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## Data on the Civil-Religious Organization of the Highland Mixe Society of Oaxaca, Mexico

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## Data on the Civil-Religious Organization of the Highland Mixe Society of Oaxaca, Mexico

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The purpose of the present paper is simply to present data and commentaries on the civil-religious organization of the highland Mixe society of Oaxaca, Mexico. The first part of this paper presents a traditional organization in which the civil and religious organizations are functioning in unison based on a civil-religious hierarchy sustained by the "egalitarian" economy of the fiesta. In this organization the rituals for the office-holders enrich the annual ritual cycle of the community. The second part of the paper presents a changing organization in which the civil organization of the *municipio* is separated from the religious organization of the church and the two tend to be in conflict. Here the remnants of the economy of prestige persist but it no longer influences the civil and religious organizations. In this situation the rituals of the office-holders tend to decline and to become politically tinged. In the transition from traditional organization to changing organization, we find complexities of changes in the civil-religious organization of the highland Mixe society of today.

### INTRODUCTION

The civil-religious organization, characteristic of the Mesoamerican Indian community social structure, has been well classified and discussed on its organizational aspects by Cámara [CÁMARA 1952] and Cancian [CANCIAN 1965, 1967] and on its historical dimensions by Carrasco [CARRASCO 1961]. However, the data on the Mixe society cited in these discussions [CÁMARA 1952: 144; CANCIAN 1967: 297-298] are limited to Ayutla as of 1933 as reported by Ralph Beals [BEALS 1945]. The purpose of the present paper is to present data and commentaries on the civil-religious organization found in the highland Mixe society of today. A part of the economy of the fiesta system as it is interwoven with the civil-religious hierarchy is treated in this paper, but the discussion of the fiesta system as a whole will be left for another paper.

In the first part of this paper the civil-religious organization in Tlahuitoltepec of 1973 and 1974 (hereafter abbreviated as Tlahui) is presented. The second part attempts to follow the process of change which has occurred in the civil-religious organization of Ayutla during the forty years from 1933 to around 1973-74. Tlahui represents the majority type of the economically and politically peripheral communiti-

es of the highland Mixe [KURODA 1976b] and Ayutla that of the acculturated major Mixe market center. In Tlahui the civil and religious organizations are functioning in unison based on a civil-religious hierarchy sustained by the "egalitarian" economy of the fiesta, and the rituals for the office-holders enrich the annual ritual cycle of the community. In Ayutla as of 1973-74 the civil organization of the *municipio* is separated from the religious organization of the church and the two tend to be in conflict. Here persist the remnants of the economy of prestige sustained by the "capitalistic" orientation of the people, though it is greatly modified by the model of the "egalitarian" economy of the Tlahui type. The economy of prestige no longer influences the civil and religious organizations. In this situation the rituals of the office-holders tend to decline and to become politically tinged. I am tempted to suppose a traditional-acculturated continuum in the transition from Tlahui to Ayutla [KURODA 1975]. The general data on the two communities permit this supposition. However, this does not mean that Tlahui will become like Ayutla. What can be said is limited to the fact that in the future Tlahui will follow a similar course of change with that of Ayutla.

The paper is organized as follows:

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      - C. The Fiesta of the Officials
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#### Concluding Remarks

The ethnographic present of this study is 1973 and 1974. I visited Ayutla for the first time on December 12, 1972, and began to live there on January 15, 1973. I continued the field work from that date to January 15, 1975. My first visit to Tlahui was made in early February 1973 and after November of that same year my main interests were directed towards Tlahui. I travelled back and forth between the two villages to observe and participate in the rituals for the office-holders in Ayutla and Tlahui. December 1973 was an especially busy month. A short trip of nine days was made in October 1976 on my way back from the field work on the Albuquerque Chicanos. The data collected on this occasion are used as the basis for some comments in the concluding remarks.

The technique of my field work is participant-observation. Since my knowledge of the Mixe language had not reached even the elementary level, data gathering was done through Spanish. To cover the drawback resulting from the language barrier, I always tried to get and confirm the data by participant-observation. I did not depend upon any specific interpreter. Thanks to my "folk-level" life among the people, I could get help from the bilingual Mixe. Details on the field work will be provided in a monograph now being prepared.

It would be impossible for me to enumerate here all the people to whom my acknowledgements should go, but I am especially indebted to Professor Chie Nakane

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## TLAHUITOLTEPEC: A TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATION

### 1. The Civil-Religious Hierarchy and Types of Offices

In Mesoamerican ethnography the office in the civil-religious hierarchy is usually called *cargo*, but in Tlahui as well as in the other Mixe communities the term *autoridad* is commonly used to denote an office as well as an office-holder. I will present the various offices in Tlahui first.

#### 1) THE TRADITIONAL OFFICES

##### (1) Offices in the Hierarchy

When the people say "*autoridades*," they usually refer to the traditional offices. They have been and still are the core of the civil-religious hierarchy of the community. A listing is given in Table 1.

As is shown in Table 1, the traditional offices are divided into two categories: first, the offices in the hierarchy, which are further subdivided into municipal offices and offices of the church, and second, the specialists outside the hierarchy. Each official has his work and obligatory services for the benefit of the community.

#### A. Municipal Offices

##### *Topil*

Young men start their first service as *topiles*. They are the assistants to the *mayor de vara*. The service is performed in two groups which alternate weeklong duty. There are a variety of services assigned to them:

1. They bring letters from the post office in Ayutla;<sup>1)</sup>
2. They cut and bring firewood to the houses of the *presidente* and the *secretarios*;

1) In January 1975 a branch post office was opened in Tlahui. Up to that time only Ayutla had had a post office, from which letters were distributed to the other Mixe *municipios*.

**Table 1.** The civil-religious hierarchy and other offices in Tlahui in 1973 and 1974

Civil Hierarchy		Religious Hierarchy	
	Traditional Offices		
Type	Number	Type	Number
<i>topil</i>	12	<i>topil</i>	12
( <i>capitán</i> )	5-15		
<i>mayor de vara</i>	6	<i>mayor de vara</i>	4
<i>tesorero</i> and his <i>vocales</i>	2+4		
<i>regidor</i>	8-9*		
<i>suplente</i>	3		
<i>síndico</i>	1	<i>fiscal</i>	4
<i>presidente</i>	1	<i>mayordomo**</i>	4
	<i>alcalde</i>	1	
	<i>principal</i>	many	
Specialists Outside the Hierarchy			
<i>secretario</i>	2	<i>capillo</i>	3
[for <i>presidente</i>	1]		[one is <i>cantor</i> ]
[for <i>alcalde</i>	1]		
		<i>sacristán</i>	2
		<i>comité de la banda</i> and musicians	
		<i>presidente</i>	1
		<i>vocal</i>	9
		musicians	about 50
New Offices			
<i>comité de la escuela</i> [of the <i>centro</i> ]	12	<i>tesorero</i>	1
<i>comité de la escuela</i> [of the <i>ranchos</i> ]	18	<i>auxiliar</i>	10-12
<i>comité de las obras materiales</i>	48		
<i>comité de las bienes comunales</i>	6		
<i>comité de la luz</i>	6		

NOTES:

Parenthesis indicates a temporary office.

\* Varies each year according to the needs of the community. For example, there were ten *regidores* in 1976.

\*\* This is the *mayordomo* of the church. In addition, each *ermita* has two *mayordomos*. Therefore, the eight *ermitas* have a total of sixteen *mayordomos* of the *ermita*.

3. They repair footpaths and bridges damaged by heavy rain;
4. They carry baggage and personal belongings of teachers, musicians and official visitors from the federal and state governments;
5. At the major fiestas they bring branches of trees and flowers to adorn the plaza. For the fiesta of Guadalupe, especially, they cut trees at the *rancho* near the footpath leading from the *centro* to Rancho Flores, and bring them to the plaza to build a corral for the bullfight. They also let off the sky-rockets at the fiestas and important community meetings;
6. They announce the community meetings to each family;
7. They announce the *tequio* so that every family can send one adult for communal work. In 1974 Tlahui needed *tequio* for construction of a road and for repair

of the roof of the church. After the Sunday mass all the participants in the mass were obliged to carry sand and gravel. The *topiles*, holding their batons of command in their hands, stand at the main and side doors of the church so that they can prevent the communicants from escaping from the *tequio*; and

8. They also work as policemen. Under the direction of the *mayor de vara*, *topiles* put into jail those who are adjudged to be in error by the *presidente*. At the major fiestas, *topiles* are on duty watching the drunkards. Sometimes the higher officials, whom the *topiles* have to obey, get drunk and the *topiles* must rush to the parish house for consultation regarding the treatment of the culprit. At the fiesta of Guadalupe the bullfight attracts so large an audience that the *topiles* cannot control it. Some young men, therefore, are chosen to temporarily help the *topiles*. They patrol the plaza with batons much shorter than those of the regular *topiles*. Sometimes *topiles* are sent to other *municipios* to prevent the people of Tlahui from getting into trouble. On June 2, 1974, many people of Tlahui visited Tamazulapam for the fiesta of the Espíritu Santo. The *presidente* advised the people not to drink much in Tamazulapam and sent *topiles* to this neighboring village so that they could prevent people of Tlahui from being jailed by the *topiles* of Tamazulapam.

#### *Capitán*

This is an appointive temporary office for sponsoring the fiestas of the major saints. Five to fifteen *capitanes* are appointed by the *alcalde*, the *presidente*, the *sindico* and their *suplentes* for the fiestas of the major saints of Ascensión, Asunción and Guadalupe. They are obliged to make expenditure, and serve food to the visiting musicians. The number of *capitanes* appointed is determined by the number of bands invited. The expenditure for each *capitán* ranges from 1,000 to 1,500 *pesos*. This office is sometimes called *caporal*.

#### *Mayor de vara*

Under the direction of the *sindico* the *mayores de vara* are in charge of the municipal jail. They command the *topiles* in fulfilling their duties.

#### *Tesorero* and his *Vocales*

They keep account of the monetary income and expenditure of the *municipio*. Each week a *tesorero* and two *vocales* are engaged in the collection of the market tax: 2 to 5 *pesos* from each stall (*puesto*) and a smaller amount from each vendor, according to the amount of his sales. For example, 1 *peso* from a woman who sells a *guajolote* (Mexican turkey) for 100 *pesos* and 1 *peso* from a vendor of wild plants. They are also obliged to collect the municipal tax. Usually they find the taxpayers at the market of Tlahui, but sometimes they have to visit the market of Ayutla to collect tax from those people of Tlahui who, because of their residence being near Ayutla, are regular commuters to the market of Ayutla rather than to that of Tlahui.

#### *Regidor*

They have civil and religious duties. As civil duties they have to inspect the

communal construction and organize the *tequio* under the direction of the *sindico*. As a religious duty they assist the *alcalde* in the management of the religious rituals. In theory they belong to the *alcalde*, but recently their civil duties have been increasing.

### *Suplente*

There are three *suplentes*: one for the *sindico*, one for the *presidente* and one for the *alcalde*. Each one assists his superior.

### *Sindico*

Under the direction of the *presidente*, he is responsible for the administrative work in cooperation with the *regidores*, *tesoreros*, *mayores* and *topiles*.

### *Presidente*

He is responsible for the administration of the community and represents the community to the outside world.

## B. Offices of the Church

### *Topil*

They work for the church and the priest. Four of the twelve *topiles* belong to the *fiscales*, the remaining eight to the *mayores de vara*. They are divided into two groups which alternate weeklong duty, and have a variety of duties assigned to them:

1. Daily ringing of the church bell;
2. Bringing firewood to the parish house and chopping it near the kitchen;
3. Buying things necessary for the church at Ayutla, Tamazulapam or Oaxaca;
4. Helping the priest to carry things brought from Oaxaca by his truck;
5. Taking care of the mules, chickens, rabbits and cows belonging to the church, and giving them food and cleaning the stable and barn.
6. Carrying the priest's baggage and belongings on his visits to the villages in the parish when they do not send their own *topiles* to Tlahui to attend the priest during his journeys;
7. Cleaning the cemetery, especially before All Saints' Day;
8. Removing dogs from the church during the mass.
9. Decorating the church, the parish house and the house of the religious sisters for the fiesta; and
10. Bringing firewood to the houses of the *mayordomos* and *fiscales*, who are too occupied with their own duties to provide their kitchens with firewood.

### *Mayor de vara*

Under the direction of the *fiscales* and *mayordomos* they order the *topiles* in their duties. Each of the four *mayores* is assisted by two *topiles*. Two *mayores* are on duty each week and they have to provide food for the *topiles* subordinate to them.

### *Fiscal*

They have fairly specialized duties:

1. Every year at harvest time they collect the tithe (*diezmo*), one *almud* of corn



from each family and half an *almud* from single women. Each of the four *fiscales* is assigned *ranchos* from which he collects the tithe. During the period from November to January they bring sacks of corn to the parish house, under the direction of the *presidente*, *alcalde* and *sindico*;

2. Each Saturday, the market day of Tlahui, they walk around the plaza to find a girl who can grind the corn in the kitchen of the parish house. The young girl thus appointed works as *molinera* for one week. This *molinera* service was also required for the federal school teachers, who were usually from other regions. However, since about fifteen years ago, as Tlahui began to acquire Mixe teachers who lived with families or who could eat with a Mixe family, the service of *molineras* for teachers has been eliminated;

3. At Christmas they have to find *padrinos* for the *posada* ritual;

4. For funerals, one of the *fiscales*, bearing a *cantor*, goes to the house of the deceased, and leads the coffin to the church. After the deceased receives benediction at the church, the *fiscal*, holding his baton of corona in his hand, walks with the *cantor* at the head of the funeral procession and attends the burial at the cemetery; and

5. On all Saints' Day the *fiscales* have the privilege of receiving offerings from the family altar of each house.

#### *Mayordomo* (of the church)

They are responsible for the management of the church. Each week one *mayordomo* lives in the house of the *mayordomos* which stands in front of the church. He takes care of the church, sweeping the floor and putting flowers at the altar.

They manage the fund of the *mayordomos* in cooperation with the priest and the *tesorero* of the church. Their major economic source is the sale of candles which they produce using a bamboo circle called *torno* at the house of the *mayordomos*. The candles are sold, but many of the people of Tlahui like to rent them. A medium-sized candle rents for 25 *centavos*. One who rents candles is called a *cofrade*. Usually, a *cofrade* rents three candles, two for his own prayer and one for a relative, friend, or neighbor who cannot come to church. He pays 75 *centavos*, takes the candles to the church, lights them for prayer, and goes back to the house of the *mayordomos* to return them.

