked with their fathers. Ramiro, who at first worked for others as a blacksmith, car mechanic, bricklayer, factory laborer, and painter, did not like any of these jobs. As he said above: 'None of this ever caught on with me, I didn't feel motivated.' He did it half-heartedly and against his will. That is: until he found his vocation, plumbing, and started working with his father in this trade. Patricio worked with his dad in construction, starting when he was scarcely seven: 'I've always liked to work.' Above his pride in earning his own wages was already mentioned, and he added: 'I've always worked in any kind of thing.' He seemed to like any job that paid well.

The third group consists of the students: people who finished secondary school and started working for wages around 18 (María and Ana) or even 27 (Raúl). They differ strongly from the first two groups in that they were always free to choose their own careers. Hence they opted for things they liked. María liked being a secretary and was happy at Prolac, where she had good wages. Ana rose in a couple of years to be the head of all INFOM secretaries, and started studying law. After graduating from secondary school, Raúl studied three years more to become a primary school teacher. These were people who selected a career that they liked and that they thought would bring them a well-paying job.

5.2.2 Finding and perfecting one's professional talent: 'I always like it'
How do the child workers find their professional talent? Most of them have had ample work experience in many usually highly different jobs. Sheer coincidence made it likely they would come across something that they liked. As a child, Juan had been loading trucks, cutting iron, running errands, selling newspapers, polishing shoes and collecting garbage. At 14, he finally found his vocation as a diesel car mechanic:

One of the things I liked was working with diesel pump systems, just diesel workshops. But I entered at that place, not as a worker but I had to sweep and mop, clean the toilets. I never entered as a worker there.

So in my spare time what I did was make good use of seeing how the people who were working there managed. In money they paid me say five quetzales a week, which amounted to about twenty quetzales a month, which was good money for a boy. You hardly paid ten cents bus fare a day. It was good money.

After two months, or maybe three, they gave me the opportunity to work. They told me to try to take apart and put together diesel pumps, and they gave me the opportunity. But after six months of being in that enterprise, in that workshop, I was a full worker.

So I didn't earn five quetzales a week anymore, but forty quetzales a week, even at that time that was really a lot of money. Because it amounted to 160 quetzales a month, when a soft drink cost six cents, bus fare five cents, you could get a pair of trousers for eight quetzales, or ten quetzales for a shirt. Four or five, I don't know. It was a lot of money.

So after literally starting at the bottom, Juan worked for about twelve years as a skilled car mechanic for other people, gaining a wealth of job experience. By chance, Guillermo also wanted to be a car mechanic, but his father arranged things like taxi or microbus assistant for him. He hated all of those jobs, until:

In the year 1980-81, something like that, I started to work in shoemaking. I didn't have to learn, in eight days I learned. Yes, everyone admired that, because most take four or five months to learn. Some even take a year. And I learned in eight days. Various people were surprised. I feel that I already had this gift.

Because I remember when we lived with my mom and dad in Primero de Julio. My dad at that time still drank a lot. One street from where we lived there was a shoe workshop. And I remember that in the afternoon, when we came back from school, I stopped to see how they made a shoe. I liked to see how they worked there.

[...] Since I learned in eight days, after two weeks I was already a full worker in that workshop. That is, they first had me a week on try-out.

A friend took Guillermo to the shoemaking workshop. Many others discovered their professional talent through a relative. Ramiro is a typical case. As a child he complained to his mother about the various tedious jobs he was doing. She talked to a brother of hers, who was making good money as a plumber. Ramiro says about plumbing:

I don't know, I always like it.[...] I don't know, but it motivates me to do my job, to find a practical solution and to feel important in the sense that people notice that I know my work.

[...] Some years earlier my mom had talked to an uncle of mine, whom she wanted to teach me to work. So he promised her that as soon as I'd finished primary school, he'd take me to his workshop so he could teach me to work.

[...] When I became 13, 14, my mom took me out of school and brought me to the workplace. And there I first started to learn my work, which is plumbing. And there I was working with my uncle for a
couple of years as assistant, helping him.

What about the exceptions: the ones who were able to pursue higher education? Again I will limit myself to María. The origin of María's pottery workshop can be traced back to a hobby. The pottery course she took was so expensive that her mother criticized her for it:

Working at the ministry there at Prolac, I took the pottery course that I'd been eager to do for many years. Because I liked it, pottery very much caught my attention. I could never learn it... I had never started to study it, because there was no schedule that could fit in with my time. Until I found an academy that did in fact teach classes on Saturday afternoons and that was the only day that I had time.

That was how I started to like pottery as a hobby. I never thought about having my own enterprise. Not having a university career, say having a high academic degree, worried me. Because I thought that since I hadn't studied I could never do something better than the work that I had.

Pottery really started as a hobby for me. Still working, I started to sell the pottery pieces I made. And since my mom had a grocery shop, there I also displayed the works I made and they sold pretty well. Everyone was surprised because I had never started to study it...

Say, when I worked I always shared my wages with her [mother]. I always gave her money, in spite of the fact that I was... I always gave her what I could and I maintained myself with many luxurious clothes. I bought a lot of clothes, shoes. Well, OK, I had many personal fancies.

But since I started seeing pottery, all of that stopped and the investment went into pottery. I was always buying pieces, paint, varnish. I didn't invest in dresses with shoes anymore. And she told me: 'What are you studying that for? It's so expensive, look at what you're spending. And what good is it going to do you? It's not going to do you any good.' And this I heard from her mouth each time I came with new things. I told her: Look what I bought. She only made a face: 'You bought that!' I didn't pay attention to her, because I liked it.

Discovering a professional talent is one thing. But in order to become an entrepreneur they had to expand this talent, by gaining much work experience. How do the informants expand their professional skills? The first group, child workers employed by third parties, had to depend on the work experience they could gain in the various enterprises where they were employed as laborers. The social relations they established with co-workers and bosses were particularly relevant here. Guillermo says:

Well, fortunately I have always been quite sociable, and I've never been proud with other people. That is, I don't like to discriminate against anyone. That is, I like to treat everyone the same since that time. And this helped me a lot, because I was lucky to have good workmates, who finished to teach me the way to learn my trade. Yes, maybe I've worked like 12 or 13 years in shoemaking, in various workshops. I didn't work in factories.

Still my informants might have continued working for other people for the rest of their lives. The immediate grounds for starting a business of their own will be examined later. First, another question will be addressed: where did the idea to become an entrepreneur come from in the first place?

5.2.3 Early thoughts on entrepreneurship: ‘One day I'm going to have my own place’
When do the informants first start to think about having an enterprise of their own? I will distinguish three different origins. First, some informants stress their own originality in coming up with the thought of having a firm of their own. Second, some stress the influence of other people, for instance relatives, customers, or fellow church members. Finally, for a few starting a firm is a logical consequence following from their last work experiences.

Juan provides an excellent example of people who have come up with the thought of starting a firm themselves. He became a worker in a diesel garage at 14 and over time learned the trade well. Even as a child he already had clear ideas on what his future could be like:

Well. Fact is that in the mind of that youngster, when he started working, a goal was set: one day I'm going to have my own place. I'm going to make an effort, I'm going to work hard and I'm going to learn my trade well. Because this is very profitable and I told myself: in time there'll be more cars. And by that time I'll be older, I'll know more. So I'm going to work as hard as possible to learn this work. And so it was, this got stuck in my head.

In contrast, some informants got the first notion of a firm of their own from somebody else. Bernardo spent twelve years working in carpentry workshops all over Guatemala City. He says:

Well, people always liked my work. They were always telling me that I should work only for myself and that I shouldn't have to depend on anyone, because I could work [well]. So I thought about working independently and I bought tools.

So with Bernardo, the germ of the idea came from satisfied customers. For other people, the idea came from usually male relatives. Ramiro's father proposed to him the idea of working together as plumbers. Other informants stress that they came from families of traders, like María and Mario. Mario's parents had various businesses in the sixties:

My dad... Both of them were business people, born merchants. We were always merchants. My dad worked with some people, who, though they didn't pay him very well, taught him the trade and he learned very well. He knew how to sell, he knew how to handle people and he learned the trade well.[...] He started a shop, because my mom had very little capital.

In summary: the relatives who suggested the possibility of starting a firm could be fathers (Ramiro), both parents together (Mario and María), or even a cousin (Luis). Alternatively, the idea could come from satisfied customers (Bernardo) and even from another social group: fellow church members. Guillermo was offered a loan by his LDS bishop to start his own firm. He already had some experience in management and business administration, so he knew that he could do it by himself:
At the last place where I was a worker, I was more or less like in charge of stock and I already knew more or less how to be a manager. Buying material and all isn’t difficult for me. Since I know the material the sole, the leather, and all that and I do know the places where it’s sold, [then] how to fix prices and all isn’t a problem.[...] But what I really didn’t know was how to do it all [at once]. But I did learn a bit.

For all of these early dreams and aspirations, most still had to wait at least another three to ten years before they could actually start their own businesses. In the meantime, they established their own households. As will become clear, the household is very important for the operation of the firm, which is why it will be described both in the past and in the present.

5.3 Establishing a household
The informants’ puberty and adolescence will also be considered here, since these influence relations with the opposite sex later on in life. I will distinguish three basic situations. First, a group of men who passed from a chaotic puberty and adolescence to a stable household, as exemplified by Ramiro. Second, María’s extended single mother household. Third, a stable adolescence and household, which becomes unstable at a later stage in life (Raúl). The leading questions are: What were their puberty and adolescence like? How do they organize their household at the start? What are its major problems? What is the current state of the household?

5.3.1 From chaos to control: ‘I never had a really messed-up life’
Ramiro had already mastered the job of being a plumber by the age of 14. Though dedicated to his profession, he also liked to go out and have fun with his friends in colonia La Florida. He gives two slightly contradicting descriptions of his puberty and adolescence. First he stresses that he was out of control:

Well, the truth is: as a kid you don’t even know what you want. There are so many things to learn, to do, that frankly you sometimes try to do what you want most, instead of what is good for you. That is what happens at this stage of life.[...] I had to go out into the street. Having gospel principles and all the doctrine and knowing the Word of Wisdom knowing all that I had to try liquor, become an alcoholic, go out with the boys visiting the wrong places, like houses of women and all that.

A bit later during the interview, however, he says things were never really that bad:

The truth is that already when I got married, already when I met my wife, I never had a really messed-up life. But I did like my beers and she even [...] met me in a karate gym. Because there I went with my gym friends. Well, there were times of just going out and having a good time. And we went out to drink our

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2 Other examples are Juan, Guillermo, Mario, and Pablo.
beers and all that. There we met my wife.

Ramiro presents his own version of `boys will always be boys': they just want to have fun and experiment with all sorts of things. In the first quote he claims to have been doing just about everything that is strictly forbidden to a Mormon: drinking liquor, going to bars and brothels, paying to have sex. He later says that he still felt connected to God and the LDS church while engaging in all these transgressions. He suggests that being a second-generation Mormon deeply instilled the Mormon doctrine in him. Which is why he makes the point of the second quote: that he was not really out of control; that these things happened because he liked to go out with his friends; that they only had beer instead of liquor; and that he even met his wife while going out with his gym friends. He is strongly implying that all of this was just `youthful sinning', a normal part of a rebellious puberty and adolescence. He seems to be suggesting that he needed an escape from all the work he had to do as a child.

The turn-about came after Ramiro fell in love and started to settle down. He married in 1985, aged 25. At first he still drank, but the birth of his first daughter caused the final change. He wanted to become active again in the Mormon church, change his life, set an example for his children. His wife Isabel came from a Catholic family and their wedding had also been Catholic. Three years later he became active in the Mormon church again. He managed to convince his wife to join him in church, thus fulfilling his goal of becoming a united family in purpose and spirit and making a celestial temple marriage for all eternity possible. They raise their children according to Latter-day Saint (LDS) doctrine and recommendations. They have four daughters, aged eight, six, four, and a baby.

Ramiro is second counselor to the La Florida bishop. Being a church leader means that he is required to set an example for other members. Ramiro is a successful breadwinner, having a stable and lucrative job as a plumber, who entrusts his wife with the family budget. A part of the money is set aside for business investment. His wife Isabel does not work for money. She runs the household: taking take of the children, cooking, cleaning, and buying things for the house. Ramiro sometimes brings groceries. Although clearly the head of the household, his attitude is not machista. However, Ramiro makes all important business decisions, such as buying the ice-cream van as a second business. His wife sometimes shows disapproval of this, especially when Ramiro and his brother (who runs the ice-cream firm) are scooping ice cream over from cannisters in the large freezer to the ice-cream van containers in

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3 Later on, the connections between working as a child, being introduced to alcohol by workmates, and going out with these buddies to have some fun is treated more extensively.

4 There is no such thing as `until death do us part' for active Mormons.
Both parents act as active educators of their daughters, who are in general wellbehaved and go to school in the neighborhood every day. The children do not work and are allowed to play, although the eldest two have to help their mother with housekeeping. In short: the household radiates middle-class values and norms, making it almost ideal—typically Mormon. Ramiro shows no disappointment at having four daughters and no son. His wife sometimes teases him about potential adultery, since his work takes him to visit many women in their homes. However, if she really feels he might cheat on her I doubt she would express it in this way. The Ramiro case was the closest thing to a stable and economically successful nuclear household among my informants.

5.3.2. An extended single mother household: 'Somebody to suffer for'

María, by contrast, provides an example of an extended single mother household, consisting of five people: María, her two children, her mother, and her grandmother. María is sparse with information on her puberty and adolescence. Since her father was a bookkeeper at INFOM and her mother had a small grocery store, she did not grow up in poverty. María did well at secondary school. From 1975 to 1983 she worked in a decentralized state enterprise for dairy products, called Prolac.

She was earning well as a secretary at Prolac, when she met her fiancé at a pottery course, which she had started as a hobby. He was 14 years older than she was, which she did not consider a problem since her parents had a 12 year age difference. They had only been engaged to get married for about ten months, when two traumatic experiences shook up her life. First her father died of diabetes at 60. A little later her fiancé was killed in a car crash. She was devastated:

Maybe for about two years I was suffering because of him. It's that you lose the drive to do anything, to live. It's that you saw him the other day and tomorrow they tell you that he's dead. It's so hard. Having so many plans in mind. So this is hard.

We met while studying pottery. We identified a lot with each other, because he also liked it a lot. He was a chemical engineer [...]. But I think: if he'd stayed alive, we would've had a good enterprise between the two of us. We identified a lot with each other, in the sense that we both liked the same things. Well, I think it would've been like that. If he'd stayed alive and hadn't died, we would have made something very nice between the two of us.

She wondered if she would ever have a family of her own. But after two years, she decided not to accept her situation. She would take action to have a family of her own, on her own terms:

So I always thought that if I wasn't married at 30, I was going to have babies. I wasn't going to run the risk of being left a spinster, without a child or anything. So he was born when I was 28. The father was someone I was very fond of and it really how shall I put it? was the last train that left for me. I had
already tried my luck and I didn't want another... I'd better stay single and, I said, I'm going to have a child. Of course the person that I had it with... Well, I definitely had to tell him what I wanted, but that's as far as it went. Well, the girl wasn't part of my plans. I said one and I have two. She wasn't part of my plans, but I have no regrets. Because thank God it's a pair of a boy and a girl, and they've made my life happy. I have somebody to work for, to suffer for.

Living with her mother and grandmother made arranging for child care easier. María fully expected to be able to continue her job as executive secretary at Prolac. However, she was promptly fired when her boss learned of her pregnancy. Soon she had a little baby boy, but no job, no father, and no husband. Fortunately, she could work in her mother's grocery store and even sold some pottery there. Their household faced a major problem of economic survival around 1985. The solution will be described below. In 1995, María has a boy aged nine and a girl aged seven. She and her mother are active educators; her grandmother’s health is fragile and she often stays in bed. María’s mother helps to sell pottery now; she no longer works as a midwife. María has a central position in the household as breadwinner. Her pottery enterprise has taken over her mother's earlier grocery store completely.

5.3.3 A traditional patriarchal household: Different options
Raúl, the subject of the last case, faced options very different from María. Born in 1941 and raised by small independent farmers, he had a traditional patriarchal upbringing. Guatemalan fingheros consider themselves one of the higher classes; politically and socially they are usually extremely conservative. Raúl's parents were members of the Central American Church, an offshoot of the Holiness type Central American Mission. He says they were not particularly active members. In puberty and adolescence, Raúl was very much involved in soccer. He played on his secondary school team in Antigua.

He met his wife after going to Guatemala City in 1965 to study to become a primary school teacher. They married in 1966 and between 1967 and 1980 six children were born. They had a traditional nuclear family household: Raúl was always breadwinner; his wife always took care of the home. Although he went to the United States for two years to earn money, he returned to help his wife raise their children and to supervise their education. After working in various jobs he started his own gas stove and electrical appliances repair firm in 1975, also selling gas. He invested the money he saved from working in the United States.

Raúl received a very extensive education: he finished primary school in San Martín Jilotepéque, secondary school in Antigua, and successfully graduated with a teaching degree from the excellent Instituto América Latina, of Protestant origin. Second, consider how his conservative upbringing did not keep him from leaving his young wife and various small children behind in Guatemala to go work in the US. He stresses that he needed the money to start his own firm, and that he returned to supervise the education of his children. Between
the lines, he hints at the fact that his wife was incapable of running the household of many children on her own. Raúl's business was doing well in the 1970s, but when competition increased he started drinking. He says that between 1984 and 1994 he had alcohol problems, and he hints at marital infidelity. It was a major strain on his marriage and became the household's biggest problem. But it did not lead to a divorce mostly, he says, because of religious principles Raúl and his wife both share. The fact that they stayed together also saved his firm, he says.

Raúl lives with his wife and his two youngest children in a big apartment in La Florida. His eldest son left for the United States in 1988 and is still living there; three other children are also married and have their own families. The old couple rent out a part of their apartment to other people, since they do not need that much space anymore. Their household is doing very well. Raúl makes all the important decisions by himself, after consulting with his wife.

Summary. After many tedious jobs the child workers generally came across something that they liked, that they were good at, and that motivated them to work hard and become even better in their trade. Some on their own had already started to think about having a firm. Others were encouraged to do so by clients, relatives, or fellow church members. The start of the firm often coincided with the founding of their own household.

I distinguished three basic situations concerning the establishment of a household. First, a group of men who passed from a chaotic puberty and early adolescence to a stable household in their twenties (Ramiro). Though they generally started their firm at an early age, it did not become a success until they adopted a more disciplined life-style. Second, two men who went from a stable adolescence to a 'mid-life crisis' characterized by alcohol problems in their forties (Raúl and Bernardo). Raúl's crisis actually started when his firm was going through hard times in the 1980s, because of increased competition. Third, María, whose fiancé died in a car accident and who consciously decided to form a single mother household with her mother and grandmother and her two children. Because she lost her job as executive secretary as a consequence of her pregnancy, she turned her hobby (pottery) into her profession, aided by a loan from an NGO. How do the other informants manage to start their firms?

5.4 Starting a firm
This section will address the process of actually starting a firm. It has three parts. First, I analyze and describe the immediate grounds for becoming an entrepreneur. Second, I will examine the individual requirements that have to be met in order to start a firm. Third and last, I will describe and analyze what starting a firm demands of the entrepreneur's household.
5.4.1 Origins of entrepreneurship: ‘They were exploiting me’

I identify three immediate reasons for the informants starting a firm. First, the advantages of having a higher income, more financial stability, and more personal freedom as entrepreneur. Second, to put an end to being exploited by the bosses they worked for who were always relatives. And third, those who got started because third parties offered aid. These could include a fellow church member, a relative, or even an NGO working within the SIMME framework.

Almost all informants mention a higher income, more financial stability, and more personal freedom as the major reasons why they became entrepreneurs. Some, like Bernardo, said that their households could not survive without their firm, because workers wages are too low and job insecurity is high: you can get fired without any prior notice. Even as a skilled car mechanic, Juan never had any job security until he started his own business. That fact constituted a strong motivation for starting his own firm:

There was a time that I was out of work, when we were married. I didn't have my enterprise yet. I had to work in a storeroom, to load trucks, heavy work. Earning a salary of 500 quetzales, 600, a month, being out of work and getting to the point of earning 100 quetzales a month. I think it was very hard. While I was trying to find a job at what I was used to earning, it was a very hard time. But we could eat, my children had milk, it wasn't bad. Thinking this I feel and I say: Well, it hasn't all been rosy-colored, like we say here in Guatemala. No, there've been difficult times, hard times. [...] During the hard times I decided to form my own enterprise. That was about fifteen years ago.

María stresses the liberty she has being her own boss, even as her pottery firm is going through hard times:

Well I prefer to be like I am, although I'm fully in debt and thinking about whether I'll have enough tomorrow to pay the boys [workers]. OK, it's a risk that I am running by myself and I know that it's to my own advantage. It's not to the advantage of third parties.

A second major reason for starting a firm, mentioned now three times, is exploitation by relatives. At 12 or 13, Ramiro was put up as an apprentice by his mother with her brother, who was a plumber. Ramiro said that his uncle was very old-fashioned and authoritarian, and treated him badly. He was also stingy:

So when this problem with my uncle happened, well OK, I left the workshop. But I was scarcely 14 years old. So I felt that I knew how to work, but how could I do it, if people wouldn't have confidence in me because I was a boy? I was a child, but still the idea was born. One day my dad asked me, saying: ‘Well, do you think you're... Do you feel able to work?’ And I told him: yes, that I felt able to work.

So he told me ‘Why don't we work together?’, and that he would represent me. So that's how we did it. Seemingly he was the plumber and all, but I did the work as a boy and he charged them and all. So they thought that he was really the master. And so I started my career as a plumber.
Pablo also learned his trade in carpentry from his uncle, while working in his workshop. He does not mince words:

I worked five years with my uncle. [...] That is, they were exploiting me. Let's say he gave me material, but I... My debts were always going up and never down. So he paid me very little and charged a lot for material. [...] What happens is, seeing as I did that they were exploiting me, I had to work day and night to be able to get what is here nowadays. It was quite difficult, because nobody supports you. [...] But I worked nights to be able to get my tools and I started to buy a little timber. Well, with what I earned I was saving to get out of where I am.

Here, the ambivalence of family ties as the basis for labor recruitment clearly comes forth. On the one hand, Pablo's uncle gave him a job as a carpenter, gave him the opportunity to become a skilled craftsman and even to acquire materials on credit to one day start his own firm. But on the other hand, his uncle did all of this in such a way that Pablo felt exploited and realized that it would be very hard to become independent. Still, Pablo managed to save a little money by working day and night, which made it possible to start his own firm. However, his bitterness is clear: 'Nobody supports you.' You are completely on your own. But it does not always have to be like that.

The third immediate reason for starting a firm is because of an attractive offer made by a third party. Sometimes this offer comes as a complete surprise. Guillermo, for instance, was offered a loan by his Santa Marta bishop to help him start his own shoemaking workshop. Guillermo interpreted his firm as a gift from God: 'I didn't do anything; the Lord put it in my hands.'

In another case the money was came from an unexpected source. For Luis, the start of his party furniture enterprise was a direct consequence of good fortune, again together with a business offer made by a relative:

In 1974 the following happened, that you don't know yet. Would you believe that I sometimes bought Santa Lucía lottery numbers. To keep it short: I won a prize in the lottery, of about 4,000 and a little more, 4,300. Something like that. And, well, I was happy. I wasted some dough on incorrect things and I think I bought some things for my house.

Already having this money, a cousin of mine proposed to me to start a business together, before I finished it all. That he knew a premises in La Florida, over there in zone 19. That we should put up a party rental business, that he had observed that this was good because you earned a bit and didn't run a lot of risk. To keep it short: I associated myself with this cousin over there in La Florida.

María provides a final example of an enterprise that originated from an outside source of

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5 To the amount of 2,000 quetzales or roughly US$ 350.

6 In 1974, 4,300 quetzales would have been equivalent to the same amount in US dollars.
funding. In 1987 she was considered eligible for a 4,000 quetzales loan by a SIMME field agent working for FAPE, an NGO working with microenterprises. This is how María describes the effects of that loan on her still tiny pottery enterprise:

We were among the first loans: I remember that they told me that it was loan number zero ten, would you believe it. And to cut a long story short... Look, this was like alka-seltzer to me. Yes. Because... Look, I could buy my clay by the ton, I bought my paints wholesale, which obviously cuts costs. Varnish I bought wholesale too. I contracted someone to help me: this young man came to work for me half-days and studied later in the afternoons. Later he went away and another came to work full days and so it was growing until I had... I came to have at least six young men working for me. And the turnover was really very nice. Clients came from the departments of Xela, Zacapa, Mazatenango, Jutiapa, Huehuetenango too. And things were really selling very nicely.

The danger of presenting this inside view of microenterprise is that the process of starting a firm appears self-evident; the logical conclusion of the working experience preceding it. Of course, this is not the case. Moreover, not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur. Below I will probe into the demands that having an enterprise makes on the owner and the household.

5.4.2 Individual requirements: 'It was a very hard period'
What is required of the individual in order to start an enterprise? Because so many factors play a part, I will distinguish five different categories: psychological, professional, financial, organizational, and social. If any of these is missing, the start up of the firm becomes impossible, or at best highly unlikely.

Psychological is my heading for the first category. I would argue these are indispensable qualities for someone starting their own firm and actually constitute the mindset of the entrepreneur in general. They include elements such as entrepreneurial drive (a combination of motivation and vision), discipline, self-confidence, and congeniality (getting along with every kind of person). A clear case of drive at a very early age was seen with Juan, who said above: `One day I'm going to have my own place. I'm going to make an effort, I'm going to work hard and I'm going to learn my trade well.' It took him twelve more years until he finally made his dream come true. Why discipline and self-confidence are essential becomes clear from Juan's account of the start of his garage:

The first two years of launching myself into this... [After] The first six months I already threw in my towel, like we say here.[...] It was hard. It was very difficult to go to work and say: Look everybody, here I am. I can work well. Not having tools, the necessary equipment. Wanting to show people that I was able to work. It was a very hard period, because I had saved a part of the money to hold out about three months, four. And it lasted only for two and they were very difficult. Because I didn't have money to eat, I didn't have money to pay for the premises, I didn't have money to pay for the apartment. We entered a time when my children fell ill, a state of chaos.

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7 Roughly US$ 725 at that time.
Bernardo always believed he would become an entrepreneur: `I have the drive; I have the will; I have the intelligence.' Indeed, a statement of purpose. María had the opportunity to study at the university, but she did not feel motivated:

I think I never passed any university course, because I'm not really like those people who lock themselves up in a book until they understand, staying awake all night to pass the exams. I didn't like it. And I've always liked handicrafts, hand-work that you do quickly, but the money also comes quickly. That's what I liked most of all.

Making pottery grabbed María's attention from the start. She spent much money on over two years of ceramics courses, improving her skills and even sacrificing personal pleasures (like buying nice clothes and shoes). It was a hobby and she `never thought about having my own enterprise.' She was the household's provider. Getting fired at Prolac because of her pregnancy gave her the drive to dedicate herself to her pottery firm.

Professional qualities that are required to start a firm consist of professional skills, professional work experience, and if possible even management experience (for example in a family firm, as in the cases of Mario and María). Simply speaking, they have to be very good at their work. This usually means they need to have more than sufficient work experience in their trade. Raúl, for example, had already been repairing gas stoves and electrical house appliances in his twenties. Ramiro, it was noted, started as a plumber at 14. Juan also began as a mechanic's apprentice at 14. After six months, he was already considered a skilled worker capable of doing most car repairs. But still 13 more years would pass until he had his own firm. Similar stories abound.

María, on the other hand, was an exception. The pottery course she took lasted from early 1983 to late 1985. She occasionally sold pieces through her mother's grocery store, until she got fired at Prolac. So when she started her pottery firm in 1985, she had scarcely 2 years of work experience. She admitted she had a talent for ceramics, though, and learned very quickly. This is of course similar to Juan and Guillermo, who also learned their trade in far less time than was considered usual.

Financial. The major financial requirement for starting a firm is capital. Capital usually takes the form of money that has been saved, and is needed both to make the initial investments and as a financial reserve (`buffer') to get the household through those first difficult months after starting the firm. Various strategies are used to build up a financial reserve. The simplest one is starting small and (re)investing as big a part as possible of profits in the business itself. This was for instance done by Ramiro, Juan, Bernardo, and Miguel. In general, however, it
required a fairly long time—ten to fifteen years—to get sufficient money together.

A far more rapid way to save money, though with its own specific problems, is going to the United States for an extended time. Both Patricio and Raúl spent about two years separated from their families, working in the US and saving lots of money. Neither of them particularly liked it: they were discriminated against, afraid of being arrested as an illegal alien, suffered from the cold and felt lonely without their family.

A third way is to accept help from outsiders, usually relatives. This is the case with Pablo (uncle) and Luis (cousin). Both, however, received additional capital through a loan by FUNDEMIX, another NGO connected with the SIMME program. Luis’ starting capital came from winning the lottery. María received a loan from the NGO FAPE. Guillermo received a loan from his LDS bishop. So the outside financial sources originated in family networks, church networks, and official NGO networks.

Organizational abilities that are required for starting a firm are basically a talent for organizing business, labor, inputs, and outputs as well as having accounting skills for keeping track of income and expenses. Only a few people have practical organizational experience from volunteer ‘civic responsibilities’. Bernardo had been active in the Tierra Nueva neighborhood association, and Luis in an association of entrepreneurs in Guatemala. Juan had been treasurer of a soccer club for many years and currently organizes and trains both a youth soccer team outside of the LDS Church and one inside. Interestingly, however, the most important organizational experience for these and the other informants comes from performing volunteer church assignments (see chapter 6).

All informants agree that some form of bookkeeping is necessary to keep track of expenses and income. However, there are various ways to achieve this. More than half of my informants follow their own unique accounting system, never having received formal training. Some systems are more sophisticated than others, but all provide monthly evaluations of costs of labor, machines, and raw materials; sales; taxes; debts and credits. Comparisons are possible with previous months or years. All of these are written by hand. The group in general feels comfortable with this situation, even though or perhaps because the owner is the only one able to make sense of the system.

Four people have formal bookkeeping skills. For María, these were part of her original

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8 Juan calls himself a ‘magnet’, who easily attracts and organizes people. He talks extensively about his time as treasurer of the soccer team, which he turned into a big success by applying LDS Church standards of non-smoking, morality, financial accountability, and trust.

9 To be exact: Juan, Guillermo, Beatriz, Mario, Ramiro, Bernardo, and Ana.
secretarial training. Raúl took a course at INTECAP\(^{10}\) in the seventies, because he felt accurate bookkeeping was indispensable for any entrepreneur. To become eligible for a first loan, Pablo was required by FUNDEMIX in 1993 to take an accounting course. Luis, finally, even has a Master in Business Administration (MBA) from San Carlos University. He is the only one to record his administration by typewriter, and who talks about switching to a computer in the future.

That leaves only two people who do not use a fixed bookkeeping system, though they say they have written records of expenses. It is unclear, however, how their systems work and they are unable or unwilling to provide information on the total estimated value of the firms, inputs and outputs, etc. Miguel says he only keeps receipts and trusts his excellent memory. His wife has always managed the money he has earned. The only thing he writes down at the end of each month is the net profit (or loss). Patricio says he never has more than two houses in construction at the same time. Interestingly, his clients are almost always fellow Mormons. He simply keeps track of the price offers and budgets he submitted to his clients, and tries not to diverge too much from those.

Family firms sometimes provide opportunities to acquire (rudimentary) accounting or management skills, as happened with Mario, who had been working since he was a child first in his parents' grocery shop and then later their ironware store. Guillermo also had the opportunity to acquire some experience in management and business administration:

At the last place where I was a worker, I was more or less like in charge of stock and I already knew more or less how be a manager. Buying material and all isn't difficult for me. Since I know the material the sole, the leather and all that and I do know the places where it's sold, [then] how to fix prices and all isn't a problem,[...]. But what I really didn't know was how to do it all [at once]. But I did learn a bit.

This valuable experience gave him confidence that he too would be able to run his own firm one day.

**Social.** Though mentioned last, the social qualities one is required to have to successfully start a firm are in fact just as essential as the psychological ones, mentioned first. They refer to the ability to build up social networks and use these in the operation of the business. Congeniality having an open and accessible character and a propensity to make new contacts easily are major assets. Communicative skills are also important: listening to clients, attending to their needs, and explaining the possibilities in clear language. Closely connected to these are negotiating skills, needed to fix advantageous prices both with customers and with suppliers.

Congeniality, communicative skills, and negotiating skills are all equally important. But

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\(^{10}\) INTECAP: *Instituto Técnico de Capacitación* or Technical Training Institute, which was part of the SIMME structure.
most important is the ability of the entrepreneurs to use their social networks to recruit workers, clients, and suppliers. The most accessible networks are those associated with family, church, friends, and neighborhood. I will briefly describe and analyze all four of these.

**Family networks** can work in many ways. María runs her pottery firm in close cooperation with her mother. Her sisters are often referring new clients to her. When necessary, they will come over and work in the enterprise, usually for free. Guillermo's sisters and nephews do the same in his shoemaking workshop. Family networks are also important when relatives working in the firm are renumerated. This is the case with Miguel's son in the printing firm, Bernardo's son in carpentry, and Ramiro's father and cousin in plumbing. Recruiting relatives as workers whether paid or not always creates certain difficulties, which I will address further below.

**Church networks** are of prime importance in business operations among the Mormons. However, using church networks can have positive and negative consequences. I will give various examples, starting with the positive ones. When Ramiro and his father started their plumbing firm together in 1975, their first clients were almost all fellow Mormons:

> And so I started my career as a plumber, and thanks to God and to our principles of honesty, respect and all that. The same principles of our house, of our very home.

> We dealt with people in church. This ensured that people could trust us, both as a worker and also as a person, right? Well, so there little by little a sort of clients was created. A long process at the beginning, because work was very scarce. Some days there was, some days there wasn't.

> At times I did one little job a day. However, it was still sufficient to get us through, because life at that time was a bit cheaper. And well, so time passed and the work... Apart from the fact that the years went by, experience also became an important factor, because this caused people to have more confidence in you and so you could get a greater clientele.

Ramiro and his father were able to use these LDS Church networks, because Ramiro was a second-generation LDS adolescent and his father was an older member. Ironically, both were inactive in the mid-seventies, when they started their plumbing business. Ramiro was going out with friends and drinking beer; his father had more serious alcohol problems. Still they had a big circle of church acquaintances who preferred to rely on a plumber from their own church. Plumbing is a trade where clients are completely dependent on the expert, and where a problem might be solved one day, only to turn up again in a day or two. Clients who have known their plumbers for a long time, and who occasionally see them in church, feel they can trust them more. Ramiro also stressed that they would go back a second time without charge, if the plumbing problem persisted.

Another example of functioning LDS Church networks concerns the lengthy business relationship between Patricio and Mario. Patricio has a small construction company with four paid workers, while Mario runs his parents' big ironware store (with about seven workers). Mario is La Florida ward's bishop and Patricio is his first counselor. Hence they meet various
times a week. Their enterprises are perfectly complementary: Mario can provide Patricio with all the building materials he needs. Patricio says he receives most of these on credit, which is a major benefit for his firm. His clients, moreover, are also predominantly LDS: his firm has a good reputation among them, for the same reason of added trust as was mentioned above with Ramiro's plumbing firm.

A third positive case of Mormon networking concerns Guillermo's shoemaking workshop, which started thanks to a 2,000 quetzales loan, apparently without interest, from his Santa Marta bishop. The bishop had some savings and thought that it would be good for Guillermo to start a firm. That way he would be more independent financially and he would have a more stable livelihood for his future wife and children. Guillermo works hard to repay the money on time, planning to be out of debt by the start of 1996.

Church networks may also have negative consequences. Both Bernardo and Patricio have bad memories of working for the LDS Church or its agencies. Bernardo had provided benches for the church, which leaders subsequently claimed did not comply with their specifications. They did not want them and refused to pay for them. Bernardo said he lost 2,000 quetzales (about US$ 345) because of this. He never worked for the church again. Ironically, he had excellent experiences while working for the La Florida Catholic priest. Another negative experience comes from Patricio. Through the old LDS Job Center\(^\text{11}\), Patricio had gotten a job to clean planes at the airport with a group of Mormon youngsters. In the end, none of them were ever paid. Patricio vowed never to go to the Job Center again; he was also skeptical of the new Self-Reliance Resource Center. He felt that employers who were, of course, mostly non-LDS could easily abuse the trust that Mormon workers had in their church agencies. LDS Church networks also played an ambiguous part in the recruitment of laborers, as will be seen below. Still for committed members it is a big step to leave church altogether, which would also imply the loss of church networks.

In the Neo-Pentecostal church Rains of Mercy, church networks appear far less important than among the Mormons. One reason is that its members live scattered all over the northern and western parts of the metropolitan area. Another factor is that there are only a handful of small-scale entrepreneurs among the membership. Raúl, for instance, mentions that some of his clients are fellow church members, but does not consider this important in his business networks. The associate in his second enterprise is a friend, not a co-religionist.

How important are friendship networks\(^\text{12}\) in recruiting workers, clients, and suppliers?

\(^{11}\) Job Center: precursor of the Self-Reliance Resource Center.

\(^{12}\) Incidentally: it is sometimes hard for people to follow my distinction between friends and fellow church members. I classify Patricio and Mario’s business relation as part of the church network, but they see it also within a friendship network.
According to the informants, they all ask their friends to refer clients to them, and most try to do so. However, nobody offers price reductions to friends, although Guillermo and Ramiro hint at occasionally doing so in a very low-profile manner. Workers are not recruited among friends either (see below). Friendship networks work at another level: friends are expected to lend money in hard times and be flexible about the timing of repayment\(^{13}\).

