

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

**GENDER, ETHNICITY AND THE LOCAL LABOUR MARKET IN
LIMON, COSTA RICA**

**A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in
The London School of Economics and Political Science
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ABSTRACT

The conceptual and empirical analysis of the interrelationship between gender and ethnicity has been largely neglected in the social sciences in general, and in Latin America in particular. The current research examines this relationship in the context of the local labour market of the Caribbean port of Limón, Costa Rica. The presence of a significant Afro-Caribbean minority along with the predominant white/*mestizo* population in the city, allows for the analysis of the distribution of ethnic and gender groups in the local economy, and the ways in which gender and ethnicity intersect with one another to produce particular patterns of employment differentiation.

The above interrelations are explored with special reference to labour market segmentation and segregation. The approach adopted comprises the synthesis of three perspectives, the first of which is concerned with tracing the historical development of the region and city as an enclave economy. The second perspective deals with the labour market itself where current patterns of labour demand also influence segmentation and segregation. The third examines the contemporary household level, where factors such as household structure and gender ideologies (both of which may be mediated by ethnicity) operate to shape the supply of labour.

Combination of the above three elements in the context of an holistic approach indicates that the configuration of employment differentiation in the enclave economy of Limón departs from more generally found patterns of vertical segmentation in gender and ethnic terms. Instead, horizontal distribution prevails in which Afro-Caribbean women do not occupy the most subordinate position in the labour market. Explanations for this lie in the historical evolution of the labour market and the dynamics of interaction between contemporary factors operating within the spheres of both household and workplace.

A survey of 250 randomly-sampled households was conducted in three low-income settlements in Limón using structured and semi-structured questionnaires and targeting both male and female respondents. An employer survey was also conducted of 17 firms in the city, including large and small-scale enterprises. The principal conclusion is that a reconsideration of conventional conceptual approaches to labour markets is necessary in order to fully recognise the importance of the interaction between gender and ethnicity in employment differentiation.

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GLOSSARY

Aguinaldo Bonus paid to workers by law, usually at Christmas.

Barrio Generic term for neighbourhood in Latin America. Usually refers to low-income housing area of the type included in the present research.

Barrio de Tegurio Costa Rican term for low-income housing area, usually implying a squatter settlement.

Chapero Postrero Casual worker (usually male) who works on a contract basis clearing land, usually with a *machete*.

Chile Chilli pepper used widely in seasoning in Costa Rica.

Colón Unit of Costa Rican currency. During the period of research in 1990, the value of the colón was approximately 85 *colones* per US dollar or £1.36 Sterling (although it fluctuated between 85.18 and 95.26 *colones*).

Compañero/a Partner in a consensual union.

Concurso Newsletter or circular distributed within companies to advertise vacant jobs.

Conquistador Participant in the Spanish Conquest of Latin America.

Convención de Trabajo Collective Labour Code. Usually the result of bargaining and negotiation between trade unions and management.

Cuadrillo Group of men working together in cargo loading in port employment.

Empanada Foodstuff consisting of meat and *chile* wrapped in a *tortilla*.

Fulines Derived from 'fill-in'. Term used by Afro-Caribbeans to describe casual cargo handlers in port employment.

Guanacasteco Native of Guanacaste province.

Hidalgo Spanish nobleman during the colonial period.

Limonense Native of Limón.

Machismo Cultural complex based on male superiority. Usually manifested in exaggerated displays of male camaraderie such as drinking, gambling, violence and sexual infidelity.

Machista Man adhering to types of behaviour associated with *machismo*.

Mandón Ruler. Usually referring to a man acting in accordance with *machismo*.

Manzana Literally 'apple'. Used in Costa Rica to describe a plot of land approximately 5 metres square.

Mestizo Name referring to populations of mixed Spanish and indigenous Indian blood during the colonial era which currently refers to the majority of people in Latin America who do not define themselves as Indian or Afro-Caribbean for example.

Municipalidad Municipality.

Negro Term used to refer to an Afro-Caribbean person in Costa Rica. Commonly used in the 'street' but not in any derogatory sense.

Paña Term used by Afro-Caribbeans to describe white/*mestizos*. Derived from 'spanish'.

Precarista Person who has invaded and squatted land illegally and has no legal title. Also *precarismo* which is the process of squatting on land.

Productores Asociadas Small-scale agricultural producers who supply large banana companies on a contract basis.