Candles are the symbol of the authority of the *mayordomos*. When someone dies, a *mayordomo* visits the house the day before the funeral, bringing two candles as an invitation to the benediction at the church.

#### *Mayordomo* (of the *ermita*)

The *mayordomos* of the eight *ermitas* belong to the *mayordomos* of the church. Each *ermita* has two *mayordomos*. They manage the fund for the saint enshrined at the *ermita* and celebrate the fiesta on the day of the saint. The *mayordomos* of Ermitas Flores and Santa Cruz receive a monthly visit by the priest of Tlahui. The priest chose these two *ermitas* for his visits because of the concentration of inhabitants in these *ranchos*, an important factor in attracting the people to the mass at the *ermita*.

The authority of the *mayordomos* of the *ermitas* rests on that of the *alcalde* and the *mayordomos* of the church. This is well exemplified by an incident at the time of the construction of Ermita Flores. When the people of Rancho Flores constructed an *ermita* without the permission of neither the *alcalde* nor of the *mayordomos* of the church, the three men responsible for the construction were put into jail by order of the *alcalde* and the *mayordomos*.

### C. Civil-Religious Offices

The offices of *alcalde* and *principal* integrate the civil and religious hierarchies.

#### *Alcalde*

The *alcalde* with his *suplente*, *secretario* and *regidores* composes an informal group in the civil-religious hierarchy. He is responsible for justice in cases where the *presidente* cannot give sanction. He is also responsible for communal rituals. In the rituals of Lent and Holy Week and at the fiestas of the major saints, the *alcalde* actively organizes and promotes the rituals as leader of the religious hierarchy.

The *alcalde* has authority to talk against the priest. For example, in about 1960 the *alcalde* did not want to accept a priest sent by the Salesian bishop and asked the bishop to replace him with another.

#### *Principal*

These are respected elders who have completed their service to the community, climbing the civil-religious hierarchy from the lowest office of *topil* to the highest of *alcalde*. They are not organized as a formal group as reported from some Meso-american communities [CANCIAN 1967: 287], but they influence the decision-making of the community, implicitly consulting the officials and leading public opinion at communal meetings. They are exempt from *tequio* by virtue of their long service to the community.

### (2) Specialists Outside the Hierarchy

In addition to the traditional offices, which compose the core of the civil-religious hierarchy, there are specialists, who, as "intellectuals," associate with the traditional officials in the management of civil and religious administration and rituals.

#### A. Specialists on the Civil Side

##### *Secretario*

There are two *secretarios*, one for the *presidente* and another for the *alcalde*. They are responsible for correspondence, birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, and the like. They get paid by those who ask them for these services at the *municipio*. They are fluent in Spanish and enjoy a level of prestige among the illiterate inhabitants.

#### B. Specialists on the Religious Side

##### *Capillo*

Every year three *capillos* are appointed, and by turns one of them plays the role

of *cantor* who is obliged to pray during liturgical rituals and at funeral processions and burials. On All Saints' Day, the *capillos* and *cantor* have the privilege of getting offerings from the family altars of the community, as a reward for their service of praying *responso*s and *salves*.

#### *Sacristán*

This is a permanent office. In the past there were eleven *sacristanes* and five or six of them alternated weeklong duties. At present two men serve as *sacristán*. They know the details of the fiestas and rituals celebrated in the past, and sometimes inform the priest of past customs. They take care of the ornaments and instruments of the church, and with the acolytes assist the priest in the mass.

#### *Comité de la Banda* (Committee for the Musical Band)

The band is an element indispensable to the civil and religious rituals of the community. It is under the direction of the *Comité de la Banda* which is composed of a *presidente*, three *capillos* and nine *vocales*. The *presidente* and the *capillos* invite the musicians to their houses for rehearsal. Each week three *vocales* pass nights at the Salesian kindergarten to guard and take care of the musical instruments kept there. They help the *musicinas* to carry the instruments and music stands. They summon the musicians from the *ranchos* to the *centro* when they are needed. There are about fifty *musicinas* in all, composed of youths and adults. They compose a great block of solidarity in a small community like Tlahui. They rehearse at the houses of the *capillos* and the *presidente*, play at the fiestas and for the communal rituals, and visit other villages to participate in their fiestas.

The *Comité de la Banda* and the musicians serve the community as a whole, but originally the musicians belonged to the church and they were headed by the *capillos*, the specialists of church music.

## 2) THE NEW OFFICES

New offices were created to meet the situation of the 1970's [KURODA 1976c].

### (1) The New Offices on the Civil Side

#### *Comité de la Escuela* (Committee for the School)

The federal school gets local cooperation through this committee, which is composed of a *presidente*, a *suplente*, two *mayores* and eight *topiles*. In addition to these offices at the community level, each *ranchito* has a committee composed of a *presidente*, *tesorero*, *secretario* and fifteen *vocales*.

#### *Comité de las Obras Materiales* (Committee for Construction)

There has recently been a need for a large amount of public construction, such as opening the road leading to the *centro* from the main road, the construction of a water tank, the new *municipio*, the Conasupo (*Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares*, National Company of Popular Subsistence), and the CAPFCE (*Comité Administrativo para el Plan Federal de Construcción de Escuelas*, Administrative Committee for the Federal Plan for Construction of Schools) school. In this situation,

where the traditional officials could not satisfy the needs of the community, this new committee was organized. It is composed of a *presidente*, two *suplentes*, and forty-five *vocales*—out of which twenty belong to the *centro* and twenty-five to the *ranchos*.

*Comité de Bienes Comunes* (Committee for Communal Property)

The DAAC (*Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios y Colonización*, Department of Agrarian Affairs and Colonization) requested the *municipio* to organize a local committee that could cooperate with the DAAC to increase the efficiency of its activities in the Mixe region. This committee was organized to meet this request. It is composed of a *presidente*, *suplente*, *tesorero*, *secretario* and two *vocales*.

*Comité de la Luz* (Committee for Electricity)

The road was opened in 1974, though it was not yet officially inaugurated, and the introduction of electricity is only a question of time. Under these circumstances, the *municipio* organized a committee composed of a *presidente*, *suplente*, *tesorero*, *secretario* and two *vocales*.

(2) The New Offices on the Religious Side

*Tesorero*

The office of *tesorero* was added less than ten years ago. This official serves for three years, and manages the fund of the *mayordomos*, loaning money at five percent interest, to increase the fund.

*Auxiliar*

They assist the priest in the mass, serving him as interpreter and prayer reciter (*rezador*). In Tlahui there are ten to twelve in all. In February, the Salesians give them special instructions as well as instructing the other *auxiliares* belonging to the parish of Tlahui. They are the intermediaries between the missionaries and the monolingual Mixe.

**2. Recruitment of Officials**

The general principle for the recruitment of officials is not one of competition but rather one of distribution of the communal obligation among the limited human resources. Only in the recruitment for the traditional officials in the civil-religious hierarchy do principles of implicit competition and achievement exist. Specialists outside the hierarchy are chosen on the basis of personal inclination to do the work. The new officials are selected from those who have considerable experience in the civil and religious offices or from those who are going to enter the higher offices in the hierarchy.

1) RECRUITMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL OFFICIALS

In theory, every male adult member of the *municipio* of Tlahui is expected to climb the "ladder" of offices from the lowest *topil* to the *alcalde*, pinnacle of the hierarchy (Table 1). In practice, however, steps can sometimes be skipped, and progress from a lower to higher office is not rigidly set. There follows an enumera-

tion of some prominent features of the methods of climbing the ladder in Tlahui:

1. A young man begins his service in the office of *topil*, either of the *municipio* or of the church.

2. One is not required to progress through the hierarchy alternating between civil and religious offices. Some men rose to *presidente* without any experience in a religious office.

3. To secure the office of *mayor de vara* in the civil hierarchy, one is expected to complete the office of *capitán* at some fiesta of a major saint. This is a preference, not a norm. But the *capitán* is the office which any male adult is required to complete to be eligible for higher offices. This is the one and only rigid regulation in the civil-religious hierarchy. After completing *capitán*, one is allowed to skip several offices, depending on ability and community need. As far as actual data are concerned, one can skip up to *suplente* or *síndico*.

4. The highest religious office of *mayordomo* is considered to be of a sacred character and, therefore, in the consciousness of the people, this office has prestige equal to that of *presidente*, though the latter enjoys more social and economic prestige. In some cases a man became *mayordomo* after completing the office of *presidente*.

This process functions without breakdown as far as the present Tlahui is concerned. There are no demographic problems as in Yacochi or Huitepec where the same person has to be *presidente* two or three times because of the small number of inhabitants. Besides, there is no problem of monopolization of a higher office as in Cacalotepec, a village in the midlands, where the same man, called "*cacique*" by the villagers, controls the village and occupies the office of *presidente* for two years.

Special mention should be made of the relationship between the selection of officials and the geographic divisions of the community. Geographic divisions are not a determining factor in the selection of officials. Higher officials such as *alcalde*, *presidente* and *síndico* are chosen regardless of where they live, whether in the *centro* or in a *rancho*. During the past seven years two *presidentes* were from the *centro* and five from the *ranchos*. The other civil and religious officials are distributed rather evenly between the *centro* and the *ranchos*, and, as a result, the municipal administration functions smoothly without causing a need to create officials in *ranchos*, such as was done in Ayutla.

Each year, in August or September, a communal meeting is held at the grounds of the *municipio*. The date for this meeting varies from year to year, and it is extremely difficult to know the date in advance. Three pairs of *presidente* and *síndico* for the coming three years are selected at this meeting. The selection of three pairs is understandable, considering the possibility of death of a *presidente* or *síndico* as happened in 1973, when the *presidente* died after falling from an *aguacate* (avocado) tree. The candidate for *presidente* for 1974 immediately filled his position. Any head of a family can recommend a candidate. The village, that is to say, all the adult participants in the meeting, chooses the three pairs. The voice of the people thus makes the selection in accordance with the popular vote. The actual method is by a show of hands. This is the traditional norm. In reality, the *presidente*, the *síndico* and their

*suplentes* tend to recommend those who enter. Their influence is so conspicuous that some *principales*, who know the traditional norm is not in accordance with the present form of election, commented: "Before, the election of the high officials rested on the free voice of the people. Now, in the name of administrative efficiency, everything is decided by the officials. This is lamentable."

After this meeting, and until November 1, the *presidente* and *sindico* who are going to enter next year look for their *suplentes*. The *presidente*, along with the *sindico*, looks for *alcalde*. The *alcalde* looks for the *suplente* and *regidores* who will belong to him. Following the traditional Mixe way of formal visiting, one has to bring a bottle of *mezcal* and three boxes of cigarettes to the house of the candidate for office. However, for proposals for offices in the lower category they bring only a quarter liter of *mezcal* to formalize the visit.

Selection of the officials of the church does not need the voice of the people; the *alcalde* together with the *presidente* looks for them.

## 2) RECRUITMENT OF SPECIALISTS

Specialists are recruited on the basis of personal talent and their inclination to do the work.

The *secretarios* of the *municipio* tend to be chosen from among young men fluent in Spanish, such as federal school teachers and *promotores* of the INI (*Instituto Nacional Indigenista*) and IIISEO (*Instituto de Investigación e Integración Social del Estado de Oaxaca*).<sup>2)</sup> In the past the *presidente* himself looked for his *secretario* and the *alcalde* looked for his own also. Today, however, two *secretarios* are voted in by a show of hands at the communal meeting. In reality, appropriate candidates are recommended by the *presidente* and the *alcalde*, and approved at the meeting.

The *capillos* are recommended by the *alcalde*, the *presidente* and the priest. The people just give their consent to their choices. There are not many who are well acquainted with the work of the *capillo*.

The *sacristán* is a permanent office. Some children begin their career as acolyte from a very young age, continue to be interested in the liturgical rituals and then tend to work as *sacristán* until they become old. At present there are two *sacristanes*; the older one began to dedicate himself to this office when he was fifteen years old. He was also successful enough to achieve the office of *presidente* about ten years ago. In some communities of Mesoamerica the office of *sacristán* is open to persons who are not inclined to climb the civil-religious hierarchy [CANCIAN 1967: 287]. But this is not so in Tlahui. Another *sacristán* is a middle-aged man greatly devoted to the duty. His son serves as acolyte. As a reward for their services they enjoy the moral support of the missionaries.

## 3) RECRUITMENT OF NEW OFFICIALS

This recruitment shows that the wave of nationalization is coming even to the

2) The IIISEO was consolidated with the INI in 1974 and its *promotores* were registered as belonging to the INI around September of the same year.

Mixe region. The *Comité de las Obras Materiales*, the *Comité de Bienes Comunales* and the *Comité de la Luz* share similar features in recruiting their officials. The *presidentes* for these new committees are chosen from among men who can communicate in Spanish with the “*agats*” (a Mixe term which means non-Mixe) about administrative matters. In due course, those who have completed the office of *presidente* or *alcalde*, or those who will hold these offices in the near future, can be suitable candidates for the *presidentes* of these committees. The names of the candidates are suggested by the municipal *presidente* and then consented to by the people. The other officials in these committees are nominated by the *alcalde*, *presidente*, *sindico* and their *suplentes*, and the *presidentes* of the committees. All are annual offices except that of the *presidente* of the *Comité de Bienes Comunales*. The *presidente* of this committee is also the *presidente* of the *Comité de Bienes Comunales de los Cinco Pueblos* (Committee for Communal Property of the Five Pueblos) of Tlahui, Ayutla, Tamazulapam, Tepantlali and Tepuxtepec [KURODA 1976a]. He will also hold this position in 1975. At the same time, he will be municipal *presidente* in Tlahui for 1975.

The selection of the *Comité de la Escuela* does not need the vote of the village. Committee members are nominated by the *presidente*, the *sindico* and their *suplentes*.

Among the new officials, the *tesorero* of the church is somewhat special. This office requires an honest and considerate personality who can cooperate with the *mayordomos* and the priest. In theory, anyone who knows how to count can be the *tesorero* but in reality, the *tesorero* tends to be chosen from among the *principales* by a show of hands at the communal meeting, held on January 15, in front of the church.

*Auxiliares* are chosen by the priest from among young bilingual Mixe interested in religious practices. Their institutional position is still obscure. The missionaries are planning to give them an official position and better training.