Finally, \textit{neighborhood networks} turn out to be the weakest of all, somewhat to my surprise\(^{14}\). This in spite of the fact that many informants had spent (almost) all of their life in La Florida. When neighborhood networks are mentioned, it is usually in reference to the past. Miguel says their new printing shop in 1977 could not have survived without a friendly lady at a neighborhood grocery store, who allowed them credit of up to eighty quetzales. But many informants acknowledge that they live quite isolated from their neighborhood nowadays. For Ramiro, this is a conscious choice that he made, after various fights and arguments with neighbors. Juan hints at something similar. Both seem irritated by continuous requests of neighbors for loans or gifts.

5.4.3 \textit{Household requirements: 'I give the money to the missus'}

After this long survey of individual qualities that required for starting a firm, I will now turn to the demands the firm makes on the owner's household. Here three of the five categories I distinguished above remain important: organizational, financial, and social.

Organizational requirements of the household include again a talent for organizing, complemented by the owner's ability or authority to persuade household members to accept the fact that they have to make sacrifices if the firm is to be a success. A clear authority structure makes the household's decision-making process simpler. Since almost all households are congruous with nuclear families\(^{15}\), the ideology of family unity is very important here: 'we all want to improve our economic situation.' Who decides when to buy things for the house or when to invest in the firm? The firm's owner, usually the husband and the head of the household, obviously has a strong voice, but the extent of his powers vary.

On one end of the spectrum, people like Miguel actually turn their complete income over to their wife:

\begin{quote}
I give the money to the missus, because she handles it. The bit that comes in, she tells me: this is for materials. We give it to her, because I see that in her hands more money remains.
\end{quote}

\(^{13}\) The role of friends in survival strategies will also be analyzed below.


\(^{15}\) With the noted exceptions of María and Guillermo.
Among most informants, however, an open partnership exists where husband and wife talk about income and expenses, and both decide together. Still, in the end the firm's owner usually has the last word. This is the situation for Juan, María and her mother, Beatriz and Mario, Guillermo and his mother and sisters, Patricio, Luis, and Ana and her husband Henry. Ramiro's household is somewhere in between this group and the next, where the head of the household makes the decisions all by himself. The owner will listen to the opinions of spouse or even elder children, but in the end the decision is his. This model applies to Pablo and Raúl.

The state of Ramiro's household very little decoration, with consumer goods having been bought only in the last three years or so suggests that the demands of the firm generally dominate those of the household.

Some prefer to keep the firm highly separated from the household. Juan's wife and children never work in the garage located on a big plot about fifty meters from his house. In hard times, when business is bad, he will call them all together and calmly explain that they need to make some financial sacrifices. In María's case, on the other hand, the entire household is very much involved in business operations. But none of the informants' children ever work in the firm, until they are sixteen or so. Then they usually get paid, like Miguel's and Bernardo's sons.

Household sacrifices for the firm may take many forms. Half of my informants have their firm located in the family home, meaning less living space for household members and causing additional annoyances like machine noise, chemical smells, and crowdedness (because of the many visitors). Children accept all of this as a given, but spouses are not always so flexible witness for instance Ramiro's wife Isabel protesting against the huge freezer in the living room, and Ramiro scooping out ice cream into the drums for the van each day.

Financial. The major financial sacrifices by the household have to be made at the start of the firm, which is usually the time when the first child is born. Taking care of the children can put a significant constraint on the expansion of the firm. Parents tend to make their baby's health and food their first priority. As Ramiro says: 'How can I make investments, when my baby daughter needs [powdered] milk?'

The state of Ramiro's household illustrates another typical feature: the postponement of buying expensive consumer goods. Although it contains a big refrigerator for household needs, a medium-sized color tv set featuring cable and a video-recorder, these things were bought only over the last three years or so. Before, Ramiro says, the money was needed to pay for tools, materials, cars, car repairs, etc. all for the benefit of the firm. According to Ramiro, the strategy of delaying consumption to expand the firm paid off extremely well. His plumbing business is very successful. Miguel, Guillermo, Mario, and Patricio followed a similar strategy in the past, but to a far more moderate extent than Ramiro. All, however,
acknowledge the continuous process of balancing expenses for the firm on the one hand and the household on the other.

Social. The firm's owner is, of course, not the only one who is included in various social networks. Other members of the household can also have or try to build up networks, which they may use for the benefit of the firm or not. Spouses and children are almost always part of the same church and neighborhood networks as the owner of the enterprise. In most cases, marriage partners also share the same friendship networks. The wife's family network can provide more possibilities for the referral of clients. However, I never encountered siblings of the wife as workers (paid or unpaid) in the firm. The children are usually too small to have their own networks\textsuperscript{16}, whereas adult children have their own households to take care of.

5.5 Problems and responses

Various problems arise in the process of acquiring professional skills, starting a firm, and trying to expand it that require a response by the entrepreneur. I will deal with five issues here that come up with most informants: introduction to alcohol by workmates, labor recruitment, market contingencies, paying taxes, and always low and/or unstable income.

Why do these particular problems predominate, and how do they influence the operation of the firm? Peer drinking starts among the child workers as part of a male bonding process, which shifts orientation away from the household during adolescence. Additionally, it requires much time, money, and energy, which hence cannot be used for starting or operating a firm. Drinking also undermines work motivation and discipline. It is the typical problem of the owner's input in the firm, and it must be solved if the firm is to become successful. Labor recruitment, on the other hand, touches on another part of firm inputs: renumerated laborers or unrenumerated family workers. How do the family firms, the mixed labor firms (which combine relatives and outsiders as workers), and the hired labor firms find their workers? How do they keep them involved and motivated?

Inputs and outputs come together at the crossroads of the market. But here there are many contingencies, which are beyond the firm owner's influence. There are macroeconomic contingencies, like inflation and devaluation, and also meso- and microeconomic factors, like increasing national and international competition. I will analyze which firms are most vulnerable to these contingencies, and how the owners respond. Another problematic issue affecting business performance is paying taxes. Does the Latter-day Saints business ethic encourage the LDS entrepreneurs to fully pay their taxes? What about the Rains of Mercy firm

\textsuperscript{16} The average age of the informants' children is almost twelve.
owners? Taxes make profits go down, hence the owner is left with a lower income. Low or highly fluctuating income is a continuous theme during almost all the 13 life history interviews. What is the cause of these frequent money shortages? The origins can be individual or household-related, chance-related (for instance repairs or medical bills), or firm-related. How do the respondents deal with the problem of a temporary lack of money? Basically, there are three strategies. But first I will start with peer drinking as the first of the problems that turns up.

5.5.1 Peer drinking: 'Drinking with the boys'

Most informants started working for wages around ten, which meant that they had to grow up quickly to do their part in the household. Since they were putting in long working days, the relationship with fellow-workers on the workshop was very important. The working children were, in general, proud workers who wanted to be accepted by their peers. But their workmates were often much older than they were, hence the children were introduced to various adult activities at a very tender age. These included going out (Juan and Ramiro), going to prostitutes (Ramiro) and especially drinking alcohol (Juan, Mario, Ramiro, Bernardo, Patricio, Luis, Pablo, and Raúl). Peer pressure was the main reason for drinking alcohol in the cases of Juan, Ramiro, Bernardo, and Patricio.

Juan, owner of a diesel car service station, says he was introduced to drinking alcohol while starting to work as a mechanic in a workshop. To be accepted as one of the boys in the group, it was impossible to refuse to go out:

The bad thing was that the people in this place were used to drinking, so this 14 year-old boy learned to drink beer and to smoke. So part of his money he invested in buying beer and cigarettes. And this boy who used to return home at two in the afternoon on Saturday, when his working day ended no longer returned home on Saturday at that hour, but on Sunday at five in the afternoon. [...] He would just get his soccer shoes and go off to the field, more or less under the influence of alcohol. And later he would go on drinking with the boys and get home around nine or ten on Sunday night.

He subtly puts the responsibility of his starting to drink and smoke on his peers at work. After all, he was only a 14 year-old who wanted to be accepted at work. The relatively high wages he received also made it easier to spend substantial money on going out, alcohol, and cigarettes: though he faithfully paid a part of his wages to his mother, but kept more than half. His week-ends during his adolescence were devoted to the two things in life he liked best: going out with workmates and playing soccer.

Still he made sure that these habits did not affect his performance at work. At 22, he

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17 Here I will use only Juan's story. The cases of Bernardo and Patricio are very similar, and will be mentioned in chapter 6. Guillermo's different story of alcoholism and drug abuse will also be dealt with there.
married Judith and soon the first children were born. His responsibilities became greater. Though he had been recruited into the Mormon church at 15, he was inactive for many years, primarily because of his drinking. However, Juan was good at his job and his ambitions were getting higher. This is how Juan finally manages to stop drinking and smoking in 1980, the year he opened his own garage:

When I started to work I had one goal: to have a workplace of my own someday. I'm going to make an effort, I'm going to work hard and I'm going to learn my trade well. [...] This [goal] got stuck in my mind. Well, I entered church, I got baptized and [...] I started to refrain from drinking and smoking and all that. And so it was.

But at Christmas there was a [neighborhood] party, which is customary here, with whiskey, beer, wine, rum, etcetera... They closed down some streets and they killed a big pig. There halfway down the street they had the grill turning around. They had meat. They had everything and I made it my task to drink some of everything. I was always used to drinking beer; liquor had never appealed to me. [...] But that day I got very drunk and they had to come to bring me home, because I couldn't walk.

When I woke up in a state that we call goma [hang-over] here in Guatemala [...] I don't know what they call it in Holland my stomach was tied up in knots. I had never felt so bad. My head was aching, so I decided to go to a swimming pool and stay there almost all day.

When my friends asked me `You want a beer?' I didn't want anything to do with it. I said: `Being drunk is like this and this, after being drunk it feels like this and I don't want anything to do with liquor anymore. Never again.' So I only had a few soft drinks, because I felt a terrible thirst. [...] In those days it was normal to have a latrine[^18], a toilet which is a hole, without sewer. So I came home, grabbed all of it packs of cigarettes, pipes, tobacco, paper and threw it in the latrine, the hole, and I said: never again. Never again I want to use this. [...] Some time later I confessed [to my friends] I was a Mormon and the ridicule started and naturally I became angry. Until I made the decision and said: 'Well, I am already committed to church.'

[^18]: He uses the Spanish word 'pozo ciego'.

Here Juan himself is making the connection between overcoming his alcohol problems and his desire to start a firm. While he was only going out with the boys from the various workplaces, they had their beers and he felt he could control his drinking. But the Christmas party made Juan acutely aware that drinking was not something he would always be able to control. While he thought he was just having fun at the party, he drank liquor and became thoroughly drunk. Friends and neighbors had to carry him home. The next day, he not only felt terribly ashamed of his behavior, but he realized he also had endangered his health by drinking alcohol. A strong hang-over made him feel lousy and forced soccer to the back of his mind. Various factors caused him to reflect on his situation and take strong action: the awareness that ultimately alcohol would control him (and not vice versa), his shame after losing control and getting drunk at the neighborhood party, worries about his health, and the unlikelihood of starting a firm while suffering from alcohol problems. Highly symbolically, he washed everything down the drain: cigarettes and beer. 'Never again.' Peer pressure was handled with the first admittance that he was, in fact, a Mormon though his workmates had never seen any evidence of this in his former behavior. Now he could use the church to keep from
drinking and stay on the right track. Moreover, the church offered other advantages for small-scale entrepreneurs in their vulnerable starting fase: stimulation, advice, and support.

5.5.2 Labor recruitment: 'I don't like to turn my back on people'

The microenterprise is characterized by easy access, hence the underpaid skilled laborer working for others is soon tempted to start his own firm. Labor contracts and social security usually do not exist, so both being hired and being fired is relatively easy. What does that mean for the recruitment of labor? I will describe and analyze specific labor problems for four different categories of firms: self-employed, family firms, mixed labor firms, and hired labor firms.

First, three entrepreneurs are self-employed, meaning they do not depend on other people's labor at all. Two just got started (Guillermo's shoe workshop one year ago and Beatriz' tiny beauty parlor two years ago), and one has existed for over twenty years (Raúl's gas firm). Guillermo is in such an early stage that he thinks hired labor is still at least one year away. His first priority is to pay off his debt to the bishop. However, his sisters and nephews occasionally work for him, without getting paid. This makes them 'volunteers' rather than dependable workers. Beatriz at first had a young girl helping her, but the business was too small to pay wages, and besides Beatriz has too little time to work. Raúl employed three paid workers in the past (a secretary and two distributors on bikes), but after competition increased strongly in the mid-eighties he was forced to fire them. However, he fully expects to hire labor in the future. His priority is investing in a second firm, a shoemaking workshop, together with a business partner.

Second, the three family firms all have very specific problems, because of their sole reliance on relatives as workers. These are established enterprises: Bernardo's carpentry firm started in 1982; Ramiro's plumbing firm and Miguel's printing company are 20 and 18 years old. Bernardo employed six hired laborers before the September 1994 robbery, in which he lost all of his machines. It brought him close to bankruptcy, and he was forced to fire all his workers. He is still unable to rehire them in 1995. Miguel's printing shop is going through hard times, forcing him to rely on family labor. His eldest son works full-time, and is paid accordingly: 200 quetzales (US$ 35) a week. His eldest daughter and his wife occasionally help in the shop, but are not paid. The daughter does not think this situation is fair and hence is unmotivated to do her job well.

Ramiro's first working experiences as a relative were not positive. He started working as a plumber with his uncle; he left because the man was treating him badly. Next he worked with his father, but alcoholism made his father an unreliable partner. Once he gave him a fifty
percent ownership, but his father used the extra money to drink even more and work less. Hence Ramiro bought him out. His father occasionally does plumbing jobs, for which he gets paid by the hour by Ramiro. Instead, Ramiro's cousin is his major worker:

My cousin... Well, the truth is that he really works hard, it's just that at the moment he's moving away from me because of a little problem. Because of my various commitments I've had to trust in people like him and my dad. And sometimes it was necessary to leave them to go and look after another client. Well he offered to work separately.

This happens sometimes and sometimes you lose to these people who offer to work cheaper, out of their own necessities. But it's a pity, because they affect you in part, because whether you like it or not you lose work, you lose a client, but still they always depend on you. Because the truth is that you are the owner of the clientele, because they take away work from you, they do it but there it ends for them. Whereas working with you they know they'll always have work, because they know that you're well-known and that it's no longer necessary to look for work, but rather that people look for you. And this has moved us a bit away from each other, because... I was a bit annoyed.

But later on he comes here to ask for work and I don't know... I'm quite generous in this sense. I don't like to turn my back on people, because later on I know I'm going to give him work again. But meanwhile he's not here.

Ramiro has worked with his cousin for a long time. He clearly acknowledges that he worked hard. Still, his relative offered to work on the sly, for lower prices. Some client told Ramiro, who then moved to isolate his cousin. The conflict is left unresolved. Ramiro's fragment above hints at a certain disappointment: family workers are no more reliable than outsiders, and may just as easily cheat on you in the end. Could it be that Ramiro's cousin was just as unhappy with Ramiro as Ramiro himself had been with his uncle, about twenty years ago? However, Ramiro's second enterprise the ice-cream van is run by his brother, showing again a preference for relatives. The problem with relatives as workers is that different roles can get confused: Ramiro is both his cousin's uncle and boss; in the second firm he is brother and boss. Likewise, Miguel is the printing firm's owner as well as boss over his employees: his son, daughter, and wife.

Third, in the mixed labor firms, which combine relatives and outsiders as employees, a similar situation exists. There are only two: Mario's ironware store and María's pottery workshop and store. Mario's situation is somewhat exceptional, because he manages his parents' ironware store, which includes two brothers and five outsiders as laborers. He complains how hard it is to find good workers:

[...] Many people want to work, but they want to work easily and earn well. And with us the work is a bit heavy. It pays well, but the work is heavy and so many people don't like it.[...] People come, try out the work and give it up.

In the ironware store, relatives and outsiders receive equal wages. All workers have the same benefits, and everybody is treated alike. According to Mario, that is the only way to keep
things running smoothly.

María's pottery workshop employed six hired laborers in 1993, apart from herself and her mother. Starting that year, however, sales went down and down, forcing her to fire laborers till she has only two left in 1995. They work in the workshop, producing ceramics: two young men in their twenties, who have been working there for some years now. María herself rarely makes ceramics, preferring instead to work with her mother in the shop. She also says that skilled workers are hard to find, and that many are unreliable: they arrive late and sometimes skip work for a day without prior notice. María pays her workers decent wages of 1,000 to 1,200 quetzales a month\(^{19}\), with additional benefits (Christmas and June bonuses), but in return she demands high performance. Her mother receives a small sum of money for personal expenses; the firm's profits go to the household or are reinvested in the firm.

Fourth, the hired labor firms are the largest of all and have the most complicated labor relations. These are also largely established enterprises, although the youngest (Pablo's carpentry workshop) is only two years old. The other four, however, are seven (Ana's law firm), eight (Patricio's construction company), fifteen (Juan's garage), and twenty-one (Luis' party firm) years old respectively. Juan has the greatest number of workers: five skilled laborers and three apprentices. Luis has six workers, Patricio four, and Pablo three. Ana only shares a secretary with somebody else.

What is the typical profile of these laborers? Generally speaking, they are highly skilled workers in their twenties and thirties, without any social relation to the firm-owner prior to being recruited. Professional strangers, so to speak. They are emphatically not recruited through church, friendship, or neighborhood networks. Juan and Bernardo have had very bad experiences with young LDS workers, saying they were unreliable, undisciplined and even 'lazy' (Bernardo). They expect favors from their fellow-LDS bosses, who are unable and unwilling to respond. Since then, Juan recruits his workers from outside his own social networks. They are all strangers when they arrive, even the apprentices. From the beginning he makes it very clear what he expects of them: discipline, hard work, intelligence, skill, and dedication. In return, he offers fair wages and a willingness to hear their problems. He has monthly talks with all of them, asking how they are doing and trying to solve any problems. He does this both out of a feeling of personal responsibility and because it benefits the firm: satisfied laborers work harder and stay longer. Miguel and Bernardo both caught workers in the past attempting to steal things from the firm. In a way, then, relying only on their sons as workers makes supervision and control easier.

\(^{19}\) Corresponding to US$ 170 to 205.
Gaining the worker's loyalty is an important task for the owner, not so much loyalty to the firm, but rather loyalty to the entrepreneur. Most workers have been employed for one or two years. However, all informants recognize the problem that the best workers are generally the first to leave, because they want to start a firm of their own. While all complain about this, some acknowledge that, of course, they did exactly the same themselves five, ten, or fifteen years ago. This problem of high job rotation among laborers is impossible to solve, even for those offering fair (or even high) wages and monthly talks. To make things worse, when sales are low the entrepreneurs sometimes lag behind in paying wages. Though they feel very embarrassed about this, they see no solution: profit margins are usually small and acquiring food for their own household is a first priority.

5.5.3 Market contingencies: ‘You have to compete with prices’

The problem of instability in the market with its law of supply and demand does not affect all firms equally. Based on the informants' information, I will describe a four group continuum that goes from highly vulnerable to less vulnerable enterprises.

The most vulnerable firms are those that are very sensitive to both the macroeconomic situation at the national level and to price competition. The five cases here are Juan's diesel garage, Miguel's printing firm, Patricio's construction company, the ironware store that Mario manages, and María's pottery firm. Juan has to pay for various spare parts from abroad in dollars, meaning the devaluation of the quetzal affects him. Moreover, he faces increasing competition from other diesel workshops in the western part of Guatemala City. Miguel also faces increasing competition, in his case from cheap photocopy shops, and has responded by going into computer graphics and printing. Patricio and Mario face heavy price competition in their branches. Finally, María's pottery shop sells gift items, which for many Guatemalans are a luxury. She also has to import some raw materials for the workshop from abroad. To make things worse, increasing competition comes both from abroad (cheap Taiwanese pottery) and from within the country:

Marketing is more difficult, because the pottery industry has increased rapidly. When I started with pottery, I remember that pottery was scarce [...]. On the other hand... Now that everybody [is in it], it's rare for people to give classes, to teach it, you don't see that anymore. Now everybody is working only wholesale: to sell here, to sell there. So there's plenty of competition.[...]

Prices have gone up, because we work with imported raw materials. So the dollar rules. So prices are constantly rising. I remember that when I started to work in pottery, the little two ounce bottle of paint cost 2.50. And now it's 12 and even 15 quetzales. That is, it has all gone up a lot. Same with everything. Electricity is constantly going up.[...]

The clients come from many parts. There's something very important, which is the sticker I use, say my trademark. I put it on everything I sell. And they come and see something they like and say: how nice. Where did they make it? And they see my trademark. So that produces more clients.[...] The product advertises itself.[...]

We go out to search for clients [too]. You go out to visit, you make offers and all. Or friendships: Often friendships help a lot. So that's how you will make more clients. But it's a bit hard, especially in the
interior of the country. That you say: Look, I've come to offer this product and the price is so much. Oh no! Would you believe there's a lady passing here who offers it at half the price.

So there you can't argue. You have to go, because there's no way, you can't give it at the same price, because it's a piece of finer work, more carefully manufactured. Because pottery... The process is to bake each piece twice: one to give the piece firmness and the other to give it brilliance. In most cases these people don't bake it two times, they bake it only once. That is, they paint it unbaked and it comes out glazed. It's not legal to do this, because it's not the process you should follow.

The second and biggest group of firms is very sensitive to competition, but only partly affected by the state of Guatemala's macroeconomy. It includes six firms: Guillermo's shoe workshop, Beatriz' tiny beauty parlor, Raúl gas sales and repair firm, Bernardo's fine furniture workshop, Ana's law firm, and Pablo's carpentry workshop. Guillermo provides the typical story here:

You have to compete with prices. Yes. Because, say, if you're going to offer a shoe at 55 quetzales, the shopkeepers screw you up. Because they say: They're selling me this shoe at 50. And you think: how is it possible, someone who offers the shoe at 50. And you: how much? Look. The lowest I can offer it to you is at 52. Ah, púchica! That's three less than what the other charges me.

And they start to negotiate and they get hold of the shoe at 52. [...] But if they buy it cheaper from you, they aren't going to lower the price of the product. They'll always offer it at the same price and if possible they'll charge a quetzal more, so as to have more profit. So that's the market here in Guatemala, that's how it works.

Luis' party furniture firm is an exceptional case, because it has little competition in Mixco and is only moderately vulnerable to the macroeconomy, since its raw material iron has to be imported from abroad, making it sensitive to the state of the quetzal.

Finally, there is only one case which is relatively less vulnerable to macroeconomic forces: Ramiro's plumbing firm, which will always have a steady demand, as long as he does his job well and keeps his prices in check, according to Ramiro.

5.5.4 Paying taxes: 'It's impossible to prosper'

Do the Mormon entrepreneurs associate the LDS business ethic with the obligation to pay taxes? Mario, La Florida's ward leader, voices the official LDS viewpoint that all members have to pay their taxes. Indeed, most see paying taxes as a civic duty, sanctioned by their church, though they complain extensively about the large amounts they pay to the Guatemalan state, without getting anything in return. The 65 year-old master carpenter Bernardo, for instance, claims to lose fifteen percent of his gross earnings to taxes:

I've made great effort. I've struggled and fought to accomplish a few things. [...] Well it's impossible to prosper, to get ahead, to do well quickly. Because they're taking away seven percent VAT from me, they're taking away a four percent deduction from me, as well as four percent over profit. In total they're taking 20 See next chapter for a description and analysis of the LDS business ethic.
away fifteen percent from my gross earnings. Nothing can be done about it.[...]

So all in all we earn very little, just about what we have to spend on food.[...] They allow us to arrive at a certain level: stay there and no further they seem to be saying.[...] I am struggling, doing things to improve our situation, but in fact we only earn enough to feed the family.

This is the quintessential complaint of the self-made man, who overcomes great obstacles in Bernardo's case: poverty, alcoholism, health problems, and crime only to see the state take away fifteen percent of his earnings. Even with the tax money they receive from people like him, the state is unable to offer its citizens protection against crime or to invest in the national infrastructure. Instead of reaching out a helping hand to him, `they' (the state? the government?), kick him down again by imposing fifteen percent taxes on his gross earnings: 'Stay there and no further.' Hence his bitter remark: `It's impossible to prosper.'

Miguel (52, printer) explicitly connects his great reluctance to pay taxes with the pervasive corruption in Guatemalan society and government:

Because rich people come and give things away without any problem: boxes full of bananas, soft drinks, liquor, and all of this they bring the government.[...] With all of this, you [government official] will change. So the majority doesn't pay taxes, [only] the poor pay the taxes. The millionaire doesn't pay. That's what happens. Because the poor are afraid like in the tv announcements that if you do not present an invoice they'll put you in prison and [...] where do they get 5,000 quetzales to pay [fines].

Like Bernardo, Miguel also strongly dislikes paying these taxes, because he too feels that the government is not doing anything in return to help poor people or maintain the country's infrastructure. Taxes are perceived as an additional burden by these LDS entrepreneurs. Miguel is not afraid to use very strong words:

It's already a war in the streets. Because taxes are already high [...], they've squeezed us out and they keep squeezing us out. So where are people going to find the money to pay [taxes]?

Both Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs (Raúl and Ana) and all but one of the LDS entrepreneurs state that they pay taxes. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that they pay the amounts they are supposed to pay, but it is impossible to get precise information on that. The main reason why they faithfully pay taxes can probably be found in a combination of a church-inspired sense of civic duty and not unimportantly the fear of having to pay huge fines, if caught at evasion: see the quote by Miguel above.

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21 After he got robbed in September 1994, he had to start all over again. See also below.

22 Patricio is the only LDS entrepreneur to decline to respond to the question. Since he does not keep any written accounts, it is likely that he pays less taxes than he is supposed to.
5.5.5 Low or unstable income: 'Today I don't have any money'

During all interviews, the problem of low or highly fluctuating income is mentioned repeatedly. The informants identify three main causes of this: individual or household-related causes, contingency factors, and firm-related causes. I will briefly address these causes.

*Individual/household factors* are connected to family budget management, basically along the lines sketched by Guillermo above: while common sense tells them not to spend more than they earn, sometimes this simply cannot be avoided. Some examples include school money, taxes, and Christmas expenses. The money Pablo spends on alcohol also falls into this category.

*Contingency factors* refer to chance events and situations that require additional spending, but that cannot be predicted. Some examples are repairs (whether of household appliances or cars), medical costs, and (police) fines. Health problems are mentioned by Juan, María, Mario, and Bernardo. When Juan had an infected meniscus, causing it to swell with liquid and hurt terribly, he could not afford an operation of about US$ 1,500. Instead, he relied on prayer healing by fellow Latter-day Saint Priesthood holders. The pain passed away.

*Firm-related factors*, finally, can be either demand or supply-related. In the first case, demand for the firm's products decreases due to outside influences, such as inflation or other macroeconomic factors, or increased competition. Raúl, for instance, started his own enterprise repairing electrical household appliances as well as gas stoves and steam irons in 1973. In 1975, he expanded his business to the current situation: selling gas cylinders and repairing stoves. Business was booming between 1975 and 1985, because there was little competition. He had a secretary and two distributors on bicycles. In the mid-eighties, however, competition in gas sales and in repairs became fierce and his income was constantly fluctuating. He managed to survive thanks to his repair skills, but he had to lay off his three workers. He has six competitors in La Florida alone nowadays, and his income fluctuates strongly. However, he says:

> A business always has ups and downs. There were times of low sales. Next came weeks when more was sold. So till these days things were levelling out. Nowadays less gas is sold, but more profit is being made. At that time [1973-75] I had a profit of 50 cents for each cylinder sold, whereas now a profit of two to 2.50 quetzales is guaranteed, depending on the size of the cylinder. It's not much.

HG: What did you do when sales were low?

I didn't have much income from gas sales, but my technical jobs allowed me to save the money that I needed to meet my personal expenses and those of my family.

Having a fluctuating income is simply part of being an entrepreneur, according to Raúl. The

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23 School money includes everything from school uniforms, (note-)books, pencils, and lunches to yearly fees.
point is that in the long run, things will balance out or better steadily improve. After some bad years, his income started to improve again in the early nineties. Around November 1994, he invested money in a second enterprise: a shoe workshop that was located next to his own business on La Florida's 7th Avenue. His friend and business associate, however, has a job at the Public Ministry and is rarely able to make shoes. Gas sale and repairs, the core business activity, are stable, but do not grow very much.

Some businesses experience strong seasonal fluctuations: María's pottery firm, Luis' party business, and Miguel's printing company all have a high turnover in December, when people graduate from secondary school or university. María also does well before Christmas and before Valentine's Day. Almost all firms do badly in January, because customers have no money left after Christmas. Other businesses, plumbing for instance, have a more or less stable demand all year round. Supply-related factors, on the other hand, can raise production costs, for instance through increased prices of raw materials, higher energy bills, or higher rents. Continuous devaluation of the quetzal is a problem for María and Luis, who buy (a part of) their raw materials clay and iron respectively abroad and have to pay for it in dollars.

Basically, there are three different strategies to tackle the problem of a temporary lack of money: being prepared, cutting down on expenses, and obtaining money from sources outside the household. The most common method of taking precautions is by saving money in good times, which all informants report doing. Most, however, are referring here to a practice from the past: Juan, María, Mario, Patricio, Bernardo, Miguel, and Pablo all had sizeable amounts of money in the bank in the seventies and eighties. While Juan says he still has `a few pennies' in the bank, the others have virtually nothing left. That is, at least half of my informants have no financial reserves at all (anymore). Guillermo, in fact, has never been to a bank. On the other hand, Ramiro, Raúl, Luis, and Ana say they have sufficient savings.

Two informants use an alternative saving method through so-called Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAS or mutual aid groups). María is involved in a ROSCA, made up of twelve people: her mother, sisters, and seven friends. Each month everyone puts in fifty quetzales; once a year they receive the full amount of six hundred quetzales. María is very enthusiastic about the cuchubal, as it is called in Guatemala. Ana participates in a church ROSCA in her home village Acatenango.

Storing a sizeable amount of canned food and bottled water for the household is a typical Mormon praticee, known as `home storage'. Through the Priesthood, the LDS

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24 In Spanish: almacenamiento. In the United States and Europe, the LDS Church recommends storing a year's worth of food, but in Guatemala the aim is much more modest: a month's worth. Many people are unable or unwilling to achieve even that.
Church recommends that all families do this, in order to be prepared for catastrophes. But in Guatemala, this practice also serves an additional purpose: as a food reserve to be used in hard times. Finally, investing money in a second firm can also be seen as a method of being prepared for income shortfalls. By having two firms, seasonal and business risks can be spread more evenly, and profits from one firm may be invested in the other. A similar, but even more flexible way of ‘diversification’ is practiced by María and Miguel, who occasionally trade in other products. María buys and sells second-hand clothes around Holy Week; Miguel sometimes trades in second-hand cars. Both have done this for many years already. It helps them make ends meet, especially when their main business is performing badly.

There are various ways of cutting down expenses, which follow a clear set of priorities. If money is short, the wives who almost invariably do all of the shopping first of all buy food for the household. If necessary, they even use money from the firm for food. Next, they pay the rent or any other urgent debt. Buying all other things is postponed until there is sufficient money again. Similarly, no money is invested in the firm for the moment. The only exception may be the buying of raw materials, for without these the firm ceases to function. María’s earlier account about postponing the upgrading of her pottery shop provides a clear example.

Finally, when things get so tight that there is not even sufficient money to buy food, other methods may be used. Here again networks of friends and relatives are important, because these provide direct one-on-one loans. Almost all informants say that only the help of friends and family can get them through hard financial times. Juan is most frank and clear about this:

The truth is that till today I've never had a cent. In fact today I don't have any money. I have sufficient to pay any necessities I have. And how did I arrange this? [...] Maybe I don't have money, but I've got plenty of friends [...] When you throw yourself into the water, there are some things here like they're not made of plastic, they're natural some call them jicaras, others tecomates. They're things like [...] calabashes. You take out all that's inside and it's left empty so you can even drink fresh water from it. You can use it as a water bottle. If you throw them in the water they float.

So there's a special saying but it's for very proud people that says: I don't need calabashes to swim [...] But I did use the calabashes a lot. Well I had various calabashes and I took hold of them: my friends. If I know somebody and I need him to lend me hundred quetzales I go. The worst that he can tell me is: Look, I don't have money. That's alright [...] I go to another: Look, I'm going through a very hard situation. And since they know me and I've become known as a responsible person that they can trust it's something that'll open the way for you. It's something that you can cultivate during your life. Not just the fact that you're seen with a tie and that you're coming and going; that doesn't really show who you are. Gaining people's trust, based on many things. They [i.e. Mormon leaders] ask us to turn to friends, brothers, cousins any relatives that can help us and that we can pay all our own necessities, without bothering the church. This teaches us how to be self-sufficient [...] I can't say that I don't want to borrow money from anyone, because I do need calabashes. In fact, I have (a few) debts [...] and others owe me too. That is: it's like a series [of debts]. That is: you can get out of it, using your intelligence.
Juan uses a complex system, which involves trying to get small loans from a large group of friends and relatives. These debts are continuously reshuffled or repaid, depending on Juan's financial situation and the needs of the money lenders themselves. He has good contact with his two brothers, with whom he also exchanges money and gifts.

Ramiro has also had hard financial times in the past, and says:

Well, fortunately I always had the support of my family at times, in this case my aunt. At times I lent her money, she lent me. When I worked again, I paid her [back]. Or sometimes I had to tell my wife: Wait till I get back and when I get back I'll bring you the money. Because this is one of the advantages of my work, that if I go now, when I get back I bring money. I don't have to wait a lot of time.

Since in the past, Ramiro's direct relatives were all poorer than he was, he could not hope to rely on them for borrowing money. His only recourse was his aunt, who fortunately was also a Mormon. Note also how Ramiro stresses the reliability of his job: people will always need plumbers, and just one job is sufficient to bring money home again. He never works on credit.

5.6 The current state of firm and household
The leading questions here are: What is the firm's current state of business? How are priorities established, e.g. when to spend money on family expenses or on business investments? Is the firm growing, stable, or in decline? Is there more than enough money, barely enough, or not at all enough for the household to live on?

To address these questions, I will construct a continuum of business success among my informants with four categories. The main criteria for success are average wages, profitability, expansion, professionalization, and the average number of clients a day. Two firms are stagnating at a rather low level (María and Miguel), three firms are stagnating at a high level (Juan, Bernardo, and Patricio), five are successful and expanding (Ramiro, Ana, Raúl, Luis, and Mario) and three firms are too new to evaluate in this way (Guillermo, Pablo, and Beatriz). I will provide one extensive case study for each category.

5.6.1 Hard times: `There is no steady income'
María's pottery firm is clearly going through rough times. It started in 1985 as a combined workshop and store in the big adobe family home on La Florida's 12th Avenue. In 1987-88, María received the first loan of the NGO FAPE, as part of the government program for small enterprise SIMME. She invested the 4,000 quetzales in her firm, which greatly expanded in the following years. Sales continued to grow impressively each year, and by 1993 she had six paid workers.
### Box 1

#### María

| Professional experience in pottery since: | 1982 (13 years). |
| Firm established in: | 1985 (10 years). |
| First loan (Q 4,000 or US$ 725) received from NGO FAPE in: | 1987-88. |
| Booming business years: | 1988-93. |
| Decrease in turnover from December 1993 to December 1994: | 35%. |
| Number of workers, including María and her mother: | 8 (1993), 7 (January 1995), 4 (June 1995). |
| Workers' wages: | Q 1,000-1,200 (US$ 175-210). |
| Average working week: | 60 hours (Monday through Saturday 10 hrs). |
| Average number of workdays a month: | 26. |
| Estimated monthly owner's wages: | Q 1,000-2,000 (US$ 174-348). |
| Estimated weekly owner's wages: | Q 230.8-461.5 (US$ 40-80). |
| Estimated daily owner's wages: | Q 38.5-76.9 (US$ 7-16). |
| Estimated hourly owner's wages: | Q 3.8-7.7 (US$ 0.7-1.3). |

Sales first started going down in 1993, during the political turmoil surrounding Jorge Serrano’s presidential ‘self-coup’ and the subsequent start of the interim government under Ramiro de León. Business turnover in December 1994 was 35 percent lower than in December 1993. Though in early 1995 she had five workers, by June only two remain. Her workers receive between 1,000 and 1,200 quetzales a month, depending on experience. They also get a bonus in July (Bono 14) and a Christmas premium. She does not pay taxes over her workers’ wages, because she considers it their own responsibility. She carefully subtracts taxes, however, from her own income. By mid-1995, she is having problems repaying her latest FAPE loan. Though in 1993 she told me she worked 48 hours a week, in 1995 she reports 60! She works ten hours a day, Monday to Saturday. Sunday she mostly spends sleeping or resting. Still she says:

> Well I prefer to be like I am, although I'm fully in debt and thinking about whether I'll have enough tomorrow to pay the boys [workers]. OK, it's a risk that I am running by myself and I know that it's to my own advantage. It's not to the advantage of third parties.[...] There is no steady income, only more or less. Look: really like selling badly, badly... If I sell for about 8,000 a month, I'll already tell you it's bad. Now when it's good you sell double that, about 15,000 or 16,000. Because I made accounts for this February, including Valentine's Day, and sales were low. I sold for about 12,500. I already told you, because last year I would have sold for about 17,000 maybe, if sales are good thank God.[...] Income is big, but the expenses are big too. Many expenses and the wages, that you definitely have to keep up with. And last year I was much too late paying the wages. Quite, quite too late. But thank God in the good months, there you'll make it up.

Sales over February 1995, the important month of Valentine's Day, were more than a quarter lower than those for February 1994, so it seems that the downward spiral is continuing. The
enterprise is more or less stable, but her monthly wages are closer to 1,000 quetzales than to the maximum of 2,000 quetzales mentioned in box 1. Even though her brothers and sisters often help her out by lending money or working for her, María feels the burden of supporting a household as a single mother. In spite of decreased pottery sales, household expenses continue to be high:

It's hard, because apart from [the children], I have my mother, and I have my granny. That is: I have four people to support. Because although there's my brothers and all that, whether I like it or not each one made his own life.

[...] because you always have to support the old-timers with medicine, for one reason or another, vitamins, they get sick. My mom is a diabetic, she needs to take her medicine. My granny has to be careful with her heart. You have to buy her medicine.[...] So all of this involves expenses.