Pulpería Small corner shop.

Tamale Foodstuff made from ground maize and mixed with meat or vegetables and served in a banana leaf.

Tejido Crocheted ornamental mat or decorative table-clothes.

Tortilla Pancake made from maize or wheat flour.

Tico Vernacular term for Costa Rican.

Union Libre Common-law marriage or consensual union.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMC	Alianza de Mujeres Costarricenses
ASBANA	Asociación Bananera Nacional
BCCR	Banco Central de Costa Rica
CCSS	Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social
CMF	Centro para el Desarrollo de la Mujer y la Familia
CNP	Consejo Nacional de Producción
CODESA	Corporación Costarricense de Desarrollo, S.A.
CONAI	Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas
DINADECO	Dirección National de Desarrollo de la Comunidad
ICE	Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad
IFAM	Instituto de Fomento y Asesoría Municipal
IMAS	Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social
INCOFER	Instituto Costarricense de Ferrocarril
INS	Instituto Nacional de Seguros
INVU	Instituto Nacional de Vivienda y Urbanismo
JAPDEVA	Junta Administrativa Portuaria y de Desarrollo Económica de la Vertiente Atlántica
MIDEPLAN	Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica
MTSS	Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social
OFIPLAN	Oficina de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica
PANI	Patronato Nacional de la Infancia
PAE	Programa de Ajuste Estructural
PLN	Partido de Liberación Nacional
PUN	Partido Unificación Nacional
PUSC	Partido Unidad Social Cristiana
RECOPE	Refinería Costarricense del Petróleo

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

"MAS ABAJO DE LA PIEL" "MORE THAN SKIN DEEP"

The title of this chapter is taken from a novel written by Abel Pacheco (1978), relating the history of the province and city of Limón. Contrary to many other works written on the area, the primary aim of the novel is to portray the Afro-Caribbean population of Limón in a manner free from prejudice and ethnic stereotyping.¹ Pacheco recognises the contribution played by Afro-Caribbeans in the development of the region and stresses the need for all ethnic groups to live together in harmony, expressed in his own lyrical words as:

"Limón es cascada en verde. Sonata en negro mayor.

Abrazo pasional de todas las razas, de todos los tiempos."

"Limón is a green waterfall. A sonata in black major.

A passionate embrace of all races, of all times." (Pacheco, 1978: 9)

The title, "*Más abajo de la piel*" translates as "More than skin deep" and while referring to racial attitudes, it may also be applied to gender, which together form the focus of the present research. The main aim of the study is to examine the interrelation of these concepts in the context of the labour market: an objective requiring an analysis, which is "more than skin deep". Aside from this general point, the title is significant in two further ways. First, the conceptual construction of race, ethnicity and gender demands a departure from reliance on ascriptive criteria based on biological and physical characteristics of sex and phenotype, which effectively involves looking "more than skin deep". Second, the examination and search for explanations of gender and ethnic employment differentiation requires investigation at more than one level; it is not sufficient to examine the contemporary labour market alone, but also necessary to look "*más abajo de la piel*" and incorporate various levels of analysis. In the context of the present work, this includes an historical perspective focusing on the evolution of the urban economy over time, and the examination of a range ^{of} social, cultural and economic factors operating at the level of the household.

Until recently, examination of the interrelationships between gender, race and class has been limited within social science research. Although the multiple interrelationships have increasingly been recognised, there is little documentation either conceptually or empirically (Walby, 1992). As Bowlby et al (1989: 172) point out, "there is, as yet, insufficient work which attempts to examine and compare

the interconnections between class, race and gender within different areas". In other words, while research has considered these issues separately, there are few studies which embrace all three in an interrelated manner (Bondi, 1990). Having said this, a considerable number of studies address the intersections between gender and class at a conceptual level (see for example, Barrett, 1988; Crompton and Mann, 1986; Young *et al*, 1981), and more specifically in relation to employment and the family at an empirical level (see for example, Gamarnikow *et al*, 1983 on employment; Delphy and Leonard, 1986 on the family; see also Walby, 1990: 7-13 for a review). Indeed, it was this interrelation which was the basis of much early feminist debate on the issue of whether patriarchy or class was more important when explaining the causes of women's oppression or vice versa (Delphy, 1977; Eisenstein, 1979; Sargent, 1981). Currently, however, the impossibility of establishing primacy has been accepted and studies now deal largely with variations among women under the general rubric of patriarchy and capitalism (see for example, Mies, 1986; Walby, 1988, 1990). ²