Owing to the increase in the number of new officials, Tlahui will not suffer a shortage of offices, either civil or religious, as reported by Cancian from Zinacantan [CANCIAN 1965]. But Tlahui may suffer an abundance of offices to be filled from a limited pool of human resources.

### 3. The Economic Burden of the Officials and the Egalitarian Economy of the Fiesta

The civil-religious hierarchy is interwoven with the fiesta system, so the economy of the fiesta is outlined before the economic burdens of the officials are discussed. Compared with the competitive and stratified fiesta system, as reported by Cancian from Zinacantan [CANCIAN 1965], Tlahui is characterized by the “egalitarian” economy of the fiesta in which the expenditures tend to be shared collectively by the members of the community, so that the economic obligations will not be too heavy for particular members. The details of the expenditures for each fiesta will be treated in another paper, so only a brief note on the general features of communal expenditures is given here.

The minor fiestas are managed by the fund of the *mayordomos* without causing

any economic burden to the people. This system of *mayordomos* is found also in Yalálag, where the civil-religious hierarchy is similar to Tlahui [DE LA FUENTE 1949: 219-226]. According to de la Fuente, the *mayordomía* (of the prestige economy) did not exist in Yalálag already at the end of the 19th century [DE LA FUENTE 1949: 276]. I am inclined to suppose there is a line of influence from Yalálag to the highland Mixe villages but there are no data to verify this hypothesis. Among the minor fiestas, Santa Cecilia is expensive, but it is sponsored by the *capillos* who can depend on the alms they collect on All Saints' Day. Also the mass for this saint is collectively sponsored by a group of women, each of whom must pay about 10 *pesos*.

Holy Week is one of the major fiestas which demands a large expenditure, but it is covered by contributions collected from each family which pays 1 or 2 *pesos*. Christmas needs eight *padrinos* for the *posada* who, however, are expected to pay only for coffee and bread for one night of the *posada*. Even the fiestas of the major saints of Ascensión, Asunción and Guadalupe are carefully planned so that they do not cause a heavy economic burden, other than to the *capitán* for the band. The mass is collectively sponsored by ten to twenty *madrinas*, each of whom pays 10 to 15 *pesos*. Their little fiesta with coffee, bread and *tepache* is also collectively paid for by them. The fireworks are also collectively sponsored by four to ten single women who have to pay 80 to 200 *pesos* to cover the 800 *pesos* cost. The premium for the bullfight is sponsored by the *municipio*. The basketball game is sponsored by the *Comité del Campeonato de Básquetbol* (Committee for the Basketball Game) which is temporarily organized to cooperate with the *municipio*. The *municipio*, along with the *madrinas* for basketball, who are obliged to contribute 10 *pesos*, helps this committee.

This careful distribution of communal expenditures, reviewed above, is in strong contrast to the consumption of 1,000 to 1,500 *pesos* imposed on some of the officials. All the offices are time-consuming, but not all of them are economically heavy. The offices which demand heavy expenditures are the higher categories like *alcalde*, *presidente* and *sindico*. These officials have to pay for the mass, drinks and meals on the days of the presentation of the officials: November 1, December 25 and New Year's Day. The three officials get together the money to be paid for the mass. On these days the outgoing and incoming officials visit the houses of the new, higher officials, and the latter have to entertain them with *tepache*, *mezcal*, coffee, tortillas, *frijol* soup, *tamales* and cigarettes. The expenditure varies from year to year, but in general they consume 1,000 to 1,500 *pesos* on these occasions.

The *capitán* for the band is an economically heavy office. At each fiesta for a major saint five to fifteen *capitanes* are nominated, whose number varies depending on the scale of the fiesta. A *capitán* performs food service to one of the visiting bands every day during the fiesta, or he performs it once or twice for all the visiting bands. The patterns of food service vary from fiesta to fiesta, depending on the economic conditions of the year and on the willingness of the people. In either case, a *capitán* spends about 1,500 *pesos* for *tepache*, *mezcal*, coffee, tortillas, *frijol* soup, and *machucado* (*chilaquiles a la mixe*).

The religious officials are not generally required to make any personal expendi-



tures except for the *mayor de vara*, who is expected to give food to the *topiles* attending him. The *mayordomos* of the church have to sponsor the fiestas of the minor saints and the *mayordomos* of the *ermitas* must sponsor those of the saints enshrined at the *ermitas*. They pay for the mass, sky-rockets, and some ornaments. For these expenditures they can depend on the fund of the *mayordomos* whose income is based on alms and the sale of candles and prints of the images of the saints (*estampas*) in the case of the *mayordomos* of the church, and on alms only in the case of the *mayordomos* of the *ermitas*.

*Capillos* are outside the hierarchy, but this office demands a fairly large amount of expenditure. They have to serve coffee, *tepache*, *mezcal*, cigarettes and food to the musicians who rehearse for the fiestas and other rituals. The *capillos* also sponsor the fiesta of Santa Cecilia, the patron saint of the musicians. For this purpose, however, they can depend on the alms received on All Saints' Day.

From the above data, it appears that the upper limit of expenditures for the officials is about 1,500 pesos. To give an idea of the value of 1 peso, I will refer to the payments made to the Mixe by government agencies like Coconal (*Compañía de Construcción Nacional*), SOP (*Secretaría de Obras Públicas*) and the *Comisión del Papaloapan*. They pay 20 to 27 pesos a day, depending on age and the type of work. According to this pay scale, 1,500 pesos corresponds to working for 56 to 75 days, or the total earnings during a period of two to three months. This is minor in comparison with the cases which correspond to one to ten years of wage work reported in some ethnographic records [CANCIAN 1967: 288, cases of Cherán, Chenalhó and Zinacantan], but it is still a heavy burden on the people of Tlahui who are accustomed to an egalitarian distribution of communal expenditures.

In spite of the economic burdens, people are willing to accept the offices. In Tlahui there are no social classes, but there is an economic differentiation between "the poor" and "the ones who have something." Some families who suffer illness or natural calamities lose money, whereas others can accumulate it. The latter are those successful in harvesting, the federal school teachers, and the *promotores* of the INI with salaries, and the owners of the shops called *caseteros*. They are under social pressure to assume economically burdensome offices. The candidates nominated should conceal their ambition for the offices, but contrary to a superficial self-negation, most are ambitious enough to do service for the community and to obtain more success than their predecessors. The customary expression of the people appointed to the offices of the higher category runs: "I myself did not want to accept this office, because it robs me of time and money. But the people chose me, so I will do my best. Why not?"

The social pressure which drives people to accept communal service is so strong that the accomplishment of it is understood as a virtue. Nobody can escape from the orders of the officials. For instance, the *molineras*, who are sought by the *fiscal* each Saturday at the market, go to the parish house to grind corn without any protest to the *fiscal*, irrespective of the types of girls chosen, traditional or "agatsi-

*zadas*" (modern). The girls who like to escape from this obligation suffer the reproach of the people.

Prestige and satisfaction enjoyed by the officials are the other side of their obligation. Those who are in office or who have completed them are proud enough to express their satisfaction. A *fiscal* of the church in 1974 expressed this in his peculiar Spanish: "I have the right to be a *fiscal*. Why not? I have an exciting and nice job (*Tengo derecho del fiscal. ¿Cómo qué no? Tengo un trabajo caliente y saburoso*)."

#### 4. New Tendencies

In this century of tremendous social changes, traditional Indian communities have no other choice than confronting the impacts from outside in a positive manner. Tlahui is making this choice and is in the process of modifying its civil-religious organization. This modification has not yet reached the stage of mestizoization which is marked in Ayutla. Some aspects of the modification are:

1. Skipping of the offices from the *capitán* for the band to the higher offices has already been reported, but recently this phenomenon has become rampant. This may be attributed to first to the necessity of having the *presidente*, the *síndico* and their *suplentes* endowed with the knowledge and experience which enables them to get along with the world of the "agats," and secondly to the increase in new offices, which demands a smooth recruitment. These circumstances work to ignore the traditional requirements for a personal career in the hierarchy. The offices, in all, higher and lower, traditional and new, amount to more than 240 in 1974 and the necessity of filling the list of offices tends to permit a more frequent skipping of offices than before.

2. Recently the *presidente*, the *síndico* and their *suplentes* tend to be chosen from the shopkeepers (*caseteros*). In 1974 and 1975 this was already a fact. They are economically better off than the others and have broad experience in contacting the "agats." For these two reasons they are valuable candidates for the higher positions.

3. The municipal *secretarios* tend to be chosen from among young bilingual Mixe such as the teachers and the *promotores* of the INI. The *secretarios* thus chosen influence older officials. Sometimes, they are so influential that they invite the anger of the old-timers, who murmur, "Before there was only one command from the *presidente*. Now there are too many. Who governs the village, the *presidente* or the *secretario*?"

4. There used to be meetings composed of the higher officials such as the *alcalde*, the *presidente*, the *síndico*, their *suplentes* and the *principales* to discuss urgent issues. Recently the teachers and the *promotores* of the INI have been added to these members in the hope that these well-educated young with their modern ideas will help the village. In 1974 this meeting was called many times to get communal decisions on the repair of the Coconol work camp and on various requests from the Coconal engineers and the *Comisión del Papaloapan*.

5. The operations of the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) in the

Mixe region have already begun. The authority of the PRI has not yet penetrated deeply into Tlahui, but in a short time it will extend its activities there.

### 5. Rituals of the Officials

Each year the changes of the officials enrich the calendar of Tlahui with a variety of rituals. The period of two or three months before November 1, the first date for the change of some of the officials, is the "liminal phase" in the definition of Arnold van Gennep [VAN GENNEP 1960]. During this period the social order is debilitated due to the tiredness and irresponsibility of the officials who have been holding their offices for more than half a year. This is the period in which the people begin to complain about them. It is a period of decadance in the social order which the officials established on New Year's Day. This disorder continues until November 1, after which, with the recruitment of some new officials, the community is reoriented to the new order for the coming year. The establishment of the new order is dramatically acted out at the fiesta of the officials on New Year's Day. From New Year's Day, the political and moral order of the community, thus rejuvenated, moves forward until around August or September when the *presidente* and the *sindico* of the coming year are appointed at a communal meeting.

The rituals of the changes of the officials are described and analyzed below. Along with the rituals on November 1, December 25, New Year's Day, and January 15, the *tequio* is dealt with as a ritualistic representation of the power and solidarity of the officials.

#### 1) DATES FOR THE CHANGES OF THE OFFICIALS

The dates of the rituals run as follows:

November 1: Presentation of the *mayores* and *topiles* of the *municipio*; the *mayores* of the church and their eight *topiles*; and the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *ranchos*).

December 25: Presentation of the *alcalde*, the officials of the *municipio* higher than the *mayores* and of the two *secretarios* of the *municipio*; and the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *centro*).

New Year's Day: Fiesta to celebrate the New Year by the officials of the *municipio* and of the church, and the *Comité de la Escuela* who were presented to the community on November 1 and December 25.

January 15: Presentation of the *mayordomos* of the church, the *fiscales*, four *topiles* belonging to them, the *capillos* and the *Comité de la Banda*.

November 1 is New Year's Day in the Mixe calendar [WEITLANER AND WEITLANER 1963: 48]. This might not be a mere coincidence with the fact that November 1 is the date for the first presentation of officials, though there are no specific data to verify this supposition. People have their own explanation for the selection of this date. November 1 falls on All Saints' Day, on which, according to the way of thinking of the people, they can act out the handing over (*entrega*) of the batons (*bastones*) of the officials under the eyes of the dead grandfathers. Besides, in terms

of convenience, on this date the handing over can be performed under the observation of the many people who gather in the *centro* for the church rituals on All Saints' Day.

December 25 is related to Christmas. The birth of Christ is correlated to the birth of the officials as will be symbolized by the ritual act of the *presidente* who carries the image of Niño Jesús (Child Jesus) in the procession on New Year's Day. Besides, at Christmas people gather in the *centro* to participate in the church rituals. Possibly for these two reasons the second presentation of the officials is performed on December 25.

New Year's Day is the date imposed by the Spaniards for the change of the officials.

The selection of January 15 as the date for the presentation of the officials of the church cannot be explained neither by objective data nor by folk knowledge.

## 2) RITUALS FOR THE CHANGES OF THE OFFICIALS

### (1) November 1: The First Presentation of the Officials

On October 31, at the grounds of the *municipio*, the *mayores* and *topiles* of the *municipio*, the *mayores* of the church and eight *topiles* belonging to them, and finally the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *ranchos*) are publicly nominated. On the same day, after mass and evening prayers, the *topiles* of the church begin to sweep the floor and patio of the church. Around midnight they adorn the entrance of the church, the house of the *mayordomos*, the parish house, the house of the religious sisters, and the small truck of the priest with the *flores de muertos* or *cempoasúchil*. This work ends around 2 : 00 a.m. All through the night the officials go back and forth in the dark plaza with flashlights and kerosene lamps, and the voices of the people occupied in preparation sound through the dark and cold air.