The children: school, clothes, medicine, the doctor, because they get sick. And, well, me too. Age already requires you to take pills, with additional vitamins. I suffer from skin disease, that gives me many scales.[...]

The illness I suffer from is called psoriasis, it's psychological. I already noticed that when I have big problems and get very nervous, ten days later I'm already covered with allergy. It gets all over my body: feet, head. I can't even comb myself, because it falls off as if I had dandruff. So with all of this I have to go to the doctor and get medicine. A while ago I had it pretty badly. A while ago before Christmas, I spent a lot of money on this.

So that's why it's hard to support them all. And many times, like I tell my friends that ask me... Because many people ask me: How come the father of your children doesn't help you? They don't even have his family name, only mine. Demand that he give you. No, I told them. I don't lack the money to live, I don't need anyone's money.[...] But the time we're going through is hard.

María is sole provider for a household of five, with many expenses. She is never sure if she will sell sufficiently, so stress is a constant factor in her life. This takes its toll in the form of a skin-disease, which requires medicine and thus raises expenses even more, causing more stress. It's a vicious circle. But María is determined to solve her own problems, together with her mother, grandmother, and her children. She will not accept assistance from `the father of the children', even though the household is going through `hard' times.

But how difficult exactly is the situation for María's household? The house generally is in good condition, though some parts need painting. The kitchen is small, with a little old fridge that makes a lot of noise. The furniture in the living room is also a bit old, but not worn-out. There are few decorations, however, and few light sources. The modest tv set (color and cable) is located in the shop area, right before the hallway to the private part of the house. The children are well-dressed and go to school everyday. María mentions that she does not take them to an amusement park every week or every other week or so anymore. She simply lacks the money and the energy.

Overall, the household budget cutbacks are mostly made on the business side. The large cut in the number of wage workers was already mentioned. Raw materials are bought in smaller amounts and production is much lower than in 1993. Many future investments are postponed until better times: repainting the shop, buying more light-bulbs and better show-
cases for the pottery on exhibit, getting a larger shop-window, constructing a larger and more
attractive shop sign outside... It will all have to wait. Acquiring new loans is, at least for the
time being, also out of the question. María's case is a clear example of the tendency of small
entrepreneurs even those who were very successful in the past to cut back on business
expenses, and not on household expenses, in times of economic hardship. The inherent
danger in this approach is that the firm will cease to grow altogether, leading to stagnation
and possibly even bankruptcy.

5.6.2 In between: ‘On a wage we soon wouldn't be eating’
Two firms are stagnating, but still allow the households that depend upon them a comfortable
standard of living. Bernardo started his fine carpentry workshop in 1982, after he overcame
his alcoholism at Alcoholics Anonymous. He constructed his own machines and the firm
expanded rapidly. There was a big demand for fine furniture from well-to-do people and by
1994 there were six paid workers. In September 1994, however, Bernardo lost almost US
8,000 worth of materials and machines in a huge night-time robbery of his workshop. It
ruined him financially. Basically, he had to start all over again. Still the firm provides him with
average monthly wages of 2,250 to 2,400 quetzales. When asked why he likes having his
own workshop, he says:

I do like it, because it's the only way that I can help my children well. Because on a wage we soon
wouldn't be eating. When they pay me 30 quetzales in a workshop we soon wouldn't be eating. So I do like
having my own workshop to earn at least 75, 80 quetzales a day. That's what I make in a day at least. I
couldn't provide the missus her comfort.

Here, Bernardo is saying that working for other people would not provide sufficient money to
live on for the household. ‘We wouldn't be eating’ may be an exaggeration if one takes it
literally, but Bernardo means that having a firm provides much better means for economic
survival. On his own, he overcame his alcohol problems and started a firm. With his own
hands, he built the first machines and solved his business problems. After he got robbed by
thieves, he had to start all over again in September 1994. But he carried on, and he is patiently

25 Like María's pottery firm, Miguel's printing firm is stagnating, but it still allows the
household a decent standard of living. The household consists of parents and four
children. It has a color tv, but no cable or video. Their house on 12th Avenue, fairly close
to María’s, is rented.

26 Roughly US$ 390 to 415. I am unable to visit his home in the Tierra Nueva
neighborhood, however, so a first-hand assessment of the household is impossible to
give.

27 Equal to US$ 13 to 14 a day, or about US$ 395 to 425 a month.
rebuilding his firm a second time. Clients still remember him and he tells me that the firm has more than enough work for four carpenters, but he thinks it is too risky to hire more workers yet.

Box 2

Bernardo

| Professional experience in carpentry since: | around 1965 (30 years). |
| Firm established in: | 1982 (13 years). |
| No loans received from NGOs. |  |
| Booming business years: | 1982-94. |
| September 1994: | lost Q 45,000 (about US$ 7,825) worth of raw materials, tools, and machines in a huge robbery from his La Florida workshop. |
| Number of workers, including Bernardo and his son: | 8 (1994), 2 (June 1995). |
| Average working week: | 45 hours (Monday through Friday 8 hrs; Saturday 5 hrs). |
| Average number of workdays a month: | 26. |
| Reported weekly owner's wages: | Q 519.2-553.8 (US$ 90-96). |
| Reported daily owner's wages: | Q 86.5-92.3 (US$ 15-16). |
| Reported hourly owner's wages: | Q 11.5-12.3 (US$ 2). |

5.6.3 Doing well: ‘I've tried to improve the work quality’

Ramiro is 35 and has worked as a full-time plumber since he was 14. His first clients were all fellow Mormons, but gradually he expanded his clientele. In 1985, the same year he married Isabel, he bought his first car, which resulted in his profits rising sharply. Ramiro says of his efforts to improve his business:

I've worked, I've tried to improve the work quality, improving my working conditions as well. Because my working conditions were very precarious, also because I had to go on foot, hauling my tool box. Sometimes there were two [of us with] a rucksack. We went by bus from here to there. It was rather uncomfortable for us, and also the time factor: that we did one or two jobs during the whole day and you got home completely worn-out.[...]

That's why I managed to earn an old car, which well served me for a couple of years perhaps. So the situation of the work had already started to become easier. Because working by car already allowed me to attend to more clients, allowed the work to be less hard for me and from there on, well, I supported myself.[...]

Well, all of this had allowed me to have my clientele. But it also pushed me to put more pressure on them, because the clientele has grown too and sometimes the work rather piles up. But thank God we're getting out of this, because people know me and they know that if I don't attend to them immediately it's because I'm very busy and that soon I'll be free to get there with them. So this same confidence that people have in me, makes them wait for me.

He currently attends to an average of between 90 and 120 customers a month. He says his net income fluctuates strongly, but averages about 3,000 quetzales (US$ 520) a month. His
A plumbing firm is doing very well and has been for many years. As part of business diversification, he bought an ice-cream van in October 1994, which he operates with four workers. A brother of his, who worked as a car mechanic before, is in charge. The second firm is profitable, but does not yield high returns yet.

Box 3

Ramiro

| Age: 35. Household composition: | R, wife, and four daughters (6 persons). |
| Professional experience in plumbing since: | 1974 (21 years). |
| Firm established in: | 1975 (20 years). |
| No loans received from NGOs. | since 1985, when he bought his first car. |
| Booming business years: | 3 (early 1995), 2 (June 1995). |
| Number of workers, including Ramiro and his father: | His cousin recently left after an argument. |
| Average working week: | 48 hours (Monday through Saturday 8 hrs). |
| Average number of workdays a month: | 26. |
| Reported average monthly owner's wages: | Q 3,000 (US$ 522). |
| Reported average weekly owner's wages: | Q 692.3 (US$ 120). |
| Reported average daily owner's wages: | Q 115.3 (US$ 20). |
| Reported average hourly owner's wages: | Q 14.4 (US$ 2.5). |
| Second enterprise (ice-cream van) since: | October 1994. |

Ramiro’s profits are such that there is always sufficient money to invest both in tools and materials for plumbing, and in the household itself. His four daughters are all well-dressed and all go to school. Ramiro has a big, two year-old Toyota pick-up truck, which he needs for his work and to transport his family. The family home on 11th Avenue is comfortable, but hardly luxurious. The furniture is neither old nor shining new and radiates a cosy atmosphere. In the living room there are a few simple paintings, a huge commercial freezer for keeping ice cream, a big refrigerator for household needs, a medium-sized color tv set with cable and a video-recorder. The latter three are highly-valued, but expensive, consumer goods in Guatemala. His next business and private goal is to acquire a telephone line, which will allow his clients to contact him without delay. Ramiro states they have savings to last them for a couple of weeks, in case he becomes ill. He also says they have a plentiful reserve of canned food, as recommended by the LDS Church. In summary, Ramiro’s household is doing very well economically.

5.6.4 Recently started: ‘I’ve passed some killer periods’

Three entrepreneurs only started very recently: Beatriz, Pablo, and Guillermo. Guillermo's

28 Pablo's carpentry workshop in the center of Mixco started in August 1993, with a loan from the only NGO working in the area with microenterprise: FUNDEMIX. It has three paid workers and general profit margins of about 20 percent. However, since I never visit his home it is impossible to assess the current state of his household. Beatriz was mentioned before as an exceptional case.
shoemaking workshop is only one year old. It started in August 1994, with a loan of 2,000 quetzales (US$ 350) by his Santa Marta bishop. Guillermo reports average monthly wages of about 1,400 quetzales or US$ 240. The extended family household consists of Guillermo, his mother, three sisters, and five nephews. Four people with low wages have to support six dependent relatives. The general state of the household is poor: they live in rented unpainted shacks around a muddy Santa Marta courtyard, and own one small black-and-white television set, some old furniture, and very few decorations. Still Guillermo thinks they are doing all right, compared to the past:

I've passed some killer periods, when I didn't have money, or a job, or anything else.

HG: What did you do?

Work, but earning little and putting up with a bit of hunger; not eating like you do when there's enough. Because naturally: when there's enough you buy and do things, but when there isn't enough you just have to put up with it.

Everything also depends on how you administer your money. Because depending on how you administer your money, it will produce results. Because if you earn 200 quetzales a week and you spend, where are you going to get the remaining 100 quetzales? You have to go into debt. But if you earn 200 quetzales you have to do everything possible to spend 175, 190, and save ten or five. After a month you’ll already have something, and when the year ends [even more].[...]

But nowadays as a family, thank goodness, we've had what is necessary to live on. How shall I put it? Like with poverty and all, but my mother has never let us die of hunger.

Guillermo sees the present very much in terms of the past. He used to live on the street as a drug addict and member of a street gang. He knows how to bear hunger. But in 1994 he received the opportunity to start his own little firm, to earn decent wages, and to help support the extended family household. Their form of budget management is very basic: don't spend more than you earn, and always try to save a little. Even if his wages are still rather low, Guillermo feels that the future has great promise for him.

**Box 4**

**Guillermo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional experience in shoemaking since:</td>
<td>1981 (14 years).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm established in:</td>
<td>1994 (1 year).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No loans received from NGOs.</td>
<td>too early to tell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booming business years:</td>
<td>1 (June 1995). His sisters, and nephews and nieces, occasionally help him out, but without being paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of workers, including Guillermo:</td>
<td>45-50 hours (Monday through Saturday).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average working week:</td>
<td>26.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of workdays a month:</td>
<td>Reported average monthly owner's wages: Q 1,400 (US$ 243.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported average monthly owner's wages:</td>
<td>Q 323.1 (US$ 56).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported average weekly owner's wages:</td>
<td>Reported average daily owner's wages: Q 53.8 (US$ 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported average hourly owner's wages:</td>
<td>Q 6.5-7.2 (US$ 1).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7 **Summary**

The major questions in this chapter were: Why and how do the informants start their firms? What conditions have to be met in order to do so? What are the major problems in this process? How do they respond to these problems? What is the relationship with household and church in all these questions?

The most obvious point to make is that having a firm generally gives people a higher income, more financial stability, and more personal freedom. Many wanted to escape exploitation by bosses, who were always relatives. Lastly, there is a group who started as entrepreneurs after a third party offered help: a fellow church member, a relative, or even an NGO. To be able to start a firm, a great many psychological, professional, financial, organizational, and social requirements have to be fulfilled at the individual level. Those that are indispensable include discipline, congeniality, professional skill and motivation, capital, a general talent for organization, and being able to build up and use social networks for the benefit of the firm. The firm has a close, at times almost symbiotic, relationship with the owner's household. The entrepreneur needs the authority to persuade household members to sacrifice labor, money, space, and time for the firm.

I described and analyzed five key problems that turn up with most informants in the process of starting and expanding a firm: peer drinking, labor recruitment, market contingencies, paying taxes, and always low and/or unstable income. Being introduced to alcohol by workmates is a typical problem of puberty and adolescence, and as such an early obstacle to starting a firm because it undermines discipline and destroys capital. In order to become an entrepreneur, a break with the orientation of their fellow wage laborers is needed. The church can play an important role here, which will be analyzed in chapter 6.

Labor recruitment is an important bottle-neck in the expansion of any firm, but even more so for microenterprise. Many family firms pay the eldest sons (modest) wages to increase their motivation. The problem is that other children may feel exploited, because they are required to work without pay. The double-sided coin of exploitation and deceit comes out clearly in the case of Ramiro and his cousin, who cheated on him by offering his plumbing skills cheaper to fixed customers. But Ramiro thinks his cousin will stay with him, and for his second firm, the ice-cream van, he also relies on a relative: his brother. Of course, exploitation and deceit can always occur with family workers, but the social relationship will never be severed completely which is a source of stability in itself. The hired labor firms, on the other hand, generally employ young, highly motivated male workers in their twenties. The entrepreneurs prefer strangers, because friends or fellow church members expect favors from their bosses and are often less motivated. In return, many entrepreneurs offer very decent wages and some extras, like Christmas premiums or a comfortable work environment.
Gaining the workers’ loyalty is important, because the best are soon tempted to start their own firms and moreover, owners are often late in paying wages when business is slow.

However, not all firms are equally sensitive to price competition or the macroeconomic conditions in Guatemala. In my four group continuum, the most vulnerable firms are those that have both a high macroeconomic vulnerability and that suffer from strong price competition, like the garage, the pottery shop, or the printing firm. A small majority of firms, on the other hand, are sensitive to price competition, but less affected by the country’s macroeconomy like the shoe workshop, the beauty parlor, the gas firm, or both carpenters. Customers know about heavy price competition and do their best to exploit it, haggling for prices and driving home hard bargains. Finally, there are two exceptional cases. The party furniture firm has little competition in Mixco, but has to import its basic raw material iron from abroad, making it sensitive to the price of the dollar. Only the plumbing firm has low vulnerability to both price competition and macroeconomic performance.

Table 5.7a

Typology of informality among informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Patricio</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-4 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-4 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Beatriz</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Bernardo</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Pablo</td>
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<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+3 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+6 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>María</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+7 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+9 formal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria
1. Starting loans. Provided by social networks or own savings: -1 informal. Provided by NGO: +1 formal.
2. Labor contracts. No -1. Yes +1. Self-employed 0.
Firm-related factors are only one source of low and/or unstable income. Most important are individual or household factors, which deal with spending habits and balancing income and expenses. Another important influence is the contingency factor: unexpected expenses, for instance on school, repairs, or health bills. The responses to a temporary lack of money follow a clear three-layered strategy. First, there is are attempts to be prepared for the problem, by saving money, which only four informants are able to do, and in the case of the Mormons by storing canned food. Second, cutting down on expenses, starting with luxuries and non-essentials, and ending with basic needs (food and rent). Third, borrowing money through networks of friends and relatives.

I was surprised to find that (almost) all informants pay their taxes, which raises the question of exactly how informal these firms are. Table 5.7a presents a typology of informality among the informants' enterprises, based on nine criteria that are often mentioned in the literature.

The above table is organized from left to right. But there is another way of looking at it: upside down, taking all informants together. The research group shows various tendencies. First, three informants received a loan from an NGO; the great majority had to find their own starting funds. Second, a great majority (only three exceptions) work without labor contracts. Third, six use their own particular accounting system; five use a formal bookkeeping system; only two have no system at all. Fourth, eight use domestic raw materials; only three have to import them. Fifth, about half are capital-extensive and half are capital-intensive. Sixth, about half use family labor. Seventh, nine pay their workers fixed wages. Eighth, eleven say they pay taxes; two avoid an answer. Ninth, ten use formal business contracts with their suppliers; only Patricio depends on informal networks. Keeping in mind these are generally more established firms, the data of the research group seem to confirm that the costs of becoming legal ‘formal’ firms do not, in the eyes of the owners, outweigh the benefits29.

I also examine the connections between high or low informality and business performance, the owner's church, the firm sector, macroeconomic vulnerability, and price competition in table 5.7b below.

A few patterns and tendencies can be inferred from this table. Concerning business performance, more formal and more informal firms seem to be quite evenly spread. Each

29 According to Tokman (1992: 9) the costs of becoming legal in Guatemala are at least US$ 200 and take between half a year and two years.
performance category (very high, high, in between and low) has one highly formal and one more informal firm. The new firms show a greater informality, which conforms to the pattern described in the literature. An even clearer pattern is visible in macroeconomic vulnerability and price competition. Generally speaking, well-performing firms have average vulnerability and price competition. All low-performing firms have both high macroeconomic vulnerability and high price competition, with the exception of Bernardo, whose firm is `in between' after the September 1994 robbery. All new firms couple average macroeconomic vulnerability with high price competition. There are too few cases to show a connection between the church the entrepreneur belongs to and business performance. The next chapter analyzes the connections between firm and church involvement.

Table 5.7b
Informality, business performance, vulnerability, and price competition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Form./Inf.</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Perf.</th>
<th>Macroeco. vuln.</th>
<th>Price comp.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy</td>
<td>+6 formal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.</td>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>serv. &amp; sales</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.</td>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>+9 formal</td>
<td>prod., serv., sales</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.</td>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>sales</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>+3 formal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.</td>
<td>Bernardo</td>
<td>LDS (inactive)</td>
<td>-1 informal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.</td>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.</td>
<td>María</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>+1 formal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>high</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Beatriz</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Patricio</td>
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CHAPTER 6

CHURCH

This chapter delves more deeply into the central research question of how membership in a particular household and church can help or limit the operation of a small firm, and vice versa. To start with, I examine the informants’ early religious experiences and how these have affected their religious worldview later in life. Next there is an extensive section on church recruitment and its aftermath, divided into three parts. The first part deals with the minority of informants who have followed the religion of their parents. A long second part examines changes in church membership, which are traced back to three causes: religious seeking in adolescence, conversions after life crises, and finally, family influences. The third part looks at the socialization into the new church environment.

Just like in chapter 5, there is a detailed ‘problems and responses’ section that analyzes which problems can drive informants away from their new churches, and how they respond to these. I have selected only the five major problems, with the principal responses: disillusionment and backsliding, alcohol problems, receiving and dealing with a voluntary church assignment, time investment required, and finally money sacrifices to the new church. Starting with the assignments, the differences between Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and members of Rains of Mercy become more pronounced, hence each part considers one of the churches. The parts on time and money sacrifices make especially clear the special position of the small entrepreneur as an active church member.

The final two sections of the chapter directly couple church membership, still distinguishing between Mormons and Rains of Mercy members, with the two other central themes: household and firm. The part on the household deals with the various forms of church involvement, both for the entrepreneur and for the household. This is followed by a part that is concerned with the connection between church membership and self-confidence, which is often mentioned in the literature. The section on church and firm has four parts. The first three describe and analyze the dominant church discourse on business success, handling money, and managing household or firm respectively. A final part deals with the importance of church networks, both in a positive and in a negative sense. As usual, the chapter ends with a summary.

6.1 Early religious experiences: ‘We grew up with the Catholic doctrine (but we really
The great majority of the key informants—eleven out of thirteen—grew up as Roman Catholics. However, the influence of this Catholic upbringing on their lives varies widely. Much depends on the church commitment of their parents. Six informants come from nominally Catholic households, where the adults never or only once or twice in their lives went to church. Three informants had parents who could be characterized as moderately active Catholics, who might have gone to church once or twice a month. Even so, the children thought their parents did not seem to take it very seriously. Ana, for instance, says about her childhood:

We grew up with the Catholic doctrine. But we really weren't [Catholic]; they weren't. I think that maybe, without being disrespectful, maybe I've been the most religious one. Because since I was eleven, I went to a Catholic boarding school. So I celebrated all the Catholic holidays.

Mario also went to a Roman Catholic boarding school. Both Beatriz and Mario went to strict Catholic primary and secondary schools, where they learned much more about Roman Catholicism than their own parents ever did. Patricio’s parents, in contrast, were the only ones who could be called somewhat active Catholics, who explicitly forbade their children to convert to another church. Finally there is Luis, who grew up an orphan and had no formal religious upbringing. Still there was a Catholic aunt who tried to help him as much as possible with his life.

That leaves the two exceptions: Ramiro and Raúl, the only second-generation non-Catholics among my informants. Ramiro says about the church commitment of his parents and his Mormon upbringing:

From what I know my parents were baptized in the [LDS] Church. They were married in the church before we were born, of course. And, well, we were already... The whole family was Mormon, from what I remember. When we were growing up, they were instilling the church into us. [...] Well, the truth is that I never knew them as active members. I think that they were only active when they got married. But after getting married, when we were born and all, the one we always went to church with was my aunt. She always stayed in the church. And she took us there and took us there, but my parents always stayed at home.

So Ramiro’s parents became members of the Latter-day Saints Church in their twenties and even received a temple recommend, but by the time their children were born they were inactive (type 1)

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1 These six include María, Juan, Pablo, Miguel, Bernardo, and Guillermo.
2 These three are Mario, Beatriz, and Ana.
3 In order to ‘seal’ a marriage in the temple, having a recommend is necessary. Receiving it means that you are complying with Church rules. Ramiro’s parents converted to the Mormon church at a very early stage: in 1956 the LDS
Mormons. Still many in the extended family were LDS and an aunt took Ramiro and his brothers to church, even when their parents had stopped going altogether. This aunt, in fact, ensured that they grew up as Mormons, by going to the youth groups and learning about the Book of Mormon and other LDS scriptures apart from studying the Bible.

Raúl’s parents, on the other hand, were among the early converts of the Central American Church in the late thirties, when it had only just detached itself from the original, US-based Central American Mission. When Ramiro grew up, his parents were hovering between a more and less active membership. But there was never any doubt about the fact that the household was Protestant. Raúl learned the hymns and went to Bible study groups. He went to church with his parents each Sunday, though he preferred playing soccer. Raúl went to Catholic schools in his home village and in Antigua. However, he studied to become a teacher at the Protestant Instituto Evangélico América Latina in Guatemala City from 1965 to 68. Raúl has the most extensive religious upbringing of all my informants.

In summary: six informants did not receive much of a religious upbringing, since their parents were only nominal Catholics. One informant was an orphan, without any religious upbringing. Three informants had a very limited Catholic upbringing, and Patricio a slightly more extensive one. Ramiro and Raúl, finally, were the only ones to grow up in a strongly religious environment: one as a Mormon, the other as a Holiness Protestant.

6.2 Church recruitment and aftermath

Based on the religious commitment and church membership among my informants, I describe two main groups: those who follow the religion of their parents (María, Pablo, Ramiro, and to a certain extent Raúl) and those who choose to change their religion. This is followed by an examination of how people then adapt to their new church. Some of the problems they encounter in this process are the subject of the next major section.

6.2.1 Continuing church membership: ‘A link that kept us always tied to the church’

Major changes in church commitment are visible even among those who continued going to the church they grew up in. In fact, the heterogeneity is remarkable here: there are at least three different ways to continue membership in the parental church. I will start with the Catholics. While Church had only about 250 members in Guatemala (Deseret News 1996: 333).

4 The Instituto Evangélico América Latina started in 1954 (Zapata 1982: 181) and by 1991 was the largest Christian academy, with over 3,000 students (Rose & Schultze 1993: 424).
Pablo became even more of a nominal Catholic than his parents, María, in contrast, became much more committed to her parish after her children were born.

Over the years Pablo developed his own, highly idiosyncratic, views on religion and church membership:

What happens is that before in the Catholic Church, and in the evangelical church as we call it, say that in both everything is always business. Because let's say... How shall I put it or explain it? In the Catholic Church they don't explain to you what it all means. Say: imagine you go to mass in the morning, to mass in the afternoon, they'll tell you the same thing.[...]

So you have to try and find a way to live well. Say I'm in my home and I try to be the best that I can, right? To apply the law which our Lord Jesus Christ taught us, to be good, give up vices.

Pablo is on the one hand dismissing churches as flawed man-made institutions, while on the other hand making a plea for a highly individual sense of morality. Pablo is a Christian believer who attempts to obey the laws of Jesus Christ, though he rejects a church commitment.

María, in contrast, consciously developed a firm church commitment after her two children were born. She explains the reasons for this with some reflection on her own religious upbringing:

After I had the children, I try to be close to God. And both are in a Catholic school, precisely so they'll both have a spiritual education. So that they'll have something better than I had.[...] I think that it's a question of individual maturity. Because when you're young and without responsibilities, you see God... Of course as Supreme Being and all, but you don't attach the importance to it that it really has. When life's treated you badly, you realize His presence in life. So I think that having a better education as children we're going to have that image that you should have of God. It's not the one like: there's God, whom I'm afraid of, who's going to punish me.

[...] I think that all children go through the same thing. In your youth you were afraid to hear people talk of God: that He's going to come, that you're going to die. Whereas now, you hear that Jesus will come soon and you're not afraid if you're behaving well.[...]

HG: How do you try to teach the children about religion?
Well, [by] instilling into them the love of God and the fear of God.[...] I try to discipline them, because we are living in a world full of upheaval, full of wickedness, full of drugs and all, that you have to say this to them.

For María, a religious upbringing is a necessary part of raising children. She wants them to have a good religious education at strict Catholic schools, because this will give them firm moral values and prepare them for the trials of adult life. She considers it normal that a fear of God causes people to behave well.

For Ramiro, the temptations of adult life were actually what made him turn away from the Latter-day Saints Church during his adolescence:

I'm now 35 years-old. I got baptized at eight, so I've been a church member for 27 years. My two brothers and I were baptized. We became church members and from then on we came to church for a while. We went to Primary and all. Then when you start to grow, when the adolescence starts and all of that, we moved away from church for a
time. And, well, some years went by and the missionaries were always visiting us and inviting us to come back to
the church. And we went for a while, and we moved away again. And we were like that for a fair amount of
time[...]

Withdrawing like this [..], I feel that God was always left unsettled. Or because He's always bringing you in. I
feel that at least I tried knowing that all of this was bad not to do it. But maybe it was because of the principles
they had given me since I was a child, that as young men we didn't always like to do [these] things anymore.

So I feel that this was always a link that kept us always tied to the Church, right? We were always relying on
the fact that we were members of the Church and that we shouldn't do this. But that even though we were doing
bad things, they were things that we reflected about and we tried not to do them.

Ramiro's story is interesting, because of its many different turns. He grew up in the LDS Church,
getting baptized at the customary age of eight and going to Primary classes. But with puberty and
adolescence, he wanted to experiment with new experiences including many that were explicitly
prohibited by his church. However, while he was going out with friends, drinking and visiting
prostitutes, and being inactive in church, he felt that God was always there as a piece of nagging
unfinished business. The church principles were always there in his conscience, causing him to
reflect on what he was doing. Still this did not stop him from living the way he did for about ten
years.

Raúl's story is somewhat similar. Raised as a member of the Holiness Central American Church
he moved away during adolescence, because of his big affection: soccer. After he got married, and
ever more children were born, he focused more on making a good living as an entrepreneur. It was
not until much later that he became religious again, but in another church.

6.2.2 Changes in church membership: 'Take me to a place where I can change my life'
Following the rational choice perspective, people presumably change churches, because they are
dissatisfied with the original church their parents brought them up in (or failed to bring them up in).
Various mechanisms are at work here, which I will organize into three groups. However, the
boundaries between the groups are highly fluid and there is considerable overlap at times. First,
there is a group who were adolescent religious seekers and visited various churches to see where
they felt most comfortable. Second, those informants who joined a new church or who
reactivated a prior church membership after going through a turning point in their lives such as
facing up to their problems with alcohol or becoming parents. Third, those who switched to another
church under the influence of spouses or children.

*Religious seekers:* Mario, Patricio, and Ana. Dissatisfaction with their parents' religion and church
commitment caused some informants to go on a 'religious quest' during their adolescence, looking
for that one true church. Mario provides the typical example here:
I was a crazy kid, because I had my own ideas and all... I lived my life quite happily. I never worried much about life. But what I did worry about was that I knew a God exits. Well, OK, then I had to find a way to worship Him. And some way to worship Him where I'd feel good and where I'd feel I was doing the right thing. And this I had never felt anywhere. So I started to seek out churches! since I was about 16. And I arrived at the Mormon Church when I was 20. And so I learned a few things, but I didn't learn much.[...

I got started in the [Mormon] church in 1978. But when we got married it was 1980, late 1980... And her parents are Catholics, super-Catholics. I had to move away from the church to be able to marry her. So for a time I was attending other churches. I was afraid to go back to mine. And for a long time I took my daughter every Sunday to mass. I always went to church.

For Ana, the quest to find the church that was right for her has a long history and a very concrete cause:

At fifteen I converted to the gospel, when I came here to the capital.[...] It was because of the 1976 earthquake. I always believed that the Catholic religion was a good one. And I always thought that all was well, if you were searching for God. But during the 1976 earthquake, I saw so many people die and I was so close to them... I thought that in spite of a good religion and a life of fifteen years, I believed I hadn't done much in my life. Nothing bad, nothing good, right? You're starting to live. I told myself: How is it possible that I don't even know where I'll go if I die?! Right?

So I thought of searching for something different. I went to the evangelical church and I heard two messages and it was enough to convince me that if I received Jesus Christ in my heart today, I'd know where I'd go. And I made a decision. Only later did I know all the gospel, what it implied. That is: I made a decision in ignorance, convinced only that if I'd die I'd go to heaven.

The chaos and destruction caused by the 1976 earthquake proved to be a highly traumatic experience; dear homes and loved ones were crushed in seconds. Ana started visiting various Protestant churches near the different boarding rooms where she was staying. From her statement it is clear that she was baptized in a Protestant church before having a spiritual experience.

Recruitment after turning points in life. No less than nine informants were recruited after experiencing a major turning point in their lives: confrontation with death (Ana), drug and alcohol problems (Guillermo), alcohol problems (Mario, Patricio, Bernardo, Raúl, and Luis), or the combination of parenthood and alcohol (Juan and Ramiro). As usual, I will select the most typical and most evocative quotes. Here I will limit myself to Guillermo, Ramiro, and Mario. The case of Ana was already mentioned above, and the issue of alcohol problems will be treated more extensively below.

Aged only 13, his father kicked Guillermo out of the family home and he was forced to live on the street. In 1984, at 18, he first learned about the Mormon church. He soon accepted it as the only true church on earth:
I wanted to change my life, because I used a lot of alcohol, drugs; I hung out with youth gangs... And they were killing these friends of mine. So I knew that they could kill me too. [...] So I hung out with very bad company.

After this some missionaries [Sisters] came here and talked to me about the gospel and I liked it. I really liked the way they talked about the plan of salvation. And it wasn't like other times, when people had arrived here and had sentenced me: That I was a sinner, that I would go to hell. But they presented me a Christ of love, someone who had mercy and that He could save my life. And at other times people had told me that I was a son of the devil, that I was possessed by Satan and that I'd go to hell together with him.

That is: the other religions presented a Christ like a tyrant. By contrast, when I heard the talk of the Sisters, they presented me a Christ of love and these things. Yes, I liked it very much. I got baptized, but I didn't have the strength or the support, I think to stay in church. And after some months, after about two months of going to church, I backslided. I started drinking again and I moved away from all this. And I didn't have anything to do with the church for seven years.

This is the most extreme story involving rejection, desperation, and drug-use among the informants. Living on the street, Guillermo joined a *mara* youth gang. He became involved in illegal activities and addicted to alcohol and drugs. In this environment he reacted very favorably to the picture of a loving Christ, presented by female US missionaries from the LDS Church who were about his own age. After his baptism, however, he did not have sufficient strength of his own, nor sufficient support from fellow church members, to really change his life. He was still living on the street and started drinking again, and using drugs.

By 1991, Guillermo's health deteriorated seriously and he weighed only 92 pounds. He went to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to find help to overcome his alcohol problems, just like his father had done many years before:

So when I arrived at Alcoholics Anonymous, four years ago, I only stopped drinking. But for six months I went on taking drugs. I didn't drink alcohol, but I hung out in bars [...] with the same friends, using drugs. That is, my life had not changed.

But after about five months [in AA] a man arrived.[...] They address themes like emotional problems such as anger, fear, ridicule. All these things are illnesses which you have in your soul. That is why you start using alcohol and drugs: to [be able to] bear this. So a man arrived and started to talk about Jesus Christ and if there's anything I never liked it's that they talk to me about Jesus Christ [...]. When this man arrived I wanted to leave [...] but something stronger than me made me stay.

Alcoholics Anonymous helped Guillermo overcome his alcohol problem, in part by teaching him how to analyze it; by relating it to emotional problems. He managed to stop drinking, but he still needed marihuana. He tells what happened next:

I passed a month [...] with this feeling that drugging myself I no longer felt the same pleasure that drugs used to give me. I doubled the dosis and... nothing. I became desperate. I got depressed and felt bad when I used [drugs].[...] I was fed up with the life I had and there were only two solutions for me: either I changed my life, or I would kill myself.
That night I went to bed [...] and I awoke around five in the morning. [...] I saw [on the wall] all the scenes from my life: the bad things I had done, what I was doing to my body, the suffering and pain I was causing in my family, the poverty that had driven me to alcoholism and that had given my family a bad name.

[...] I knelt down on the bed and asked God for forgiveness. And I said: My God, if you really exist, if you really have a purpose for my life, manifest yourself, I said. I put my life into your hands and do what you want with me because I could never do anything with it. And I said: Take me to a place where I will stop using drugs, where I can change my life, where I can be happy and where I can make my family happy, and where I can serve Him.

So I got up, bathed myself, changed clothes and I didn't know where I was going. I left and passed the bus stop and walked on the road that passes in front of the church. And when I noticed, I was again in the church where I had been baptized seven years ago. So since that moment my life began to change, because I stopped using drugs. [...] I made an effort to be a different person, to try to support my family and see how I could get them ahead. That's how I came and went to church. But I was only called by the Lord. Nobody came to visit me; no friend came to bring me there.

Like all typical conversion stories, this one stresses how lost Guillermo was: even drugs could not soothe him anymore; he was approaching suicide. But he took action. He confessed all the 'bad things' he did, and humbly asked for God's forgiveness and active intervention. In a trance-like state he awoke one Sunday morning, put on nice clothes and started walking. He returned to his senses in the same LDS church building where he had been baptized seven years before. Other people had nothing to do with his Salvation; it was a matter between Guillermo and God. The Lord called him, and he accepted the invitation, by doing his best to really 'be a different person'. Guillermo's story is an excellent description of a spiritually-motivated recruitment.

In contrast, Ramiro drifted away from his parental church during adolescence, when he did many things the Mormon Church explicitly prohibited. The missionaries often invited Ramiro and his brothers to come back to church, and Ramiro himself stated above that there was always a link that kept them tied to the church. A change in social roles proved crucial. Ramiro got married in 1985, aged 25. He says:

After we got married I still drank for a time. Maybe what made me reflect was when my first daughter was born and the responsibilities of the home became greater. We needed more money to live on and sometimes there wasn't enough and I felt a bit irresponsible. All of this made me reflect and think about improving my situation.

Because when you're in this environment you waste a lot of money. You're not particularly interested in the state of your family, you become rather irresponsible. But I [...] tried to correct this error by becoming active in church. So there I started to improve my situation.

Ramiro struggled to give up his old life in order to become a responsible husband and father. He consciously chose for parenthood, instead of personal pleasures, by reflecting on his situation. He was very much aware of the parallels between the choices he would make now, and the choices his own father had made and how the children always suffered the consequences. Moreover, the Latter-day Saints Church expressed exactly the same message: that responsible fathers had to take
good care of their children, to the point of sacrificing part of their own life. Reflection on both his father and his LDS upbringing prompted him to change his old lifestyle and embark on a new one. That is why he became active again in the Mormon Church.

*Family influences*: Raúl, Beatriz, and Miguel. The question is whether a change of church because of relatives will have a lasting impact or not, and to analyze why (not)⁵. In the case of Miguel it did not. In the cases of Beatriz and Raúl it did, although the process took a long time.

Miguel, the first case of family influence, was introduced to the Mormon Church by his own children around the year 1978:

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About 17 years ago I got baptized. My children got baptized about two years before. Yes. Glendi first, then Amilcar got baptized, then Milton and finally we got baptized ourselves.[...] And, well, I told them to visit church so they would more or less to see which religion they would adopt if they liked it or if they didn't like it.

We were Catholics. We did go to church regularly. And so we tried to change religion so they wouldn't head in another direction. Well, I think that you can worship God in any place. So that's what happened. That's why we got baptized in the Lord.[...]

How shall I put it? We liked to get baptized, so that our children would be on the right path. So none would go astray. That's why we went there. Because we're not talking about churches; it's not that. Well, Catholics drink and say bad things and all that, right?

So in order to avoid these things you try to get rid of them. To say bad things and to drink. To follow a correct path. That's what we liked most of all.
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Miguel's story shows no evidence of a spiritual motivation. His children were recruited to the LDS Church during their adolescence. The parents followed, because they wanted their children to grow up with firm moral principles. But Miguel clearly acknowledges that the particular type of church you go to does not matter very much: `Well, I think that you can worship God in any place.' He has not been to church for at least six months, for reasons that will be addressed below.

For Mario and Beatriz, the situation was very different. After her husband Mario reactivated in the LDS Church in 1986, Beatriz gradually became interested in it herself:

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That's how he decided to go back to Church. But he was going and I said: 'Look, Mario,' I told him, 'I don't see that you're including me in your plans.' 'It's just that I cannot force you to go to church. That's something very personal. Whether you want to follow me and talk to the missionaries and convert to the church that's your decision. I cannot force you to go.'