Similarly, within literature on ethnicity and race, the relationship with class has been extensively documented (see for example, Kuper, 1974; Miles and Phizacklea, 1984; Rex and Mason, 1986; Wilson, 1987). Debates in this field have concentrated on determining whether capitalist development leads to the relegation of ethnic groups to the bottom of the class hierarchy. However, while empirical relationships have been established between class position and racial and ethnic origin, it is now widely accepted that assumptions based on the homogeneity of ethnic groups found in uniformly disadvantaged positions are overly simplistic and, indeed, spurious (Miles, 1982, 1989; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979). At a conceptual level however, intense debate still wages as to how to theorise the intersections of race and class and how to deal with their relationship with the state in terms of competition for scarce resources (Jackson, 1989a).

In both fields of enquiry, the way in which race and gender have been reduced to class, has been a major stumbling block in extending further research (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Bourne, 1984; Jackson, 1989b). In other words, within feminist research the examination of race and ethnicity tends to be viewed as largely peripheral to overall conceptualisations and explanations of social relations, and similarly within research on ethnicity and race, gender tends to be marginalised and assumed to have little bearing on the nature of ethnic relations. This amounts to the relegation of both categories in each instance to the role of epiphenomena in that they are conceived as secondary symptoms rather than causal factors in explaining gender or ethnic relations.

In Christopherson's (1989: 83) words, they refer to "the characteristics of the individual that is static, locally constituted and irrelevant to the elucidation of dynamic, global processes". However, the recognition of this polarisation has led to some re-orientation, which increasingly deals with the simultaneous intersection of gender, ethnicity and class within more comprehensive frameworks of analysis (see for example, Centre for Cultural and Contemporary Studies, 1982; Miles, 1989; Phizacklea, 1988 on race and Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Mama, 1989; Walby, 1990; Westwood and Bhachu, 1988 on gender).

Reasons for the reluctance in examining these issues concurrently may owe in part to the difficulties of theoretical formulation, particularly when each issue on its own is often insufficiently researched, let alone theorised (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Walby, 1990). Indeed, Veronica Beechey (1986) points out that at present we know far too little about the differences between women of different classes and different ethnic groups to allow the construction of a theoretical framework. Moreover, the reductionism of many theories also tends to obscure the underlying diversity within gender, class and ethnic groups and fails to identify the complex interrelationships between them (Benería and Roldan, 1987; Walby, 1992). In addition, at the practical level, the inclusion of multiple gender and ethnic groups in sample populations is often considered problematic given that they represent a supposed deviation from the 'norm' which is often perceived to be the white male (Nash and Safa, 1986; Phoenix, 1990). For example, Sebald (1986: 6) notes how phrases such as "No blacks or Hispanics were included.....hence some degree of homogeneity was established", frequently occur within social science research projects. Overall therefore, while a shift has occurred, particularly within feminist research, the tendency to deal with these groups as largely independent, rather than mutually interacting, still prevails.

Gender, Ethnicity and Class In Latin America and the Caribbean

The need to integrate the study of gender, ethnicity and class, becomes even more apparent when examined in the context of the developing world, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, the present section highlights how the gaps in the literature widen as we move from the broader scale examining research on the developed and developing worlds, to specific regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, to the country of the present study, Costa Rica, where these issues have not been dealt with at all. Lack of research on this topic is especially ironic given that it is often in these

nations where the interrelationships between gender, ethnicity and class acquire even more saliency (Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Munck, 1988). Furthermore, the recent call for the recognition of ethnic differences between women has come not only from black women in developed countries (see for example, Amos and Parmar, 1984; Carby, 1982; Bryan et al., 1985 on the United Kingdom; Amott and Matthaei, 1991; Davis, 1981; Hooks, 1982, 1984 on the United States), but also from women in developing areas (see Antrobus, 1985; Benería and Sen, 1981; Bourne, 1984). These demands were precipitated by the United Nations Decade for Women (Pietilä and Vickers, 1990), and were largely based on criticisms that mainstream feminist theories were formulated on the experience of white women from Europe and the United States (Benería and Sen, 1981). As Michèle Barrett (1988: xxiv) points out, "the voices now most effectively addressing questions of class, inequality and exploitation are those of black women, not white socialist-feminists". ³ This is echoed by Bourne (1984: 21) who suggests that we turn to the experiences of women from the developing world to provide us with precedents from which to develop strategies to overcome oppression, and from which to shape a feminism which is more relevant to the majority of women world-wide.