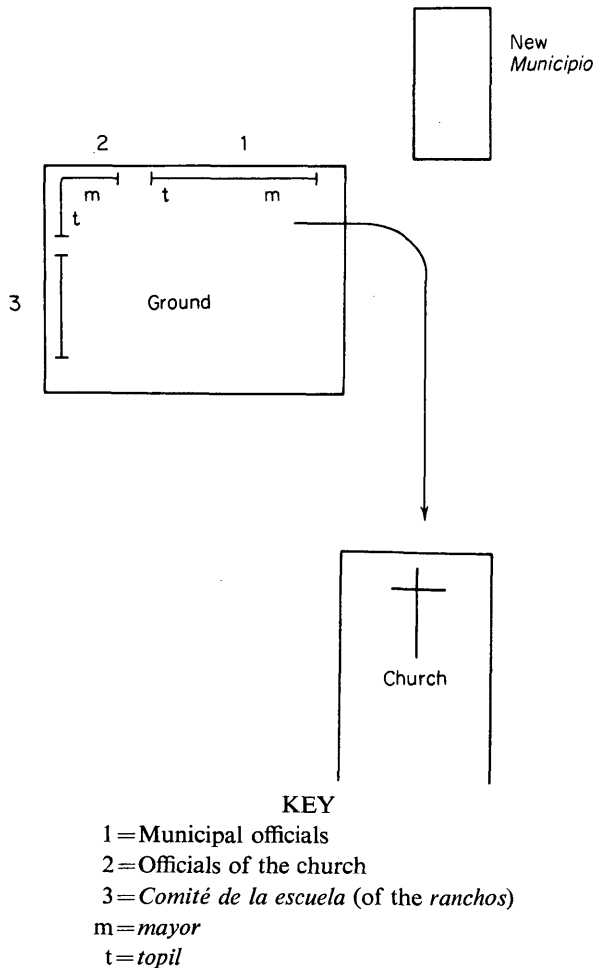
On November 1 the presentation of these officials is acted out in front of a crowd gathered at the plaza. The following description is based on my observations on November 1, 1974:

10:00 a.m. At the grounds of the *municipio* the handing over of batons begins. The batons are brought from the new *municipio* while the newly appointed officials make a line to enter the grounds. First, the municipal officials, second, the officials of the church, and third, the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *ranchos*) enter. In this entrance ceremony the *mayores* enter before the *topiles*. They take seats as shown in Figure 1. In all of the rituals of the officials the higher officials walk and take seats before the lower ones. When all are seated, the *alcalde* hands a baton to each; first to the *mayores* of the *municipio*, second to the *topiles* of the *municipio*, third to the *mayores* of the church, fourth to the *topiles* of the church, and finally to the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *ranchos*). The batons for the *mayores* and *topiles* of the *municipio* and the church are long and thick, made from recently cut wood. These batons are made and thrown away each year by those who come into office, but the short and thin batons for the officials higher than the *mayor*

are saved and handed over each year. The batons for the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *ranchos*) are short and thin, and decorated with red and green ribbons. The handing over of batons ends around 10 : 30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. The band leads the line of the new officials to the church where they hear the mass. The new officials walk slowly in a line to the sound of the band (Figure 1). The patio in front of the major entrance of the church is adorned with two lines of *flores de muertos* or *cempoasúchil*. The officials enter the church in a line, walking between the two lines of flowers. The priest comes to the entrance and receives the new officials, sprinkling blessed water over them.

12:00 a.m. The mass ends around noon. The officials thus consecrated by the mass leave the church, passing through the major entrance which is also

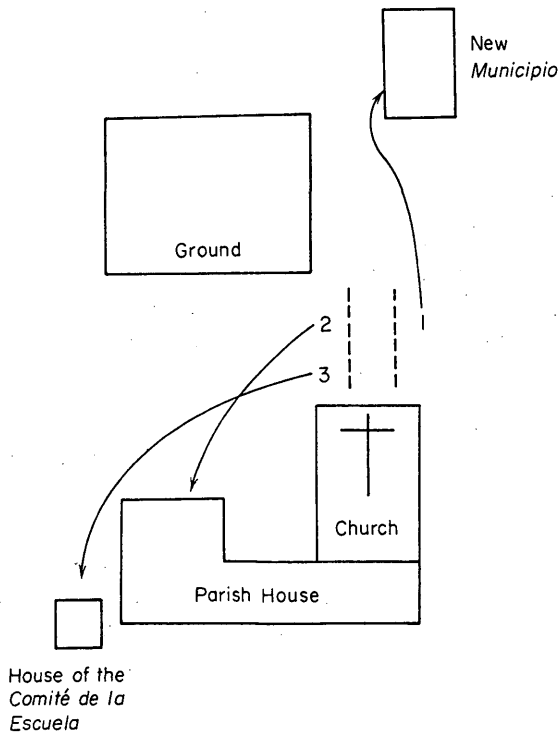


**Figure 1.** The first presentation of the officials (Handing over of the batons)

adorned with flowers, and make two lines as shown in Figure 2. The band is waiting for them at the side of the entrance of the church. The *alcalde* and his *suplente* are watching the officials line up. The band leads, first, the line of the municipal officials to the *municipio*, then the line of officials of the church to the parish house, and finally the line of the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *ranchos*) to the house of the committee (Figure 2).

At these three places, that is, at the *municipio*, the parish house and the house of the *Comité de la Escuela*, the officials of 1974 receive the newly appointed officials for the next year, and give them blessings and instruct them in the Mixe way. The following example is from the reception at the parish house.

12:20 p.m. The line of the new officials arrives at the patio of the kitchen of the parish house, and first the *mayores* and then the *topiles* sit down in a line on a bench. One of the *fiscales* is watching over them. One of the *mayordomos* goes to the first of the *mayores* and gives him instructions on the duties of his



KEY

- 1 = Municipal officials
- 2 = Officials of the church
- 3 = *Comité de la escuela* (of the *ranchos*)

Figure 2. The first presentation of the officials (Movement of the officials following mass)

office: "Fulfill your duty. Obey the *Padre* (priest). Treat him well. Ring the bell at the proper time. Chop the firewood for the kitchen of the *Padre*. ..." The *mayordomo* holds a bottle of *mezcal* with both hands, according to the traditional Mixe ritual way of drinking, and hands it to the *mayor*. The *mayor* receives it with the right hand, the forearm being supported by the left hand. He then spills three drops of *mezcal* on the ground, reciting the set oration of "*Dios, Hijo, y Tierra* (God, Son and Earth)" or "*Que me perdone Dios, Que me perdone la Tierra, Que me perdone el Cerro* (May God pardon me, May Earth Pardon me, May the Hill pardon me!)" and he takes three drops of *mezcal* from the bottle. Then, the *mayordomo* hands him three cigarettes. This ritual is repeated for all of the new *mayores* and *topiles*. This being over, the priest greets them with words of thanks. This ends the ceremony.

This kind of reception proceeds simultaneously at the three places: the parish house, the *municipio* and the house of the *Comité de la Escuela*. When everything is finished, the band plays joyful pieces, and the new officials and people begin to dance and drink in the plaza.

#### Commentary

The rituals on November 1 are a simple repetition of a ceremony which lays stress on the hierarchical order and the responsibility it involves. The consecration of the officials is doubly performed: by the mass at the church and by the traditional Mixe communion of *mezcal* and cigarettes.

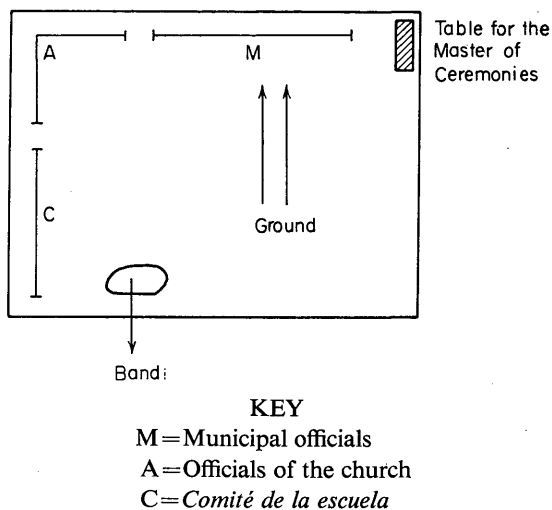
Possibly because the newly presented officials are of the lower category, the rituals on November 1 are rather simple in comparison with those on New Year's Day for the officials of the higher and lower categories. The later needs more complexity to symbolize the continuity and harmony of the officials as a whole.

#### (2) December 25: The Second Presentation of the Officials

Around noon the outgoing officials set up a microphone at the grounds and present to the people the *alcalde*, the new municipal officials higher than *mayores*, the two *secretarios* and the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *centro*). In order of the offices mentioned, they take seats on the benches put around the grounds as on November 1 (Figure 3). There, they are served *mezcal* and cigarettes. The presentation is followed by the recreational program planned by the teachers and the *promotores*. The symbolic consecration of the officials is postponed until New Year's Day.

#### (3) New Year's Day: The Fiesta of the Officials

It is no exaggeration to say that New Year's Day exists for the performance of the rituals of the officials. From December 25, the entire community has been involved in preparation for New Year's Day, and from midnight of December 31 through January 2 the plaza serves as a theater for the drama played by the officials. The following is a chronological description of events observed from December 27, 1973 through January 2, 1974. Commentary is added last.



**Figure 3.** The second presentation of the officials (Handing over of the batons)

December 27, 1973

Early in the morning the entering *presidente* and *alcalde* visit the parish house to request the midnight mass be read on December 31. The *presidente* has his own ideas on the procession of Niño Jesús performed on New Year's Day, and says to the priest: "*Padre*, I'll pay much. I would like to have a procession not only around the church but also all round the *centro*."

December 31, 1973

The *alcalde*, the *presidente* and the *síndico* put together their money, and their wives use it to prepare food at the house of the *alcalde*. The outgoing and incoming officials, the priest and the religious sisters are invited to the meal. The light of kerosene lamps at the house of the *alcalde* is not extinguished until late at night and numerous sky-rockets are sent up.

6:00 p.m. The rosary is recited at the church. Not many people attend.

12:00 p.m. Before 12:00 p.m., the bell is rung three times. Many people come to church. The benches in the church are full of people and those who cannot take seats stand at the sides. The band enters the church. Some of the musicians are slightly drunk. The new officials, carrying candles, enter the church in a line with the *alcalde* and *presidente* at the head, and they take seats near the main altar. The mass begins, taking about an hour. The mass being over, the priest asks the *alcalde*, the *presidente* and the *síndico* to make rogations. They say, "Thank you, God. The last year ended without calamities.... So that the people can be happy also in the New Year, so that the people can have a good harvest, so that we, the new officials, can complete our responsibilities...." After each rogation, the priest invokes, "*Santa*



*María, Madre de Dios* (Holy Mary, Mother of God), *Dios en el Cielo* (God in the Sky),” and so forth. Then all the participants in the mass together say “*Ruega por nosotros* (Pray for us).”

1 : 00 a.m. The bell is rung repeatedly and the new *topiles* of the church shoot sky-rockets. This is understood as the symbolic representation of the passing of the old year. The band begins to play *Santo Dios*, but cannot play well because many of the musicians are drunk. People leave the church. The plaza is dark and cold. People cover with a poncho or shawl and hurry home.

January 1, 1974

Throughout the day the rituals of the officials take place.

7:30 a.m. Before mass there is the procession of Niño Jesús. The new *presidente* carries the image and marches in procession with the other officials around the church and the parish house. The officials walk with lighted candles adorned with ribbons. The candles of the higher officials are adorned with more ribbons than those of the lower officials. The procession being over, the small mass begins, continuing until around 9 : 30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. The mass paid by the higher officials begins, and the church is full of people.

12:00 a.m. At noon the handing over of the batons begins at the grounds. The band leads a line of new officials to the grounds. (The officials presented on November 1 also participate in the ceremony on New Year's Day, although the handing over of their batons was finished on the earlier date.) They enter the grounds with the *alcalde* and *presidente* at the head of the line. Entering the grounds, they make two lines in the center and then take seats in order of municipal, religious and school officials and also in order of the higher and lower categories as shown in Figure 3. At one side of the grounds is placed a table for the microphone. A teacher, native of Tlahui, plays the role of master of ceremonies. Until around 1960, an old man, well informed about the community and its customs, played this role on the days of the changes of the officials or on other important communal occasions, but the wisdom of the old folks is gradually being replaced by knowledge gained through formal education. After the introductory speeches by the teacher, the *presidente* and the *sindico* of the previous year greet the people using the microphone. Then, the *alcalde*, *presidente*, *sindico*, two *secretarios* and the *tesorero* make two lines in front of the new *alcalde* and *presidente* (Figure 3). The old *presidente* hands the Mexican national flag to the new *presidente*. They hand over the flag in a military way, a way which is unfamiliar to the Mixe, and so all the observers and performers cannot but giggle at each step. In the meantime the batons are being brought from the *municipio*. These batons are for the officials presented on December 25. First, the old *sindico* hands over the stamp of the *municipio* and the baton to the new *sindico*. Then,

a baton is handed over by each old official to the new one. Short and thin batons, adorned with ribbons, are for the municipal and school high officials and long and thick, recently cut ones, are for the *vocales* of the *Comité de la Escuela*. The handing over of the batons being over, the officials of the previous year bring *mezcal* and cigarettes which are enjoyed by the new officials who follow the ritual way of drinking. The band begins to play joyful pieces. A little later a recreational program planned by the teachers begins. The program is composed of short theatrical plays and regional dances.

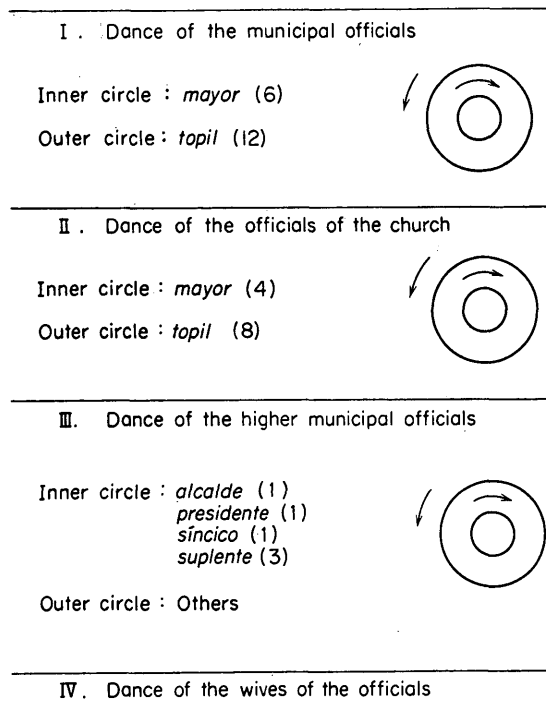
- 2:00 p.m. With the program over, the new *presidente* greets the people, manifesting his decision for better administration and asking for the cooperation of the officials and the people.
- 2:40 p.m. All the municipal officials go to the *municipio* and receive the stamps, official records and so forth handed over by the old officials. The band is playing joyfully on the veranda of the second floor of the *municipio*.
- 3:00 p.m. All the new officials, with the band at the head of the procession, walk to the house of the *alcalde*. After arriving there, they are offered food and drinks.
- 5:00 p.m. At the patio of the house of the *alcalde* the dance of the officials begins. Four dances are performed (Figure 4).

First, the dance of the *mayores* and *topiles* of the *municipio* begins. Six *mayores* form an inner circle and twelve *topiles* form an outer one. The two circles move in opposite directions to the tune. As soon as the *mayores* in the inner circle change direction, the *topiles* in the outer circle change also. They dance to three pieces of music. When the third piece is over, the *alcalde* embraces each one of the *topiles* and all of them are offered *tepache* and *mezcal*.