Later I decided to go to Church.[...] It was all new to me. That is: what I liked is that you learn a lot. That's something other churches aren't concerned with.[...] The church has many programs which help you. The welfare program, genealogy, to know something of your forefathers. Another thing I also liked: it helps homes those who want to obey to have a lot of respect for their wives.[...] Listen: to have a husband in church does good things,
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⁵ The influence of family on recruitment to churches is mentioned in Lofland & Stark (1965) and expanded on in Stark & Bainbridge (1980, 1985).
whereas...

Beatriz’s feelings of exclusion are clear in her comments on Mario’s return to the Latter-day Saints Church. He said he could not force her to accept the church, but the pressure on her to accept was substantial. She took some time to study the LDS Church and try it out. She liked the fact ‘that you learn a lot’, because the church offered advice on many things: welfare, genealogy, families, how to deal with others. Most importantly, she thought the LDS Church taught husbands to respect their wives; to appreciate their work and to be faithful to them. In summary: Beatriz was recruited because she gradually started to like what the church represented and how it could help their family.

Raúl finally became a member of Rains of Mercy in 1994, aged 53, after going to the church and its predecessor for about fifteen years. He had been raised by his parents as a Holiness member of the Central American Church, and hence already had a full knowledge of Protestant doctrine. His recruitment process to Rains of Mercy, however, was lengthy and remains somewhat sketchy:

As you can see, I’m already a somewhat mature person. I’ve passed the major part of my life of my youth, right? involved in and infested with the pleasures of the world. And until now I had attached little importance to the things of God, right? According to the events taking place right? at the national and international level, we believe that many of the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures have been fulfilled and that the Coming of our Lord is not far away.[...]

I’ve been attending the church for a long time, maybe fifteen years perhaps or more, because of the fact that my family my wife has always attended this church. And whether you like it or not: wherever the family goes well, because of principles you have to go too.

Raúl is acknowledging three different things here, which I will deal with in order. First: he describes a typical spiritually-motivated recruitment, after leading a life of vice, ‘involved in and infested with the pleasures of the world.’ Second: he puts his own life, together with events at the ‘national and international level’ in a wider, millennial perspective. He believes that in the midst of chaos and confusion, the Second Coming of Our Lord will come to pass. Third and finally: he admits that it was his wife who brought him back to church, who pressured him to change his life, who convinced him to trust in God and Jesus Christ. Without his wife, he would not be where he is now.

Summary. By far most informants nine out of thirteen have a spiritual recruitment experience to a new church, after going through a certain life crisis or turning point: generally alcohol problems, but parenthood and confrontation with death are also mentioned. Alcohol problems are one possible response to various social and emotional problems: poverty, hard work, parenthood, machismo, and strained family relations. Recruitment to a new church provides another kind of response, one that allows these informants to continue their responsibilities, both as spouses and parents and as
workers and entrepreneurs. Recruitment also seems to be related to a strong motivation to achieve a more disciplined lifestyle and to improve the material conditions of the household.

A much smaller group of three consists of informants who were religious seekers as adolescents, because of spiritual questions that were left unresolved or unsatisfied in their parents' (Catholic) church. Unlike the former group, these informants usually visit many different churches, until they find the one they like best. This feeling may then be confirmed by having a spiritual recruitment experience.

A final small group is made up of informants who were recruited to a new church because of family influences. These come in two kinds: the influence of spouses or of children. Again, the determining variable is the spiritual experience following recruitment, which confirms the choice of church. Miguel got baptized soon after his children did, but he never had a spiritual experience. Beatriz and Raúl, however, did receive a spiritual confirmation. The process usually took many years: eight for Beatriz and almost fifteen for Raúl.

6.2.3 Adapting to a new church: `I couldn't be separated from the church'

Almost all informants mention a need for direct religious experiences as the major reason for changing church membership and commitment. Almost all had high expectations after going over to Rains of Mercy or the Latter-day Saints Church. Some new members receive a lukewarm or downright cold welcome in their new church group, which often leads to either inactivity or backsliding into old problems (typically alcoholism). Others, however, receive a warmer welcome and gradually get accepted as new members and grow comfortable with the new church group. Disillusionment with the new church members and dealing with alcohol problems will be analyzed in the next major section. Directly below I discuss expectations of the new church, the process of acquiring a church testimony, and cases of successful integration into the new church group.

Acquiring a testimony. Most informants set their expectations of the new church very high. According to many, their recruitment was the first direct religious experience in their lives, and they were taught as members of Rains of Mercy or the Mormon Church that more would follow. Juan states that he was recruited to the LDS Church in 1968, aged only fifteen⁶:

Still not quite convinced [...] I got baptized. [...] It's necessary to recognize and know, through the testimony of many people, that there exists something superior to the human being. And that there are still many things more. He who asks shall be given, when he looks for it there.

My life has been full of miracles. It's been full of important events, both my life as a married man and as a

⁶LDS Church policy currently requires people to be at least 18 at baptism.
Juan's spiritual experience also came after his baptism in the Mormon Church. When he decided to get baptized, he did it simply because it felt right. At that time he was drinking with his fellow-mechanics and going out to bars till late at night. The 'miracles' that happened in his subsequent life as a father, elder, and entrepreneur are both the basis for and a consequence of having testimony of the veracity of the LDS Church. The miracles help to sustain his faith, but without his faith the miracles never would have happened. Juan does not just believe the Mormon church is the only right church, he knows it is.

For the majority of (Neo-)Pentecostals, however, switching to a new church without having a testimony of its spiritual veracity would constitute a grave offence. Consider the case of Raúl, for instance:

Look. To be honest with you: I've been a passive member of this church until the month of December 1994. [...] I've been working in church for about seven months. During this time I've seen new people coming in. I've even converted some people who are nowadays attending church.[...]

Since I was baptized, I started to work. Not before. Before I visited, I only went as a listener. I didn't participate, because... Well, I've always preferred to be sincere in everything and I recognize that God cannot be ridiculed. And, I don't know, I could be acting with hypocrisy.

You cannot pretend to the people before the church, before the congregation that you are an honest person and that you've been morally dedicated to labor in the Lord's work, if your life's not up to it. If your life is very misdirected and burdened, participating [in] all sorts of sin. It's not correct. Because far from being a blessing for the church, you could be a curse. Because a person's testimony has a lot of influence in these cases. That's why.

The key phrase here is the first in the last paragraph. The congregation itself could be affected by your hypocrisy, which might do a great many people harm. So Raúl waited until he had straightened his life out i.e. solved his alcohol and infidelity problems before he got baptized.

Having a solid testimony of the veracity of the church is supremely important for both the Mormons and for the Rains of Mercy members. But for the Neo-Pentecostals though not for all Protestants: remember Ana who got baptized `in ignorance' at fifteen it is a requirement that has to be met before baptism, while among Mormons it is acceptable that it happens afterwards. In another LDS case, Bernardo says:

I've got testimony that it's the true church. That the men are imperfect, but that the doctrine is perfect, it's true, it's God-given. And God is the One who governs the church. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. So I am sure that it's like this. So I couldn't be separated from the church. I wouldn't have a clue. Maybe I'd've started drinking again. Well, the doctrine is very extensive. There's a welfare plan which teaches us to live better: how to be hard-working, how to be self-reliant, not to depend on anybody. That is: this welfare plan is very good. It's a very special doctrine and I like it a lot.

From there on, well, what Jesus Christ taught: how we should live, what we should do. To be honest, to pay
attention, to be benevolent and everything that He wants us to be. That's what I like. And my temperament has always been very pacific. So I haven't had problems staying in church. That's the truth.

Bernardo also knows the Mormon Church is the true church. He could never be separated from it, because he might start drinking again. The fact that he does not drink anymore, proves to him that the LDS Church is, in fact, the true church. But there is more proof: ‘the doctrine is very extensive.’ The welfare plan teaches members how to improve their lives economically, while Jesus Christ taught them how to improve their lives spiritually and morally. Moreover, the church offers sound practical and moral advice on a whole range of matters.

Beatriz makes exactly the same observations as Bernardo, and continues:

It's like a school where they demand things of you, where you are learning, but by going to this school you are doing what they ask of you. Whereas when you're not in church, when you don't have a religion, you're not fit for life. You don't know how to do things.[...]

They give us much advice. They advise us not to beat our children. The prophets... When the General Authorities come and look, this gives me such remorse they say that our children are like travelers. They say that they are only lent to us. Imagine that when they give you something, you're going to take good care of it, because it's not yours. If our children are only lent to us and we have to return them to our Heavenly Father imagine if you beat them! [...]

Yes, there are various courses they offer you [...]. There's home instruction and budget administration. There's spiritual life, which is purely doctrine. There's social relations: trying to have better relations with your fellow men.

Beatriz is not sharing her testimony of the Latter-day Saints Church here. Instead, she is analyzing what she likes about the church and why she stays in it. You learn lots of things that you need in life: ‘If you don't have a religion, you're not fit for life. You don't know how to do things.’ The LDS Church offers advice on everything from spirituality to budget administration. Following church advice gives Beatriz more self-confidence and helps her cope with difficult issues, like disciplining her three children without resorting to beating them.

Successful integration. Although there are many cases of disillusionment and backsliding (see below), new church members can also have good experiences with the more established members. Beatriz, Bernardo, and Ramiro were successfully integrated into the Latter-day Saints Church as new members; Raúl did likewise in Rains of Mercy. New members frequently receive a warm welcome, as happened with Patricio, who returned to the LDS Church after God helped him to stop drinking:

About two days later the bishop came and asked if I'd accept a calling as second counselor of the bishop. I even started to cry. How was it possible that I'd moved away and there's so many who deserve it more than I, and I who failed. The [stake] president came, he interviewed me and just like that I became second counselor.
Well, I was afraid, because I'd never been... And when I was in church before I never had a calling. Nothing. I hadn't even been in a sacramental blessing. Never. But he told me this would help me and really; it did. I felt quite strange, because I felt bad about everything that I had drunk. And, well, because of all this I felt bad.[...]

Since Juan was first counselor, about two months later they changed Juan and made him president of the quorum of elders, and they made me first counselor. Another more important calling, I said. And when they told me this, again I was happier. I said: Another message of the Lord. You already feel different, because you've already changed the way you are.

Even my mom, when she saw the change that I didn't drink anymore and that I was putting my life in order... That I bought this, I bought that. I even got me a car. Seeing these things, she never said anything. It was changed. I was happy to be well.

Patricio came back to the Latter-day Saints Church after a spiritual experience with God, that Patricio felt helped him overcome his alcohol problem. The Lord then called upon him to go back to church. So when Patricio received important callings, they strengthened his church commitment. Even though he is feeling uncertain and ignorant, he senses the Lord is always helping him, which greatly raises his self-confidence. When his life changed, Patricio saw it as just more proof that he was doing the right thing; that God was finally on his side.

The second time Guillermo committed himself to the LDS Church, he also received a warm welcome:

But [now] I did have a lot of support from all the brothers of the church. Well, not from the entire congregation, but at least from some who did support me and who pressured me a lot and who didn't give up until I could walk by myself.

It's like a child. You come and see that a child starts to crawl and do its best to walk. And you have to take care of it, because if you don't it falls and hurts itself, and then you lift it up when it falls. But when it walks well you can let it run, to have them playing around. So they did the same with me: they took care of me like a baby and taught me really how to live the gospel.

After two months in church they conferred the Aaronic priesthood on me. After three months in church they conferred the Melchizedek priesthood on me, [...] and so they already gave me a calling. They called me as president of the young men's group, i.e. they showed they trusted him to be a role model for LDS youth.

The cases of Patricio and Guillermo clearly show that receiving a calling is a crucial moment in making a new church commitment. If new members can learn how to cooperate successfully with other church members, it nourishes their commitment. But if they lack the self-confidence, or do not
want to sacrifice their time, a calling can just as quickly make them inactive. This issue will be explored further below. First I want to describe and analyze other obstacles to church commitment that figure very prominently among the informants.

6.3 Problems and responses
I identify five major problems, and analyze the informants' principal responses, that can drive people away from their new church: disillusionment and backsliding, alcohol problems, receiving and dealing with a voluntary church assignment, the time investment required, and finally money sacrifices to the new church. All have special relevance for small entrepreneurs, with the possible exception of the first.

6.3.1 Disillusionment and backsliding: 'Some church member disappoints them'
In the cases mentioned above, Beatriz, Bernardo, and Ramiro were clearly successful in gradually merging with their Mormon ward. They felt welcome and appreciated. The attitude established members took towards the new members was very important in making them feel comfortable in church or not. If new members received a lukewarm or cold welcome, their already difficult task of grasping a new doctrine, complying with new behavior rules, and changing their lives became even harder. Many got disillusioned and became inactive.

Disillusionment happened for instance to Guillermo, the first time he got recruited to the Latter-day Saints Church at 18. It also happened to Miguel in 1978, when he was 36. He says:

Well, in the beginning there are people who take badly to you, who don't stick to you. Say that when you go, that they take you seriously. I've told various missionaries, who find it so hard to walk knocking on door after door, to see if they can baptize somebody... It's so hard for them, and maybe when they [the new members] get to church, some church member disappoints them. Because you have to treat them well. You have to welcome them and all that. And that's what I've tried to do.

Miguel was perfectly happy to work with the US missionaries in the La Florida ward, but they changed his calling and some fellow-members ridiculed him because he could not read. Going to church became a burden, instead of a joy. He soon became inactive, because he felt they did not take him seriously as a member. He has not been attending church in the last six months of my field-

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7The part on post-recruitment church disillusionment is relatively short, since my study focused primarily on small-scale entrepreneurs who were active in their church.
work.

Backsliding. If new members lack the support of established members, they may become inactive, which is what happened to Miguel. An even bigger risk is that people backslide, i.e. they slip back into former problems. This happened to Guillermo, who went back to the street to drink and take drugs again; to Mario; and to Ramiro, who says:

The truth is that the church is a strong commitment if you want to be sincere. [...] When you're involved in church you know that if you do something wrong around the corner, it's like as if there's someone watching you. You feel a remorse that what you're doing isn't correct.

[...] While in church I was backsliding: I went to church and I drank. But I felt bad, because I felt I wasn't doing things correctly, like the Lord wanted. So this made me experience my conscience; it was hammering into me that I wasn't behaving correctly. So I had to make this choice: either I went straight to the street to live my life, or I stayed in church and tried to use the principles which the church would give me [...].

People do not just stay in church because of social control, i.e. because they feel obliged by watchful church members and leaders. Ramiro's story here shows what happens when people have the (economic) freedom to go on drinking, while at the same time going to church. Ramiro grew up as a second-generation Mormon, hence was more thoroughly socialized in LDS morality than other people. This is probably why his conscience gave him trouble, when he was both in church pretending to be good and drinking in secret. He knew that he `wasn't behaving correctly.' So he faced an either/or choice: either he ended up with the church or on the street, with everything that both things implied. He opted for the church.

6.3.2 Dealing with alcohol problems: `God did a miracle'

Nine of the thirteen key informants have experienced alcohol problems in the past. What do they have in common? First, they are all men. Ana, María, and Beatriz never drank. Miguel is the only man without a drinking past. Second, most started drinking around 14, the time they also started to work for money in various jobs. Patricio was the youngest, who had his first beer at eight; at 22, Mario was the oldest. Third, around 20 most were dealing with a very serious alcohol problem. Guillermo and Juan were early, at 13 and 14. At 22, Patricio and Mario about conformed with the average. Luis was in his mid-twenties, while Pablo was 27. The only exceptions are Raúl and Bernardo, who were 43 and 47 when their alcohol problem got out of hand.

How and why do these men start drinking alcohol? When and why does the problem get out of

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8 Had Ramiro opted for the street, I never would have met him. Or I might have passed him as one of the many drunks on street-corners, shouting obscenities and sarcasms like: 'Long live the United States of America.'
hand? And finally: how do they manage to overcome their alcohol problems? Here I will discuss the cases of Raúl, Bernardo, and Patricio; above I showed how growing up in the LDS Church affected Ramiro and activated his conscience. Earlier the issue of `peer drinking' was already addressed as one of the problems of starting to work young and one of the obstacles to having a firm of one's own.

In many ways, Patricio probably constitutes the most extreme case of alcohol problems. His father suffered from the same problem and Patricio was only eight when he first drank beer. As a child, he heard the Mormon missionaries and liked their message very much. Already at eight he wanted to convert, but his Catholic parents prohibited him. Throughout his adolescence he worked as a bricklayer or carpenter in his father's construction firm. He married young at 19 and became a father one year later. In 1978, aged 22, his alcohol problem got out of hand. For years he continued to drink too much and watched his family suffer the consequences. Motivated by a desire to help his family and household, they converted together to the Latter-day Saints Church in 1982. He managed to control his alcohol problem, although he did not stop drinking altogether, and by 1983 started a construction firm that was independent from his father's company. Business was slow, however. He worked as an undocumented alien in Chicago in 1985-87 to save money for his new firm. He was very unhappy there and missed his children, so after a year he started drinking again. Back in Guatemala he kept it up. Before the November 1990 elections he had been drinking continuously for two months, almost without eating. Patricio describes what happened next when he was on the street:

I knelt down and I felt some hands on my head. And when the hands came I felt nothing anymore. When I managed to wake up I was in a bed in the Roosevelt hospital. [...] Well, I felt that God did a miracle. I didn't even feel a hangover. [...] I didn't feel nauseous anymore; I didn't feel dizzy anymore. I was hungry. Imagine what it's like to be two months without eating, just drinking. There I felt the complete change of the Lord in me.

Ever since that day I never drank again. I got fully involved in Church and I feel that I've changed a lot. [...] Because the Lord is always calling you [...] exactly one month later the bishop came to ask me if I wanted to come back to Church. And I told him maybe yes. [...] You feel this joy inside, this pleasure. It's something you really cannot explain. It's something very big. You feel more worthy, coming a bit closer to the Lord; that you're more intimate.

Raúl is the subject of the second alcohol problem case. When competition in the gas trade increased strongly around 1985, Raúl's alcohol use went up and became very problematic. He often quarreled with his wife and he hints at marital infidelity. He started attending a Protestant church with his wife around 1980, but still became an alcohol abuser around 1984 (aged 43). The money he spent on liquor meant there was less for the household which included six children by now. Raúl stresses that the Protestant principles he shared with his wife, who already in the late 1970s had become
spiritually born-again in a Protestant church, helped them to keep their marriage together and motivated him to put his life in order. It was only after he put his life in order, overcame his alcohol problem, and acquired firm testimony of the veracity of Rains of Mercy that he was baptized a member of Rains of Mercy. In 1994, aged 53, he officially became a born-again Christian himself. Again the connection between alcohol problems and religion is striking.

Bernardo, the subject of the third and last case, has more in common with Patricio than with Raúl. Among the carpenters it was also common to go out every Saturday with all the boys from the workshop together, just like among Patricio's bricklayers and Juan's mechanics. It was impossible to say no, if you wanted to belong to the group. Bernardo says:

On Saturdays we drank with the boys from the workplace where I worked. We went out and started to drink some beer. We started with a few and later it was many, many and I didn't work anymore. I don't know the reason. [...] They invent many motives: because it's cold, it's hot; because your football team won, because they lost; because they baptized a child; because it's somebody's birthday. [...] But it's not that, it's because you're ill and you need to drink. [...] It's a disease: treacherous, progressive, and, well, incurable.

Most informants spent their twenties and thirties having problems with alcohol. For Bernardo, however, his alcoholism started when he was in his forties, after remarrying with an LDS wife, becoming a father again, losing his home in the 1976 earthquake and joining a squatter movement in Tierra Nueva. Maybe the stress and responsibilities became too much for him. Bernardo was drinking with fellow-workers since his teens, but his alcoholism started in 1977, when he was a block-leader involved in the construction of new houses in Tierra Nueva. His drinking problem soon negatively affected his performance at work. Though customers at various places where he worked told him to start an enterprise of his own, alcoholism made that impossible:

Well, alcoholism came and it was very strong in me. I became an alcoholic and I couldn't... I bought tools, I sold them to drink. Again I bought tools, again I sold them. And so I was throwing it all away and I never accomplished anything.

The last time I drank it was very serious. I was drinking like for three days in a row, day and night. So I was already almost... I already felt I was going to die. So one day in the early morning I knelt down and asked Jesus Christ to help me stop drinking, or to let me die in some way or other. Because I couldn't bear life like this anymore.

Bernardo is an exception, because he was already in his forties when he became an alcoholic and in his early fifties when he kicked the habit and started his carpentry firm. Note the highly passive way he talks about the problem: `alcoholism came [...] and I never accomplished anything.' Like Guillermo and Patricio, he reached the point of thinking he was going to die. Only when he admitted that he needed God's help did a solution become possible. This is what he says about his
struggle to give up alcohol, which featured the prominent help of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):

Yes, it was hard to stop drinking. I struggled, I tried various ways. My wife took me to a drugstore; they told her to buy this or that. She gave it to me and I didn't stop drinking. She took me to a curandero\(^9\) gentleman up there, with white roses and water and I don't know what else... There they did things with me to take away the bad spirit nonsense, right? But it didn't do anything. They gave me drinks, they made me vomit and they did so many things with me. But all in vain.[...]

But I saw my three youngest children, who were [...] in secondary school. They were with their school friends in the September 15 [Independence] Parade. I was standing at a corner, but I was drinking.[...] They were very poorly dressed: their shoes old; their trousers very old; their shirts very old, very worn out. And the other boys were well dressed, with polished shoes, very nice.

So I started to think that it wasn't fair that my children were like that. I had to do something, because my children couldn't be like that. This thought got stuck in my mind and that night I was thinking and thinking. In the early morning of the night of 15 September I got out of bed, I knelt down and I asked God to help me.[...]

Only the power of God... There's a pact in Alcoholics Anonymous that says: we realized that our lives had become uncontrollable and that only an act of divine Providence could bring us back to sane judgment. So I acted upon that. I held on to that pact, that only an act of divine Providence can bring us back to sane judgment.

I said: Well, if that's true I am going to struggle with divine Providence, with Jesus Christ, and I'll see what happens. Because I can't do it any other way. And it worked. Until this day I haven't been drinking. I never drank again.

Healers and medicine and pressure from his wife were insufficient for Bernardo to stop drinking. But when he observed the state of his children at school, he made a connection with his own childhood. He knew he had to do something, but he did not know what. So he had to show humbleness and discipline: he would ask God for help, which was very common at Alcoholics Anonymous. He would fight his alcohol problem aided by divine intervention. `And it worked.' Out of gratitude towards the Lord, he became active again in the LDS Church.

Bernardo's tale is very much the `standard story' among my informants. In fact, these stories of dealing with alcohol problems are all remarkably similar. Almost everybody was introduced to drinking by workmates, began experiencing serious alcohol problems in their twenties, and found some sort of solution in their thirties. They saw the poverty in their households, which affected especially their wife and children, and felt responsible for it. They were reminded of their own fathers, who had failed as educators and providers. After some serious self-reflection and self-discipline, some were able to overcome their alcohol problems on their own like Ramiro, Juan, and Patricio or through Alcoholics Anonymous (like Bernardo and Guillermo). In all cases, their religiosity and their church group played an important part. The informants' church and household combined with individual self-reflection to bring an end to the problems with alcohol and gain control back over their lives.

\(^9\) Curandero: (Indian) healer.
6.3.3 *Church assignments: 'The opportunity to serve' (or become inactive)*

Doing voluntary work in a church assignment, for instance as a leader or teacher, offers the opportunity to acquire new practical skills and hence increases self-confidence. Of my eight Latter-day Saint informants, only two do not have a calling: Bernardo, who says he is too old, and Miguel, who is inactive. Both members of Rains of Mercy, Raúl and Ana, have callings. Neither of the two Catholics (María and Pablo) have any assignment in the parish; of course, the organizational structure of the Roman Catholic church makes lay assignments more rare than among Protestants. First I will discuss the Mormons, and next the Rains of Mercy members.

*Latter-day Saints.* Over three-quarters of all active LDS members had a calling (assignment). What is more, forty percent of those with a calling had only received it less than six months before. On the other hand, in June 1995 Mario is relieved as bishop of La Florida after almost seven years: much longer than the customary three to five years in the United States. My impression is that the leadership callings (dealing with church organization, management, and administration) rotate only very slowly, while the teaching and more humble callings rotate at a higher speed. Of course, these latter callings are usually given to newer members, while leadership callings go to more experienced members like Mario, Juan, and Ramiro.

Mario, manager of his parents' ironware store and from 1988 to 1995 bishop of the La Florida ward, presents the official church opinion on the importance of callings for members:

> Any calling in church provides the opportunity to serve. The whole point is that the person who's called finds the way to serve the others in his calling. So you can be a teacher or simply someone who's assigned to welcome people at the door [...]. Any assignment, any calling in church, gives this blessing of knowing that you're useful for other people.[...

> But through this service you make progress by knowing people's problems and helping to solve them. It gives you life experience. When you are confronted with these problems yourself you'll know how to solve them.

According to the LDS Church, having a calling teaches members how to serve others by taking responsibility for them. It is an important part of members' spiritual progress. Ramiro's own experience with callings is positive. He feels more confident, closer to God, because he has a calling. However, fear of God also plays a part:

> It's happened to me that they tell me: Well, you're going to work as teacher of this or that. And I might be able to

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*Source:* November 1993 LDS survey.
talk to people in a lot of situations, but to teach class and all is very difficult for me. Sometimes I felt unable to do my part.

But I feel that if I say no, the Lord will stop blessing me. So I have to make a sacrifice trying to do it, even though I don't like it and I think I cannot do it. And the Scriptures even say that the Lord will not give you a task you cannot fulfill. So it might be a burden, something you don't think you're able to do. However, you've got to try and do it. And if the Lord helps you... And the truth is that when you're in this process, you realize that things are going right.

The problem in a nutshell: in a calling members are forced to learn new things, like teaching, that they are not used to and do not know well. They would like to shirk their responsibilities, but they are afraid of losing God's blessing if they fail, so they go on. And then they realize they had it in them all along. This is basically a story about self-confidence. In the end, Ramiro might still be a bad teacher in Sunday School. In that case his fellow-members will have to suffer the consequences just like they often do in the many church meetings on Sunday, listening to boring speeches by ill-prepared members. As Ramiro says: it is all part of their sacrifice, and it will bring LDS members many blessings. Apart from facilitating spiritual progress, a calling can also give people life experience, which in general raises their self-confidence. But it does not always work out that way in La Florida. In fact, new members actually sometimes become inactive, when given a calling. Miguel's experiences provide a case in point.

Miguel had a calling as ward mission leader in the early nineties. It meant on the one hand trying to get members to evangelize, while on the other hand assisting the young missionaries in any way he could. He referred names of people interested in the church to them, took the elders in his car to appointments, and often brought them home during the rainy season. He very much liked working with the US missionaries:

HG: What do you like about the North Americans?
The way they talk... Well, that among all of them there are always many who are very friendly, understanding and all, with what you tell them.

Miguel was happy with his calling and put his heart into it. But around September or October 1994, the stake presidency changed his calling. Miguel was forced to work with Guatemalan church members who treated him arrogantly, as he put it. In October 1994, he stopped going to church regularly and thus became inactive. He shows no desire to go back to church, though both Juan and Mario are good friends of his. The US missionaries of the La Florida ward also talk very appreciatively of him. But they cannot convince him to become active again in church, even though they are

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11 Miguel never volunteers more information on this matter, but the missionaries tell me that he was ridiculed by some fellow-members because he could not read or write (fieldnotes, November 16, 1994).
Miguel's troubles are part of a structural problem: a great lack of leadership at both ward and stake level in La Florida. Unmotivated and uninspired leaders help to create passivity among members. According to the new bishop\textsuperscript{12}, most members were in 'spiritual sleep'. He thought that the La Florida ward was lacking unity, friendship, and human warmth. This problem started with the new stake presidency in 1990. But ordinary members were also in part responsible: they found it hard to do unrenumerated volunteer work in church. This was to be expected, since most are living in poverty, which causes many family and health problems.

*Rains of Mercy.* I calculated that 35 to 45 percent of all active members in Rains of Mercy have a calling. Ana is a teacher and counselor of the young single women (age 15 and older), which she likes very much. But I will concentrate here on Raúl, who says about his assignment in Rains of Mercy:

> Well, I'm secretary and leader of the church's deacons. As deacons, we have the mission to evangelize. Our goal is to try to convert people who do not have our religion. To try to convince them there is only one path. And that path is our Lord Jesus Christ, who can lead us to God and hence to eternal life, right?

After this rather formal explanation of his tasks as a deacon, Raúl follows up with a critical review of Rains of Mercy's authoritarian structures, which he claims does not make good use of members' capacities:

> The growth of a church in great part corresponds with the pastor who is leading it. It's very important that he should not act with partiality. It's not convenient in a Christian church or in any enterprise that there exists partiality. You have to treat all persons the same, giving to each one their proper place.

> So not turning toward, in the case of churches, only particular persons with a high frequency of privileges, right? But taking everybody into account, and finding new values if possible. Because sometimes there's people in church, there's newly-qualified people, who have a lot to offer.

> But the managers or the pastors simply don't take them seriously; they don't give them the opportunity to develop themselves. They are almost always with the same old people, who are maybe not qualified, but they have won over the pastor or council in one way or another. And this happens in all churches.

\textit{HG}: And in your church too?

> I think too you have to be honest and say it but what I do have very clear in my perspective as a Christian is that we don't belong to a church. We don't go precisely to that church to be obliging the members, the leaders, the pastor of that church. But rather we do it as a commitment to work for the Lord.

\footnote{\textit{HG}: And in your church too?}

\footnote{Interview. December 3, 1994. At that time he had a calling in the stake high council and was unaware of the fact that in June 1995 he would become the new bishop of the La Florida ward. However, his analysis was astute and he had more freedom to talk openly about the ward's problems at that time.}
Here, Raúl's view on the meaning of the church for a Christian seems highly influenced by the situation in La Florida's Rains of Mercy congregation: a small power faction, a strong leadership conflict, and little growth within the church. It shows that this type of conflict can undermine the unity in a congregation and the motivation of its members to work as volunteers in church assignments. If people feel limited in performing their assignments, which Raúl is saying here, the functioning of the congregation as a whole will suffer. That is the negative side of doing volunteer work in a church.

In summary: performing church assignments offers the possibility of acquiring new skills, both in the Latter-day Saints Church and Rains of Mercy. However, the success of these assignments depends greatly upon the organizational and communicative skills of church leaders. If these are insufficient, stagnation of church growth and lack of motivation among members can be the result.

6.3.4 Time investments: 'You're making a sacrifice'

Considering the lengthy descriptions and analyses of the benefits of church membership for household and firm, it seems logical to ask what the church demands in return in money and time investments. How much of their time do my informants invest in their church, including Sunday and weekday meetings, voluntary assignments, Bible study, and prayer?

For the Mormons I count three hours on Sunday, one hour on average for Bible study and prayer, and the hours spent on their callings. For comparative purposes I include the stake president in the table below, although he is not a key informant. The Roman Catholic María is included twice, because I can compare her situation in 1995 with her situation in 1993. With her I count two hours for Sunday mass and one hour for Bible study and prayer. Rains of Mercy member Raúl states he goes to church two or three times a week (meaning four to six hours); he has on average two weekly deacon meetings (two to three hours, including preparation) and one hour of study and prayer. Of the 168 hours in a week I will subtract a standard 56 (eight a day) for sleeping, so the total number of hours is always 112. The results are presented in the table below.

The combined average score of weekly time spent on church matters for all informants is about seven percent, but the variations are huge. Pablo spends no time on the Roman Catholic church at all. Whether the emphasis is on her work (in 1995) or on miscellaneous things (1993), María only spends three percent on Catholic Church matters. Both Raúl and Ana spend six to nine percent of their time on matters concerning Rains of Mercy. For the Latter-day Saints, the important factors are being active, having a calling, and having a leadership calling. Inactive Mormon Miguel only spends about one percent of his weekly time on prayer and religious discussions with his children. Bernardo, who has no calling, spends four percent. Beatriz spends about five percent. Finally the
LDS leaders: Ramiro, second counselor to the bishop, spends five to seven percent of his waking time on church matters; Guillermo (who had four callings!) needs 10 to 13 percent; and the duty-heavy stake president no less than 16 or 17 percent. These leaders are, not surprisingly, highly active Mormons indeed!
Table 6.3.4a

Hours per week spent on church, work, and miscellaneous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Church in hours (%)</th>
<th>Work in hours (%)</th>
<th>Miscellaneous (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pablo *</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>55 (49%)</td>
<td>57 (51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>40-60 (36-54%)</td>
<td>51-71 (45-63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María 1993</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>61 (54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María 1995</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>60 (53%)</td>
<td>49 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardo</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>45 (40%)</td>
<td>63 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatriz *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>5-6 (4-5%)</td>
<td>20-25 (18-22%)</td>
<td>81-87 (72-78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricio *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>50 (45%)</td>
<td>54-56 (48-50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>56-58 (50-52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>46 (41%)</td>
<td>58-60 (52-54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis *</td>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>8-9 (7-8%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>55-56 (49-50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana *</td>
<td>RoM</td>
<td>7-10 (6-9%)</td>
<td>45-47 (40-42%)</td>
<td>55-60 (49-54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>RoM</td>
<td>7-10 (6-9%)</td>
<td>40 (36%)</td>
<td>62-65 (55-58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>11-14.5 (10-13%)</td>
<td>45-50 (40-45%)</td>
<td>47.5-56 (42-50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario * stake president *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>18-19 (16-17%)</td>
<td>&gt;60 (&gt;54%)</td>
<td>&lt;33-34 (&lt;29-30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45 (40%)</td>
<td>48-49 (43-44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combined average</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.5 (7%)</td>
<td>47.4 (42%)</td>
<td>57 (51%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates calculated estimations.

I also calculated the ratio between hours spent on church matters and hours spent on work: see table 6.3.4b below. Inactive Mormon Miguel spends 50 times more time on his work than on the Latter-day Saints Church. Another high score is for María, who in 1995 spends 20 times more hours on her firm than on church matters. On the other side of the continuum, the stake president only spends about 2.5 times more hours on his work than on church matters. Guillermo scores about four, Raúl five, Ramiro seven and María in 1993 scored 16.

All Latter-day Saints together, according to the November 1993 survey, spent an average of seven hours a week on callings. Adding the time spent on Sunday meetings, preparations and study, the total number of hours a week dedicated to church is eleven, corresponding to about ten percent of their total waking time. However, since older members are overrepresented in the survey, it is very likely that most ordinary members spend considerably less time on church matters.¹³

In fact, LDS leaders specifically bishop Mario and second counselor Ramiro openly admit

¹³ Ramiro would qualify as about the average member in this respect. By way of comparison: the typical Dutch LDS member spends one or more nights a week in church meetings and at least two hours on study, which roughly translates to four to eight hours a week, or four to seven percent (see van Beek 1988: 36).
that it is hard to motivate people to come to church on Sunday. Even members with testimony of
the veracity of the Mormon Church often consider it a big sacrifice to be locked inside the church
building three hours every Sunday, to the point of skipping lunch if they have important meetings.
Since it can be hard to get members to invest their time in Sunday church meetings, this can explain
why average attendance on Sunday (76) is lower than the approximate number of active members
(100).

Table 6.4.3b

Average ratio's between hours spent on church, work, and miscellaneous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Av. ratio work:church</th>
<th>misc.: church</th>
<th>misc.: work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pablo *</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María 1995</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María 1993</td>
<td>Cath.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardo *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricio *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramiro *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis *</td>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana *</td>
<td>RoM</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>RoM</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatriz *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>15.45</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>&gt;3.25</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>&lt;0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stake president *</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combined average</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates calculated estimations.

Ramiro also recognizes that for him the temptations are not relaxing or enjoying the weather, but
refraining from working on Sunday. The Latter-day Saints Church, like almost all Protestant
churches, stresses the importance of the `day of the Lord', the day of resting. Working on a Sunday
is not acceptable for faithful Mormons. However, consider this quote by Ramiro:
At least I have never been able to say no to them [his customers]. Even sometimes when I have to go to church and they come looking for me to work, I cannot say anything to them. Because I know that Sunday is a resting day and that I need to use it for the church. Then customers come with some sorrow: that, look, the water is leaking out and so many things. I have to tell them: Well, we'll go quickly to see what they have.

Here the tension between spending time on church matters and working for money comes out very clearly. The last sentence can only mean that sometimes Ramiro does, in fact, work on Sunday. But the reason for doing so, from what he says, appears not to be money; anyway his average wages are about the highest among the informants. It seems the real reason is loyalty to his customers. He phrases it as ‘not being able to say no to them.’ But at home and with relatives (for instance in the incident with the cousin who worked for him) Ramiro can show strong character and determination, proving that he is quite able to say no if he wants to. Ramiro is simply determined to be there for his clients, which may even imply working on a Sunday. Of course, Ramiro is a very active member: a high priest with a leadership position. Mario, his bishop, will surely disapprove of these actions and criticize him for it in private. If the bishop's second counselor works on Sunday, other members might think that they can do the same especially if they need the money they can earn on a Sunday a lot more than Ramiro...

Summary. Latter-day Saint leaders report that it is not easy to get people to sacrifice their time by becoming involved in church. Still my calculated estimations show that the Mormons spend an average of nine hours on church matters a week, compared to the Rains of Mercy members 8.5 and the Roman Catholics only two. The average for the three churches together is eight. The church has to compete against relaxation on the couch with television, going outside and at least in the case of Ramiro even with work. Generally speaking, the Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs combine a high dedication to their work with a high dedication to their church thus ironically sacrificing time for their family, which the church itself sees as vital for both society and personal spiritual growth. The Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs pair a higher than average commitment to church with a low (Raúl) or average (Ana) commitment to work. The Roman Catholics, finally, tend to make a very low time commitment to church, an average to high commitment to work and a low (María in 1995) to high (Pablo) time commitment to other things including the household.