Turning to research on Latin America, the examination of gender roles and relations has received considerable attention in the social science literature (see for example, Chant, 1991a; Jelin, 1991; LACWE, 1980; Lavrin, 1984; Nash and Safa, 1980, 1986; Radcliffe and Townsend, 1988: 66-80; see also Saporta Sternbach et al., 1992 for a review of feminism in Latin America). However, much of this work has concentrated on gender and class in the context of employment patterns or household relations (see for example, Bohman, 1984; Fonseca, 1991; Saffioti, 1978; Schmink, 1986). While ethnicity is often mentioned in various studies, it is usually in an epiphenomenal manner and as an adjunct to the main focus of study (Arizpe, 1990; Berlin, 1986³; Jelin, 1990; Scott, 1986a, 1990). Important exceptions include research on female political participation (Cusicanqui, 1990; Harvey, 1988), and on indigenous populations (Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1987), particularly in relation to migration (Radcliffe, 1986; 1990; 1992). Nonetheless, these studies have not only concentrated on indigenous groups rather than on Afro-Caribbean populations (but see Rubbo, 1975 on Colombia), but have rarely examined the nature of labour market differentiation along lines of gender and race (but see Stubbs, 1985 on the pre-revolutionary Cuban tobacco industry).

The relatively marginal position of ethnicity in the field of gender studies in Latin America could arguably be mirrored by a similarly peripheral position of gender

in research on 'race' and 'ethnicity' in the same area. Indeed, the latter is perhaps even more evident. The majority of work has focused either on indigenous populations in the Andean region (van den Berghe and Primov, 1977), dealing with debates on uses of the terms race and ethnicity (Pitt-Rivers, 1973), or on African slave populations in the pre-colonial period (Carroll, 1991; Bowser, 1974; Harris, 1974; Palmer, 1976; Toplin, 1974), concentrating on the differences between racial classification systems utilised in the United States and Latin America (Wade, 1988). ⁴ In general however, there has been a tendency to examine only the relationship between race and class, rather than including gender as an important axis of differentiation (Calderón, 1977 ~~on~~ ^{and Mexico} Mexico; Ianni, 1972; Paré, 1977 on Bolivia). Moreover, research on contemporary Afro-Caribbean groups in Latin America and particularly their position in the labour market, have received little attention with the exceptions of Wade (1988) on Colombia, Whitten (1965) on Ecuador and Conniff (1985) on Panama. Finally, studies which examine race, gender and class together have been limited, with the notable exception of the work of Peter Wade (1989) on domestic servants in Colombia, and Jan Carew's (1988) historical study of racism and sexism during the Age of Discovery in the Americas.

The present research on Limón, Costa Rica has also been affected by influences emanating from the Caribbean region. Therefore, it is important to briefly consider the nature of research on race, gender and class in the area. As in the case of Latin America, research on these issues has remained largely separate. The issue of race has been widely documented both historically in terms of slavery (Braithwaite, 1971; Genovese, 1975; Higman, 1976) and in contemporary society focusing on the notion of pluralism (Clarke, ^C1975, 1984, 1989; Lowenthal, 1972; Nettleford, 1978; Smith, M.G, 1965; 1984), ⁵ again emphasising the relationship with class. Similarly, there is considerable research on gender and class, particularly under the auspices of the 'Women in the Caribbean Project' (WICP) (Anderson, ^P1986; Bolles, 1986; Massiah, 1984, 1986, 1990; Powell, 1984, 1986; Ellis, 1985; Durant-Gonzales and Massiah, 1982). However, while research on gender has given some recognition to the importance of race, examination of race relations has largely ignored the role of gender, even if the vast literature on family formation and organisation has dealt with both issues implicitly (Clarke, ^E1957; Smith, RT. 1956; Solien de Gonzales, 1969). Indeed, the only work which has addressed both issues in a more prominent ^Emanner, has been recent research relating to the role of African women during slavery (see for example, Bush, 1990). ⁶ In short however, the criticisms levelled at research on Latin America may also be applied to the Caribbean: there has been insufficient attention paid to the

integration of gender, race and class as a unified field of enquiry.