Second, the dance of the officials of the church begins. Four *mayores* make an inner circle and eight *topiles* an outer one. They dance to three pieces of music, but their dance is shorter than that of the officials of the *municipio*.

Third, the dance of the higher municipal officials begins. The *alcalde*, *presidente*, *sindico* and their three *suplentes* form an inner circle and the others an outer one. All of them dance animatedly to many pieces of music such as *Nunca el Domingo* (composed by a teacher of music in Totontepec), a part of the original *Fandango Mixe* (which sounds lighter than the *Fandango Mixe* popular at present in the Mixe region) and the *Jarabe Mixe*. They are so animated that they do not want to stop dancing. While dancing, the *alcalde* cheers and embraces each official. It gets dark and fog begins to cover the sky.

Fourth, the dance of the wives of the officials, who have finished their work in the kitchen, begins. Each of them dances passionately in her own way. According to their explanation, this dance is in thanks to the officials for coming to the banquet on this day.



**Figure 4.** Dances at the house of the *alcalde*.

January 2, 1974

The plaza looks quiet in comparison with yesterday.

9:00 a.m. Near the school building the handing over of the batons for the *Comité de la Escuela* (of the *centro*) is performed, again to the music of the band. But there are no onlookers at this ritual. The new school officials are invited to the house of the *Comité de la Escuela*, and there they drink and dance to the sound of the band.

#### Commentary

The symbolic authorization of the officials by the church is dominant in the ritualization of New Year's Day: for example, the mass and the procession of the officials with the image of Niño Jesús. The traditional Mixe customs for New Year's Day were characterized by sacrifices performed by individuals or by the officials at a cave at midnight on December 31 [KURODA 1976b], the sexual abstinence of the incoming officials, and the purification of the body by taking a bath before the midnight mass. Among these customs, the sacrifice performed by the officials was given up many years ago. Regarding the time of disappearance of this custom, any old man of Tlahui will comment, "When I was a child, there was already no such custom. It had been lost many years ago." The other customs mentioned above still survive among some of the conservative people.

The handing over of batons is performed on whatever the date for the change of the officials may be. The new element on New Year's Day is the dance of the officials. In each of the three dances of the officials the inner circle formed by the higher officials is protected by the outer circle formed by the lower officials. Command, however, is always in the hands of the higher officials. When those in the inner circle change the direction of their movement, those of the outer circle have to change also. This can be understood as a ritualization of the solidarity and as a symbol of the hierarchical order among the officials. Thus, the first three dances symbolize the ideology of the civil-religious hierarchy. The dances are performed in a formal and sacred atmosphere. When the dance of the wives of the officials begins, the atmosphere suddenly changes to profane joviality and the tension of the earlier sacred and formal atmosphere is neutralized. The dances of the officials on New Year's Day are the single example of stylization of dances as a ritualization of communal life in Tlahui.

#### (4) January 15: The Fiesta of the Officials of the Church

As New Year's Day is a great event for the officials of the *municipio*, so is January 15 for the officials of church. On this day the change of the *mayordomos*, the *fiscales*, the *topiles* belonging to the *fiscales*, the *capillos* and the *Comité de la Banda* is ritualized. At the same time the handing over of the fund of the *mayordomos* to the new *mayordomos* is performed. The total process centering around January 15 is that of what V. Turner calls the "social drama" played by the officials of the church, the priest, and the people of the village represented by the municipal officials. It could be a drama in which the latent schisms among the three may come to the surface, but this is not the case in Tlahui, at least in 1973 and 1974. Unlike Zacatepec and Ixcuintepec, where the *mayordomos* have had conflicts with the church for the past few years, in Tlahui the municipal officials, the officials of the church and the priest have cooperated with one another for the last fifteen years. In 1974 I observed an excellent social drama of the cooperation of the three powers:

January 13, 1974

The priest begins to work with the *Libro de los Mayordomos* (Book of the *Mayordomos*) to figure income and expenditure for the last year.

January 14, 1974

12:00 a.m. The *secretario* of the church and three *mayordomos* come to the parish house, bringing a bag of alms full of loose coins (5, 10 and 20 *centavos*). They are allowed to go to the second floor of the parish house to count these coins, and the coins in a chest kept by the priest. The priest, on the first floor, continues his figuring.

3:30 p.m. When the *mayordomos* finish counting the coins, they want to have *mezcal*, and hint of their desire to the priest, who gives them a bottle. This is the time for the *fiscales* to bring the tithe they have collected. They have brought it piecemeal since November, and now they try to bring the last

portion before the term of their office expires on January 15. The *fiscales*, the *alcalde* and his *suplente* come to the parish house. The *alcalde* is here, because as head of the civil-religious hierarchy he is responsible for the work of the *fiscales*. The *fiscales* bring three bags containing corn for the tithe, and the *alcalde* takes note of the quantity of corn, saying, "Padre! We are poor. We cannot bring much."

4:40 p.m. The *presidente* comes to the parish house and observes the handing over of the tithe. An old *fiscal* is somewhat drunk and says to the priest, "Padre! This is the last day of my service. I really enjoyed my work, and today I am going to complete my duty."

6:00 p.m. All the officials leave the parish house. The musicians come to the church and the mass begins.

9:00 p.m. On January 15 the *capillos* and the *Comité de la Banda* are going to be replaced. As today is the eve of the fiesta, the musicians play music until late at night at the houses of the departing and incoming *capillos*.

January 15, 1974

10:00 a.m. Four *mayordomos* bring the last bag of alms to the parish house. All are drunk and greet the priest sentimentally. In the meantime the *presidente* speaks loudly, using a microphone, from the second floor of the *municipio*, informing the people of the start of the change of the officials of the church. In front of the *municipio*, the incoming *mayordomos* and *fiscales* make a line waiting for the handing over of the batons, and those leaving office, bearing the batons with crown, come down from the second floor. First, the *alcalde* and his *suplente* greet the departing and incoming *mayordomos* and *fiscales*. Next, the outgoing *mayordomos* greet the entering ones, shaking hands with one another. The departing *fiscales* hand their batons to those entering office. Third, the new *Comité de la Banda* and the *capillos* are introduced to the people. These activities being over, the band begins to play and leads the newly appointed officials to the church. On entering the church, they are offered *mezcal*. They take three drops each. The priest waits for them near the entrance and invites them to seats near the altar. This is the day of Esquipulas, and so the priest wears a green chasuble while saying mass. At the end of the mass, he says, "Don't lose this beautiful custom of celebrating the change of the officials." Then the new officials make various rogations for their offices.

12:00 a.m. The *presidente* and the two *mayordomos* of the previous year bring the chest containing the fund of the *mayordomos* from the parish house to a table set in front of the house of the *mayordomos*. The men occupy a place near the entrance of the church and the women a place in front of the house to listen to the report on the fund (Figure 5). First, the priest reports on the income and expenditure of the previous year. The *secretario* interprets in Mixe. According to this report, in addition to the sale of candles and prints

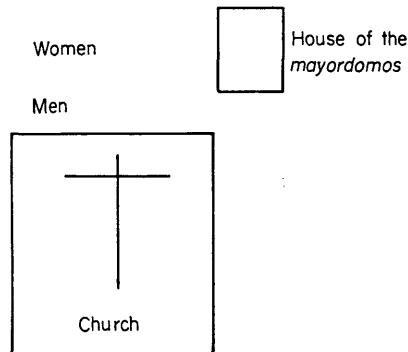


Figure 5. The fiesta of the officials of the church

of the saints, income includes financial help from a German Catholic organization and from the bishop for the repair of the roof of the church. When the report is over, the *presidente* thanks the priest for his personal service in buying and bringing cement from Juchitán. In the meantime, the *mayordomos* of the last year weigh the candles of *cofrades* and hand them, along with the *estampas* of Ascensión, Asunción and Esquípuilas, to the new *mayordomos*. The loose coins of the alms, being counted and spread on the table, fall on the ground. The people laugh, and the general atmosphere is joyful. After a brief interval, the *mayordomos* of the previous year report that they can hand over another 1,000 *pesos* from the gross sale of candles handed over to them by the *mayordomos* of 1972.

- 1 : 00 p.m. The outgoing *secretario* makes a farewell speech, after which the election of the *secretario* for the new year begins. Three candidates are nominated by the people, and the one who receives a majority of raised hands becomes the new *secretario*. The women participate in the election, raising their hands more actively than do the men. This year the person chosen was one of the *principales* noted all through the village for his honesty and wisdom.
- 2 : 00 p.m. The old and new *mayordomos* and *fiscales*, with the band, visit the parish house. The priest makes a little gift to each of the four leaving *topiles* as well as to the eight *ex-topiles* who left their offices on November 1. After greeting to the priest, the new officials of the church dance at the patio of the parish house.

Commentary

January 15 is the fiesta of the officials of the church and the band. The *alcalde*, as leader of the civil-religious organization, attends the payment of the tithe to the priest, and supervises the change of the *mayordomos* and *fiscales*. The *presidente*, as leader of the civil organization, announces the ritual of the change of the officials of the church, later participates in the handing over of the fund of the *mayordomos*, and also thanks the priest for his service to the village. Thus, in Tlahui, the original

functions of the *alcalde* are well preserved and there exists a state of harmonious cooperation between the civil and religious organizations.

The relations between the priest and the *mayordomos* have latent tensions, because both have rights in the management of the church. In Tlahui their relationships are characterized by mutual respect and cooperation based on continuous consultation and uprightness in the management of the budget of the church. Usually the *mayordomos* withdraw some money from their fund to hold a little fiesta for themselves with *mezcal* and food after the handing over of the fund on January 15. The priest knows and admits this. He thinks that the *mayordomos*, who have to devote themselves to community service without payment, have a right to benefit from their fund as long as the quantity of money they withdraw is reasonable. However, the priest keeps an eye on the *mayordomos* so that they may not abuse their official authority. On the other hand, the *mayordomos* seem totally obedient to the priest, but they also watch him so that he may not manage the fund of the church as he likes. When they count the alms at the parish house, they learn that the fund of the church is managed with fairness by the priest. Therefore, on the following day at the communal meeting, they make it public that they had the "secret" fund of 1,000 *pesos*. If such a delicate balance between the two sides would be broken, a great conflict could emerge and ruin the harmony within the religious organization.

Communal participation in the handing over of the fund of the *mayordomos* is active. Different from an acculturated village like Ayutla, women also participate actively in the meeting and influence the election of the *secretario*. In church affairs, women's "power" is not to be ignored. All in all, it can be said that Tlahui, at least in 1973 and 1974, preserves a good example of the "democracy" of a little community.

### 3) *Tequio* as Ritual Representation of Community Solidarity and the Power of the Officials

*Tequio* is a barometer to estimate communal solidarity and the power and control of the officials over the community. Tlahui had a great deal of *tequio* in 1973 and 1974. Since 1953, when the village was totally involved in the *tequio* for the construction of the market, Tlahui has never had a year so occupied with *tequio* as it did in 1973 and 1974. In these years, with the opening of the road, the people of Tlahui were feeling the coming of the new age and they decided to prepare the village for the new epoch.

In ordinary years the obligation for *tequio* is not particularly heavy. The head of the family, as a taxpayer, has to dedicate twelve days to *tequio*. Musicians and dancers are supposed to be exempt but in reality they participate. In 1973 and 1974 the obligation exceeded the norm and they had to work three days a month; thirty-six days a year or three times the regular obligation. In these two years there was an urgent demand for *tequio* for the extension of the road from the main route to the *centro*; the construction of the school with the help of the CAPFCE;

repairing the roof of the old *municipio* which was rented to the employees of the Coconal; construction of the Conasupo; and reconstruction of the church roof.

The extension of the road was rapidly completed, partly because of the enthusiasm of the people and partly because of the encouragement of the higher officials, the majority of whom are shopkeepers interested in transportation of merchandise by truck. Although the people worked only with picks and shovels, their work was very efficient. From the main route of the road nearest to the *centro*, to Santa Ana, where the storehouse of the *Comisión del Papaloapan* was stationed, the road was opened in only two days; from Santa Ana to Santa Cecilia, in four days; and from Santa Cecilia to the *centro*, in a little more than four days. In less than fifteen days, the road was opened from the main route to the *centro*, a distance of more than 10 km. During this time some forty to fifty men, and sometimes more than 100, worked on the road.

To promote the construction of the school in accordance with the plan of the CAPFCE the teachers ordered their pupils to carry sand using the nylon bags which they usually use to carry books for classes. They got the sand kept at the *centro* and walked down the steep footpath leading down to Santa Cecilia carrying the heavy nylon bags. At the same time, the *vocales* of the *Comité de la Escuela* carried bags of cement from the *centro* to the building site for the school near Santa Cecilia.

The repairing of the roof of the old *municipio* in 1973 was completed by *tequio* in a short time so that the employees of the Coconal could be stationed in Tlahui as soon as possible. With the completion of the roof, the main camp of the Coconal was transferred from Tamazulapam to Tlahui, although the warehouse remained in Tamazulapam until 1974.

In contrast with these three projects, the construction of the Conasupo was delayed because many of the higher officials were shopkeepers unwilling to invite the Conasupo which would adversely effect their small businesses. They ordered *tequio* to make *tabique* (adobe) for the repair of the church and for the construction of the Conasupo which was going to pay for the construction materials. The men for the *tequio* made and dried *tabique* in front of the old *municipio*.

A *tequio*, most significant in ritual and social organizational aspects, was the one organized for the repair of the roof of the church, which culminated on July 13, 1974.

The repair of the roof of the church was a great event to the village. It cost about 44,000 *pesos*. To reduce the cost the priest cooperated from early 1973. In the summer of 1973 he began to buy cement from Juchitán and brought it to Tlahui using his own truck. He brought more than thirty tons of cement in the six months before December 1973. Just before Christmas the cement that he transported to a hut built on the main route nearest to the *centro* was carried to the *centro* by the *topiles* of the church and men doing *tequio*. On December 30 when additional bags of cement were brought from Juchitán, some three hundred men, working from 7 : 30 a.m. to 5 : 00 p.m., were able to cement one-third of the roof. To reward the people for their service the priest offered them 600 pieces of bread and soft drinks at lunch



time. When the work was over in the evening, the *presidente* of the *Comité de Obras Materiales* rewarded everyone with two gallons of *mezcal* which was bought by the committee and the *mayordomos* of the church who had saved some money from their fund for this purpose.