6.3.5 Money investments: The Lord's share

What about the money the informants directly invest in their church membership? I will address tithing and offerings for both church cases: first the Mormons, then Rains of Mercy.
Latter-day Saints. For the Mormons, tithing money makes up the biggest part of direct costs, followed by fast offerings. But there are also many indirect costs: providing lunches for the (mostly US) missionaries\(^{14}\), buying formal clothes to wear to church, bus tickets to go to stake meetings, teaching materials... These costs vary greatly from one member to another and are impossible to calculate. Fast offerings are paid each Sunday of testimonies, the first Sunday of each new month, in closed white envelopes. All of the informants always seem to turn these in, but many other members do not at least not always. Acquiring more information on them is also impossible. Hence I will concentrate on tithes.

The LDS tithing system is quite complicated. Tithes, usually defined as ten percent of monthly wages, have to be paid each month directly to the bishopric. The bishop (sometimes aided by somebody else: a counselor or even the ward secretary) administers all tithe money and makes yearly overviews for each individual member usually the head of the household. The only other church leader who has access to individual tithing overviews is the stake president, who is normally too busy with other bureaucratic tasks to keep track of tithes. The Area Office only sees the total amounts of received tithe money by ward and by stake. They have no way to check individual tithing contributions. All of the tithing money goes out of the local ward.

Tithing money is seen as the Lord's share, so if people pay less than ten percent of their income, it is ultimately their own responsibility. During the regular `worthiness interviews', a requisite for obtaining a temple recommend, the bishop and stake president routinely ask if the member pays tithes. On the standard interview form, the leader can fill out both the member's answer and his own appraisal. Most members say they paid tithes, and it is up to the local leaders to decide whether they are worthy of a temple recommend or not.

In practice, the bishop is the only person who knows exactly how often a certain member pays tithes, and how much money is involved. Of course, the bishop is also highly aware of most members' financial state, and he knows who receives aid as part of the welfare program. He knows when a counselor of his is going through hard times with his firm. So the bishop usually takes a very flexible position. But his very power in deciding whether the tithes are sufficient, which means that the member is entitled to temple recommend, makes the abuse of his authority a continuous

\(^{14}\) A new policy, which apparently originated in the LDS mission office, requires all ward members to invite the missionaries (elders) over for lunch various times a month. The idea is to have closer contact between ordinary Guatemalan members and the (mostly North American) missionaries. However, it produces some undesired side effects: many members can hardly afford to feed the tall and hungry adolescents, and the missionaries themselves complain about eating too much 'rice 'n' beans', which are lacking in nourishment. In practice, well-to-do members like Juan invite the elders far more often than ordinary members, so the policy actually emphasizes wealth differences
temptation. Hence, LDS bishops will talk about anything except tithes. They have to be very discrete.

*Rains of Mercy* Pastor Marco Antonio shows the same discretion. In spite of promises to the contrary, he never gives me an approximation of how many members pay their tithes. He only says that is is `hard' to get members to pay tithes. He confirms that the pastor is responsible for collecting the tithes and keeping the records. Only information on tithes at the congregation level goes to the central church building, together with a percentage of the money that is collected. But most of the tithing money stays within the local congregation. The Rains of Mercy manual uses very strong words to phrase the obligation to pay tithes:

In God's plan the people should give tithes, offerings, and first fruits for the support of Christian work: Malachi 3:8; Exodus 22:29; 34:26; Proverbs 3:9; Deuteronomy 18:4; Deuteronomy 14:22; Leviticus 29:30; Deuteronomy 12:17. Not doing so entails a curse, which cannot be removed by prayer, fasting or abstinence, but only by giving the Lord the tithes, offerings, and first fruits. Understanding and observance of this point will change the life of the brothers and the Church in everything. 

The obligation to pay tithes also comes up regularly during Sunday School meetings and Sunday worship meetings. The same Bible quotes the Mormon Church uses in support of this practice are read aloud and leaders stress that if members administer their money well, paying tithes will be no problem at all.

*Summary*. Considering how often (temporary or structural) money shortages and business problems came up in the previous chapters, I think that almost everybody with the exception of Ramiro (and Mario!) in the LDS church and both Raúl and Ana in Rains of Mercy is occasionally unable to pay any tithes at all, and generally pays less than ten percent. In fact, Miguel and Patricio will have a hard time just calculating the actual amount of money they are supposed to donate, since they do not keep records of expenses and incomes. Which in itself also supports my claim here: that while people will make a great effort to pay at least something to the church each month, for most members this will only very rarely amount to ten percent of their income.

6.4 Church membership and the household
Here I will describe and analyze the different forms of church involvement among my informants,
church involvement among spouses and children, and finally, how being active in church and leading a spiritual life can raise people’s self-confidence and give them faith in the future.

6.4.1 Forms of church involvement: ‘The church is a strong commitment’
This chapter has presented evidence that all the informants, including those currently inactive in a particular church, share a religious worldview (to various degrees, of course). Whether people comply with certain church rules is almost impossible to ascertain in general, based on interviews with them and participant-observation in their home and church. Moreover, compliance itself is not necessarily an indication of church involvement: people may be following rules because they fear the power of social control from fellow church members, who 
may be important business partners as well. Here I propose to look at the intensity of church involvement, based on very concrete indicators: the informants’ performance in fulfilling their calling(s), paying their tithes, and especially the amount of time they spend on church-related activities.

The time people spend on their church is a good indicator for various reasons. First, because it is very concrete: one can inquire about the subject and make calculated estimates based on the information. Second, because it is very specific: time spent in and on church can be measured in hours and compared to time spent on work, which I also have detailed information on. Time spent on church matters and work may then be compared to time spent on family/miscellaneous. The drawbacks can be responded to relatively easily: I do not pretend that this information consists of ‘hard data’, to be used as a basis for making hard statistical comparisons. Furthermore, the information only provides a snapshot of the time the informants spent on church between March and June 1995.

An earlier table (6.3.4a) measured church involvement by looking at the time people spent on church matters. Rather than considering the absolute numbers and estimates, I propose here to compare the average time spent on church, work, and family/miscellaneous for all the informants. This can be used to construct a typology of church involvement: see table below. The advantage is that time spent on church matters (not just Sunday services, but also callings, study, and prayer) is not seen in isolation but explicitly compared with time spent on work and family. Another advantage is that it deals with averages, which do not suggest a spurious exactness.

Table 6.4.1

| Average time spent on church, work, and miscellaneous |
The typology results in four types, corresponding to very low, low, average, and high levels of church involvement. I will briefly discuss these labels, going from very low to high. But first I will mention a few precautions. The typology is built on a mixture of hard data from interviews and life histories, and calculated estimates, which are directly based on the research information. The data and categories reflect only the current situation (except for María's data, which is from 1993 and 1995). Finally, it is important to remember that the averages here always refer to the informants, not to the whole of La Florida, Guatemala City, or Guatemala.

**Type 1**, characterized by a very low level of church involvement, consists of three people in two categories. The first category includes Pablo and Miguel, both of whom score extremely low on time spent on church matters (one and zero hours respectively), and slightly higher than average on work. LDS carpenter Bernardo scores low on church time and lower than average on work. At 65, he cannot afford to retire, but it is hard to keep up working 45 hours a week. He suffers from health problems and chronic fatigue, which explains why he does not have a calling in church.

**Type 2**, those who have a low level of church involvement, is made up of two women: Roman Catholic pottery entrepreneur María and LDS part-time beauty parlor owner Beatriz. Together they form three categories. The first two categories represent two points in time of María's life. In 1995, María scores high on work (hence lower on family time), because her firm is experiencing hard times. In 1993, on the other hand, she scores about average on work and above average on family. That was during the last of her good business years. The flexible character of church involvement becomes apparent here: the choice to put more time in work when business is bad, meaning less
time to spend on church and especially family. Beatriz scores a little below average on church time and very low on time spent on work, because she spends much more time than average on her family. Of course, in a situation where traditional gender role patterns are dominant and with a majority of male informants, it makes sense that Beatriz spends much more time on her family than her husband Mario or any other male informant.

Type 3, average to above average church involvement, is made up of three categories and six different people. Rains of Mercy gas vendor Raúl makes up the first category by himself: he spends above average time on church, but very little time on work. Four informants make up the second category of group 3, those who spend above average time on church and average time on work: LDS car mechanic Juan, LDS plumber Ramiro, Elim party furniture supplier Luis, and Rains of Mercy lawyer Ana. Ramiro says of his dedication to church:

The truth is that the church is a strong commitment if you want to be sincere. [...] If you're in church you know that if you do something wrong around the corner, it's like as if there's someone watching you. You feel a remorse that what you're doing isn't correct.

Construction firm owner Patricio forms the last category by himself: he spends higher than average time on church and also higher than average time on work.

Type 4, high, consists of only three persons: Guillermo, the Mormon stake president (who was not a key informant), and Mario. La Florida bishop from 1988 to 1995, Mario scores high on time spent both on church and work, and hence very low on time spent on family. Guillermo, who has four callings, scores high on church and average on work, just like his stake president. These persons do their callings to the best of their ability, which means a great time sacrifice. However, as faithful Latter-day Saints they believe that refusing a calling will result in God denying them blessings. Since only established and faithful members are eligible for the higher callings\footnote{I have no information on whether people sometimes refuse a higher calling. I imagine it happens only very rarely.}, it is perfectly logical to find Mario, the stake president and Guillermo in type 4. As supervisor of his parents' ironware store, Mario puts more time in his work than the other two, who are both independent entrepreneurs: Guillermo is a beginning shoemaker, while the stake president has an established printing firm.

Priorities. How do the informants value their church involvement? Type 1 is characterized by low (Bernardo, LDS), very low (Miguel, inactive LDS) or completely absent (Pablo, nominal Catholic) church involvement. Bernardo forms the category low church/lower than average work by himself.
His conversion happened thirteen years ago, as a consequence of seven years of alcoholism. I mention his age as prime factor of low involvement, but the fact that he occasionally smokes, which is explicitly prohibited by the church, indicates that his commitment is less than among the other Latter-day Saint informants.

Type 2 consists of Beatriz, and María at two different points in her life. Above I showed how María, who forms a household with her two children, her mother and grandmother, shifted the emphasis in her life from her family to her work, while the time she spent on church matters remained relatively stable. For María, church is important as an individual commitment, but even more so as part of the children's education. She keeps her church involvement stable (going to mass every week), but at a low level (refraining from any assignment). Her real priorities are her family and her work, and these two shifted between 1993 and 1995 because of business developments. Beatriz, on the other hand, has to balance her role as housewife and mother of three small children (which absorbed almost 75 percent of her waking time) with her calling as Primary counselor and teacher in church (five percent) and her beauty parlor (over 20 percent). Beatriz, in fact, would like to increase her church involvement and time, but the household's circumstances, especially Mario's demanding job and his calling as bishop, make this impossible.

In type 3, Juan, Ramiro, Luis, Ana, and Patricio make work their first priority, but still manage to perform above average in time spent on church matters, showing that they take their church involvement very seriously. Raúl is the exception here, who opts for making his family a first priority and thus spending less than average time on his work. Type 4, finally, has important leadership callings, spends much time on church matters, and pays tithes to the best of their ability. They attempt to make the church their first priority in life, though their economic position generally forces them to make work a first priority.

After this extensive typology of church involvement among my informants, it now becomes necessary to expand the scope of analysis to their households. How does the informants' church involvement shape the activity of the other members of their household?

6.4.2 The household: 'The desire to have a better family'

A few introductory remarks before analyzing the state of the household's involvement in church. First, the fact that most informants are men constitutes an obvious bias here. Second, all informants have children, except Guillermo. Third, almost all informants have a partner, except Guillermo and María, who are single. Fourth, while the average age of the children is twelve, the

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17 Ten informants are men, three are women.
range varies from infant to over thirty. Adult children usually have their own households and are responsible for their own church involvement. Finally, since Mario and Beatriz form a household, the totals are usually twelve instead of thirteen.

Spouses. In eight households, the spouses show a commitment by being active in church. This is the case in five Latter-day Saint households (Juan, Mario & Beatriz, Ramiro, Bernardo, and Patricio), both Rains of Mercy households (Raúl and Ana) and Luis’ Elim household. Only in two cases are the spouses inactive: in Miguel's LDS household (where only the children go to church) and in Pablo's nominal Catholic household.

To take involvement one step further: how many spouses actually give speeches in church? In the LDS church, I see Jeanette (Juan's wife) as well as Mario & Beatriz give talks, though I never see Isabel (Ramiro's wife). In Rains of Mercy I see Ana's husband Henry but never Raúl's wife give a speech. These are the only people I have first-hand information on. Jeanette and Henry are both highly active in their respective churches.

Children. How often are the informants' children active in church? This again happens in eight cases, but they are not entirely the same as those mentioned above. María's two children go to mass with her each Sunday. In contrast, all Miguel's children go to the Latter-day Saints Church, even though their parents are inactive. Bernardo's and Raúl's households only consist of the younger children, because the eldest have already started their own families. All children that still live with them go to church.

How many children, aged eight and older, actually give speeches in church? In the Mormon church I see Juan's two eldest children (aged 19 and 18), Mario & Beatriz' eldest daughter (13), Ramiro's eldest daughter (8), and Patricio's eldest son (17) on the platform. Rains of Mercy has no tradition of having children before the congregation; Ana's children are too young anyway. In summary: Juan's two eldest, Patricio's eldest son and to a certain extent Mario & Beatriz' daughter are the only children really active in church. Most of the children, however, are still too young to have a testimony of their own.

Households. In eight cases, the entire household is involved in church. This applies to five out of eight Latter-day Saint cases (Juan, Mario & Beatriz, Ramiro, Bernardo, and Patricio), both Rains of Mercy cases (Ana and Raúl) and Luis as sole representative of Elim. This quote by Ramiro is

18 Bernardo goes to another Latter-day Saint ward, which I am never able to visit. Luis goes to the Neo-Pentecostal church Elim, which I only visit once.
representative for many:

When we married, I was inactive. After being married to my wife for about three years I got active once again. [...] I married at 25. And with the desire to have a better family and all, that it would have good principles, well I tried to instill the religion into my wife. Well, since most of her family are Catholics... I even married her in the Catholic religion.

And being married we talked and agreed to go to the church where I was a member and baptized and all. So she learned about it, she liked it and she also got baptized. And, well, now we are a real family: all church members. She likes the principles that are practiced in the church and we think that we should continue believing the good principles of the gospel. And we even got married in the temple. [...] From then on we've been members. We've been inactive maybe for a few months, for nothing much, but we've always been quite close to the church.

In three cases, only part of the informant's household is active in church. In Miguel's Latter-day Saint household of six, only the children go to church, while the parents are inactive. In María's Catholic household of five, only she and her two children go to mass, while her mother and grandmother stay at home. In Guillermo's ten-person household, only he and three nephews and nieces go to the LDS Church. Finally, in Pablo's nominally Catholic household of five does nobody go to church at all.

Summary. When the husband is an active church member, the spouse is almost always active in church as well. In eight cases, the children are also active in church. Only the eldest children of four households occasionally give speeches in the Latter-day Saints Church. Also in eight cases, the entire household goes to church together. In three cases (María, Miguel, and Guillermo), only part of the household goes to church. In Pablo's household nobody goes at all.

6.4.3 Self-confidence: 'I've got faith in God that it will grow'

How church assignments may increase member's self-confidence, or alternatively damage their confidence in church leaders, was explored above. But having a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the goal of each Mormon and (neo-)Pentecostal, may give members the strength to endure or even overcome many hardships: poverty, stress, health problems, alcoholism, family problems, uncertainty, and risk. All of my informants share a strong faith in the future of their firm, even those who are suffering serious problems. I will give a few examples.

Guillermo's shoe workshop is barely one year old. It is doing OK, but profits are small. Still, he is optimistic about the future, which reflects the dominant Latter-day Saint doctrine on covenants between God and His servants:

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19 Juan & Jeanette, Mario & Beatriz, Ramiro & Isabel, and Patricio & Andrea.
I think that if I go on like this with the enterprise, if I go on respecting the covenants with the Lord, He will make me prosper. Because I am only a steward here, He is the owner and as manager I am His worker. If I fail, then He will take it away from me.

However, being a faithful Mormon is no guarantee for economic security. Juan and Bernardo both provide cases in point. Juan's garage was going through hard times in late 1994. He says:

[...] nowadays I've learned to have more trust in Him. Maybe I could put it like this. Some time ago I was very worried, talking about my firm, because there was no work. Work had gone down and I was worried. And again another time the work was a bit less and again I was worried.

After making an analysis, an examination, I started to see. Well and I said: I've got food, I've got clothes, I've got a few cents in the bank, I eat the things that I like to eat. So why am I worried when there's no work? It doesn't mean that I don't worry at all, or that I stopped worrying altogether.

So I said: You're forgetting something. So I would say that in fact I wasn't worrying, but I was being ungrateful. I was worrying only about asking and asking [more]. Stupid man; you're forgetting to be thankful. So after that time I started to be more grateful and to be more thankful, differently.

Really trusting in God can be a strong way to cope with the insecurity and risks inherent in business life. Bernardo's carpentry workshop, for instance, was doing very well in 1994: sales were high and he had eight workers. But in September 1994, he lost US$ 8,000 worth of machines, tools, and materials in a burglary. He was subsequently forced to lay off all his workers, except his own son. Bernardo does not consider this a punishment from God\textsuperscript{20}, but it clearly represented a terrible setback. He still gives it a positive turn, though:

The church has taught me to be self-reliant. At least now that I lost everything [to thieves], with what I learned I can do something. There's no need for anybody to give me anything, since I have to struggle to do it myself. And if I don't have enough well, I'll have to bear it without cursing, without being angry because I don't have enough.

Bernardo, in fact, had to start all over again. But he never considered giving up the firm by selling it, because he wants his sons to have it, after he dies. Luis, faithful member of the Neo-Pentecostal church Elim, expresses a similar sentiment regarding the future of his alquifiesta(s) (party furniture firm):

Well, I believe that it will improve [...]. We need to have this faith, it will improve, and I have the idea that my sons

\textsuperscript{20}Ironically, I once catch him hastily extinguishing a cigarette under his shoe, when I show up unexpectedly at his La Florida workshop. Most LDS leaders consider smoking disobeying the Word of Wisdom, a breach of the covenant between a member and God. Fieldnotes, March 27, 1995.
will continue. By the time they start to run it, it's already established. I think that it will help them: that these kids have already finished their education and that they will take over. I think that it will improve by the time they help, right?

In short, I do believe that there will be more work and that the firm will get better. And I think that in the future it will always be necessary to seek financial backing, because you never know how much you'll invest. Today I buy a machine, and next I realize that I need another and next another and in short... You start with one little welding machine and I already have three welding machines and next if you want to improve you have to invest. Investing never stops.

The party furniture shop is expanding strongly and generally doing very well, in spite of the postponement of investments because of the insecurities typical of an election year. Luis thinks of himself as a dynamic and professional entrepreneur, and his quote reflects that attitude well. For him, having confidence in the future is an essential part of it.

Of course, it is much harder to have faith in the future of the firm when business is bad. María's pottery workshop and store is going through a difficult period, because sales dropped considerably two years before and fail to improve. Still she says about the future of her pottery workshop:

I've got faith in God that it will grow. There are always little projects; that you're going to acquire new customers. Yes, I feel that God willing I have to move on. Right now I have a project of cutting out a window and putting up a show window beside the road. But I think that this will mean about 5,000 quetzales [over US$ 850] in expenses. So I don't have it and I can't do it, even though I'd like to. Also painting the house and putting up signs: pottery, I make this and I make that. This is also expensive, maybe about 500 quetzales. But I don't know. It cannot be painted [now], the money isn't there.

This strategy of postponing business investments when business is bad was already identified before. But the postponement is in itself a show of confidence in the durability of the firm. María's case also makes clear that for coping with insecurity and risk, the actual church one belongs to is not the decisive factor. Individual religiosity makes the difference here: whether people feel they can trust in God enough to put their lives completely in His hands. The examples here show that this can happen with Catholics, Mormons and Neo-Pentecostals alike. Much depends on the extent of individual church involvement and the importance of church networks, compared to other social networks.

6.5 **Church membership and the firm**
The aim here is not to give an evaluation of the informants' firms, but to trace and analyze the various direct connections between being both a small-scale entrepreneur and a church member. The principal contrast here is between the Mormon Church and Rains of Mercy, although there are
again various references to María, who is a Roman Catholic. I will identify four points where church membership can influence having a firm. First, through the dominant church discourse on business success. Second, through the influence of church advice on consumption and handling money. Third, through the church discourse on managing household and firm. Fourth, through the use of social networks of church friends and acquaintances in the operation of the firm. Although these connections seem to be mostly positive, most in fact include a negative component, which will also be identified and analyzed.

6.5.1 Business success: 'The Lord put it in my hands'

*Latter-day Saints*. The manuals for leaders stress that members have to strive for economic self-reliance. They suggest that active and faithful church members will be able to find a good job, provided they live according to God’s laws. But in their speeches, church leaders in La Florida often go beyond the manuals: they say that it would be good if members became economically independent by having their own enterprise no matter how small in order to achieve self-reliance. Having a firm will help the household to be more economically independent. Being an entrepreneur also allows the husband/provider more flexible working hours, so as to spend more time in church or in callings.

An LDS Church business ethics21 exists, which, however, seems to be implicit rather than explicit. Juan provides a good example. Juan thinks that being an active LDS Church member also makes him a responsible entrepreneur. His firm benefits from this as well:

When you believe in that great Master, you come and start to apply [the gospel]. And my life is like this: to apply all things of the gospel in my own life. It doesn't matter whether it's my work, if it's in your home, even more in the church.

I can't be doing my work say, stealing. And how can I steal? There are many ways. You're going to take me in your car. You trust and know that I'm going to do the work for you. Whether because they recommended me as being good, recommendation from somebody else. And you bring me a number of new spare parts. I could install them and I could not install them. Repairs are hidden.[...]

So here I apply a gospel principle: being honest.[...] When can I stop by to get my car? At ten o'clock. That's a promise, a word given. What would happen if you arrive at ten and guess what. I'll start working on it in a moment. No, right? The principle of honesty, the principle of responsibility and the principle of punctuality...

Juan first stresses that you have to apply the gospel in all of your life: home, work, and church. Next he basically describes a general sense of morality and righteousness, which is not exclusively Mormon (although it could be called typically Christian22). A great part of doing business is

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21 See also Gooren (1997b).
22 See for instance Raúl's highly similar story on the importance of morality in business below.
ultimately based on trust. Car repairs are an excellent example of this. If you have a reputation for being honest, it will also benefit your business. But Juan goes beyond that: to be responsible and punctual is also very important in his trade. In short: Juan thinks that the LDS Church imbues him with various ‘principles’ that serve not only his own spiritual development but also the development of his car repair business.

Some Latter-day Saint leaders, in fact, are actively and directly helping members to start a small enterprise. Guillermo says on the start of his small shoe enterprise:

I didn't do anything, the Lord put it in my hands. It happened through a brother of the Church [...] more specifically the bishop. He had some money at home and once he called me, interviewed me and asked about my work and all that. I told him and he said: look, Guillermo, I've been thinking. It would be good for you if you become independent and how much money do you need more or less to achieve that [...] I think it was a gift from God [...] I think that if I go on like this with the enterprise, if I go on respecting the covenants with the Lord, He will make me prosper. Because I am only a steward here, He is the owner and being the manager I am His worker. Of course, if I fail He will take it away from me.

I have faith in God. He says in his Word that if you obey the commandments, that He will give you a piece of land as inheritance. That is: if I pay my full tithings. I respect, for example, the Word of Wisdom, the day of resting, all these covenants that I made with Him. If I come and I'm faithful to this, He will give me the blessing, because He says: I am obliged to give you, if you do what I tell you. But when you don't do what I tell you, you will not receive a single promise [...] We in the church are a people of covenants. But you know that the covenant is between one person and another or more. If one side does its part, the other is obliged to fulfill what he has promised. But if any of the two fails... So that's how God's things are.

Guillermo stresses the reciprocal nature of his relationship with God: as long as he does his part, God will make sure that his firm prospers. This ‘covenant discourse’ of business success is dominant among the entrepreneurs in La Florida's LDS Church: Juan, Mario, Patricio, and Ramiro. However, no one takes this to imply that they are chosen by God and sure of a place in heaven.

Still, the negative component is easy to see: when business is bad, does this mean that they are out of God's favor? If one day their firm goes bankrupt, would that mean that God has abandoned them altogether? All Mormon entrepreneurs are doing reasonably well, so the issue apparently does not come up. But it is easy to imagine that poor people who are struggling daily to survive will not be happy in a church where leaders tell them to strive for self-reliance and it is implied that firms do well because people are keeping their covenants with God. If their economic situation remains unchanged while they are active Mormons, it is highly likely that these people will move on to another church.

*Rains of Mercy.* They might for instance go to La Florida's Rains of Mercy, which does not have a clear discourse on business success. Instead, its moral discourse focuses on the temptations...
presented to members by wealth and materialism. In Rains of Mercy, Raúl provides the best example of mixing morality with business. Raúl talks extensively about business ethics, focusing on the importance of trustworthiness and impartiality:

Well. In every possible way I try to be as trustworthy as possible. In the first place because this is to the advantage of my own enterprise because of reputation, but above all it's for fear of my own principles. From the start I was educated by my father to be honest, to be decent, to be trustworthy and sincere with everybody. It's best not to act with a bias. Not to be biased: to make an exception for people.

So whatever group they may be, whatever race they may be, you have to treat them the same, you have to charge them the same, you have to be alike. And if there's something they don't understand, you have to be able to come to an understanding with them, so that they will understand it and will have confidence in you. Once you win the confidence of the customer he will keep buying all the time and to this success is owed.

I was here in this and in the adjacent neighborhoods, and even in the place where I was born, widely known. I am a reliable person. Any client that may come [...] can let me into his house to do a job all day long if he wants to. He'll never have any doubt that I took advantage of that opportunity to appropriate something. Never. I've never done it.

I could never in my life even without being religious, right? work in a fraudulent way. I carried out works in which I was offered money in return for not performing my job. Bribes: I always turned them down. And in some firms where I went to work and where I tried to work [...] they wanted to subject me to this system of working and I resigned.

It exists in all firms. But nowadays I don't know much about this, because I've been working for myself for a long time. But, yes: in almost all firms I shouldn't say in almost all, but in all firms there's corruption. In one way or another there's corruption. The people you trust cheat you, fail you, rob you.

Here, Raúl is painting a very grim, almost apocalyptic, picture of Guatemala as a country experiencing extreme anomy. In all firms corruption and fraud are commonplace; there is nobody you can trust. If trust is missing, how can people do business? The answer is clear: by doing business with people of unquestionable morals, people of good reputation, people who know their job and people who understand and try to please their clients. In short, people like him. This morally inspired business ethic closely echoes the one by Juan, described above. It suggests that the church one belongs to is not the decisive variable, but rather one's individual religiosity and morality. Note his interjection that he is unable to cheat, `even without being religious.' The problem, of course, is that a good reputation is a very fragile thing: one misstep may utterly destroy it for years. Juan and Raúl have to be extremely careful to live up to their claims of moral righteousness with their customers whether fellow church members or not.

6.5.2 Handling money: `Maybe I'm going to make my brothers feel bad'

The Latter-day Saints Church discourse on handling money stresses self-reliance, which can be

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23 See chapter 2. Incidentally, this bleak view of Guatemala is not limited to members of evangelical Protestant churches. However, this group is more prone to describe it in apocalyptic terms and condemn it in moral terms.
achieved through having a job and the efficient administration of money at the household level (see below). To get a good job, having an education, a strong work ethic, and high morality are considered very important. But the Mormon Church does not ask its members to live a sober lifestyle: becoming rich and spending lots of money are generally not frowned upon either in Guatemala or in the US although everybody is pressured to pay their tithes. However, wealth must never be attained through illegal or immoral means, and money must never be spent on things that tend to move members away from God, like for example alcohol, drugs, prostitution, or pornography. As long as they remember their financial responsibilities towards the church and their household, and regularly donate their fast offerings to poorer members, there is no reason why well-to-do church members should not enjoy their money. Juan says:

And, well, there was a time when I felt... I don't know if it was a complex or if I felt bad, because in church all sorts of people arrive. Whereas in the ward where we go it's poor people, plain people, who say cannot wear an Arrow shirt. Here in Guatemala it's one of the most expensive; McGregor and those brands. I've been to the supermarket, I carry a few pennies in my pocket and I see a shirt and I like it. I put it on and, well, I went to church, but there was something like remorse of conscience: maybe I'm going to make my brothers here feel bad, wearing this shirt and this and that. And I'm thinking this, till one moment of the day, meditating on all of this because you have to meditate. I said: Well, I work. I burn my hands, I hit my hands, I get my hands dirty, I sweat, I work hard, day and night sometimes. So am I not worthy of wearing what I like, while at the same time I help my brothers? So I said: I'm going to do it.

And nowadays it's a part of me; it's part of what I deserve. Because I'm working; I'm not stealing anything from anyone. The money I earn, I earn it working honestly, by what I know about and by what I'm familiar with. So this has made me feel good. And the same: enjoying my meal. If I want to eat chow mein, if I want a hamburger, I eat one. If I want to eat pizza, OK. And no more the burden of this remorse. Well, it's my work and I want to enjoy it and I'm going to enjoy it.

Juan provides an extensive justification: he deserves all of this, because he knows his job and he works very hard. He is worthy of it, too, because he helps his fellow church members with fast offerings and occasional money donations. Juan is the only one of the well-to-do entrepreneurs to address this issue openly: that his capacities and his firm allow him to enjoy a more comfortable lifestyle than others. Unlike Ramiro and Patricio, who are only slightly better dressed than the other church members, Juan has some beautiful white shirts and well-cut blazers. However, all three act and talk like the other members. Although they only spent a few years in school, Juan and Ramiro especially have excellent verbal skills and an extensive vocabulary. They both radiate self-confidence, even more so than bishop Mario and first counselor Patricio.

While Juan is a Mormon who values a good appearance, María rejects `vanity' altogether. Although a Roman Catholic, a member of a church that cherishes appearance and ritual, María professes adherence to sobriety in daily life:
Because how shall I put it? I realize... Say there'll be a baptism. I don't know if in your country they also celebrate it like they do here, the baptism: that I'm going to make a lunch, that I'm going to invite people here. And what dress I'm going to wear? The hairdo I'm going to have. The shoes: I have to buy shoes, because I don't have shoes for in church.

Thank God it wasn't like that, the day they [my children] were baptized. I went to church. As a matter of fact I did dress well and the godparents too. Absolutely nothing like a party or this or that. For me the important thing was to have them baptized.[...]

It's vanity, I think. The party, I think, is above all vanity. Because I see that when people go to mass, they go well-combed, well-dressed. And I'm going to wear this; it's more expensive. And they even order a dress made.

It's a moment that one will share with friends, to share the joy of having them baptized. But it's not the most important thing. I think that the joy should be between you and the Lord.

María's story here is in line with her wanting to give her children a thoroughly religious upbringing at Catholic schools and her need for spirituality. When she was young, she told in her story, she enjoyed nice shoes and clothes; here she seems to imply that she has moved beyond all that. She is an active Roman Catholic, but with a rather ascetic view on ritual and vanity that is reminiscent of Pentecostalism. However, being a single mother with two children and no plans to look for a husband, it is highly unlikely that she will ever be fully accepted in either the Mormon or any (Neo-)Pentecostal church.

*Rains of Mercy*, finally, stresses that having a good job and a work ethic are highly important just like the Mormon Church. Again there also is a strong emphasis on paying tithes to the Lord. But the general emphasis lies more on moral issues: to be honest, to be fair, to earn money by proper means, and not to spend it on incorrect things like alcohol, drugs, prostitution. Pastor Marco Antonio often warns members against the temptations of materialism. Still among the more well-to-do members these hardly seem to be pressing matters. Ana thinks it normal that she and her husband Henry decide how they spend their high combined wages. The morality of spending is a matter between them and God, and as long as they pay their tithes and offerings she does not perceive any problems. Thus they have two cars, many durable consumption goods, and both wear fine clothes. Ana, additionally, wears heavy make-up.

Raúl also shows his wealth in his clothes, but to a lesser extent. Like Ana he subscribes to the idea of seeing the morality of spending as a matter between each Christian and God. Tithing and paying offerings for charitable activities are essential obligations of each sincere Christian. He says that for him a sober lifestyle means not to waste money on incorrect things, like alcohol. Apart from that, he does not see any problem with buying whatever he or his family wants.

6.5.3 *Managing household or firm: ‘To apply all things of the gospel’*
Latter-day Saints. According to the leader manuals, administering money well at the household level is an important part of achieving self-reliance. Some recommendations are to avoid debts, to pay your part to the Lord (tithes) and to fellow church members (fast offerings), to save money, to be frugal, and to use your time wisely. Above I already noted that although almost everyone tries to save money, only Ramiro manages to do so. The LDS entrepreneur informants are busy people, whose idea of relaxation is to watch cable television, play with their children, or read the Bible. They are never bored and it is hard to imagine them wasting time.

Whether the LDS entrepreneurs cab be called ‘frugal’ depends on the definition of frugality. Earlier I analyzed their consumption patterns. Poorer members like Guillermo live under very modest circumstances, having for instance only a black-and-white television with antenna. Mario and Beatriz’ household has a color antenna tv and a new fridge. Well-to-do entrepreneurs like Juan, Ramiro, and Patricio all have expensive consumer goods, such as color cable television and refrigerator. They buy their children expensive toys, like bicycles and Casio keyboards. They could save more money, by refraining from buying these goods. It shows something of their priorities, and who decides on these. Watching television is mostly done by the children; having a fridge on the other hand benefits the entire household. Still the decorations and furniture in their living rooms are generally rather modest. Their cars are well-maintained, but all are second-hand models. Based on their possessions it appears that the husband and the children have most power to decide on consumption priorities. Finally: Juan’s story about enjoying the fruits of his hard labor (see above) does not seem to include an emphasis on frugality.

What about their paying tithes and fast donations? First of all it is important to point out that Juan, Mario, Ramiro, and Patricio are all ‘high priests’, meaning they have leadership callings. These positions are conditional upon paying tithes, hence it may be safely concluded that all pay their dues to the church. On testimony Sundays I also observe all of them putting their fast offerings in the envelopes, but it is of course impossible to know how much they contribute. The other LDS informants (Beatriz, Guillermo, Bernardo, and Miguel) all say they pay tithings as well even though Miguel is inactive.

The manuals counsel members to try to avoid going into debt. The subject of whether or not a responsible Mormon may enter into debt is very interesting, precisely because of the diversity of opinions. Some conform to the manuals in declaring debt taboo, others accept debt (or its counterpart: providing credit) between fellow church members only, while still others always resort to borrowing money when they are experiencing hard times. At one end of the continuum stands Bernardo, who says that he consciously avoids ever going in to debt. Even when a commercial bank offered him a loan with good conditions, after he lost almost US$ 8,000 worth of machinery in a
robbery, he turned them down. He was afraid that the bank would sell his house or his possessions if he failed to repay in time. In fact, that is the real reason for avoiding debt, not the LDS manuals. Bernardo only lends money occasionally to his youngest son, the last one that still lives with them.

A considerable group thinks loans and credits are alright, but only among church members. However, in all of these cases loans and credits are exchanged between church members who also happen to be close friends. Guillermo's shoe workshop could only start because of a loan made by his bishop, who helped him get settled in church. The ironware shop run by Mario on behalf of his parents always supplies Patricio's construction firm with materials on credit, which can be paid within a fixed term. Patricio admits that without this arrangement his firm would be in trouble. The fact that almost all of his customers are LDS some acquaintances, but also some strangers is also highly instrumental in his business operation. Because of the large sums of money involved, trust is a key principle. Ramiro lends and borrows money from and from his aunt, who is also Mormon. Through its system of rotating unpaid callings, the LDS Church fosters large networks of friends and acquaintances, which are easy to expand continuously. Discretely checking up on a person's reliability is also relatively easy.

Juan provides an example of someone giving and receiving loans from (non-LDS) friends and family. If Juan, and by extension his household, is in a tight financial situation, he tries to borrow small sums of money from a big group of people mostly family and friends. Over the coming time he will try to repay each of them. Although Juan and Miguel are the only ones to admit to using this method openly, other LDS informants also say that friends and relatives help them in times of economic hardship. Borrowing money seems to be the preferred method, but nobody says so openly. Having a firm means they depend on fluctuating demand, making occasional money problems very likely. Miguel and Ramiro in the past tried to receive business credit from SIMME, but both were turned down for unspecified reasons.

*Rains of Mercy.* The advice of the Rains of Mercy constitutive charter and study guide on managing household or firm does not go beyond the emphasis on paying tithes and the enumeration of eight common causes for failure to comply, which were already analyzed before. Poverty is traced back to individual moral lapses, such as pride, theft, jealousy, or lack of discipline. The practical advice that can be deduced from this is presented during an entire Sunday School session on budget management. It stresses the importance of moral principles such as righteousness, honesty, fairness, and impartiality recommends avoiding debt and leading a thrifty lifestyle. Don't spend
more money than you have, don't waste money and try to avoid debt. Moreover, in his sermons, pastor Marco Antonio frequently warns against the dangers of excessive materialism.

Since the firms of the Rains of Mercy informants are doing very well, saving money is relatively easy for them. They show little awareness that their church offers advice on managing either household or firm. Instead, both Ana and Raúl acknowledge a religious aspect to their work—the importance of paying their tithes as well as the moral aspects of doing business in general. I have already mentioned that Ana refuses to take divorce cases and continuously considers the ethics of her acting as a lawyer. She also reports that she always pays her taxes. The issue of debt never comes up with her or with Raúl.

6.5.4 Church networks: Easy to (ab)use

Earlier I mentioned that business networks are of prime importance to the Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs. I gave several examples. When Ramiro started his plumbing firm with his father, their first customers were mostly fellow Mormons. Patricio and Mario have enjoyed a long business relationship: Patricio acquires his construction materials on credit at the ironware shop of Mario's parents. Moreover, Patricio's clients are all LDS. Guillermo could only start his shoemaking workshop thanks to a loan given by his Santa Marta bishop.