In 1974, from Holy Week to July, each Sunday after the big mass the male communicants climbed up to the roof to cement it, and the women, using their shawls, carried gravel which was brought to the *centro* by the priest from near the cemetery. At the main and side doors of the church the *mayores* of the church, holding their batons, waited to catch the communicants coming out of the church so that they might not escape the *tequio*.

The *tequio* for the church roof culminated on July 13, during the season of rain and fog. At 9 : 00 a.m. some 500 men came to the *centro* from the *ranchos*. They climbed to the roof to set and cement the arches. All through the day the *presidente* directed the work, speaking loudly through the microphone which the people liked very much. They kept on working despite the weather. When half the work was finished, the priest gave them refreshments of lemon juice and snacks. When the work was completed at 3 : 00 p.m., all the men formed two lines in front of the church. Flute and tambour were played at the church tower. Traditionally, these musical instruments were played to call the people for *tequio*, but on this day they were played to announce the beginning of the closing ceremony for the *tequio* on the church roof. The *presidente* spoke, thanking the people. Next, the old *sacristán* greeted the people to express his gratitude for their service to the church and offered them two big jars of *mezcal*. This was a personal contribution from the *sacristán* who devoted himself to the church affairs. The heavy *tequio* made the people quickly drunk, and the band began to play joyful pieces to announce the end of the ceremony.

This *tequio* on July 13, 1974 was completed by the cooperation of three groups: the priest, the *mayordomos* and the *sacristán*, and the *presidente* and the *Comité de Obras Materiales*. In 1974 these three social groups, representing the church, the religious officials and the civil officials, showed an excellent attitude of cooperation and no schisms were noted among them.

## AYUTLA: A CHANGING ORGANIZATION

### 1. The Civil-Religious Hierarchy and the *Mayordomías* in 1933

#### 1) THE CIVIL-RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY IN 1933

The first data on the civil-religious hierarchy in Ayutla are from 1933, as reported by Ralph L. Beals, who did field work among the western Mixe for more than three months, starting in the latter part of January 1933. Chapter 3 of his monograph, *The Ethnology of the Western Mixe*, presents his data on the "Mixe government" in various villages of the western Mixe. In this chapter, pages 21 to 25 are dedicated to a description of the civil-religious hierarchy in Ayutla. This, together with the

fragmentary data on pages 64 to 83, are the only sources available on the civil-religious hierarchy in Ayutla of the 1930's.

Beals produced a table of the civil-religious hierarchy, arranged in a single column as in Table 2. Utilizing Beals' other data [BEALS 1945: 21-31, 64-83], I reconstructed Table 2 and drew Table 3, dividing the officials into a dual hierarchy in the same way as I had done for Table 1. It is difficult to decide which reflects the true situation, an understanding of the hierarchy of Ayutla in 1933 as a unilineal civil-religious unit as in Table 2, or as a dual line as in Table 3. Beals' data are full of ambiguities regarding the real practices of the hierarchy, and it is difficult to say which interpretation is more appropriate. Table 3 was made to supplement Table 2 with the officials outside the hierarchy, and also to understand the civil-religious hierarchy in the context of the economy of prestige as represented by the existence of the *capitán* for the band and the *mayordomo*.

An official called by the same name plays a similar role in any Mixe village, although, strictly speaking, the role of each official changes slightly from village to village depending upon the degree of acculturation and the peculiarities of the village. From Beals' description, some features of the hierarchy are extracted, which do not exist in the civil and religious organizations in 1973 and 1974.<sup>3)</sup>

1. The *topilillo*, that is, the *topil* of the church, was the first office to be taken by young men at around seventeen years of age. There were twelve in all and their service was performed on alternate weeks. Theoretically, every man had to take the office of *topilillo* before he could reach the rank of *topil* [BEALS 1945: 23].

2. The *cabo* and the *teniente*, though they are assistants to the *mayor de vara*, were considered to have completed the same service as the *mayor de vara*, so they were exempt from that office [BEALS 1945: 23].

3. Already, in 1933, the office of *secretario* showed the mestizoization which begins to be noted in Tlahui late in 1973 and 1974. An ability to speak Spanish was a prerequisite for *secretario*. He was not required to enter any offices lower than *secretario*. After completing this office, he could skip the office of *regidor* and advance to the *suplente* of the *sindico* [BEALS 1945: 23], or sometimes go up to the *suplente* of the *presidente*. This was possibly due to the progressive administration of Daniel Martínez, the "cacique" who promoted modernization in the 1930's [BEALS 1945: 25]. In addition, the *secretario* was exempt from the office of *mayordomo* [BEALS 1945: 25].

4. A *mayordomo* was chosen for each saint and was responsible for the budget and fiesta for that saint [BEALS 1945: 24, 65-67].

5. Of the five *regidores*, two were for the church. These two were entrusted with the collection of the tithe [BEALS 1945: 23].

6. The offices of the higher category were combined in a complex way with the

3) Cámara set up two ideal types of civil and religious organizations: the "centripetal organization" and the "centrifugal organization." He classified Ayutla as recorded by Beals as a "centripetal organization," which is "traditional, homogeneous, collectivistic, well-integrated, and obligatory" (Cámara 1952: 143-144).

**Table 2.** The civil-religious hierarchy in Ayutla in 1933  
[BEALS 1945: 22]

Type	Number
<i>topilillo</i>	12
<i>topil</i>	16
<i>cabo</i>	2
<i>teniente</i>	2
<i>mayor de vara</i>	2
<i>secretario</i>	1
<i>regidor</i>	5
<i>suplente</i>	1
<i>sindico</i>	1
<i>suplente</i>	1
<i>presidente</i>	1
<i>suplente</i>	1
<i>alcalde</i>	1
<i>fiscal</i>	2
<i>principal</i>	many

**Table 3.** The civil-religious hierarchy in Ayutla in 1933 [Revised]

Civil Hierarchy		Religious Hierarchy	
Type	Traditional Offices Number	Type	Number
<i>topil</i>	16	<i>topilillo</i>	12
( <i>capitán</i> )	2-3*		
<i>cabo</i>	2		
<i>teniente</i>	2		
<i>mayor de vara</i>	2	<i>mayordomo</i>	1**
<i>secretario</i>	1		
<i>regidor</i>	3	<i>regidor</i>	2
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>sindico</i>	1		
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>presidente</i>	1		
	<i>suplente</i> 1		
	<i>alcalde</i> 1	<i>fiscal</i>	2
	<i>principal</i> many		
.....			
Offices Outside the Hierarchy			
		<i>capillo</i>	1
		<i>sacristán</i>	5

**NOTES:**

Parenthesis indicates a temporary office.

\* for each fiesta of the patron saints.

\*\* for each saint

*mayordomias*. Before taking the office of *mayor de vara* it was preferable to have served as *mayordomo* at least once. But, in 1933 this was already not prescriptive [BEALS 1945: 66].

7. If one had completed two *mayordomias* (fiestas for saints), he was excused from the office of *presidente* [BEALS 1945: 66]. This rule seems to have been rather new in 1933, for Beals comments in another place, "In former times no one who had not given two *mayordomias* was eligible for the office of mayor [*presidente* in Spanish]. Although this rule is now abrogated, two *mayordomias* are still required before a man finished his service to the village" [BEALS 1945: 24].

8. One who had completed the office of *capitán* for the band was excused from becoming *mayordomo* [BEALS 1945: 66]. Sometimes, he could get the office of *alcalde* faster than one who had completed the office of *presidente*, for the *capitán* for the fiesta of the patron saint was considered equivalent to the *presidente* in economic and social importance [BEALS 1945: 25].

9. The *fiscal* was a religious office for which those who had completed the office of *alcalde* were eligible [BEALS 1945: 25].

10. Those who completed the office of *fiscal* composed an informal group of *principales* whose influence was later taken over by the power of Daniel Martínez [BEALS 1945: 25].

11. The service of *capillo* was considered equivalent to completing one *mayordomia*. At the fiesta of San Pedro, in June, he had to give food to the band [BEALS 1945: 25].

The characteristics of the civil-religious hierarchy of 1933, as contrasted with those of 1973 and 1974, are: (1) the civil hierarchy co-existed with the religious one, that is, the *municipio* was not separated from the church, (2) the hierarchy permitted a fair degree of skipping of offices, but still there were some regulations controlling it, and (3) the civil-religious hierarchy was well combined with the *mayordomias*.

## 2) THE *Mayordomias* IN 1933

The sponsorship of the Catholic religious fiestas in Ayutla can be explained in terms of the "economy of prestige," a commonly accepted term used among the Mesoamericanists to refer to the system in the Indian communities in which one's prestige comes from the service one renders to the community, and the accomplishment of which demands a fair economic burden. Sponsorship in Ayutla is "individualistic and capitalistic", as compared with that in Tlahui. The origin of this orientation is obscure, but my supposition is that Ayutla, a "capitalistically" oriented market center, possibly developed this type of sponsorship under the influence from the Oaxaca valley, especially from Mitla. I am inclined to suppose that Mitla might have offered Ayutla a model of *mayordomias* and fiesta complex on the basis of the remarkable similarities in these aspects between the data of Ayutla and those of Mitla [PARSONS 1936: 192-200, Chapter VI]. In the following, I will reconstruct the *mayordomias*, using Beals' data plus information that I obtained.

There were fourteen *mayordomos*: San José, Corazón de Jesús, Jesús Nazaleno,

La Sagrada Familia, La Dolorosa, La Soledad, San Antonio, Santa Cruz, San Pablo, San Pedro, Santo Entierro, Corazón de María, San Isidro, and Guadalupe [BEALS 1945: 65]. Except for the relative high rankings of the *mayordomos* of San Pablo and San Pedro (two patron saints), there seems to have been no ranking to be mentioned in social and economic importance among the *mayordomos* as often reported from Mesoamerican Indian communities, especially from highland Chiapas [Cancian 1965]. This is supported partially by Beals who did not mention rankings, and is confirmed by my informants who emphasize individual choice (*gusto*) of the saint for the *mayordomía* irrespective of prestige.

The candidates for *mayordomos* were recommended by the *presidente* and nominated at the communal meeting [BEALS 1945: 66]. According to Beals, this service was for three years [BEALS 1945: 66], but according to my informants, this rule was not observed. Once a person was recommended by the *presidente*, it was hard for him to escape from taking the *mayordomía*. Along with this obligatory acceptance, some took the *mayordomía* voluntarily because of their devotion to some specific saint.

Each year a little after the fiesta of the saint, the change of the *mayordomo* took place. The date for the change, however, seems to have varied from *mayordomía* to *mayordomía*. Beals cited the case of the change of the *mayordomía* of Santa Cruz (the fiesta date is May 3) on February 4 [BEALS 1945: 67]. In this case the change was made before the time of the fiesta [BEALS 1945: 67]. Under the supervision of the *presidente* the *mayordomo* received candles, wax and the fund for the saint passed on by his predecessor. This handing over of the *mayordomía* is called *entrega*. On this occasion the entering *mayordomo* had to offer *tepache* and *mezcal*. His term of service began on this day and ended with the next handing over to the *mayordomo* for the coming year.

The fund of the *mayordomo* was from three sources: that handed over by his predecessor; the sale of candles (he had a right to extinguish the candles dedicated to the saint so that he could take advantage of the wax to produce more candles); and the sale of corn and *frijol* put in front of the saint as alms [Beals 1945: 66].

To be a successful *mayordomo* he had to start his activities as soon as the *entrega* was over. He dared to sell candles as far as Tepuxtepec, Tepantlali and Zacatepec. Some *mayordomos* with a spirit of "capitalism" could be very successful. For example, one of my female informants, who is a cheerful and dependable character and a devotee to Corazón de Jesús, served as *mayordomo* three times. She was successful each time partly because Corazón de Jesús had many devotees and partly because this lady, who was beloved by the people, could sell many candles. Beals also reports of a successful case of *mayordomo*. A coffee and corn merchant served as *mayordomo* of La Dolorosa for a number of years, taking advantage of the fund of the saint in his commerce. As a result he could increase the fund and also present the church with a new image of the saint [BEALS 1945: 66]. In contrast to these successful cases, some lost the fund of the saint. For instance, one woman who was a friend of an informant, voluntarily took the *mayordomía* of Corazón de

Jesús but she reduced the fund tremendously. In such a case, when the term of service was over, the individual had to restore the fund and this could ruin him financially [Beals 1945: 66]. If the person could not afford to pay, the *municipio* would have to restore the fund of the *mayordomo*.

The fiesta of the *mayordomo*, except those of the patron saints, began with a mass paid for the saint by the *mayordomo* on the day of the saint. After the mass, he returned home with the band and opened a fiesta with dances, *tepache*, *mezcal* and *tamales*. The image of the saint was not taken to the house of the *mayordomo* [Beals 1945: 66]. His total expenditure was payment for one or more masses, payment to the band, purchase of sky-rockets, and purchase of food and drink for consumption. For the fiestas of the patron saints, San Pablo and San Pedro, the *mayordomos* could get help from two or three *capitanes*. One *capitán* provided one or more fireworks and three meals to the band, and another *capitán* served meals to the band and to all the visitors. When a band was invited from a neighboring village, the third *capitán* was appointed to serve it with food and drink. The expenditure of the *capitán* was more than that of the *mayordomo*. However, there was a tendency to attach more prestige to the service of *mayordomo* than to that of *capitán* [BEALS 1945: 66].

In addition to the fourteen *mayordomías*, Rosario and Corpus Christi were celebrated by a mass paid for by the *regidor* [BEALS 1945: 65].

**2. The Civil-Religious Hierarchy around 1960**

The civil-religious hierarchy of Ayutla as reported by Beals seems to have been functioning till around 1960, though with slight modifications. Salomón Nahmad, who did extensive field work in the Mixe region around 1960,<sup>4)</sup> prepared a listing of the officials of Ayutla as shown in Table 4.

A comparison of Table 4 with the hierarchy in Table 2 as reported by Beals shows that one difference is the disappearance of the *principales* which Nahmad confirmed with his informants [NAHMAD 1965: 85]. Neither is the *fiscal* recorded

**Table 4.** The civil-religious hierarchy around 1960 [NAHMAD 1965: 84]

Type	Age
<i>topilillo</i>	12 to 15
<i>topil</i> (can be <i>mayordomo</i> )	15 to 19
<i>auxiliar</i>	19 or older
<i>cabo</i>	25 to 30
<i>mayor de vara</i>	30 or older
<i>regidor de vara</i> to the 1st <i>suplente</i>	35 or older
<i>sindico</i>	35 or older
<i>suplente</i> of the <i>presidente</i>	
<i>presidente</i>	
<i>alcalde</i>	
and, <i>secretario</i> and <i>tesorero</i>	

in Table 4. However, the disappearance of the *fiscal* as the top official of the church is incredible because the *topilillo*, the lowest church office, still exists in the hierarchy. So it is to be supposed that the informants of Nahmad made an error in giving him the hierarchy.

### 3. Changes in the Civil-Religious Organization and the *Mayordomías* after 1962

Shortly after the visit of Nahmad, a drastic change occurred, which gave Ayutla the present form of its civil and religious organizations. The coming of the Salesians, in 1962, was a primary factor in this change. There was a conflict with the people, when the first priest of this religious order began to reside in Ayutla. Finding the church devastated during the age of the secular clergy, the priest wanted to take the saints down from the altars to clean them. This caused trouble which the people still remember clearly. Thinking that the new priest wanted to take the old saints away, a group of women headed by a female leader rushed to the church and hit him forcefully with sticks. Being frightened by this outrage, the priest escaped at night to Tlahui, where another Salesian was stationed. The relations between Ayutla and the Salesian missionaries thus began with a quarrel. In the course of time, however, Ayutla began to harmonize with the Salesians and gradually cooperated with them in the "modernization" of the *mayordomías*. As the people had been feeling the burden of the *mayordomías* for a long time, they accepted the Salesian proposal to replace the "capitalistic" *mayordomías* with group sponsorship by the *Comité de la Iglesia* (Committee for the Church). The shift from the *mayordomía* to the committee system was already reported from Tarascan communities in the 1940's [CARRASCO 1952: 26-35]. Recently W. Smith reported a similar case from Guatemalan Maya communities [SMITH 1977: 103-159]. Among the Mixe I found the same trend in Ayutla.

From around 1962 [KURODA 1976c], four years before the opening of the road, people had general aspirations for changes and this trend influenced the decision of the people for a change in the *mayordomías*. At present they try to explain this decision by using the expression, "the Salesians took away the *mayordomías*." Then they like to add a remark about how they have a nostalgia for the traditional *mayordomías*. This remark shows the reason why Ayutla, even after 1962, retains its economy of prestige, mixing its "capitalistic" orientation with an "egalitarian" distribution of communal expenditures in the Tlahui style.

### 4. The Civil and Religious Organizations, the Remnants of the *Mayordomías* and the Rituals of the Officials in 1973 and 1974

#### 1) BREAKDOWN OF THE CIVIL-RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY

The civil officials compose the *ayuntamiento* (municipal government) which is completely separated from the religious organization (Table 5). Noteworthy in

4) His book, *Los Mixes*, was published in 1965, but nowhere does he mention the year of his field work.

Table 5 is the ranking of *presidente*. In the traditional hierarchy, the *presidente* occupies a position lower than the *alcalde* who is the highest leader of the civil-religious hierarchy. But in 1973 the *presidente* is ranked higher than the *alcalde*. Owing to the increase in contacts with the world of the "agats" the importance of the *presidente* increased as the leader of the political world, whereas the *alcalde* as the leader of the spiritual world lost his prestigious position.

To climb the hierarchy in the *ayuntamiento* one is not required to take the office of *mayordomo* nor of *capitán*. This was a prerequisite for the higher offices in traditional Ayutla. In addition to the elimination of this regulation, when one is considered adequate for a specific office, any degree of skipping of offices is permitted. One need not climb the hierarchy step by step but can skip from a lower office to a much higher one. The degree of skipping depends on the talent of the person and on the degree of difficulty in recruiting for the office each year.

What is noticeable in the recruitment for the officials of the *ayuntamiento* is the absentee *presidente*. By 1973 Ayutla had had two cases. One was a Mixe teacher living and working in Oaxaca who originated from a successful family in Ayutla, that has been influential in the political affairs of the village for the last fifteen years. At the end of the 1960's he was appointed *presidente*. For a year he was in Ayutla to hold office. Utilizing his connections with the Oaxaca world he could handle the municipal politics with the help of sympathizers in the village.

Another case of the absentee *presidente* occurred in 1973. The *presidente* for that year was an *Ayutleño* living in Mexico City and working in connection with the Ministry of Education. Living in the metropolis more than twenty years, he had had no experience with any office in Ayutla. However, he had been interested in becoming *presidente* once in his life, and had been listed as candidate for the office. He had waited for two years till finally, in 1973, he was elected. When he started his office, he was animated to work for his native village and his wife took care to visit Ayutla from Mexico City on the occasions of the rituals of the officials. The new *presidente* lived with one of his relatives in Ayutla and tried to be at the *municipio* to receive the people. But life in Ayutla was difficult for one accustomed to city life. Gradually he stayed away from Ayutla on visiting to his family in Mexico City and was seldom seen at the *municipio*. People visiting the *municipio* discovered he was absent. On the outskirts of the *centro* were seen piles of rubbish which in ordinary years the *topiles* removed and burned under the proper order of their higher officials. Under these conditions the peoples' complaints increased daily. In addition, there was discord among the officials. The *presidente*, alien to the Mixe world, could not control the officials, and they openly criticized the inability and lack of enthusiasm of the *presidente*. The *secretario* entrusted with the municipal stamp began to use it without the consent of the *presidente*. The *sindico* and his helpers continued with the municipal construction work with which the *presidente* was not well acquainted. The *presidente* made a public promise to construct a new market but no work was being done. The *presidente* in 1973, who was no more than an unknown citizen in the metropolitan city, had an ambition to be a leader of his native village,



**Table 5.** The civil and religious organizations in Ayutla of 1973 and 1974

Ayuntamiento		Religious Organization	
	Traditional Offices		
Type	Number	Type	Number
<i>topil</i>	30		
<i>mavor de vara</i>	4	<i>comité de la iglesia</i>	
<i>comandante</i>	2	<i>presidente</i>	1
<i>tesorero municipal</i>	1	<i>tesorero</i>	1
<i>suplente del regidor</i>	4	<i>secretario</i>	1
<i>regidor</i>	4	<i>vocal</i>	6
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>sindico municipal</i>	1		
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>alcalde único constitucional</i>	1		
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>presidente municipal</i>	1		
<i>secretario</i>	1		
( <i>Rancho</i> )			
<i>agente</i>	1		
<i>vocal</i>	5-6		
Specialists Outside the Hierarchy			
		<i>capillo</i>	1
		<i>comité de la banda</i>	
		<i>presidente</i>	1
		<i>vocal</i>	6-9
		<i>musicians</i>	20-30
New Offices			
<i>comité del kindergarten</i>		<i>organist</i>	1
<i>presidente</i>	1	<i>auxiliar</i>	several
<i>tesorero</i>	1	<i>catechist</i>	several
<i>secretaria</i>	1		
<i>vocal</i>	2		
<i>comité de la enseñanza primaria</i>			
<i>presidente</i>	1		
<i>tesorero</i>	1		
<i>secretario</i>	1		
<i>vocal</i>	5-11		
<i>comité de bienes comunales</i>			
<i>presidente</i>	1		
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>tesorero</i>	1		
<i>secretario</i>	1		
<i>vocal</i>	2		
<i>comité de riego</i>			
<i>presidente</i>	1		
<i>tesorero</i>	1		
<i>secretario</i>	1		
<i>vocal</i>	2		
<i>comité de la luz</i>			
<i>presidente</i>	1		
<i>suplente</i>	1		
<i>tesorero</i>	1		
<i>secretario</i>	1		
<i>vocal</i>	several		

possibly to advance his hope of getting personal connections with the federal and state governments. But his ambitions were totally crushed by the barrier of cultural distance between him and the Mixe village. Absentee *presidentes* may happen in Ayutla and Totontepec, which have many influential countrymen living outside the Mixe region, such as in Mexico City and Oaxaca.

Another conspicuous feature in the civil organization around 1973 is the role played by young Mixe, most of whom are teachers and the *promotores* of the INI and IISEO. They are the emerging elites, highly influential in the affairs of the village through their knowledge, Spanish-speaking ability, and their enthusiasm for development. They are requested to take higher offices in spite of having no experience in the lower offices. The *secretario* is also chosen from this young elite. Their alliance with the PRI seems to have deepened in the last few years, as far as can be judged from the list of the members of the *Comité del PRI* of Ayutla. It is composed of a *presidente*, a *secretario general*, and three *secretarios*: one for the political action, one for the peasant action, and one for the progressive action. For the feminine action, a *presidente* and two *vocales* are nominated. These offices tend to be occupied by members of the young elite. The officials did not show this tendency in 1973, but it was obvious in 1974. The *presidente* of the *municipio* for 1974 is a young *promotor* of the INI, around thirty years of age, who was the *secretario general* of the *Comité del PRI* of Ayutla in 1973. Also in 1974, another unmarried young man, who was the *secretario* for the political action of the *Comité* in 1973, became the *suplente* of the *síndico*. In 1975 a *promotor* of the INI, who was the *presidente* of the said committee in 1973, took the office of *suplente* of the *presidente*.

In 1973 there are many new offices in addition to the traditional ones. All of these have been organized since 1970 to meet social necessity, under the impact of the federal and state governments, as in the case in Tlahui. For the management of the kindergarten there is the *Comité del Kindergarten*, composed of a *presidente*, a *tesorero*, a *secretaria* chosen from among the teachers, and two *vocales*. For the management of the primary school there is the *Comité de la Enseñanza Primaria*, composed of a *presidente*, a *tesorero*, a *secretario* chosen from among the teachers, and five to eleven *vocales*—the number of which is variable according to the needs for the year. For the problems regarding the communal land there is the *Comité de Bienes Comunales*, composed of a *presidente*, a *suplente*, a *tesorero*, a *secretario* and two *vocales*. For the irrigation policy there is the *Comité de Riego*, composed of a *presidente*, a *tesorero*, a *secretario* and two *vocales*. The *promotores* of the INI and IISEO are obliged to participate in the meetings of this committee by order of the municipal *presidente*. For the introduction and management of electricity there is the *Comité de la Luz*, composed of a *presidente*, a *suplente*, a *tesorero*, a *secretario* and some *vocales*—the number of which is changeable according to the year. The dancers have not yet organized a committee, but for the purpose of conserving their dances they have a teacher who plays the role of leader.

On the religious side, the *Comité de la Iglesia* (Committee for the Church) is composed of a *presidente*, a *tesorero*, a *secretario* and six *vocales*. This committee

organizes the minor religious fiestas in cooperation with the missionaries but independently of the *municipio*. But at the fiestas of the patron saints the committee cooperates with the *municipio*. As the manager of church affairs, it is entrusted with the collection of alms and the sale of candles which women, entrusted by the committee, do at the major entrance of the church. Six *vocales* are divided into two groups of three and each group takes care of the church every other week. Outside the *Comité de la Iglesia* there are an organist, some *auxiliares* who work as interpreters for the priest, and some catechists whose number varies from time to time. In 1974 the Mixe Bishopric of the Salesians was not yet well organized and these helpers of the church were not given official positions in the missionary organization. In the near future, however, according to the plans of the Salesians, they will be given official positions and small payments.

## 2) SECULARIZATION OF THE *Mayordomías*

The remnants of the *mayordomías* and its simultaneous secularization are two notable features of the Ayutla of 1973 and 1974.

The expenditures for the minor religious fiestas, formerly sponsored by the *mayordomos*, are now paid for by the *Comité de la Iglesia*, which manages the church fund. The committee pays for the mass, adorns the altar, and buys the sky-rockets. Usually the fiesta ends with this, but details vary from fiesta to fiesta.

Two saints, La Soledad and Guadalupe, retain their "*mayordomos*." They are still called "*mayordomos*" by the people but, more precisely speaking, they are *padrinos* for the mass who pay for the mass and the food on the day of the fiesta but do not manage the funds of the saints. Two new saints not reported by Beals, Santa Cecilia and Juquila, also have "*mayordomos*" which are really *padrinos* for the mass.

The fiestas of the patron saints are organized by the *Comité de Festejos* (Committee for the Feasts) which is temporarily organized by the municipal officials. It is composed of a *presidente*, a *secretario* and three *ayudantes* chosen from among the *promotoras* and teachers who were born and raised in Ayutla.

The "*mayordomo*" is selected by the *Comité de Festejos* in cooperation with the municipal officials. In case the committee cannot get a candidate, it has to play the role of the "*mayordomo*" by getting financial help from the municipal fund and collecting alms from individuals. This happened in 1970. But, usually the committee can find a candidate for "*mayordomo*" each year and sometimes there is more than one candidate. In January 1973, at the fiesta of San Pablo, the committee secured two "*mayordomos*", so the village could have mass on two days. The expenditure of the "*mayordomo*" is not small. He pays for the mass and gives food to the band and all the visitors. According to the estimates, expenditures amount to 2,000 to 4,000 *pesos*. This so-called "*mayordomo*" system in the Ayutla of 1973 corresponds to the *madrina* for the mass in Tlahui. In Tlahui the expenditures are collectively paid by numerous *madrinas*, while in Ayutla a "*mayordomo*" pays it all. In this respect, even in 1973, Ayutla retains her economy of prestige.

The *capitán* for the band is an economically heavy office, but in Ayutla where the shopkeepers and intermediary *acaparadores* (intermediaries between the monopolistic buyers and the small Mixe vendors) earn more than before, it is not hard to find candidates. In 1973 and 1974 small restaurants called *fondas* flourished in Ayutla, serving food to the federal and state employees who traveled in the region. So even woman owners of restaurants desired to become *capitán*.<sup>5)</sup> At the fiesta of San Pablo, in January, three to fifteen *capitanes* are appointed. The number varies each year according to the number of bands invited. At the fiesta of San Pedro, in June, usually no bands are invited, and so no *capitanes* are appointed.

There is a difference in the psychological orientation of those interested in "mayordomo" and those interested in *capitán* for the band. Those who are religiously oriented want to accept "mayordomía," while those interested in economic prestige tend to serve as *capitán*. The social prestige enjoyed by the holders of these two offices differs in character but not in degree. In 1973 it is difficult to confirm Beals' statement on the Ayutla of 1933 that "the service of *mayordomo* has more prestige and involves in the native mind somewhat greater spiritual rewards than does service as a captain" [BEALS 1945: 66].

The *padrino* for the firework is still an office for a single person. It is never taken collectively as in Tlahui. At each fiesta of the patron saints, makers of fireworks are invited from Tlahui, Tepantlali or Tlacolula. Usually two or three fireworks are burned and one *padrino* is sought to pay for each firework.