But Mormon networks are also easy to abuse. Bernardo was never paid for some furniture he made for the LDS Church, because leaders claimed he did not follow their specifications. He never wants to work for his own church again. Through the LDS Job Center, Patricio got a job cleaning planes at the airport. None of the group of Mormon youths he was in was ever paid by the airport company. Bernardo and Juan had negative experiences with the LDS youths who worked for them: they expected favors, were sloppy workers and soon quit, because they preferred office work.

The LDS Church, with its elaborate top-down organization and its rotating unpaid callings, creates an excellent environment for the development of social networks. This is especially true for the men, who are all connected through the Priesthood. Every man has a wide circle of LDS friends, fellow ward members and acquaintances. A shared identity as active LDS believers provides a strong basis for trust. Besides, it is relatively easy to ask a leader if a certain acquaintance would be trustworthy—say to make a business deal with. On the other hand, these networks can easily be abused by outsiders (like the airport company). A shared church membership can also be used in a clientelistic way: by expecting favors from LDS employers, like the youths who worked for Bernardo and Juan.

In La Florida's Neo-Pentecostal church *Rains of Mercy* I do not find much evidence, either positive or negative, of the importance of business networks. Of course, in part this is because there are only three firms among its members: Henry's transport firm, Ana's lawyer's office, and Raúl's gas cylinder business. Ana estimates that three-quarters of her customers come from her home village Acatenango, where she holds office each Tuesday. Although she acknowledges that occasionally fellow La Florida church members employ her, she says this happens only rarely. When asked, Raúl also says that Rains of Mercy networks are not important for his business. He says that he likes to give testimony of his faith to his customers and suppliers, who are mostly non-evangelicals. In the past, his distributors were the sons of friends of his, and his eldest daughter was his secretary. Since Raúl feels uncomfortable with the leadership of Pastor Marco Antonio and his confidants, it is unlikely that he will build up business networks through leaders in Rains of Mercy.

Unlike the Mormon Church, Rains of Mercy is not an international church. It only has about forty congregations in Guatemala, including the original mega-church in western Guatemala City. In practice, the La Florida congregation has few relations with the others, and the pastor takes care of most of these. The next section summarizes the findings of this chapter and puts them in a broader perspective. A final chapter discusses the conclusions of the investigation.

### 6.6 Summary

The main questions of this chapter were: What is the origin of the informants' church involvement? Which problems can drive them away from their church? How do they respond to these problems? What is the state of the informants' current church involvement? What is the relationship with household and firm in each case?

Although eleven of the thirteen key informants grew up as Roman Catholics, the influence of this upbringing on their lives varied immensely. Six came from nominally Catholic households. Two of these remain Catholic: Pablo became even more of a nominal Catholic than his parents, but María actually committed herself more to her parish after her children were born. There is a very typical pattern visible among the male informants: growing up (more or less) religiously, working for money at an early age, drinking and going out with workmates during adolescence, getting married in their twenties, gradually giving up liquor and individual entertainment, and finally finding a new church to consolidate the shift in orientation from workmates to their household members.

Three informants were already religious seekers during their adolescence, and found their new

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26 Perhaps when it is available people prefer an unknown professional, because of the private nature of judicial conflicts.
church in this stage; three others changed religion because of their children or spouses. Almost all informants, however, converted to a new church after experiencing a turning point in their lives, usually alcohol problems or parenthood. The informants saw the poverty in their households, and were reminded of their own fathers, who had failed both as providers and as educators. After deep self-reflection, they managed to overcome their alcohol problems, either by themselves or with the aid of Alcoholics Anonymous. Afterwards, the new church offered a protective environment where drinking and going out were prohibited, where the orientation was on improvement of the household, and where new social networks could be built up. Does recruitment create a strong motivation to achieve a more disciplined lifestyle and to improve the material conditions of the household? Or is it the other way around: the desire for, or the need of, a more disciplined lifestyle precedes recruitment to a new and stricter church. Among the informants, the latter seems to be the case.

Acquiring a testimony of their faith and church and building up relations with the older members are important factors for successful integration in a new church. Converting to a church without having a testimony is no problem for the Latter-day Saints, whereas Raúl's case shows that most Neo-Pentecostals consider it a serious offence. Receiving a church assignment may help people to adapt to the new church, but among the Mormons it also drives many of them away. Other problems that can drive people away from church are backsliding into old vices, alcohol problems, and the time and money sacrifices required by the new church.

Time and money sacrifices are especially hard to make for busy small entrepreneurs. Almost everybody with the exception of Ramiro (and Mario!) in the LDS church and both Raúl and Ana in Rains of Mercy is occasionally unable to pay any tithes at all, and generally pays less than ten percent. In fact, Miguel and Patricio will have a hard time just calculating the actual amount of money they are supposed to donate, since they do not keep records of expenses and incomes. Which in itself also supports my claim here: that while people will make a great effort to pay at least something to the church each month, for most members this will only very rarely amount to ten percent of their income.

Working on Sundays is forbidden though Ramiro seems to do it occasionally out of loyalty to his customers and church assignments take away a great deal of the entrepreneur's time. On average, the informants spend 7.5 hours a week (7 percent of their waking time) on church matters, a little over 47 hours (42 percent) on their firm, and 57 hours (51 percent) on miscellaneous things. That is: the informants spend on average over 6 times more on their work than on their church and 7.5 times more on miscellaneous activities than on their church. However, there is a huge range of variation in the individual scores. Not surprisingly, the Roman Catholics spend least time of all (zero
to three hours) on church matters, while the Latter-day Saint leaders spend most time of all: 18 or 19 hours a week. Most LDS entrepreneurs spend slightly less than average time on church, while the two Rains of Mercy firm owners score somewhat above average. These different scores might indicate a connection between time spent on church and business performance: see the table below.

Table 6.6
Time spent on church, informality, and firm performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Church hrs (%)</th>
<th>Work hrs (%)</th>
<th>Form./Inf.</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Perf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy</td>
<td>7-10 (6-9%)</td>
<td>45 (40-42%)</td>
<td>+6 formal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy</td>
<td>7-10 (6-9%)</td>
<td>40 (36%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>serv. &amp; sales</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>8-9 (7-8%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>+9 formal</td>
<td>prod., serv., sale</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>18-19 (16-17%)</td>
<td>&gt;60 (&gt;54%)</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>sales</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>46 (41%)</td>
<td>+3 formal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Bernardo</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45 (40%)</td>
<td>-1 informal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>LDS (inact.)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>40-60 (36-54%)</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>María ('95)</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>60 (53%)</td>
<td>+7 formal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>55 (49%)</td>
<td>+1 formal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>11-14.5 (10-13%)</td>
<td>45-50 (40-45%)</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
<td>prod. &amp; sales</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Beatriz</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>5-6 (4-5%)</td>
<td>20-25 (18-22%)</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Patricio</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>50 (45%)</td>
<td>-4 informal</td>
<td>services</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

combined averages | 7.5 (7%)  | 47.4 (42%) | +0.3 formal |

The owners of firms which perform excellently (++) or well (+) all seem to spend about average or below average time on work; Raúl is much below average. Four consciously seem to reserve time to spend with their family and church. The first exception is Mario at number 5, who works over 60 hours a week. Interestingly, the entrepreneurs whose firms are in between (+), Juan and Bernardo, also work less than the average number of hours a week. In Bernardo's case this is due to health problems; in Juan's case business is simply a bit slow. Conforming with expectations, however, is the fact that the owners of firms that are doing badly (-), Miguel and María, both work high above the average. Both spend relatively little time on church matters. The new firms, finally, are in a category of their own: one expects long working weeks to conquer a place in the market. Pablo is indeed working high above average, Guillermo hovers flexibly around average and only Beatriz is far below average, because she spends most of her time taking care of three children and their home.

There seems to be a clearer connection between (in)formality and spending time on work. With the exceptions of María (low performance) and Pablo (new firm), all the more formal firms have about average working weeks in terms of hours. The more informal firms, on the other hand, all
require their owners to put in more hours a week, ranging from over 60 (Mario, -3) to a minimum of 45 (Bernardo, -1). Beatriz is again a case apart for the same reason mentioned above. This is a confirmation that informal firms tend to be more labor-intensive.

The fact that certain informants spend more hours on work does not mean they spend less on church. In all cases in which the husband is an active church member, the spouse and children are active in church as well27. The Latter-day Saint bishop spends many hours on church and also much above the average in his work; the stake president has a working week that is only slightly below average. Chapter 5 pointed out that the highest Mormon leaders are forced to make their work a first priority and the church second, thereby sacrificing time spent on their household. Three other LDS leaders and entrepreneurs all have very similar scores, differing only slightly in time spent on work (Juan 46 hours, Ramiro 48, Patricio 50) and consequently in time left for the household: from a minimum of 54 hours (48 percent) for Patricio to a maximum of 60 hours (54 percent) for Juan. The Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs are in a position to make the household a clear first priority, while still allowing above average time for church matters and slightly below average time for work.

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27 In three cases (María, Miguel, and Guillermo), part of the household goes to church. Only in Pablo’s household does nobody go at all.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

This book has dealt with the question how membership in a particular church and household may help or limit the operation of a small firm and vice versa: what effect being an entrepreneur can have on church and household involvement. Connections between church membership and small-scale enterprise became especially important after the explosive increase in poverty and growth of non-Catholic churches in Guatemala, both of which happened in the late 1970s and first half of the 1980s.

This chapter starts with some general conclusions about being a small entrepreneur and a member of a certain household, church, and society. Next I go deeper into positive and negative aspects of church membership for entrepreneurs, by systematically evaluating them in two separate sections. I analyze the negative aspects under the headings network abuse, time constraints, money constraints, and the price of ethics. The positive aspects neatly mirror these with network use, new skills, charity and counseling, and the value of ethics. A subsequent section aims at connecting these findings to the theoretical approaches. The first part reviews the evidence in light of Weber's Protestant ethic thesis; the second part reassesses the actor-in-context and rational choice approaches. I then reflect in broad strokes on household, small-scale enterprise, and church in Latin America, ending with some final considerations.

7.1 Conclusions
Since this book centered on three related themes church, firm, and household I will present my conclusions in three sections, too: entrepreneur and household, entrepreneur and firm, and finally entrepreneur and church. In addition I have included a section on entrepreneur and society, which places the key informants in the context of Guatemalan society and examines how representative their experiences are.

7.1.1 Entrepreneur and household
Three general patterns in the informants' life cycles can be distinguished from the life histories and are schematically represented in the figure below.

Figure 7.1
Chronological patterns in life histories

childhood
wage labor as child wage labor as adult
age: 7-12, average 9 age: ≥ 18
Ram., Pat., Juan, Mig., María, Ana, Mario,
Gui., Luis, Pab., Ber. Bea., Raúl

orientation on peers: orientation on parents/siblings
introduction to alcohol Mra., Ana, Mro., Bea., Mig.
age: 8-22. average 14

alcohol problems: no alcohol problems
age: 13-27. average 21
Gui., Juan, Pat., Mro, Luis, Pab.

church recruitment: no church recr.
age: 8-36. average 24
Ram., Juan, Gui., Mro., Pat., Luis, Mra., Ana, Bea., Mig.

marriage: single
age: 19-29. average 24

orientation on household; parenthood: individual orientation
age: 20-30. average 26

starting a firm: starting a firm: no firm
age: 14-39. average 30

alcohol problems
end of alcohol probl.: active in church: inactive in church
age: 25-36. average 30 age: 52, 53

Pattern 1 applies to six male informants, who are between 29 and 48 years old: five Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs (Guillermo, Patricio, Juan, Mario, and Ramiro) and Elim member Luis. All came from poor families; their fathers had unstable jobs and their mothers usually worked for wages, too¹. These informants all started working for wages around nine,

¹ The stories of the pattern 1 informants are remarkably similar to the life history interviews conducted by Collins & Moore (1964: 56) in Michigan: "[..] the father figure who out of either maliciousness, sloth, or incapacity failed to provide the family with adequate economic support [...]: He was the laziest man I ever knew... in and out of business several times but never made any money at it... we didn't starve to death, but we were very poor... These fathers are spoken of with open and frank disgust, usually just before the entrepreneur tells how he quit school at an early age and started out on his own. Often coupled to the "weak and bad" father is the "long suffering and deserving" mother."
which created an orientation toward their workmates. Peer pressure influenced them to go out and drink during their adolescence, which formed the basis for subsequent alcohol problems in their early twenties. In that same period, they rebelled against being exploited as wage laborers, against their upbringing and their fathers, and some against the rules of their church as well. After they got married and settled down, their alcohol problems and general lack of discipline brought poverty and chaos into their newly-established households. They overcame the alcohol problems and their orientation shifted away from workmates to spouses and children. Many found a new church or reactivated in the church they used to belong to. As their households gradually stabilized and their work skills improved, starting a firm became a possibility. By this time, most were in their late twenties or early thirties.

*Pattern 2*, which is almost a subtype of pattern 1, applies to the two oldest male informants: Rains of Mercy gas salesman Raúl (54) and LDS carpenter Bernardo (65). In spite of their differences, both have in common that they faced a life crisis in their forties. Raúl's firm suffered from increased competition and seemed near bankruptcy, while he was unfaithful to his wife. Bernardo remarried and had children again, became a leader in a new squatter's neighborhood, and tried to start a firm. Their orientation shifted away from the household and both struggled with alcohol. Bernardo went to Alcoholics Anonymous, started his carpentry firm, and reactivated in the Latter-day Saints Church. Raúl straightened out his life with the aid of his wife and his new church Rains of Mercy.

The informants of patterns 1 and 2, except Raúl, shared the same childhood experiences so bleakly described by Maldonado at the end of chapter 4: they sacrificed their childhood being exploited as wage earners and suffered from alcohol and family problems. However, they found a way out with self-discipline and with the aid of their households. They (re)activated in church out of concern over their salvation, because the church offered a protective environment against alcohol and going out with workmates, and because they

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2 Again, the parallel with Collins & Moore's (1965: 75) entrepreneurs is striking: ' [...] a principal factor was that these men had learned to play adult occupational roles at an early age. At a time when most kids are looking forward to high school dances or to high school graduation, they had already entered the world of work. One result of this was an increasing dissatisfaction with the role of student.'

3 The early, psychologically-oriented study of US entrepreneurs by Collins & Moore (1965: 67-68) vividly describes their aversion to authoritarian adult figures which remind them of 'the unwilling and unable father who demands much and offers little.[...] Throughout life the entrepreneur meets him as schoolteacher, as boss, as sponsor, as senior partner. He always demands too much and gives too little.[...] this figure, which begins by promising and intending to give all but, after demanding love and work, withdraws itself leaving the child alone and unprotected.'

4 Raúl grew up among well-to-do small farm owners and received extensive education and a Protestant upbringing. Bernardo was born of poor nominally Catholic parents and never finished primary school, because he started working for wages at twelve.
wanted their children to have a religious upbringing\textsuperscript{5}. After a few years, most informants reached important leadership positions in their churches. Being in church increased their self-confidence, offered the possibility of acquiring new skills, and also helped their firm in many ways (see below).

It is possible to analyze various shifts in the informants’ priorities at different points of their life cycle. Roughly speaking, the emphasis is on personal indulgence during their adolescence, on fatherhood in their twenties, on entrepreneurship during the first two or three years of their firm (their late twenties and early thirties), and increasingly on their church membership when they have a more stable household and firm (in their late thirties and early forties; the current age of most informants).

\textit{Pattern 3} applies to the three female informants Beatriz, Ana and María who are 34, 35, and 40 years old. As children they had their own toys and finished both primary and secondary school. Around 18, they started to work for wages in jobs like secretary (María and Ana) or in an ironware store (Beatriz). Their orientation remained always toward their parents or their brothers and sisters. Being girls, they were raised with many restrictions on their freedom to go out at night. They never experienced alcohol problems. María became more active in the Catholic Church after her children were born. Beatriz converted to the Mormon Church after marrying Mario. Ana converted to Rains of Mercy as a university student; here she met her future husband Henry. All three maintained a strong orientation toward their children and their household, which stimulated them to start their firms around thirty. María was forced to turn her pottery hobby into a profession, after she was fired as a result of her first pregnancy. Beatriz and Ana wanted to increase their household’s income by earning their own money. All three continued to be active church members.

How did the priorities of these female informants shift at various points in their lives? Though they organize their time very differently\textsuperscript{6}, all are first and foremost mothers even during those difficult two to three years after starting their firms. Since María’s household

\textsuperscript{5} The connection between church participation and the life cycle has often been reported in the literature on the United States: people who grow up in a certain church often drift away from it during puberty and adolescence, only to return to it after they get married and become parents. Parental religiosity (Stolzenberg \textit{et al.} 1995 and Myers 1996), stable religious beliefs (Hoge \textit{et al.} 1993), religious upbringing (Kirkpatrick & Shaver 1990), and especially becoming parents (Hout & Greeley 1987; Wilson & Sherkat 1991; Stolzenberg \textit{et al.} 1995) have all been identified as sources of adult church participation. See also Hunsberger & Brown (1984), Ozorak (1989), and Willits & Crider (1989). For the LDS Church in the United States, see Albrecht \textit{et al.} (1988).

\textsuperscript{6} María works 60 hours a week in her struggling pottery firm, Ana puts in 45 to 47 hours a week as a lawyer, and Beatriz says her household responsibilities only allow her to work 20 to 25 hours a week in her beauty parlor.
completely depends on her income, she cannot spend much time in her parish. Ana and Beatriz provide complementary incomes, but in situations that are vastly different: Ana earns more than her husband Henry, whereas Beatriz only makes a tiny contribution to a household that mostly revolves around Mario's wages. The tighter economic situations of María's and Beatriz's households limit their possibilities to spend more time on church matters. Ana, on the other hand, can afford to work less hours than María, meaning she has more time for her assignment in Rains of Mercy. Nevertheless, all three share the same order of priorities: first motherhood, then the firm, and finally the church.

**Summary.** Gender figures importantly both as a factor in the three patterns I identified and also as a determinant in establishing the informants' priorities. The men of patterns 1 and 2 generally started their firms to improve the material situation of the household by using their former work skills and experience. Only one woman of pattern 3 started her firm to improve the material situation of the household (Ana), while the others did so out of necessity (María) or to complement the husband's wages (Beatriz). These gender-specific differences are very much in line with the literature. Most interesting about the men, however, is that they were able to break away from the traditional male gender roles of machismo and reorient themselves to their households in a role of provider and educator.

### 7.1.2 Entrepreneur and firm

Having a firm generally provides people with a better income, more financial stability, and more personal freedom to divide their time. Many informants wanted to escape a situation of exploitation by bosses, who were always relatives. Another group got started as entrepreneurs after a third party offered help: a fellow church member, a relative, or even an NGO. The indispensable requirements for starting a firm are discipline, congeniality, professional skill and motivation, capital, a talent for organization, and being able to build up and use social networks for the benefit of the firm. The firm is very dependent upon the owner's

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8 'The benevolent small businessman maintains his workers his family and neighbours; but he maintains them by exploiting them. The hard reality of the informal sector is that it is based on the law of the jungle.[...] The majority of these businesses constantly violate the social legislation that exists in the various Latin America countries: working hours, minimum salaries, social security provisions, holidays and other benefits' (Alba Vega & Kruijt 1994: 18-19).

9 'To be successful it is desirable for the entrepreneur to start out as an employee,' writes economics professor Casson (1991: 301).

10 The economic literature on 'formal' entrepreneurs describes similar, though exclusively psychological, requirements. Mahin (1981: 232-233) lists motivation, drive, energy, personal sacrifice, emotional stability, (professional and accounting) skill,
household\textsuperscript{11}, so the owner requires the authority to persuade household members to sacrifice labor, money, space, and time for the firm.

I identified five key problems that turn up with most informants in the process of starting and operating a firm: peer drinking, labor recruitment, market contingencies, paying taxes, and always low and/or unstable income. Peer drinking formed the basis for more serious alcohol problems in their twenties for the informants of patterns 1 and 2, and made starting a firm impossible. Labor recruitment is a bottle-neck in the expansion of any firm\textsuperscript{12}, but even more so for microenterprise. Even with family workers, exploitation and deceit are always possible, but the social relationship will never be severed completely which is a source of stability in itself. The hired labor firms, on the other hand, generally employ young, highly motivated male workers in their twenties. The entrepreneurs prefer employing strangers, because friends or fellow church members expect favors from their bosses and are often less motivated. In return, many entrepreneurs offer very decent wages and some extras. Gaining the worker’s loyalty is important, because the best are soon tempted to start their own firm, especially when owners are often late in paying wages when business is bad. Responses to a temporary lack of money follow a three-layered strategy: being prepared by saving money (four informants) or by storing canned food (seven Mormon informants), cutting down on expenses (starting with non-essentials and ending with rent and food), and finally borrowing money from large networks of friends and relatives.

The causes of money shortages may be contingency- and household-related, or firm-related. The most vulnerable firms are those that are highly sensitive to macroeconomic conditions and also suffer from strong price competition. A small majority of firms is sensitive to price competition, but less affected by the country’s macroeconomy. Customers know about heavy price competition and do their best to exploit it, haggling for prices and driving home hard bargains. Almost all informants pay taxes, which raises the question of exactly

\textsuperscript{11} This also applies to the formal firm. See e.g. Casson (1991: 299): ‘The origins of a firm lie in the family [...] of its founder [...] Typically, a firm is founded because someone opts for self-employment.’

\textsuperscript{12} See e.g. Casson (1991: 195-199; 304-306). Lauterbach (1966: 64) already describes the view of well-to-do entrepreneurs on their laborers: ‘A Guatemalan plantation owner and real-estate man commented: “On my plantation, I am a dictator. Whoever complains is thrown out, even if it involves a whole group. Although there are too many people, there are not enough Indians available now for the work to be done. The Indian only wants to eat, has no other ambitions.” A merchant in Guatemala felt that the efficiency level was rather low as a result of educational limitations, that it was very hard to get good sales people, and that there was an honesty problem with the “smart” ones.’
how 'informal' these firms are. The table below presents a typology of firm performance, connecting it to church, informality, labor, and macroeconomic and price vulnerability among the three patterns of informants described above.

Table 7.1.2

Church, informality, labor, vulnerability, and firm performance among the three patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Form./Inf.</th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern 1: Male entrepreneurs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricio</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>-4 informal</td>
<td>hired</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>-4 informal</td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>family</td>
<td>average-low</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>-2 informal</td>
<td>self-employed</td>
<td>average-high</td>
<td>new firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>+3 formal</td>
<td>hired</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>+9 formal</td>
<td>hired</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern 2: Older male entrepreneurs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernardo</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>-1 informal</td>
<td>family</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>+-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>self-employed</td>
<td>average-high</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern 3: Female entrepreneurs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatriz</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints</td>
<td>-3 informal</td>
<td>self-employed</td>
<td>average-high</td>
<td>new firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy</td>
<td>+6 formal</td>
<td>hired</td>
<td>average</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>María</td>
<td>Roman-Catholic</td>
<td>+8 formal</td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The typical informant of pattern 1 is a male Mormon in his thirties, who owns a more informal firm with hired laborers to provide for his household. His firm is generally doing well, but is also characterized by average to high vulnerability. The typical informant of pattern 2 is an older male informant, who is self-employed or working with his son. The firm tends to be more informal and might be in between (Bernardo) or doing well (Raúl). The typical entrepreneur of pattern 3 is a woman in her thirties, who spends less time on her church, because her first priority is motherhood. Her second priority is the firm, which tends to be more formal and characterized by average to high vulnerability.

7.1.3 Entrepreneur and church

Although eleven out of thirteen key informants grew up as Catholics, the influence of this upbringing on their lives varied immensely. About half came from inactive Catholic households, where nobody ever went to church. The informants of patterns 1 and 2 converted
to a new church after experiencing a crisis or turning point in their life, usually alcohol problems or parenthood. Figure 7.1 shows that for all informants church recruitment coincided with marriage, when they were about 24. Six years later on average, the younger male informants simultaneously started their firm and (re)activated in church. The older male informants also returned to church after overcoming their alcohol problems. Meanwhile, the female informants remained active in their church all through their lives, though they were unable to spend much time on church after they became mothers. The active church members want to worship God and work on the salvation of their immortal soul in a community of like-minded people. This concern influences many of their actions in household, firm, and church.

*Latter-day Saints and Rains of Mercy compared*

The La Florida LDS ward has an active member rate of only 25 percent, corresponding to about 100 children and adults, with a majority of 55 to 60 percent women. On paper there is membership growth, but in the ward it is hardly visible. Growth does not necessarily guarantee a steady inflow of potential new leaders either. Most Guatemalan LDS wards suffer from a huge leadership problem: because capable leaders are very scarce, the same people remain bishop or stake president for more than five years and some even perform these callings twice.

The Rains of Mercy congregation in La Florida shows a different dynamic. Its active member rate is at least 50 percent and probably higher, because many people also go to the early morning meeting. Women make up an even greater majority of 60 to 70 percent, out of a total of 250 children and adults. The congregation is run by a council that consists of pastor Marco Antonio and five elders, which is quite autonomous in its operation. Their leadership style is authoritarian, which drove many of the young and active members away around 1990. As in the LDS Church, however, the membership is still young and mostly of upper lower-class and lower middle-class background.

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13 One is reminded of Ernst Troeltsch (1960: 1005-1006): ‘The idea of the future Kingdom of God, […] the final realization of the Absolute, does not […] render this world and life in this world meaningless and empty; on the contrary, it stimulates human energies, making the soul strong through its various stages of experience in the certainty of an ultimate, absolute meaning and aim for human labour. Thus it raises the soul above the world without denying the world.’

14 The Guatemalan case may help demystify figures of high Mormon growth in Latin America (Stark 1984, 1990, 1996; see also Bennion & Young 1996 and Gooren 1998b). Since LDS members consist mostly of young families, the high population growth of 3 percent per year should be taken into consideration. While Gooren (1998a) records an average annual growth of 7 percent since 1990, only about half of the new members stay in church: the inactivity rate is an amazing 45 to 75 percent. Conclusion: real LDS growth in Guatemala is probably closer to a mere 2 to 3.5 percent per year.
Having testimony of the church and building up relations with the older members are important factors for successful integration in any new church. Converting without having full testimony of its veracity was not a problem for the Latter-day Saints, whereas the Neo-Pentecostals considered it a serious offence. Receiving a voluntary church assignment may help people to adapt to their new church, but among the Mormons it also drives many of them away because they lack the self-confidence to carry out the assignment. Other problems that can drive members away from church are backsliding into old vices, alcohol problems, and the time and money sacrifices that are required of them. Time and money sacrifices are analyzed in the next section.

I find more small-scale firms among the LDS members than among the members of Rains of Mercy, which could be a result of the LDS Church discourse on self-reliance and entrepreneurship. I find no evidence that successful entrepreneurs are overrepresented among the Latter-day Saints: out of a total of eight LDS firm owners, one performs excellently (Ramiro), one performs well (Mario), two are in between (Juan and Bernardo), one is experiencing hard times (Miguel), one gives no information (Patricio), and two firms are too new to evaluate (Guillermo and Beatriz).

**Poverty and prosperity discourses**

The two church cases have very different discourses on poverty and church assistance to needy members. Neither church idealizes poverty. Rains of Mercy traces poverty back to individual moral lapses, such as pride, theft, jealousy, or lack of discipline. Rather than talking about poverty, however, the themes of wealth and excessive dedication to material goods are addressed, and usually in explicit terms. Needy members, ten elderly widows, are handled by the pastor on a case by case basis. There are no other programs to help members improve their economic situation.

The LDS Church sees poverty primarily as a problem of individuals, who are part of families. The breadwinner, usually the husband, has to provide for his household. If he is a practicing Priesthood holder, doing his part in Church and keeping his covenants, he will surely be blessed by the Lord. Hence, success with the firm is seen by some as a counterpart to spiritual progress towards Salvation. Being poor could then be interpreted as a sign of insufficient faith or insufficient discipline; hence if certain members remain poor, a situation of ‘blaming the victim’ might arise.

The LDS entrepreneurs Juan, Mario, Patricio, Ramiro, and Guillermo have their own version of the Latter-day Saints Church ‘covenant discourse’: as long as they keep their covenants with the Lord, He will make sure that their firms are doing OK. Guillermo even thinks that God will make his shoe firm prosper. Although this seems a general LDS version of the so-called ‘prosperity gospel’, it is in fact a typically local phenomenon. By contrast, Dunn...
sends about Mormons in the United States:

Mormons do not believe there is a "blessings-per-hour" rate of exchange, and they do not believe that God incurs a debt to them or is obliged to bless them because they work. [...] We cannot repay God for his blessings. We cannot purchase his blessings by our service and our obedience. He cannot be placed under contract to us. What he wants from us is this acknowledgment of which I have spoken— that we see our relationship to him, that we acknowledge the ties that bind us to him, and that we accept his generous gifts with a loving heart.  

Where does this Guatemalan Latter-day Saint prosperity discourse come from? Is it a 'survival', mirroring the reciprocal relationship position between the members and the saints in popular Catholicism? Is it connected to the way indigenous peoples in Guatemala trade and bargain directly with their ancestors or with the spirits? Or is it simply an expression of the Latin American tendency to embrace any prosperity gospel, because people are poor and need hope, need confirmation that they or their children will be better off in the future?

Another question that arises concerns the interaction between the LDS Church discourse, which is quite goal-oriented and rational, on the desirability of members' spiritual progress and the views of the entrepreneurs on the above covenant discourse. Is it a direct result of socialization in Mormon discourse in a Mormon Church environment? Or could it be that in general, entrepreneurs will feel more attracted to the LDS Church exactly because of its rational and goal-oriented discourse? Since all informants were already church members though not always active ones before they started a firm, the first explanation seems more likely. However, these interactions between religion and economic motivation, between church membership and economic action, need to be studied systematically in future studies all over Latin America if only because religion and churches are so strong in this continent, and poverty so widespread.

Like Rains of Mercy and other Christian churches, however, the Mormon Church has two contradictory discourses on poverty. First, the view mentioned above that poverty is caused by individual vices, like laziness, idleness, alcoholism, lack of discipline, and wasting money on non-essential goods. Second, the moral view, dating back to Jesus Christ, that the poor are spiritually blessed and will enter the Kingdom of Heaven more easily than the rich. Wealth only serves to distract people from God's laws and make them proud and rebellious. Like in Rains of Mercy, the first view clearly dominates. The official church view emanating from the Latter-day Saints manuals is that faithful active members should be able to find a good job. By working hard they can attain a lifestyle that fulfils at least their basic material needs, and generally more.

LDS members are taught to be self-reliant: to strive for economic independence and to solve their problems at the household level. They are even encouraged to start a small enterprise, if they have the capacity. To help members achieve self-reliance, LDS Church manuals stress education; good health; having a good job; making sure they have sufficient shelter, food, and clothes; solid household budget management; and acquiring and maintaining social, emotional, and spiritual strength. Since the LDS Church recognizes there may still be times when people encounter economic hardship, there exists an extensive Welfare Program\textsuperscript{16}.

7.1.4 Entrepreneur and society

How representative are the thirteen key informants of microentrepreneurs in Guatemala? The main biases in their selection have already been noted: they are mostly men in their forties, operating established hence more successful firms, who are usually highly active members, often lay-leaders, of Rains of Mercy or the Mormon (Latter-day Saints or LDS) Church. Even so, the three patterns indicated above hint at interesting differences in background, firm operation, dealing with social problems, forming a household, and giving substance to active church membership. How representative they are is based on the informants’ backgrounds, their job history, their struggle to start a firm, and their attempts to strengthen their households and (for the men of patterns 1 and 2) overcome their alcohol problems.

Unfortunately, most of the Guatemalan literature does not delve into these issues. Studies on the informal sector in Guatemala are typically based on large samples and surveys, mostly statistical and economic in nature\textsuperscript{17}. Accumulation, subsistence, ethnicity, and labor relations are the main focal points; family relations, life histories, and the importance of religion are remarkably absent or only briefly referred to. Goldenberg & Acuña (1994) is an important exception, because it deals with gender and contains life histories of 21 small-scale entrepreneurs in five Central American countries. The excellent analysis by Goldenberg of the impact of gender on having a small firm correctly identifies the importance of child wage labor as an apprenticeship phase\textsuperscript{18}, as well as the influences of machismo and alcohol\textsuperscript{19}, but

\textsuperscript{16} In 1993, the LDS Area Office in Guatemala City founded the Self-Reliance Resource Center to help members improve their economic situation. It included a job center, courses in practical skills (like English), vocational training, household budget management, career planning, and a project aimed at stimulating village banks and small-scale enterprise among members. It also coached stake and ward welfare committees, which in general function very badly.

\textsuperscript{17} See for instance almost all FLACSO studies, e.g. Menjívar & Pérez Sáinz (1989, 1993); Pérez Sáinz & Menjívar (1991); and Pérez Sáinz (1991).

\textsuperscript{18} Goldenberg (1994: 195-197).

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. (98-199).
ends with a theory on gender and providing for the household which focuses mostly on women. Religion is again routinely mentioned, but not analyzed or even described. Out of the ten selected male life histories, two mention alcohol problems, but almost all 21 cases include elements similar to those of my informants in their struggle to start a firm. In summary, my key informants are representative of a certain type of small-scale enterprise: more established, older firms with experienced owners, who have passed through long apprenticeships and overcome many social problems, most of whom are currently active in strict churches, such as the Latter-day Saints Church and Rains of Mercy. With a few exceptions, this is also a study of successful firms, which explores the influence of church and household involvement.

Classical studies on the life worlds of people in low-income neighborhoods are for instance Lewis (1963, 1986), Roberts (1973), Perlman (1976), and Lomnitz (1977). The impact of growing up in poverty, quitting school, and starting to work for wages as a child, escaping into alcohol and drugs, are all dealt with here. But how machismo, alcohol problems, and neglect of households may impede the start of an enterprise is described not in the literature on the informal sector or microenterprise, but on Protestantism (see last section). The influence of church membership on having a firm in Latin America has not been addressed explicitly.

7.2 Negative aspects of church membership for entrepreneurs

7.2.1 Network abuse

I mentioned two negative experiences that an entrepreneur had with church networks, both involving the LDS Church or its agencies. Bernardo provided benches for the church, which leaders subsequently claimed did not comply with their specifications. They did not want them and refused to pay for them. Bernardo said he lost 2,000 quetzales (about US$ 345) because of this. He refused to ever work for the LDS Church again. Another negative experience is related by Patricio. Through the old LDS Job Center, Patricio got a job to clean planes at the airport with a group of Mormon youngsters. In the end, none of them were ever paid. Patricio vowed never to go to the Job Center again. He felt that since employers were mostly non-LDS, they could easily abuse the trust that Mormon workers had in their Church agencies. These two examples are different in character and therefore have different outcomes, too. Bernardo completely lost confidence in the LDS Church as a business partner, while his trust in fellow church members also deteriorated. Patricio noticed that the trust of members in LDS Church agencies could easily be manipulated by outsiders. However, he still

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20 Ibid. (205).
maintained great trust in fellow church members. The fact that his small construction firm depends completely on LDS networks with Mario as supplier and fellow Mormons as clients is sufficient proof of this.

Latter-day Saint networks also played a negative part in the recruitment of laborers. Juan and Bernardo had very bad experiences with young LDS workers, saying they were unreliable, undisciplined, and even 'lazy' (Bernardo). They expected favors from their fellow LDS bosses, who were unable and unwilling to respond. That is: Bernardo has twice been disappointed by LDS networks. Since the robbery, he prefers to work only with his son. Juan has eight workers, who are all from outside church circles. However, Juan and Bernardo are by no means unique: none of the entrepreneurs have workers who are also fellow church members.

7.2.2 Time constraints
Both in Rains of Mercy and in the Latter-day Saints Church, voluntary assignments take up much of the entrepreneurs' valuable time. The informants spend an average 7.5 hours a week on church matters (seven percent of their waking time), over 47 hours on their firm (42 percent), and 57 hours on miscellaneous things concentrated on the household (51 percent). Generally speaking, they spend six times more time on their work than on their church and 7.5 more on miscellaneous things than on their church. However, there is a huge variation in the individual scores. The table below follows the three main patterns described above: male entrepreneurs, older male entrepreneurs, and female entrepreneurs. The typical entrepreneur of pattern 1\(^{21}\) spends about nine hours (8 percent of his time) on church matters, 48 hours (i.e. Monday through Saturday: 43 percent) on the firm and over 55 hours (49 percent) on miscellaneous. Elim member Luis almost exactly has these scores. Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs Patricio, Ramiro, and Juan all score slightly below average on church time, average on work time and slightly above average on miscellaneous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Church hrs (%)</th>
<th>Work hrs (%)</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mario *</td>
<td>Latter-day</td>
<td>18-19 (16-17%)</td>
<td>&gt;60 (&gt;54%)</td>
<td>&lt;33-34 (&lt;29-30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>Saints</td>
<td>11-14.5 (10-13%)</td>
<td>45-50 (40-45%)</td>
<td>47.5-56 (42-50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis *</td>
<td>Latter-day</td>
<td>8-9 (7-8%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>55-56 (49-50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricio *</td>
<td>Saints</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>50 (45%)</td>
<td>54-56 (48-50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>Elim</td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>48 (43%)</td>
<td>56-58 (50-52%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{21}\) Not counting Mario's exceptional scores.

Table 7.2.2
Hours spent on church, firm, and miscellaneous among the three patterns
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juan *</th>
<th>Latter-day Saints</th>
<th>Latter-day Saints</th>
<th>Latter-day Saints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8 (5-7%)</td>
<td>46 (41%)</td>
<td>58-60 (52-54%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates calculated estimations.

The ratios of work to church (about seven to one) as well as miscellaneous to church (about eight to one) are almost identical. They conform to the profile of the typical male LDS entrepreneur with a household of many children to take care of, with a firm that requires a Monday to Saturday working week and with an important though not the highest calling in their church. They combine a high dedication to their work with a high dedication to church, thus sacrificing time for their household and family.

The typical female entrepreneur of pattern 3 spends about 5.5 hours (5 percent of her time) on church matters, more than 39 hours (i.e. Monday through Friday; 35 percent) on the firm, and 66 hours (59 percent) on miscellaneous. That is: they spend an average 11 hours more a week on their household than the male informants of pattern 1 and a full day less on their firm. However, the three cases are much too divergent in their scores, for reasons connected to the specific situations of their household and firm not to church or gender. The two cases of pattern 2 are also highly divergent. Instead, I will elaborate on the profile of the typical Rains of Mercy entrepreneur.

Both Raúl and Ana spend six to nine percent of their time on Rains of Mercy: prayer, Bible study, Sunday School, assignments, and church services. But the time they spend on their firms is clearly below average: 40 hours (Monday to Friday; 36 percent) for Raúl, against roughly 46 hours (also Monday to Friday; 41 percent) for Ana. The household always gets more than half of their waking time, to a maximum of 58 percent for Raúl and 54 percent for Ana. In short: for the Rains of Mercy firm owners, the household is a very clear first priority and the enterprise a clear second. They prefer to work a little less so as to have more time for church and household. However, their church might not be the determining variable.
here, but rather the character of their firm: more established, successful, and hence stable. They do not have to fight for survival, like María’s pottery workshop, or for expansion, like Guillermo’s shoe firm.

7.2.3 Money constraints
Both Rains of Mercy and the Latter-day Saints Church strongly press their members to give a tenth of their income in tithes to the church, and also demand additional contributions in the form of offerings for needy members (both churches) and for new construction activities (Rains of Mercy). I concluded in chapter 6 that only Mario and Ramiro in the LDS Church and both Ana and Raúl in Rains of Mercy always paid their tithes. Ana and Ramiro are the only ones with a sufficiently stable income to always pay ten percent. The remaining five active Latter-day Saints Guillermo, Patricio, Bernardo, Juan, and Beatriz probably always give something to the church, but low or unstable income rarely allows them to pay ten percent. All informants generally give less than ten percent occasionally much less, when business is very bad. Although the informants are unable to contribute full tithes, at least they can donate a considerable part of their time to the church, thus prioritizing it not in capital, but in labor or rather in time. As an inactive Mormon, Miguel probably pays no or very little tithes. However, since he and Patricio do not keep any account of income and expenses they cannot calculate their tithings either. Of course, the lower people’s income, the greater is the burden to pay ten percent: every cent counts, so to speak. On the other hand, the higher the income, the higher the tithes. One wonders whether Ramiro really pays the equivalent of US$ 52 a month in tithes and Ana US$ 87 to 139...

7.2.4 The price of ethics
The informants pay a price for their self-professed business ethic. For example, entrepreneurs from both religious groups pay taxes, which one of the principles. Among the Latter-day Saints, Juan thinks that by applying gospel principles in his work as a car mechanic, he becomes an honest, responsible, and punctual entrepreneur. These same features gain him a good reputation among customers, who recommend him to others. Raúl of Rains of Mercy tells a very similar story of trustworthiness, reputation, reliability, and honesty. He emphasizes the difference with other entrepreneurs in Guatemala: ‘In all firms, there’s corruption in one way or another. The people you trust cheat you, fail you, rob you.’

From a short-term perspective, Juan and Raúl could probably make much more money if they also overcharged or did their work in a sloppy way. Apart from moral constraints, however, in a long-term perspective the special competitive advantage their firm has over others would be destroyed (see below). This brings me to the advantages of church membership for entrepreneurs.
7.3 Positive aspects of church membership for entrepreneurs

7.3.1 Network use

The ability to build up social networks and use these in the operation of the enterprise is one of the major social requirements for starting a firm. I gave three examples of positive experiences with church networks among the Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs: Ramiro and his father, Mario and Patricio, and Guillermo and his bishop. When Ramiro and his father started their plumbing firm in 1975, their first clients were almost all fellow Mormons. They were able to use LDS Church networks, because Ramiro was a second-generation LDS adolescent and his father was an older member. The fact that both were inactive in church during the mid-seventies, when they started their plumbing business, did not seem to limit their ability to use church networks for the benefit of their new firm. Mormons simply have more trust in a Mormon plumber.

The long-term business relationship between Patricio and Mario provides a second positive example of functioning LDS Church networks. Patricio has a small construction company with four paid workers, while Mario runs his parents' big ironware store, which has about seven workers. Their enterprises are perfectly complementary: Mario can provide Patricio with all the building materials he needs. Patricio says he receives most of these on credit, which is a major benefit for his firm. His clients, moreover, are also predominantly LDS: his firm has a good reputation among them.

A third positive case of Mormon networks concerns Guillermo's shoemaking workshop. It started thanks to a US$ 350 loan by his Santa Marta bishop, who had some savings and thought that it would be good for Guillermo to start his own firm. That way he would be more independent financially and could develop a more stable livelihood for his future family.

The LDS Church, with its elaborate top-down organization and its rotating unpaid callings, creates an excellent environment for social networks. This is especially true for the men, who are all connected through the Priesthood. Every man has a wide circle of LDS friends, fellow ward members, and acquaintances. A shared identity as active LDS believers provides a strong basis for trust. Besides, it is relatively easy to ask a leader if a certain acquaintance would be trustworthy say to make a business deal with.

Although Rains of Mercy also emphasizes voluntary assignments, it is not an international church like the Latter-day Saints Church. It only has about forty congregations in Guatemala, including the original mega-church in western Guatemala City. In practice, the La Florida congregation has few relations with the others, and the pastor takes care of most of these. In La Florida's Rains of Mercy there is not much evidence, either positive or
negative, of the importance of business networks. Of course, there are only three firms among
the members: Henry's transport firm, Ana's law office, and Raúl's gas cylinder business. Raúl
says that Rains of Mercy networks are not important for his business. He likes to give
testimony of his faith to his customers and suppliers, who are mostly non-evangelicals. In the
past, his distributors were the sons of friends of his, and his eldest daughter was his secretary.
Since Raúl feels uncomfortable with the leadership of pastor Marco Antonio and his
confidants, it is unlikely that he will build up business networks through leaders in Rains of
Mercy.

In summary: LDS entrepreneurs use church networks to find friends or business
partners, to acquire capital or clients, or just to get information. When business is bad or
money is tight for other reasons, church acquaintances or friends may provide loans and
ultimately the church itself may provide charity. Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs seem to rely
more on non-church networks.

7.3.2 New skills
The firm owner who is very much involved in church may gain in return increased discipline
by internalizing church rules and increased confidence by learning new skills in church
assignments. The importance of assignments has been stressed throughout the book. I
estimated that 90 percent of the Rains of Mercy members had a calling, compared to over
three-quarters of the active Latter-day Saints.

However, in the LDS Church there are only five to ten really important leadership
positions at the ward level. These include: the bishop, his two counselors, the president of the
elders' quorum, the members of the stake high council, and the president of the Relief Society
and her two counselors. In the United States, the maximum duration of an LDS calling is five
years, but in Guatemala Mario is relieved as bishop after seven years and in the past a bishop
even served 12 years. Callings are important for members' spiritual progress, because a calling
teaches them to serve their fellow church members by feeling responsible for them. Mormons
gain life experience in callings and may learn many new skills: studying, teaching, leadership,
organization. This increases their self-confidence; Ramiro provides a very clear example of
this. However, new members often feel insecure when interacting with established members,
and unable to perform in a calling. Instead of acquiring new skills in a calling, self-confidence
is then weakened and many become inactive.

An estimated 90 percent of the Rains of Mercy members have an assignment in church

22 Wuthnow (1994: 640) also notes: 'Individuals report, for example, that career plans
are uncertain, expenditures are out of control, and they have no family budgets; yet
prayer, a sense that God will provide, and a feeling that biblical rules make good
economic sense often surface as sources of comfort in the face of such uncertainty.'
and I calculated that 35 to 45 percent have a leadership position. These include the five elders, twenty deacons, the leaders of the three societies (of men, women, and children), the five rotating Sunday School teachers, and the ten leaders of the family groups. That is, a great many people (about 45) are in a position to acquire organizational and leadership skills. Raúl says, however, that the power conflict between the pastor and other lay leaders is causing a general lack of motivation to perform well in assignments.

7.3.3 Charity and counseling
Among the Latter-day Saints, most welfare activities are carried out at the ward level. The local welfare committee is supposed to meet at least once a month under the direction of the bishop. Its main tasks are teaching the principles of self-reliance to all members, gathering information on needy ward members, administering ward welfare resources, and deciding how to distribute these resources. The La Florida welfare committee is made up of only five people: the bishopric and the presidents of the elders quorum and Relief Society. In practice, bishop Mario makes almost all decisions by himself. He reports that there are five or six families—25 to 30 people—that occasionally receive welfare assistance, usually in the form of money or (canned) food. However, the idea is to give only the minimum that people need and ask for some sort of reciprocation: often volunteer work in or around the 5th Avenue church building. News of the Self-Reliance Resource Center in zone 1, which the central LDS Welfare Service started in November 1993 to help members better their economic situation through education, training, and advice, for instance on setting up a small firm, has not yet reached members in La Florida. For practical advice, the budget management classes of the Relief Society are much more accessible.

Rains of Mercy limits itself to providing charity to about ten elderly widows, which are dealt with by pastor Marco Antonio on a case-by-case basis. Like with the Mormons, more prosperous members are supposed to pay for this. The church has no programs to stimulate either members’ economic performance or to provide training or counseling for them, except on doctrinal matters.

7.3.4 The value of ethics
Raúl (Rains of Mercy) and Juan (Latter-day Saints Church) tell similar stories about the importance of trustworthiness, reputation, reliability, and honesty for entrepreneurs. Above I noted that in the short term, they lose the opportunity to overcharge, but in the long term, they achieve certain competitive advantages over other firms through their connection to a specific church and their business ethics, both of which guarantee their good reputation. Raúl emphasizes the differences between himself and other entrepreneurs in Guatemala and also
stresses the importance of impartiality\textsuperscript{23}.

Interestingly, Weber notes that Puritan, Quaker, and Baptist merchants think it ethically virtuous to treat all customers the same, whereas within Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam the tendency is towards treating fellow church members more favorably\textsuperscript{24}. Yet it seems that the determining variable is not the church one belongs to, but the business ethics one adopts from it or not. Hence María, who shows the same impartiality in dealing with clients and the same awareness of the importance of having a good business reputation as Raúl and Juan, is able to follow similar ethical guidelines, but with a very different religious origin: orthodox Roman Catholicism. Below I will connect my findings to the major theoretical approaches: a Protestant ethic approach, and an actor-in-context and rational choice approach.

7.4 Theoretical approaches

7.4.1 Protestant ethic approach

Weber considers the Protestant ethic a rational method to achieve salvation. It stresses individual action and responsibility, transcendentalism, work as a divine calling, success in business as a sign of divine favor, and a sober lifestyle (self-discipline). I will analyze each of these points, relating them to the four interfaces between firm and church mentioned above: networks, time sacrifices and acquiring new skills, money sacrifices and access to church charity mechanisms, and business ethics. Occasionally, I will also apply them to the three patterns I identified among the informants and to the two church cases.

Individual action and responsibility is a running theme in the choices the informants have made throughout their life cycle: from their early work experiences to peer drinking and going out, to marriage, giving up alcohol, starting a firm, and (re)activation in church. It seems likely that people who make certain choices for instance, favoring their household and firm over personal indulgences would feel more attracted to churches with a strict moral code. Though it is impossible to show a causal relationship for example, that conversion precedes starting a firm the connection between the two cannot be denied. At some point, the male informants of patterns 1 and 2 reflected on the problems in their lives and accepted responsibility for these, which opened possibilities for radical change\textsuperscript{25}.

\textsuperscript{23} Barth (1963) shows that a successful entrepreneur has to exploit his specific market niche by making good use of his resources in the form of capital, family ties, social ties with bureaucrats and politicians... The entrepreneur's actions and strategies are therefore influenced by moral and social constraints, such as for instance good will or reciprocity, both of which inspire other people to trust him. See also Swedberg et al. (1990: 63).

\textsuperscript{24} See Weber (1978: 616) and also Wuthnow (1994: 627).

\textsuperscript{25} Strauss & Quinn (1994: 289) correctly note: `[...] strong cognitive patterns cannot
Although the female informants never experienced these kinds of life crises, their responsibilities as mothers led them to (re)activate their church membership for the benefit of their household and children, rather than their firm.

Individual action also lies at the heart of starting a firm and is central to many of the demands psychological, financial, etc. that are made on the entrepreneur. Building up and using social networks is only one of these. It also forms the basis for deciding whether time and money sacrifices the informants make for their church, and conforming to a certain business ethic, are proportional to the perceived benefits, which is something the rational choice approach will deal with below. The perceived importance of education is made clear by the fact that all informants, except Pablo, send their children to school; children below fifteen rarely work in the firm.

_Transcendentalism_ refers to establishing a direct link between everyday life and the sacred. It is the aim of all religiously active informants, although its realization seems to differ widely from one to another and throughout their lifetimes in general. The clearest example is how the male informants of pattern 1 and 2 see the hand of God in the process of overcoming their alcohol problems. Everyday life includes not only that of the individual, but also of the household and the firm. All Mormon and Rains of Mercy firm owners directly acknowledge the aid of God in their work and household. For these informants, work is a part of their path towards salvation and for the Latter-day Saints spiritual progress.

_Work as a divine calling_, however, seems too strong a phrase to use for the Mormon and Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs. In the life histories they talk about the many dreary jobs they had as children; the joy of finding a trade they have a special talent for which then motivates them to do it well. They reflect the typical pride of the craftsman in his skill not the Calvinist concept of work as a special calling which can be an indication of whether one has been chosen for heaven by God. Entrepreneurs in both churches strive to apply gospel principles to their work, and to do it well. But they show no indication of viewing it as a calling. This is a clear contradiction to a central element in Weber's Protestant ethic thesis.

_Success in business as a sign of divine favor_. Above I mention the typical covenant discourse of the five male Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs of pattern 1. Though only Guillermo believes that God will make his shoefirm prosper, the four others (Mario, Juan, Ramiro, and Patricio) all think that God will not let their firms go bankrupt, as long as they keep their promises to Him. That is: as long as they are active church members who comply with church
morality and their obligations as members to fulfil their callings and pay their tithes. The Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs show no tendency to consider success in business a sign of divine favor.

A sober lifestyle stressing self-discipline. Rains of Mercy stresses the dangers of materialism as satanical temptations which are able to steer true Christians away from the right path towards salvation. In the LDS Church, on the other hand, the view predominates that well-to-do members are perfectly entitled to enjoy their money, as long as they comply with church rules and pay their tithes. With the exception of Juan, however, the LDS entrepreneurs still seem to embrace a rather sober lifestyle. For a long time, Ramiro even denied his household the benefits of many modern consumer devices such as a big refrigerator and color cable television. This is in line with Wuthnow's interpretation of the Protestant ethic:

Protestantism restrained people from behaving in an irrational or unsystematic manner, disciplining them, for example, to think more clearly about the relationships among their various activities. It also restrained one kind of economic activity directly, namely, the frivolous expenditure of money on consumer goods. If Protestantism encouraged the accumulation of capital, therefore, it was actually by setting up a certain kind of resistance to what individuals might have otherwise been inclined to do. [...] Thompson (1966) [...] argue[s] that ascetic Protestantism during the 19th century disciplined an unruly working class, restraining its members from paying too much attention to their kin networks, discouraging them from consuming alcohol or engaging in disorderly conduct.  

I find no evidence that the informants are restrained by their churches in their kin networks; if anything quite the opposite is true. Self-discipline, on the other hand, does seem crucial for all entrepreneurs. Just witness, for instance, Bernardo's failed attempts to start a firm while he was an alcoholic.

Two major theoretical conclusions of Wuthnow's discussion of the literature and his own research on religion and economic life are also confirmed by the present study. The first is an axiom of economic anthropology and sociology: 'economic behavior cannot be understood as an autonomous institutional realm functioning strictly according to its own specialized norms [...]'; religious commitments and understandings of spirituality influence cultural understandings of work and money as well.' Second, 'basic beliefs and values, such as those which arise from religious inclinations, are less likely to direct economic behavior into particular channels than they are to lend meaning and order to this behavior.' Since most informants are highly active church members who often occupy leadership positions, I expected to find the strongest connections between church and firm precisely in my research

group. However, even here I find that church influence on the operation of the firm seems to be mostly indirect: through networks and safety nets (charity, welfare, loans), through the church discourse on poverty and wealth, through values and rules the church stands for, through assignments and the obligation to pay tithes.

The Protestant ethic approach is useful for identifying important connections between firm and church, because it identifies elements in church doctrine and practice which may be helpful to entrepreneurs for improving their economic situation. Of the five key elements of the Protestant ethic, the importance of individual action and responsibility seems to be the strongest among the informants. From the life histories, however, it appears that the informants first changed their lives—gave up alcohol, made the household a priority, started a firm—and next changed their church or reactivated; often these events all seem to occur at the same time. This coinciding of changes in mentality, orientation, and work with changes in church affiliation indicates a strong dialectical relationship. In simple terms: the typical informant is raised without religious affiliation, learns about strict churches during his adolescence, satisfies his personal desires, gets married and needs a more disciplined lifestyle, remembers the strict church, makes an effort to stop drinking, joins a church that will help in this process, in church acquires new skills and new priorities, which in turn strengthens the orientation toward the household, etc.

Transcendentalism is another important factor, because it is the basis of their business ethics. Neither church stresses an explicitly sober lifestyle, although the warnings of Rains of Mercy against materialism might be considered in that light. Although Guillermo is the only Mormon to see success in business as a sign of divine favor, four other Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs believe their firm will be OK as long as they keep their covenants with God. Bad business is not seen as proof that they are out of God's favor, but as divine tribulation—a test of faith reminiscent of Job. Rains of Mercy entrepreneurs, on the other hand, do not make the connection between business success and divine favor at all. Finally, the idea of work as a divine calling is entirely absent among all informants.

All in all, I find only a moderate version of the Protestant ethic among the Latter-day Saint entrepreneurs, whose church I had expected to exemplify Protestant ethic virtues, and an even weaker one among those of Rains of Mercy. This confirms at least the first half of Gaskill's conclusion that 'the Pentecostal churches [..] do not, in general, seem to endow work with a sense of calling or drive their adherents to aspire towards positions of general

29 Though well-to-do members like Ana and Raúl do not seem much affected by these warnings.

30 Unless it refers to their church assignment instead of their job, but that was not what Weber meant. Church assignments, incidentally, are actually referred to as 'callings' in the Latter-day Saints Church.
social prestige in society any more than do the other Latin American religious traditions\textsuperscript{31}. However, the Protestant ethic approach does not shed much light on the importance of networks or time and money sacrifices for the church. The approach also assumes that believers are rational actors, who balance their church, firm, and household obligations.

7.4.2 Actor-in-context and rational choice approaches

The actor-in-context approach is based on people's everyday life experiences and agency: their ability to process social experience and develop strategies to cope with the problems of everyday life. The structural context of Guatemala plays an important enabling or restraining role here. The study combined an actor-in-context with a rational choice approach, assuming that actors rationally "weigh the costs and benefits of potential actions, [...] choosing those actions that maximize their net benefits"\textsuperscript{32}. Rational choice also supposes that preferences (needs) are stable from one person to another and unchanging over time. However, I have shown above how the informants' priorities did shift in different stages of their life cycle.

For the male informants of patterns 1 and 2\textsuperscript{33}, satisfying personal desires is a priority during puberty and adolescence; providing for the household gradually becomes a goal after marriage, leading to the start of their firms some years later. Priority then shifts to the firm for its first two or three years of existence; as firm and household get more stable, church membership increases in importance. This suggests that the actor's goals are heavily influenced by the surrounding social context: first workmates, later spouses, finally fellow church members. Whether goals shape context or vice versa is impossible to establish, but the connection is undeniable. As a child worker, job performance and security to a large extent depend on fellow workers, hence investing time and money in cultivating a relationship with them makes perfect sense from a rational choice point of view. After marriage, personal indulgence gets out of hand and serious alcohol problems ensue. Reflection and self-discipline, and the aid of others (spouses, Alcoholics Anonymous, church members, and friends) allow a way out, following a reorientation to the household. The informants do not want their children to suffer as they did; they show a clear capacity for agency and coping with problems.

The three female informants of pattern 3 were involved in a church for most of their lives and did not suffer any of the life crises that the males did. After marriage they were first

\textsuperscript{32} Iannaccone (1997: 26).
\textsuperscript{33} The timing of these occurrences is much later for the informants of pattern 2, but the events and their reactions are very similar.
and foremost mothers. Although María expresses a strong religious orientation, the dire situation of her pottery firm, which is the sole source of income for her household, does not allow her to spend much time in the parish. Ana and Beatriz, on the other hand, have spouses who are also wage earners, which allows them to spend much time in church.

For all informants, starting a firm is above all a way to better provide for the household. It allows the entrepreneur more personal freedom, although it also greatly increases responsibilities. Starting a firm is risky, but continuing as a salaried worker in microenterprises is inherently uncertain: workers may get fired any day or forced to accept a cut in wages when business is bad. The decision to start a firm regardless would seem to confirm Hechter's observation that `rational actors prefer risky to uncertain situations'. Before beginning an enterprise, however, the informants had to make some sort of cost-benefit analysis: How much do I have in savings? How much time do I need to make a profit? What is the probability of failure? How can I improve my chances?

Is it possible to construct a cost-benefit analysis of the informants' church involvement? Since two informants are inactive, salvation is obviously not a prime goal for everybody or rather: the ways to achieve salvation clearly differ from one person to another. The informants who are active in church feel that this is necessary for their salvation. Implicitly or explicitly a number of choices, of priorities, have to be established. Among the informants, the priorities seem to be household first, firm second, and church third. That is: household needs generally prevail over firm needs, while firm needs generally overrule church needs. If money is tight, business investments are typically postponed. When investments can no longer be put off, the church receives less tithes. As a general picture, this seems to hold, but there is plenty of room for nuances and subtle variations. If the firm is to be a success, the household has to make (substantial) sacrifices. Along a similar vein: if the informants are unable to give the church its due in full tithes, then at least informants can donate a considerable part of their time to the church, thus prioritizing it not in capital, but in labor or rather in time.

Do the informants compare the time and money they spend on church with the benefits? They will not say so explicitly, because they feel this undermines their belief, their

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35 Miguel has been an inactive Latter-day Saint for at least half a year; Pablo is a nominal Roman-Catholic since birth.

36 Ramiro's case showed that these sacrifices could bring very concrete rewards in the future.

37 This corresponds, incidentally, to Iannaccone's (1997: 31) 'casual observation' that 'richer congregations opt for a variety of time-saving, money-intensive practices' to expand their involvement, whereas poorer people are more likely to increase the time they devote to church.
salvation, their covenant absolute goals the fulfilment of which is so important for the informants that no costs, no matter how high, should impede trying to attain them. But meanwhile, the informants still have to live, work, sleep, eat, and provide for their household in this material world. Implicitly, therefore, they are all forced to make a cost-benefit analysis of their church commitment. They are clearly aware that it is based on an act of free will.

A modified cost-benefit approach formed the basis of this study. Such an approach favors exploring concrete and measurable variables, such as time and money sacrifices, while ideas and motivations tend to move to the background. Since religion and church membership deal with ultimate and absolute truths, the cost-benefit method may lead to incomprehension and possibly resentment although not openly expressed among the informants. However, the major advantage of the actor-oriented rational choice approach is that it offers practical methodological means and fosters an awareness that people with a low or unstable income who spend much time and money on their church are forced by their situation and lifeworld to make some cost-benefit analyses. Many of the potential benefits of church membership networks, charity and advice, ethics and the drawbacks again ethics and networks, as well as time and money sacrifices can be easily studied and compared across many different churches, countries, and even continents. The mechanisms by which people may either become more active in a particular church, or alternatively become inactive and possibly completely disaffiliated, should be studied more in many different contexts.

The next section sketches in broad strokes my interpretation of the data collected during this study, and the consequences it has for the analysis of household, small-scale enterprise, and church in Latin America.

7.5 Church, small-scale enterprise, and household in Latin America

Though the Guatemalan masses have always been poor, the end of the Ubico dictatorship in 1944 gave them for the first time the freedom to seek new economic opportunities in Guatemala City. However, the economic growth of the fifties, sixties, and seventies mostly benefitted the upper classes: agricultural exports, big industrial enterprises, and to a lesser extent tourism and government employment. As a result of the severe international economic recession of the 1980s, unemployment and poverty grew rapidly. This caused a rapid expansion of the so-called informal sector, both in the number of firms and in the number of workers. However, these small-scale enterprises were surrounded by many kinds of problems: child labor, exploitation, alcoholism, and machismo, all of which put strains on

households and families. Many families started to fall apart:

Caught as they are between crushing material conditions, changes in patterns of values which threaten their traditional role, and scanty possibilities further reduced by the crisis of finding any legitimate ways of satisfying the needs and aspirations of their family members, a substantial proportion of men in the lower-class urban strata find themselves unable to play their roles of husband and father. This anomic situation gives rise to a vicious circle in which their failure to fulfil their obligations weakens their authority within the family, and this in turn helps to hasten their abandonment of those obligations.\(^{39}\)

However, the life world and situation of the male informants of patterns 1 and 2 appear the mirror opposite of those men described by Kaztman above. Much of the literature confirms that non-Catholic or evangelical churches are capable of supporting the household and the family:

[Evangelism] strengthens the social and economic base of the family by prohibiting competing activities such as drinking, dancing, and (directly and indirectly) other women. Perhaps more important, Evangelism provides a social alternative to male "street culture". [...] men who lead virtuous lives can gain recognition and respect from the congregation when they participate in preaching and leading the hymns at the nightly meetings.\(^{40}\)

The husband does not lose his traditional gender-based dominance, but its character is changed. Maldonado says:

[...] the emphasis placed on the role of the man as chief of the household is often unquestioningly accepted as a counter-balance to abandonment of families by males. [...] This theologically informed domestic conservatism provides a greater measure of security to women and children and establishes new guidelines of affection, responsibility, and leadership for men.\(^{41}\)

The connections between gender roles, machismo, conversion to an evangelical church, and the household are most thoroughly analyzed by Brusco:

With conversion, machismo is replaced by evangelical belief as the main determinant of husband-wife relations. The machismo role and the male role defined by evangelicalism are almost diametrical opposites. Aggression, violence, pride, self-indulgence, and an individualistic orientation in the public sphere are replaced by peace seeking, humility, self-restraint, and a collective orientation and identity with the church and the home. [...] In evangelical households the husband may still occupy the position of head, but his relative aspirations have changed to coincide with those of his wife.\(^{42}\)

\(^{39}\) Kaztman (1992: 84).

\(^{40}\) Bossen (1984: 175).

\(^{41}\) Maldonado (1993: 234).

Although this is probably an idealized, black-and-white description, I agree with Brusco that the most important achievement of non-Catholic churches is that the aspirations of husbands and wives are synchronized to coincide. Both make salvation and the improvement of the economic situation of the household their priorities. This leads Martin to conclude:

The aspiration for a better life, broadly understood, in terms of moral standards, economic prosperity, personal dignity, and health of body and mind, has some kind of US attachment, even though people simultaneously recognize that the United States is morally chaotic. Some commentators develop the theme of Americanization much further, and see evangelicals as really in the business of making Anglos out of Latins, in outward appearance and vesture as well as inward disposition. If that is true of any group it is true of the Mormons.  

I do not agree that the aspiration for a better life is a North American trait. The point is that traditional Latin American gender patterns predispose men and women to have divergent aspirations and that (Neo-)Pentecostal and Mormon churches are able to realign these aspirations. But this has nothing to do with ‘making Anglos out of Latins’: the differences between Guatemalan and North American Latter-day Saints have been mentioned throughout this study.

Almost all informants have a lower-class background. The great attraction of non-Catholic churches for the lower-classes has been noted in all of the literature, and by Nida already in 1958:

[...] the membership of most of the Protestant churches has come from the upper brackets of the lower class. The leadership within the churches has seemed to come primarily from the families of independent tradesmen and merchants, e.g. carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and shopkeepers. It would appear as though the gospel had an attraction for just those groups which had much to gain, e.g. education for their children, a sense of importance (as co-laborers with God in the Kingdom of Heaven), and recompense for having been so largely excluded from the upper brackets of Latin American society. Conversely, these same people had very little to lose by becoming Protestants, for they were not so likely to lose their jobs, were not dependent upon some person for their social and economic security (as in the case of the day laborer or peon), and had never been cultivated to any great extent by the Roman church, which has concentrated most of its attention upon the elite classes. 

Though using a Weberian approach, Nida made no reference to any Protestant ethic in Latin America. Denton's (1971) 'impressionistic' analysis of upward social mobility among Protestants in Latin America concluded that the middle-classes there tended to imitate the upper-classes in their aristocratic and economically non-productive behavior. That same year,

\[^{43}\text{Martin (1990: 281).}\]

\[^{44}\text{Nida (1958: 101). The appeal of non-Catholic churches to the "successful poor" has also been confirmed by Hoffnagel (1978).}\]
Yinger made the following observation on the predominance of Pentecostalism in Latin American Protestantism:

The Pentecostal sects in Latin America, as elsewhere, are predominantly otherworldly in doctrine. Their effect on economic development, if there is such an effect, will be indirect, transmitted by the ways in which they reorganize the values and motives of their adherents in relation to the society around them, while helping them deal with the stresses imposed by that society. How these values and motives will be translated into behavior depends upon the structure of opportunities, with the latent qualities of innerworldly ascetism, individualism, and economic activism becoming manifest only in situations where an expanding economy gives them reinforcement and meaning.\(^{45}\)

The last sentence probably reflects the age of economic optimism in which it was written. If anything, it has become clear that non-Catholic churches can positively influence people who are living in times of macroeconomic crisis, experiencing conditions of poverty or low income\(^{46}\). The major advantages of church membership for entrepreneurs include access to church-based business networks\(^{47}\), learning new skills in assignments, and building up self-confidence\(^{48}\). New elements that this study suggests for further investigation are how people balance these benefits of church membership with the costs of time and money investments, and the price and value\(^{49}\) of ethics.

The possibility of experiencing the benefits of membership, however, is greatly enhanced by an open, more or less democratic church organization in which every member knows what is expected of him or her and does their part. In practice, the reality is often very different. In La Florida's Latter-day Saints ward, there are differences of opinion, communication problems, and tensions between newer members and more established members. Many new members seem to become inactive because they lack the confidence and guidance by leaders to perform in callings, or because they develop conflicts with these same leaders, who are all older members\(^{49}\). In Rains of Mercy, the power conflict between pastor Marco


\(^{47}\) As shown for entrepreneurs by this study and for members in general by Willems (1967), Roberts (1968), Westmeier (1986), Martin (1990), Stoll (1990), Maldonado (1993), and Mariz (1994).

\(^{48}\) See Martin (1990), Stoll (1990), Samandú (1991), Schäfer (1992), and Maldonado (1993).

\(^{49}\) Since the established members are overrepresented among the informants, the
Antonio and his group and other lay leaders, especially deacons like Raúl, was shown to negatively influence performance in assignments especially by experienced members.50

7.6 Final considerations
Now I have come full circle. Starting with the constraints of the structural context of Guatemala I have shown how membership in non-Catholic churches can bring together and focus the aspirations of husbands and wives salvation and improvement of the household and help to fulfil them, only to end with the observation that obviously many of these same structural constraints particularly authoritarianism and clientelism are again reproduced in the non-Catholic churches. However, I have also shown that in the circles of household, firm, and church the entrepreneurs show awareness of their authoritarian inclinations and strive to modify them, for instance by consulting with their wives and children, their clients and workers, and their fellow church members. They take their roles as fathers more seriously than their own fathers did; as entrepreneurs they are aware of the value of business ethics (whether for moral or utilitarian reasons); and as Christians they opt for churches that put the responsibility of their salvation on their own shoulders.

I will finish by analyzing and expanding upon the following quote by Acuña:

For the informal entrepreneur, the social space is the family. He or she is connected with the world outside of the labor environment through the press, the radio or the television, depending on his/her occupation. He or she considers the social context a basically hostile universe, not only because 'the government isn't helping' and in general 'nobody is helping nobody', but because what he or she sees around him/her are criminals, bureaucrats who come to collect taxes, and corrupt and lying politicians. If the citizen can only exist if he lives in a polis, one could state that the informal entrepreneur is not a citizen, because for him the public space does not exist. The idea of community spirit, of conscious and altruistic participation in civil society or in political society, seems quite strange to him.51

Acuña's idea of a supposed 'altruistic' community spirit seems quite strange to me, too. I would assume that people are active in neighborhood associations or social clubs because they get a certain satisfaction whether prestige, power, authority, or plain self-esteem from it. However, civil associations and clubs are not thriving in Guatemala. Churches, on the


other hand, appear as one of the most dynamic parts of civil society in Guatemala, even though they are highly fragmented, at times even sectarian, and do not foster political goals. Instead, they foster moral, economic, and religious goals: salvation and improvement of the individual as part of a household. But although these are aims at the individual and household levels, their formation and realization depend on participation in church communities. Hence much more empirical research is needed to explore the following questions: Which social groups and what kind of people are more inclined to make the link between salvation and active church membership? Which churches are especially popular among these groups and individuals? Which elements in the doctrine, organization, and membership composition of these churches could be responsible for this? What is the interaction between church membership and individual, as well as church and household? How do these interactions affect society at large? What happens to members who become inactive? Do they go on to another church or do they prefer to isolate themselves from church, neighborhood, and society? Formulating the right questions is, of course, merely the first step...
# APPENDIX 1

## SHORT LIST OF THE KEY INFORMANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital status, childr.</th>
<th>Firm (since)</th>
<th>Church (since)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>married, 5 children</td>
<td>garage (1980)</td>
<td>LDS (1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Guillermo</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>single, 0 children</td>
<td>shoemaker (1994)</td>
<td>LDS (1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>María</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>single, 2 children</td>
<td>pottery (1985)</td>
<td>LDS (1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>married, 3 children</td>
<td>ironware shop (1965)</td>
<td>LDS (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Ramiro</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>married, 4 children</td>
<td>plumber (1975)</td>
<td>LDS (1968)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>married, 4 children</td>
<td>printer (1977)</td>
<td>LDS (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pablo</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>married, 3 children</td>
<td>carpenter (1993)</td>
<td>RC (birth)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDS</th>
<th>Latter-day Saints (Mormon) Church.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RoM</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

1. Beatriz (04) and Mario (05) are spouses.
2. Mario is bishop (group leader) of La Florida ward. Ramiro (06) and Patricio (08) are his counselors.
3. Miguel (09) is an inactive Mormon.
4. Pablo (11) is an inactive Roman Catholic.
APPENDIX 2

GUATEMALAN MACRO INDICATORS

Area: 109,000 square kilometers.
Capital: Guatemala City (the metropolitan area has over 2 million inhabitants).

Infant mortality rate: 1980: 75 per 1,000; 1995: 44 per 1,000.
Average life expectancy: 66 years.
Population growth: 1980-90: 2.8 %; 1990-95: 2.9 %.

Illiteracy. Total: 45 %. Women: 51 %; men: 38 %.
Distribution of the work force (1990). Agriculture: 52 %; industry and manufacture: 17 %; services: 31 %.

Distribution of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Agriculture: 25 %; industry and manufacture 18 %; services 56 %.
GDP per capita: US$ 1,340 (World Bank lower middle-income economy).
GDP growth. 1980-90: 0.8 %. 1990-95: 4.0 %.

Average annual inflation. 1985-95: 18.6 %.
Trade balance: US$ - 1,103 million.
Total external debt: US$ 3,275 million (14.9 % of GDP).

Income distribution (1989). Lowest quintile: 2.1 %; second: 5.8 %; third: 10.5 %; fourth: 18.6 %; highest quintile: 63.0 %. Highest 10 %: 46.6 %.
Population living on less than $1 a day: 53.3 %.
Population with access to safe water: 64 %.
Telephone mainlines (1992): 22 per 1,000 persons.
Percentage of roads in good condition: 7 %.
Percentage expenditure 1991-95. education: 16.8 %. defense: 13.9 %. health: 10.1 %. social security: 4.4 %. Total expenditure on social services: 38.4 %.
Tax revenue as percentage of GDP. 1980: 8.7 %; 1995: 6.8 %.

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### APPENDIX 3

**GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENTS AFTER 1945**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Military rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945 - 1950</td>
<td>Juan José Arévalo</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 - 1954</td>
<td>Jacobo Arbenz</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954 - 1957</td>
<td>Carlos Castillo Armás</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958 - 1963</td>
<td>Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963 - 1966</td>
<td>Enrique Peralta Azurdia</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966 - 1970</td>
<td>Julio César Méndez</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 - 1974</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974 - 1978</td>
<td>Carlos Arana Osorio</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978 - 1982</td>
<td>Kjell Laugerud García</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 - 1983</td>
<td>Romeo Lucas García</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983 - 1985</td>
<td>Efraín Ríos Montt</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986 - 1990</td>
<td>Oscar Mejía Victores</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 - 1993</td>
<td>Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 - 1995</td>
<td>Jorge Serrano Elías</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 -</td>
<td>Ramiro de León Carpio</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4

THE SISTEMA MULTIPLICADOR DE MICROEMPRESAS (SIMME)

In 1986, the Cerezo government planned social programs to alleviate the poverty caused by the economic crisis of the 1980s and the Structural Adjustment Programs. Vice President Roberto Carpio, together with his brother Mario Carpio, selected a team to design a massive program, known as SIMME, to help microenterprise in Guatemala. Its goals were to create new jobs by creating new microenterprises, to achieve a multiplier effect through the use of rotating funds, and finally to stimulate and coordinate cooperation between the government and NGOs to help and directly support the informal sector. The aim was to help 25,000 microenterprises by the end of 1990. The firms only manufacturing and services, no commerce, had to have existed for at least 1 year. Loans had a maximum limit of 7,000 quetzales, to be repaid within six months to two years. The country was divided into 14 areas with one participating NGO active in each area. Funds were provided by the Guatemalan government, USAID, the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), FLACSO, INCAE, the Organization of American States (OAS), the UN Development Program (UNDP), the governments of Germany, Belgium, China, Israel, the Netherlands, and the German Ebert and Seidel foundations.