The "mayordomo" for the mass, the *capitán* for the band, and the *padrino* for the firework sponsor the fiesta in cooperation with the *Comité de Festejos* and the *municipio*. They assume the economic burden necessary to equip the fiesta in a traditional manner. In the Ayutla of 1973, in which the fiesta is being secularized, there are many new kinds of entertainment. The *Comité de Festejos* has to invite an orchestra from Oaxaca, sponsor the basketball game and set up the merry-go-round. To accumulate funds to sponsor this new entertainment the committee, many days before the date of the fiesta, organizes popular dances with the help of a modern band named *Conjunto Ayuuk* (which specializes in modern Mexican music) and sells tickets, the profit of which is channeled to cover the new types of expenditures. Usually the storehouse of the INI is used as the dance hall. Women are also authorized by the committee to sell soft drinks and snacks. The profits are deposited in the fund of the *Comité de Festejos*. For one or two months before the day of the fiesta, families near the *centro* have to suffer the noise of the dances.

One the day of the fiesta, when the orchestra comes from Oaxaca, the committee sells tickets for the event. In 1973 and 1974 this method of collecting funds became very popular, not only for sponsoring the fiesta but also for raising funds for any communal project such as the construction of toilets for the kindergarten.

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5) In 1975 most of the government agencies left Ayutla. So in 1976 the restaurants had far fewer customers than in 1973 and 1974. It is supposed that the owners of the restaurants were, therefore, less inclined to serve as *capitanes*, but I could not confirm this.

The *municipio* and the *Comité de Festejos* buy trophies and offer food to the visiting players for the basketball championship. A trophy is given to the winning team and on this occasion some *madrinas* for sportsmen are appointed to contribute 10 pesos and to pin ribbons on the winning players. This mestizo element has already been reported by Beals from the Ayutla of 1933 [BEALS 1945: 73].

At the fiesta of San Pablo in January 1973 a merry-go-round was requested from Oaxaca. The municipal *presidente*, along with the *Comité de Festejos*, had to look for somebody who could give food to the engineers of the merry-go-round. The "*mayordomo*" for the mass was obliged to accept the request of the *presidente* and the committee, and he was appointed *capitán de la máquina*.

To sponsor the bullfight, *madrinas* for the bullfight were appointed. Several young ladies as *madrinas* were obliged to buy *sombreros* adorned with ribbons. At the closing ceremony, at the corral, they gave the *sombreros* to the winning fighters and then danced with them.

As we have seen so far, the civil organization is completely separated from the religious one and is going to overshadow it. With the increase in contacts with the world of the "*agats*," the policy of the dominant society of Mexico will not leave Ayutla as it was before. Ayutla will be increasingly involved in the national trends of Mexico. The fiesta economy in the Ayutla of 1973 and 1974 is more "egalitarian" than in 1933, but still more "individualistic" and "capitalistic" than that of Tlahui in 1973 and 1974. And it shows a great deal of secularization in comparison with the economy of prestige in Beals' time.

### 3) POLITICIZATION OF THE RITUALS OF THE OFFICIALS

Among the rituals at the community level, those of the officials show three trends: (1) a decline of ceremonialism, (2) separation from the religious rituals, sometimes even showing a neglect of church rituals, and (3) an increase in political bias. The following description is based on observation in 1973, 1974 and part of 1975. I have put the actual date of each observation for purposes of accuracy.

#### (1) Dates for the Rituals

The dates for the election of the officials tend to be determined by pressure from some organization at the state level. For example, in 1974 people simply say "Oaxaca made us choose the officials earlier than before." In the same year, on September 17, the loud-speaker of the *municipio* called for the people to gather for a meeting but few came. Another meeting was planned for September 25. It was a cold and foggy day, as a result of nearby hurricanes. The meeting was held at the INI grounds. Three *presidentes* for the coming three years and the *sindico* and their *suplentes* for 1975 were elected. The appointment of the lower officials was delayed till the middle of November. These dates for election and appointment vary from year to year, according to external pressure and the convenience of the officials of

Ayutla. The election of the *presidente* in 1973, for example, was carried out on November 17.

The *Comité de la Iglesia* is elected at the beginning of November each year. This election has nothing to do with the municipal officials and it does not attract much attention.

The *Comité de la Banda* is supposed to be elected by a popular vote. But in reality it is designated by the musicians one day before All Saints' Day.

The change of all the officials takes place before midnight on December 31 so as to offer the village the new officials on New Year's Day.

The dates for fiestas of the officials tend to change from year to year according to the convenience of the officials themselves.

## (2) Rituals of the Officials

The rituals of the officials are composed of three stages: first, the election, second, the change of the officials on December 31, and third, the fiesta sponsored by the officials. The first two have a political importance which, therefore, gives a highly political tinge to the activities of the ritual. The third has symbolic and religious significance and, when compared with the first two, is declining.

### A. The Election

The following description is based on observations made in 1973. On November 16 at 11:00 a.m. the meeting begins at the grounds of the former military station. Three groups are seen. The present officials are standing before a table with a microphone. The important people of the village, who have experience in offices or who have new offices outside the *ayuntamiento*, are standing with some PRI members from Oaxaca and the members of the *Comité del PRI* of Ayutla. The people of the *centro* and the *ranchos* are at the other side. First, the *Comité del PRI* of Ayutla is introduced. Second, the leader of the PRI of Oaxaca greets the people. Third, a teacher, an *Ayutleño* who lives in Oaxaca and who was once *presidente* of Ayutla, makes a speech of recommendation for a *promotor* of the INI to be *presidente*. A brother of the teacher, who is also working in Oaxaca as a teacher, is in charge of the microphone and acts as master of ceremonies. The other candidates are announced but not followed by any speeches of recommendation. A group of people from Rancho Cerro Pelón, sympathizers of the said *promotor* working in this *ranchito*, support the *promotor* for *presidente* and all of this group raise their hands for him. The *promotor* is chosen as *presidente*. Then, except for *topiles* and the *agentes* of the *ranchos* (the *vocales* of the *ranchos* are appointed by the *agente*), all the municipal officials are chosen. The master of ceremonies does not even know who is who during this election, for he has not been living long in Ayutla. When the election is over, the chief of the PRI of Oaxaca again presents his greetings. Then the outgoing *presidente* of the PRI of Ayutla greets the people. Thus ends the election of the higher officials.

As is clear from the above, all of the process is politically tinged. As accurately

criticized by a woman in Ayutla, this political ritual is not a ritual of the village of Ayutla but one of the PRI of Oaxaca.

#### B. The Change of the Officials on December 31

In comparison with the rituals of the officials on New Year's Day in Tlahui, those of Ayutla are more separated from the church rituals and far different from the ceremonialism found in Tlahui. The following description is based on observation from the end of December 1974 to the beginning of January 1975.

On December 31 at 9 : 00 p.m., the band arrives at the house of the new *presidente* who entertains them with *mezcal* and *tepache*. At 10 : 30 p.m., with the band at the head, the outgoing officials followed by the those entering office arrive at the grounds of the *municipio*. They take seats around which are sitting the dignitaries of the village, composed of ex-officials of the higher category and some influential families originating from Ayutla but living in Oaxaca or Mexico City who pay visits to the native village at the fiesta of the patron saint and on New Year's Day. The outgoing *presidente* greets the people, introduces the entering *presidente*, and makes a speech to instruct the new officials in their responsibilities. When his speech is over, the band plays for an interval. Then the entering *presidente* begins his speech, manifesting his service to the village and soliciting the peoples' support in the realization of plans such as the construction of the market,<sup>6)</sup> the introduction of drinking water and irrigation, conservation of the woods, and introduction of the telephone and telegraph. In the meantime the first peels of the church bell can be heard.

The outgoing *presidente* hands over his baton and the national flag to the new *presidente*. All the municipal officials hand their batons to those assuming office, as do the *Comité de la Escuela*, the *presidente* for the band, and the teacher of the dancers. The *agentes* of the *ranchos* do not appear on this occasion. All this being over, a parade with the national flag is performed by some young men to the step of militaristic tunes, and the new officials are led to the *municipio* by the old *presidente*. A little later all the people, including the old and new officials, go to the church to participate in the midnight mass. When the mass is over, around 1:30 a.m., the people return home in darkness, and have coffee and *tamales* to bless the New Year.

#### C. The Fiesta of the Officials

In sharp contrast to the series of rituals performed in Tlahui, New Year's Day in Ayutla passes without any rituals of the officials. The following description is based on observation in 1974 and on general information about New Year's Day.

On January 3, or any day before January 10 which is convenient to the officials and the priest, a mass for the officials is celebrated. The date varies from year to year. In 1973 it was delayed until February 17 because the *presidente* was absent from the village. The day before the mass, the higher officials led by the band, bring candles to the church. After the mass a fiesta is opened at the house of the *presidente*. The people invited are served *tepache*, *mezcal* and food at the patio of

6) The construction of the market was initiated in 1974 and almost completed by October 1976.

the house while the band entertains them with music. In addition to the people of the village, federal and state employees stationed at Ayutla are invited and given the best table.

The original date for the mass for the officials seems to have been January 6, the day of the Three Kings (*Tres Reyes*). Beals refers to the custom on this date as follows:

The new mayor [*presidente*] sends his *topiles*, or policemen, with corn to all the unmarried girls. They grind it for the *atole*, or corn gruel, to be served by the town council. The *topiles* may take maize only to the girls of their own division, or *barrio*. Should they take it to a girl of the opposite group, she would send it back to the mayor without grinding it [BEALS 1945: 27].

This custom as of 1933, reported by Beals, survived until recently, though its details seem to have been somewhat transformed. Women in Ayutla remember this custom as follows:

The *topiles* look for single girls (*solteras*) and give them one *almud* of corn to make *nixtamal* (corn cooked with lime in water) for *totoposte* (corn tortilla well toasted) at their own houses. The girls make *totopostes* and bring them to the *municipio* to be inspected. The girls who get a low evaluation for their *totopostes* have to spend three days at the jail. *Atole* (soft drink made of corn flour) is made by some old women from *nixtamal* brought by the girls. *Atole* and *totopostes* are prepared for the fiesta of the officials in this way. On January 6, after the mass for officials in the morning, all the people gather in the patio of the military station to enjoy *totopostes* and *atole*. The officials and the musicians have the privilege of eating twelve *totopostes* each. A cup of *atole* is served to everyone. Till late in the afternoon the noise of breaking *totopostes* is heard as if it were the noise of breaking *zacates* (dried corn stalks).

#### D. The Decline of the *Tequio*

Under the general trends towards secularization the *tequio* is also in the process of disappearing. In 1933 a *tequio* of three days a year was required of each family head [BEALS 1945: 30], but this obligation no longer exists. The work for the church is paid for by the *Comité de la Iglesia* and by the fund of the missionaries. For example, when the missionaries opened a trail from Matagallinas to Chicocana, Duraznal and Cerro Amole, the hard work was done by the people of these *ranchos*, who were served food by the missionaries.

*Tequio* still exists for the work of the *municipio*. In 1973 and 1974 there was the construction of the building for the *Comisión del Papaloapan* which will be used as the telephone and telegraph office. In addition, there was a new market to be constructed. A *tequio* of six to seven days a year was imposed for these two projects. According to the *síndico*, some 70 percent of the people of the village participated in this *tequio*. That is a high percentage and the remaining were people who could not come



because they lived far from the *centro*. According to the same *sindico*, the *municipio* cannot enforce the law to put in jail those who neglect the *tequio*. This tolerance is quite different from the rigid application of punishment in traditional Ayutla as reported by Beals

Those who must serve are notified by *topiles* a week in advance of the time when their services are required. If they have not appeared by the end of the week, they are arrested and fined or made to do ten or fifteen days' additional labor as punishment [BEALS 1945: 30].

In traditional Ayutla, the *tequio* was the symbol of the "esprit de corps" of the village, and the announcements for *tequio* were indispensable to life in Ayutla. Beals left us a description as follows:

One interesting feature of the *tequio* is the daily call to work. At Ayutla each morning and evening the *regidores* call from the plaza or the brickyard below the town to remind people to come to work. The call, shouted in unison, floats musically along the mountainside and echoes in the gorge below "Hurry, hurry, hurry, that the work may be finished" [BEALS 1945: 31].

At present the officials use the loud-speaker at the *municipio* to call for the *tequio*, "Come for the *tequio*. If you come, the INI will give you cans of milk, rice, *frijol*, and other commodities of the Conasupo." In spite of this offer the people do not come. The *tequio* will soon disappear from Ayutla.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The data of Tlahui and Ayutla have been reviewed. It appears that Tlahui of 1973 and 1974 presents a civil-religious hierarchy and system of rituals that are much more traditional than those of Ayutla of 1933. In comparison with Ayutla, as far as the civil-religious organization is concerned, Tlahui presents a time lag of more than forty years. It is not, strictly speaking, easy to compare the two villages, for they have many differences in their ways of distributing the communal expenditures for the sponsorship of the fiestas, differences which cannot be explained only in terms of social change caused by the passing of time. However, moving the focus from Tlahui to Ayutla, we observe a process of change: separation of the civil from the religious organization, coinciding with the replacement of the *mayordomias* by the committee system, and the simplification and politicization of the rituals of the officials.

Some changes will gradually emerge from the community but others will occur suddenly, owing to the "direct political action" [CANCIAN 1967: 295] by the state and federal governments. This happened to Ayutla at the end of 1975. In October 1976, when I revisited the Mixe region, I found a great change in the civil organization in Ayutla. The higher officials of 1975 were still in office. They were not

allowed to leave office when they visited the state governor to report the entrance of the new officials for 1976. The officials of *presidente*, *síndico* and *regidores* were ordered to serve for three years, although the lower officials were permitted to be replaced. Ayutla informed Tlahui of this sudden change in state policy. Tlahui was ready to receive the same order from the state government, but the annual change of the officials was the same as had been accepted by the state in previous years. The people of Tlahui and Ayutla who have a level of political consciousness understood Ayutla as a test case for a new system of municipal officers which was applied by the state to this leading Mixe village, and they were carefully watching for what will come out of this new system.

The impact of outside influences, including the above-mentioned "direct political action," will increase in the Mixe region in the near future. The people's adaptation to these influences will help to bring about changes in their civil-religious organization which will, in turn, enable them to cope better with the outside world.

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