The first credits were handed out in a ceremony at the National Palace in February 1988. By December 31, 1990 almost 15,250 loans had been made to informal entrepreneurs. After the change of government in January 1991, however, SIMME’s leadership was also changed and the program got into trouble. Only 1,750 new loans were approved in 1991. Interest went up from about 13 percent in 1988 to 25 percent in 1991. From its start, the Serrano government started a Crédito Popular program, which was under closer government control than SIMME. In 1992, only 2,235 loans were approved as part of SIMME. The 14 NGOs were urging a revitalization of the program. The leadership was changed twice, until Mario Morales took over. He started to revitalize and reorganize SIMME and once again went out to find new international funding.

In 1993, Serrano’s failed ‘self-coup’ as president, and the subsequent nomination of de León to complete his term, once again put SIMME in danger. Some NGOs, proposing a strict financial-economic vision of the program, tried to influence the new adviser to the Vice President to abolish SIMME in its current form altogether. They said the program had always been too dependent on the government, on party politics and clientelism, prone to corruption and a

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lack of control. Only about 24 percent of all loans were completely repaid with interest. After a brief power struggle the program started functioning again in July.

Because of long negotiations with foreign donors and internal divisions in the de León government, however, SIMME virtually became inactive again in October 1993, when Mario Morales left. Over 11,000 new loans were given in 1993, most of them between July and October. A new structure for SIMME was defined in 1994: it would be directed by a National Council (*Consejo Nacional*) made up of four representatives from the government (Ministries of Finance and Economics, the Vice Presidency, and the SEGEPLAN planning office) as well as two representatives each of NGOs and of microentrepreneur organizations. The new structure became effective in June 1994, but in 1995 the program was still not operational⁴.

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⁴ Sources: Consejo Nacional (1994) and personal interviews with people from SIMME and the Ebert foundation in 1993 and 1994-95.
I will distinguish five main religious categories: historical Protestant churches, Holiness churches, Pentecostal churches, Neo-Pentecostal churches and independent Christian traditions.

Oldest are the historical Protestant churches, which are the most established and mainstream. They originated in the Reformation in 16th century Europe, or from subsequent schisms. All stress the importance of personal study of the Bible over ritual, laity over ecclesiology and Jesus Christ over Mary and Joseph. Some examples in Guatemala are Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Baptists.

The Holiness movement developed out of revivalist meetings in historical Protestant churches in the US in the 1830s and 1850s. Its ideal was for people to have highly individual religious experiences in quite autonomous congregations. During emotional services, people who felt the presence of the Holy Spirit began to speak in tongues, to shout, to dance, or to cry. These outbursts were generally rejected by the pastors, who were mostly middle-class, which resulted in a number of schisms. This is the origin of e.g. the Primitive Methodists, the Church of the Nazarene, the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), Enmanuel, and the Central American Mission. The Holiness movement is generally seen as the precursor of Pentecostalism.

The Pentecostal churches incorporated the notion that glossolalia (speaking in tongues) was a sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal churches derive their name from the second chapter of Acts in the New Testament, when the Spirit came over the apostles in 'tongues, as of fire'. The new idea of the Spirit as a force capable of changing individual lives was already adopted by some Holiness pastors in the 1880s and 1890s. The rupture between Holiness and Pentecostalism was caused by racial prejudice, not doctrine. In 1906 the black Nazarene pastor William Joseph Seymour went to Los Angeles, but was refused to preach in his own church, because he was black. Between 1906 and 1909, Seymour led a black Pentecostal congregation on Azusa Street, in a town on the edge of Los Angeles. Most literature considers this the first appearance of institutionalized Pentecostalism. The black roots of early Pentecostalism are clear; its members were poor, lower-class, and

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5 See e.g. Schäfer (1992: 47).
6 "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2: 1-4).
often barely literate. Examples of early Pentecostal churches are the Church of God (founded in 1906), the Assemblies of God (1915), the Pentecostal Church of America, and the Church of the Foursquare Gospel (1924). The evangelical zeal of these churches was expressed by the fact that they sent their first missionaries to Central America only twenty years after their foundation: see table below.

The next category is *Neo-Pentecostalism*. The prefix *neo* refers to the fact that these churches were the results of schisms in historical Protestant, Holiness, or even institutionalized Pentecostal churches, like for instance the Assemblies of God. The result was a `Pentecostalization' of the older churches. The new schisms stressed the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of personally accepting Christ to receive Salvation just like the original Pentecostal churches. According to the literature, Neo-Pentecostals in the United States and Guatemala were predominantly middle-class or even upper-class. Rains of Mercy members in La Florida, however, did not confirm to this pattern.

Finally, there are the *independent Christian traditions*, like the Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the Jehovah's Witnesses. They did not result from schisms, but instead were independently founded in the 19th century by charismatic prophets in the United States. Although they still maintain certain tensions with mainstream society, they nevertheless continue to grow impressively worldwide.
Table A5.1  
*Chronology of arrival or start of churches in Guatemala, 1882-1984*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Church Type</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church (US)</td>
<td>1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Central American Mission (US)</td>
<td>1896-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Independent Pentecostal Church (US)</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Friends [Quakers] (US)</td>
<td>1902</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Church of the Nazarene (US)</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Seventh-Day Adventist Church (US)</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Full Gospel Church of God (US)</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Jehovah's Witnesses (US)</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Primitive Methodist Church (US)</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Church of God of Prophecy (US)</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Brethren (US)</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Central American Church (Centr.Am.Mission)</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Lutheran Church (US)</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Assemblies of God (US)</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Enmanuel (US)</td>
<td>1937</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (US)</td>
<td>1945</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Príncipe de Paz (Centr.Am.)</td>
<td>1945</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Baptist Church (US)</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints Church [Mormons] (US)</td>
<td>1947</td>
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<td>HC</td>
<td>Church of God, Anderson (US)</td>
<td>1950</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús (Mex.)</td>
<td>1952</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Galilea Church of God (US)</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Church of Christ (US)</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Elim (Centr.Am.)</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Iglesia Evangélica del Espíritu Santo (Presb.)</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Episcopal [Anglican] Church (US)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>American Pentecostal Church of God (US)</td>
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<td>HPC</td>
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<td>1968</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>La Voz de Dios (Gua.)</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Monte Basán (Prim. Meth.)</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Bethania (Presb.)</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Manantial de Vida (Gua.)</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Church of the Word (US)</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
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<td>36</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Fraternidad Cristiana de Guatemala (Calv.)</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>El Shaddai (origin unknown)</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy (Presb.)</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Explanation of church-type codes:

- **HPC** (7: 18%)  
  Historical Protestant church: roots in European Reformation.

- **HC** (6: 16%)  

- **PC** (13: 34%)  
  Pentecostal church: resulting from early 20th century manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the US.

- **NPC** (8: 21%)  
  Neo-Pentecostal church: resulting from schisms in HPC in United States and...
Guatemala, based on manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Independent Christian tradition: Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

Out of the total of 37 churches mentioned the Central American Mission and Church are both listed 25 (over two-thirds or 68 percent) have US origins. Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches together make up 55 percent here.

Table A5.2

Statistics of baptized non-Catholic church members, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>church</th>
<th>bapt. members</th>
<th>multiplier</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>117,868</td>
<td>294,670</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Príncipe de Paz</td>
<td>92,000</td>
<td>230,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Full Gospel Church of God</td>
<td>74,543</td>
<td>186,358</td>
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<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Central American Church</td>
<td>66,763</td>
<td>166,908</td>
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<td>05</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Misión Evangélica Elim (est., 1980)</td>
<td>38,225</td>
<td>95,563</td>
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<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>36,600</td>
<td>91,500</td>
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<td>07</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Misión Cristiana El Calvario</td>
<td>35,272</td>
<td>88,180</td>
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<td>08</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Fraternidad Cristiana (estimate, 1989)</td>
<td>26,250</td>
<td>65,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints (Mormons)</td>
<td>20,545</td>
<td>51,363</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>16,500</td>
<td>41,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Asamblea Evangélica La Voz de Dios</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>37,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Misión Evangélica del Espíritu Santo</td>
<td>10,247</td>
<td>25,618</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Baptist Convention Guatemala</td>
<td>8,401</td>
<td>25,203</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Jehovah's Witnesses</td>
<td>5,826</td>
<td>14,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>American Pentecostal Church of God</td>
<td>5,805</td>
<td>14,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía Univer-</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>sal</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Iglesia Evangélica Bethania</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>4,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy (1990)</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Church of the Word</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HPC  Historical Protestant churches: 2 (9.5%).
HC   Holiness churches: 2 (9.5%).
PC   Pentecostal churches: 7 (33.3%).
NPC  Neo-Pentecostal churches: 7 (33.3%).
IC   Independent Christian traditions: 3 (14.3%).

Sources: Johnstone (1995: 252-253) and Similox (1991: 63-64, Anexo 4.1), which are both based on figures provided by the churches themselves. I have used a standard 2.5 multiplier to calculate the entire church community. The Elim figure is modified from Zapata (1982: 192), by also using a 2.5 multiplier. The Fraternidad Cristiana figure is similarly calculated from Similox (1991: 57). The Mormon figure comes from the Area Office in Guatemala City. The Jehovah's Witnesses figure is calculated with a customary multiplier of 3. No data on Seventh-Day Adventist Church.
Table A5.3
Statistics of baptized non-Catholic church members, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>bapt. members</th>
<th>multiplier</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>97,854</td>
<td>244,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Príncipe de Paz</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Full Gospel Church of God</td>
<td>70,872</td>
<td>177,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Central American Church</td>
<td>67,700</td>
<td>169,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Misión Cristiana El Calvario</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Latter-day Saints (Mormons)</td>
<td></td>
<td>148,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Misión Evangélica Elim</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>125,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Seventh-Day Adventists</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Misión Evangélica del Espíritu Santo</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Fraternidad Cristiana (estimate)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Asamblea Evangélica La Voz de Dios</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>24,014</td>
<td>60,035</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church</td>
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<td>57,500</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>Baptist Convention Guatemala</td>
<td>16,500</td>
<td>41,250</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Jehovah's Witnesses</td>
<td>13,632</td>
<td>40,896</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Rains of Mercy (estimate, 1995)</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>American Pentec. Church of God</td>
<td>5,826</td>
<td>14,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>(1986)</td>
<td>5,805</td>
<td>14,513</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Iglesia de Dios/Prof. Universal (1986)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Iglesia Evangélica Bethania (1986)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Iglesia El Shaddai (1990)</td>
<td>1,800</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Church of the World (1986)</td>
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</table>

Historical Protestant churches: 2 (9.5%)
Holiness churches: 2 (9.5%)
Pentecostal churches: 7 (33.3%)
Neo-Pentecostal churches: 7 (33.3%)
Independent Christian traditions: 3 (14.3%).

Sources: Johnstone (1995: 252-253) and Similox (1991: 63-64, Anexo 4.1), which are both based on figures provided by the churches themselves. I have used a standard 2.5 multiplier to calculate the entire church community. The Mormon figure comes from the 1997-98 Church Almanac (Deseret News 1996: 333) and includes all baptized members, half of which have probably deserted the church by now. The Jehovah's Witnesses figure is calculated with a multiplier of 3.
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Centrale themas en vragen

Dit is een studie naar de relaties tussen kerk, kleinbedrijf en huishouding bij kleine ondernemers in een arme wijk van Guatemala-stad, waar ik veldwerk verrichte in 1993 en 1994-95. Kerken vormen een belangrijke basis voor sociale organisatie in Guatemala. In Latijns-Amerika valt Guatemala boven dien op vanwege het grote aantal niet-katholieke gelovigen: tussen de 20 en 25 procent\(^1\) van de totale bevolking. De relatief recente groei van het protestantisme in Guatemala is uitgebreid bestudeerd, maar er zijn nog weinig pogingen gedaan om religie met armoede en kleinbedrijf te verbinden.

Tussen de zestig en negentig procent van de totale Guatemalteekse bevolking van meer dan 10,5 miljoen is arm. Ruwweg een vijfde van de bevolking meer dan twee miljoen mensen woont in het centrale stedelijke gebied van Guatemala-stad en zustergemeente Mixco. Twee-derde van hen leeft onder de armoedegrens. Volgens schattingen van de Verenigde Naties maakte de zogenaamde ‘informele sector’, breed gedefinieerd als alle ongeregistreerde economische activiteiten, in 1977 acht procent uit van het BNP, toenemend tot twintig procent in 1990\(^2\). Een derde van de beroepsbevolking van Guatemala-stad werkte in de informele sector in 1991. Volgens studies van FLACSO was de helft van deze groep self-employed, dat wil zeggen: de eigenaar was de enige werknemer. Een op de zes was micro-ondernemer, eigenaar van een bedrijfje met vijf tot tien werknemers. De overigen werkten als betaalde arbeidskracht of als onbetaalde familiezorg. De meeste bedrijven waren familiebedrijven, gezorgd op ondersteuning van de eigen huishouding. Ik definieer de huishouding als een groep mensen, vaak verwanten, die onder hetzelfde dak leven en al hun hulpbronnen of tenminste een groot deel ervan samenvoegen om economisch te overleven.

Het systematisch navorsen van de relatie tussen bedrijf en kerk is belangrijk niet alleen vanwege de sterke protestante groei in Latijns-Amerika, maar vooral vanwege de toenemende nadruk op kleinbedrijf bij westerse donoren, niet-gouvernementele organisaties (NGO’s) en organisaties van de Verenigde Naties\(^3\). In de loop van het project werd deze beleidsinteresse omgevormd tot de volgende centrale vragen:

Hoe kan lidmaatschap van een bepaalde kerk het functioneren van een klein bedrijf helpen of belemmeren? Welke rol speelt de huishouding van de eigenaar hierbij?

Theoretische benaderingen


\(^3\) Bijvoorbeeld de ‘International Labor Organization’ (ILO).

De actor-in-context benadering sluit goed hierop aan, omdat deze is gegrond in ervaringen en concepten uit het dagelijkse leven van mensen. Een cruciale aanvulling is ‘agency’: de capaciteit van een individu (actor) om sociale ervaringen te verwerken en strategieën om met het leven om te gaan ‘coping strategies’ te ontwikkelen. Deze strategieën worden sterk beïnvloed door de kennis van de actor en door zijn/haar ‘life world’: de eigen perceptie van de geordende realiteit van het dagelijks leven. Volgens Arce & Long wordt het dagelijks leven gedomineerd door het pragmatische principe: het is vooral gericht op het oplossen van praktische problemen. Om niet in voluntarisme te vervallen is een kritiekpunt op de actorbenadering zijn de leefwerelden van de informanten duidelijk in de context van de Guatemalteekse samenleving geplaatst. Tenslotte zal met behulp van een rationelekeuze-benadering geanalyseerd worden hoe de informanten de prioriteiten in hun leven stellen.

Onderzoeksverloop
Als onderzoekslocatie raadde counterpart FLACSO La Florida aan: een relatief veilige volkswijk tien kilometer ten westen van het centrum met veel kleine ondernemingen. La Florida is na 45 jaar een gevestigde wijk met huizen van ‘adobe’ (leem) en geasfalteerde hoofdweg, waar op slechts één vierkante kilometer 37.000 mensen leven.

Na La Florida in kaart gebracht te hebben en via NGO’s micro-ondernemers uit heel Guatemala-stad geïnterviewd te hebben, besloot ik om twee contrasterende kerkcasus te selecteren in de wijk. Het ging om de mormoonse kerk, met hoofdquartier in Salt Lake City in de Verenigde Staten, en een lokale neopinksterkergenamde Regens van Genade (‘Lluvias de Gracia’). Gebaseerd op eerder eigen onderzoek en de literatuur was de verwachting bij de mormonen veel kenmerken van Weber’s protestante ethiek aan te treffen. Regens van Genade zou daarentegen veel meer gericht zijn op spiritualiteit en verlossing. De mormonen waren sinds 1947 in Guatemala en hadden ongeveer 150.000 leden, waarvan echter hoogstens de helft daadwerkelijk naar de kerk ging. Regens van Genade bestond sinds 1981 en had waarschijnlijk tussen de 8.000 en 12.000 leden, verspreid over veertig congregaties in het land. In beide kerken hield ik uitgebreide levensgeschiedenis-interviews, alsmede met twee rooms-katholieke ondernemers en een lid van de neopinksterkerg Elim.

In totaal zijn in deze studie de levensgeschiedenissen van dertien sleutelinformanten opgenomen (zie appendix 1), waaronder tien mannen en drie vrouwen. De gemiddelde leeftijd was 42. De meesten waren in de 30 of 40; de jongste was 29 en de oudste 65. In de tekstblokken van de levensgeschiedenis-interviews hebben ze allemaal fictieve namen. Bernardo en Pablo waren timmerlieden, Juan was automonteur, Guillermo was schoenmaker, María maakte keramiek, Patricio was aannemer, Beatriz had een kleine schoonheidssalon, haar man Mario was bedrijfsleider in de ijzerwaren winkel van zijn ouders, Ana was advocate.

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Miguel was drukker, Raúl verkocht gasflessen, Luis maakte en verkocht en verhuurde feestmeubilair, en Ramiro was loodgieter. Het aantal werknemers in de bedrijfjes varieerde van nul (de eenmansbedrijven van Guillermo, Beatriz en Raúl) tot acht bij Juan. De gemiddelde werkweek van de eigenaar was ongeveer 48 uur: maandag tot en met zaterdag. De bedrijfjes bestonden gemiddeld al twaalf jaar; ze waren dus tamelijk oud.


Context
De economische crisis van begin jaren tachtig leidde tot een sterke toename van armoede in Guatemala. Maar de extreem ongelijke welvaartsverdeling wordt vooral veroorzaakt door de onevenwichtige economie: enerzijds dynamische sectoren agrarische export, toerisme, en ook drugshandel met hoge opbrengsten en lage belastingafdrachten, anderzijds een enorme sector van zelfvoorzienend landbouw en microbedrijfjes. De oorsprong van deze onevenwichtige economie gaat terug tot landverhoudingen in de 19de eeuw, de overwinning van Liberalen over Conservatieven en de daarop volgende expansie van de koffie- en bananenproductie. Plantages annexeerden gemeenschapsgronden van indianen en Ladinos werden de typische bemiddelaars tussen de grootgrondbezitters en de indianen boeren. Veel analisten zien de plantage-economie als de basis voor racisme van Ladinos tegenover Indianen.


De terugkeer naar de burgerdemocratie in 1986 veroorzaakte een opbloei in volksorganisaties, met name indianen groepen, vakbonden en mensenrechten groepen. De volkssectoren kampten echter met een gebrek aan goed leiderschap (de beste leiders waren vermoord), onderlinge verdeeldheid en problemen van cliëntelisme, corruptie en representativiteit. De voornaamste problemen van het land die geanalyseerd worden in hoofdstuk 2 zijn de oorlog tussen leger en guerrilla, hoge misdadigcijfers, een zwakke staat, verdeelde volkssectoren en grote armoede.

Religie vormde een belangrijke bron van organisatie en identiteit, maar ook van verdeeldheid. In 1970 beschouwde 95 procent van de bevolking zich nog katholiek. Maar de rooms-katholieke kerk had belangrijke zwaktes: ze was sterk geconcentreerd in de steden, onderling verdeeld in tientallen groepen (volkskatholieken en orthodoxen, basisgemeenschappen en charismatic groepen, dioceses en kloosterordes) en moest sinds 1976 steeds feller
concurreren met de protestante kerken. De snelle protestante opmars sinds 1976 werd veroorzaakt door een synergistisch effect van vijf gelijktijdige factoren: sterke urbanisatie; anomie veroorzaakt door armoede, onderdrukking, oorlog en de aardbeving van 1976; de sterke institutionele basis van protestante kerken die sinds eind 19de eeuw hun eigen kerken, scholen, instituten en ziekenhuizen hadden gevormd; de mogelijkheid van participatie, zelforganisatie en het opbouwen van bepaalde vaardigheden (bijvoorbeeld leiderschap en lesgeven) in deze kerken; en tenslotte ontevredenheid of gebrek aan contact met de katholieke kerk.

Mormonen en Regens van Genade
In onderzoekswijk La Florida waren de gevolgen van dit proces goed terug te vinden. Er waren zeker veertig niet-katholieke kerken, met een geschat totaal aantal leden van bijna 8.500. De mormoonse groep had 300 inactieve leden en slechts 100 actieve, waarvan 65 volwassenen. Drie-kwart van deze volwassenen had een ‘temple-aanbeveling’, wat betekent dat ze leefden volgens het ‘Woord van Wijsheid’ (geen koffie, thee, alcohol of tabak gebruiken), geld betaalden aan de kerk en regelmatig naar de kerk gingen. De totale opkomst op zondagochtend lag tussen de 65 en 85. Vrouwen vormden een meerderheid van ruwweg 60 procent. De leden waren over het algemeen afkomstig uit de lagere klasse of de lagere middenklasse: typische banen waren loodgieter, schoenmaker, winkelbediende, kleermaker, onderwijzer en secretaresse. Regens van Genade telde ongeveer 250 geregistreerde leden; bij de twee diensten op zondagochtend zaten er telkens tussen de 100 en 125 leden in de kerk. Ook hier vormden de vrouwen een duidelijke meerderheid. Alcohol drinken was strikt verboden, net als uitgaan, dansen of naar de bioscoop gaan. Wel was er een levendige electrisch versterkte muziekbands, bestaande uit toetsenist, drummer, gitarist en basgitarist. De typische beroepen van de leden hier waren die van de hogere lagere klasse, bijvoorbeeld timmerman, metse, schoenmaker of caissière.

Regens van Genade en de mormoonse kerk hadden elk twee tegenstrijdige vertogen over armoede. Enerzijds zagen beiden armoede als een probleem dat werd veroorzaakt door individuele ondeugden als luiheid, alcoholisme, gebrek aan discipline en geldverspilling. Anderzijds klonk bij beiden ook de omgekeerde visie door, terug te voeren tot Jezus Christus, dat de armen spiritueel gezegend waren. Het voornaamste verschil tussen beide kerken was dat de mormoonse kerk haar leden adviseerde te streven naar economische zelfredzaamheid (hard werken, sparen, onderwijs volgen, ethisch leven) en hen actief ondersteunde in harde tijden middels een welzijnsprogramma, waarvan vijf of zes huishouding gebruikt maakten. Regens van Genade praktiseerde daarentegen alleen liefdadigheid voor een tiental oudere weduwen en kende geen enkel programma of visie om leden te stimuleren economisch vooruit te komen. Bij de mormonen vond ik vijf kleine ondernemers op 100 actieve leden (5 procent), bij Regens van Genade drie op 250 (1,2 procent).

Het bedrijf
Met een bedrijfje hadden de informanten gewoonlijk een hoger inkomen, meer financiële zekerheid en meer persoonlijke vrijheid. Vaak vormde uitbuiting door een familieled of de directe aanleiding om ondernemer te worden. Ander kregen hulp van derden soms familieleden, soms NGOs of een medekerklid bij het starten van hun microbedrijf. Succesvolle ondernemers moesten aan een groot aantal psychologische, professionele, financiële, organisatorische en sociale eisen voldoen. Onmisbaar waren discipline, goed met mensen om kunnen gaan, professionele vaardigheid en ervaring, startkapitaal, een talent voor organisatie...
en de vaardigheid om sociale netwerken op te bouwen en te gebruiken voor het bedrijf. Gezien de nauwe, bijna symbiotische relatie tussen bedrijf en huishouding had de eigenaar de autoriteit nodig om andere leden van de huishouding over te halen hun arbeid, geld, ruimte en tijd op te offeren voor het bedrijf.

Ik beschrijf en analyseer vijf sleutelproblemen in het proces van het starten en uitbouwen van een bedrijfje: drinken met werkmaatjes, recrutering van arbeiders, marktonzekerheden, belasting betalen en altijd een laag en onzeker inkomen. De meeste mannelijke informanten werkten op hun twaalfde al voltijd en begonnen onder druk van collega’s alcohol te drinken. Velen raakten door overmatig alcoholgebruik in de problemen, omdat dit hun discipline ondernemende en hun kapitaal vernietigde. Om ondernemer te kunnen worden, moesten ze breken met hun oriëntatie op medearbeiders en zich richten op het verbeteren van de economische positie van hun eigen huishouding. De kerk kon hierbij een belangrijke rol spelen door deze keuze voor de huishouding te bevestigen en te ondersteunen.

Recrutering van arbeiders vormt een probleem voor elke onderneming, maar nog sterker voor het microbedrijf. In veel huishoudingen werden de oudste zonen betaald voor hun arbeid, terwijl jongere kinderen vaak hun zusters geen loon kregen en zich uitgebuit voelden. Uitbuiting en fraude konden dus ook in familiebedrijven voorkomen, maar de sociale relatie kon hier nooit compleet afgesneden worden wat op zichzelf al een bron van stabiliteit was. De bedrijven die uitsluitend betaalde arbeiders hadden, recruteerden deze vaak buiten de kring van familie en kerk, zodat gedeelde identiteit geen reden kon worden voor een voorkeursbehandeling. De ingehuurde arbeiders waren gewoonlijk jong (in de twintig) en sterk gemotiveerd. Ze ontvingen vaak hele redelijke salarissen, want het risico was anders groot dat de besten snel verdwenen om hun eigen bedrijfje op te zetten wat typisch is voor de ‘informele sector’.

Niet alle bedrijven waren even gevoelig voor concurrentie of macro-economische omstandigheden. De kwetsbaarste bedrijven bijvoorbeeld Juan’s garage, María’s keramiek-onderneming en Miguel’s drukkerij waren zowel gevoelig voor concurrentie als de macro-economie. Een tweede groep was kwetsbaar voor prijsconcurrentie, maar minder afhankelijk van het macro-economische klimaat: Guillermo’s schoenmakerij, Beatriz’ schoonheidssalon, Raul’s gasbedrijf en de timmerlieden Bernardo en Pablo. Tenslotte waren er twee uitzonderlijke gevallen. Luis’ feestmeubilairbedrijf had weinig concurrentie in het gebied, maar moest zijn basisgrondstof ijzer importeren met dure dollars. Alleen Ramiro’s loodgietersbedrijf was vrijwel ongevoelig voor concurrentie of macro-economische omstandigheden.

De onderzoeksgroep vertoefde zowel informele als formele kenmerken. Drie ondernemers ontvingen hun startkapitaal van buiten via een NGO. De grote meerderheid werkte weliswaar zonder arbeidscontracten, maar bijna allemaal betaalden ze vaste salarissen. Zes gebruikten een geïmproviseerd boekhoudsysteem; vijf een formeel systeem. Drie informanten moesten hun grondstoffen importeren uit het buitenland. Ongeveer de helft had familie-arbeiders. Slechts twee wilden niet zeggen of ze belasting betaalden, de rest verklaarde van wel. De grote meederheid gebruikte formele zakencontracten met leveranciers, alleen Patricio gebruikte informele netwerken. Aangezien bij deze oudere bedrijven informele en formele kenmerken elkaar min of meer in evenwicht hielden, lijkt dit toch erop te duiden dat men er niet naar streefde het bedrijf te ‘formaliseren’.

Ik heb het succes van de bedrijven geanalyseerd aan de hand van de volgende criteria: gemiddelde inkomsten, winstgevendheid, groei, professionalisering en het gemiddelde aantal klanten per dag. Twee bedrijven stagneerden op een tamelijk laag niveau (María en Miguel), drie stagneerden op een stabiel niveau (Juan, Bernardo en Patricio), vijf hadden succes en
groeiden (Ramiro, Ana, Raúl, Luis en Mario) en drie bedrijven waren te nieuw om op deze wijze te evalueren (Guillermo, Pablo en Beatriz).

Het bedrijf was echter slechts één mogelijke bron van geldgebrek. Daarnaast waren er individuele en huishouding-factoren, alsmede toevoegelijkheden zoals ziekte of reparatie. De reacties op geldgebrek volgden een patroon met drie lagen. Ten eerste preventie, door geld te sparen (waar slechts vier informanten in slaagden) of bij de mormonen een voedselvoorraad aan te leggen. Ten tweede, bezuinigingen op niet-essentiële uitgaven. Ten derde, geld lenen van uitdijende netwerken van vrienden en familieleden.

De kerk
Hoewel elf van de dertien sleutelinformanten opgroeiden als rooms-katholieken, blijkt de invloed hiervan op hun latere leven sterk te variëren. Zes kwamen uit nominaal katholieke gezinnen. Twee van hen zijn katholiek gebleven: Pablo is zelfs nog minder actief dan zijn ouders, terwijl María veel meer betrokken is geraakt bij haar parochie sinds haar kinderen werden geboren. Er is een typisch patroon zichtbaar bij de mannelijke informanten: een min of meer religieuze opvoeding, loonarbeid als kind, drinken en uitgaan met werknaties, trouwen in de twintig, allengs opgeven van alcohol en uitgaan, en tenslotte actieve deelname in een nieuwe kerk om de eigen oriëntatie op de eigen huishouding, en niet meer op medearbeiders, te consolideren.

Drie informanten waren al religieuze zoekers tijdens hun adolescentie; drie anderen vonden een nieuwe kerk onder invloed van hun partner of kinderen. Maar de grote meerderheid werd actief in een nieuwe kerk nadat ze een keerpunt in hun leven bereikten: soms door alcoholproblemen, soms door vader te worden. Deze groep zag de armoede in hun huishouding, de toestand van hun kinderen, en werden aldus op pijnlijke wijze herinnerd aan hun eigen ongelukkige jeugd. Na zelfreflectie slaagden bijna al deze mannen erin de drank te komen hetzij op eigen kracht, maar meestal met steun van partners, familieleden, kerkgenoten of de Anonieme Alcoholisten. De nieuwe kerk bood een beschermende omgeving, waar drinken en uitgaan verboden waren, de eigen huishouding centraal stond en waar nieuwe netwerken opgebouwd konden worden. Bij de informanten was de wens tot een meer gedisciplineerde leefwijze de voorbode van toetreding tot een hechte, strenge kerk. De omgekeerde volgorde, discipline na toetreding, kwam zelden voor. Het uitvoeren van vrijwilligerstaken in de nieuwe kerk kon mensen helpen er gewend te raken, maar soms was hun onzekerheid juist reden om op te stappen. Andere problemen die mensen uit de kerk konden verdrijven waren opnieuw alcoholproblemen en de investeringen in tijd en geld die de nieuwe kerk opeiste.

Tijd en geld waren juist voor de kleine ondernemers van groot belang. Afgezien van Ramiro en Mario in de mormoonse kerk en zowel Raúl als Ana in Regens van Genade, had bijna iedereen problemen om hun tienden te betalen aan de kerk. Miguel en Patricio konden niet eens precies uitekennen hoeveel ze moesten betalen, aangezien ze geen boekhouding bijhielden. Kortom: iedereen deed zijn best deed altijd wel iets aan de kerk te geven, maar men slaagde er zelden of nooit in ook echt tien procent van het inkomen af te staan.

Werken op zondag was strikt verboden hoewel loodgieterproblemen bij zijn vaste klanten Ramiro dit verbod soms deden overtreden en onbetaalde keerkosten vergden veel tijd. De informanten besteedden gemiddeld 7 uur per week (7 procent van hun tijd) aan kerkzaken, iets meer dan 47 uur (42 procent) aan hun bedrijf en 57 uur (51 procent) aan hun gezin en andere zaken. Met andere woorden: de informanten besteedden gemiddeld meer dan zes keer zoveel tijd aan hun werk dan aan hun kerk en 7 keer zoveel tijd aan hun gezin dan
aan hun kerk. Maar de onderlinge verschillen waren enorm. De katholieken besteedden de minste tijd aan hun kerk (nul tot drie uur) en de hogere mormoonse leiders het meeste: 18 of 19 uur per week.

Nog duidelijker is de connectie tussen de tijd die besteed werd aan werk en het informele karakter van het bedrijf. Met uitzondering van María (bedrijfscrisis) en Pablo (nieuw bedrijf) hadden alle meer formele bedrijven gemiddelde werkweken van 48 uur, terwijl de eigenaars van de meer informele bedrijven langer werkten: soms wel 60 uur (Mario). Dit bevestigt dat de meer informele bedrijven arbeidsintensiever zijn.

Het feit dat men meer tijd besteedde aan werken betekende niet noodzakelijk dat er minder tijd overbleef voor de kerk. Indien de echtgenoot een actief kerklid was gold dit evenzeer voor zijn partner en kinderen. De mormoonse congregatieleider besteedde zeer veel tijd aan de kerk, maar zat ook ver boven het gemiddelde op zijn werk. De hogere mormoonse leiders zagen zich gedwongen om hun werk hun eerste prioriteit te maken en de kerk hun tweede, wat betekende dat hun gezin pas op de derde plaats kwam. Drie andere mormoonse ondernemers Juan, Ramiro en Patricio zaten dicht bij elkaar met hun scores op werk (respectievelijk 46, 48 en 50) en op gezin: minimaal 54 uur (Patricio) en maximaal 60 uur (Juan). De ondernemers in Regens van Genade verkeerden door hun zakelijke succes in de positie hun huishouding tot hun eerste prioriteit te kunnen maken en tegelijkertijd boven gemiddeld veel tijd te besteden aan hun kerk en iets onder gemiddeld aan hun werk.

Conclusies

Patroon 2 lijkt bijna een subtype van 1. De twee oudste informanten de mormoonse timmerman Bernardo (65) en Regens van Genade gasverkoper Raúl (54) maakten beiden in een crisis toen ze in de veertig waren. Raúl's bedrijf kreeg te maken met sterk toegenomen concurrentie en Bernardo hertrouwde, werd opnieuw vader en was leider in een nieuw op te zetten volkswijk. Hun oriëntatie verschoof van de huishouding naar hun eigen problemen en beiden worstelden met de alcohol. Bernardo ging uiteindelijk naar de Anonieme Alcoholisten, begon zijn timmerbedrijf en werd opnieuw actief in de mormoonse kerk. Raúl bracht zijn leven op orde met de steun van zijn vrouw en bekeerde zich uiteindelijk tot Regens van Genade.

Patroon 3 is exclusief van toepassing op de drie vrouwelijke informanten: Beatriz (34), Ana (35) en María (40). Ze hoefden niet te werken als kind en maakten naast de basisschool zelfde de middelbare school af. Pas op hun 18de kregen ze hun eerste baantjes. Ze werden beschermd opgevoed, met veel regels en discipline, zoals gebruikelijk bij meisjes. Geen van hen had ooit problemen met alcohol. María werd actiever in de katholieke kerk nadat haar kinderen werden geboren, Beatriz enkele jaren na haar huwelijk met Mario lid van de mormoonse kerk en Ana bekeerde zich al als student op de universiteit tot Regens van
Genade. Alle drie behielden een sterke oriëntatie op hun kinderen en hun huishouding, terwijl hun partners hen stimuleerden om rond hun dertigste een eigen bedrijfje te beginnen. María zag zich gedwongen van haar keramiekhobby haar beroep te maken, nadat ze werd ontslagen als directiesecretaresse vanwege een ongehuwde zwangerschap. Beatriz en Ana wilden eenvoudigweg hun eigen geld verdienen om zo bij te dragen aan de huishouding.

Uit de studie en de drie onderscheiden patronen volgen de volgende hoofdconclusies. Het bleek dat kerklidmaatschap een positieve invloed had voor kleine ondernemers via netwerken, het aanleren van nieuwe vaardigheden, het bieden van advies en begeleiding, en de eis van ethisch gedrag. Anderzijds hadden deze voordelen elk ook hun negatieve kant: netwerken konden misbruikt worden voor fraude, de kerk vergde veel tijd en geld van haar leden, en ook ethisch zakendoen had zijn prijs.

Elementen van Weber's protestante ethiek waren duidelijk terug te vinden bij de informanten, maar in genuanceerde vorm. Individuele handelingen en verantwoordelijkheid nemen voor het eigen gedrag liepen als een rode draad door de levens van alle informanten. Transcendentalisme in het dagelijks leven werd door allen uitgedrukt in de mening dat hun bedrijf en de staat van hun huishouding geheel te danken waren aan God. Vijf mormoonse ondernemers uit patroon 1 gaven uiting aan hetgeen ik het 'convenant vertoog' genoemd heb. Ze stelden dat God hun bedrijven nooit failliet zou laten gaan, zolang ze zich hielden aan hun convenant met hun beloften aan Hem. Niemand gebruikte echter termen die suggererden dat werk gezien werd als een roeping, of een teken van uitverkorenheid. In Regens van Genade, tenslotte, werd het meest expliciet gewaarschuwd voor de verleidingen van het materialisme en de rijkdom. In de mormoonse kerk was de mening dominant dat het in orde was om te genieten van rijkdom, zolang men leefde volgens de regels en moraal van de kerk en tienden betaalde. Het kerklidmaatschap schepte dus niet zozeer de voorwaarden voor ondernemerschap, maar bevestigde en ondersteunde de noodzakelijke omstandigheden en vaardigheden die het mogelijk maken.
Henri Gooren was born on August 12, 1967 in Harderwijk, the Netherlands. From 1979 to 1985 he attended the Monseigneur Frencken College VWO in Oosterhout (NB). Between 1985 and 1991 he studied cultural anthropology at Utrecht University, specializing in development issues, Latin America, and religion. He carried out fieldwork in San José, Costa Rica, on the growth of a Mormon congregation in 1990. From 1993 to 1998 he was a Ph.D. student at Utrecht University's Department of Cultural Anthropology. He conducted graduate research in a low-income neighborhood of Guatemala City in 1993 and 1994-95. His scientific and journalistic publications include work on Protestantism and Mormonism, crime and poverty, democracy and war, poverty and small-scale enterprise, and the Californian suicide cult "Heaven's Gate".