Moving on to the literature on Costa Rica itself, the treatment of these issues is sectoralised further. For instance, there have only been few studies dealing with the status of women and their domestic and economic roles (Chant, 1991b, 1991c, 1992a; Facio, 1989; Gonzales, 1983; Guzman, 1983; Quiroz *et al.*, 1984; Ramirez-Boza, 1987a, 1987b; Sherman, 1984) and even fewer on ethnicity and race (Carvajal and Driori, 1987; Duncan and Powell, 1988; Duncan *et al.*, 1986; Meléndez and Duncan, 1989; Olien, 1973, 1977), with few elaborating these in the context of class relations. Therefore, with the exception of Eulalia Bernard's (1987) work on gender and race in Limón, there has been no research which attempts to address the interconnections between all three variables.

In conclusion, it appears that there is a substantial lack of research examining the complex interrelations between gender, ethnicity and class, and that these shortcomings intensify as we move from the general scale to the specific. While this is certainly a growing field of enquiry, and interestingly, it is work on female domestic service which seems to be leading the way (see for example, Cock, 1980; Gaitskell *et al.*, 1983 on South Africa; Radcliffe, 1990 on Peru; Wade, 1989 on Colombia), there still appear to be few conceptual or empirical analyses which pinpoint these issues as topics of investigation. The present research therefore aims to contribute to this emerging field of research through examining patterns of gender and ethnic employment differentiation in Limón, Costa Rica.

Objectives of the Study

The preceding section provides justification for the focus of the present study on gender, ethnicity and to a lesser extent, class. While the major conceptual objective is to examine the interrelation between these issues (see later), the specific aim is to investigate the nature of labour market segmentation and segregation along lines of gender and ethnicity in the context of the local labour market in Limón, Costa Rica. The term segmentation is used in the present case to refer to the division of the labour market into different branches, sectors or types of employment which may be characterised by a disproportionate concentration of particular gender or ethnic groups. Segregation on the other hand, denotes the concentration of the labour force itself into particular sectors or types of employment according to criteria such as gender and race (Walby, 1988b: 17-18).⁷ Having said this, these terms are often used coterminously

especially when examining gender and ethnicity. This is mainly due to problems of distinguishing between the two types of differentiation in that both tend to operate simultaneously. Therefore, while this distinction should be borne in mind throughout the research, segmentation and segregation are usually referred to interchangeably.

The Caribbean port city of Limón provides a suitable setting from which to examine these issues, in that unlike many other urban areas in Costa Rica, Puerto Limón has an ethnically differentiated population consisting mainly of white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean groups. In spite of difficulties in establishing the ethnic composition of the city, ⁸ the most recent figures estimate that white/*mestizos* represent around two-thirds of the urban population, while Afro-Caribbeans make-up about one-third (Carvajal and Driori, 1987: 43). In light of this, the present research aims to examine employment patterns among white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans, as well as among men and women.

In order to examine gender and ethnic labour market segmentation and segregation, analysis is approached from a number of levels; first, from an historical perspective which involves examination of the evolution of the urban economy over time; second, from a contemporary perspective focusing on the nature of labour market sectors and factors relating to labour demand; and third, from the level of the household concentrating on contemporary patterns of family organisation and composition, as well as the nature of gender roles and relations within the household, highlighting how these may influence the supply of labour. ⁹ Using this holistic approach, the most important points are to identify the main employment branches and sectors in the city and how they have changed over time, to establish where particular ethnic and gender groups are located within these sectors, and, finally, to search for explanations for these patterns.

Historical Perspectives

An historical approach is particularly important with regard to ethnicity as it may help to establish the reasons for ethnic diversity and how various groups have come to be located in the area. As Robert Miles (1989: 129) points out, any analysis of ethnically differentiated regions involves historical investigation of the development of capitalism and the availability of labour which meets the needs of capital at the time. In other words, examination is needed of the changing demand for labour at particular historical junctures and the way in which this demand has been fulfilled. As in many cases where indigenous supplies of labour within a particular area are insufficient, alternatives are

sought elsewhere, often involving recruitment of a labour force of a different ethnic group from the area as a whole. In addition, this labour tends to be manual in nature and migrant workers often hold positions in the labour market which are usually regarded as inferior (Miles and Phizacklea, 1984). While the most obvious example is slavery, this process has been found in many different contexts with the main difference being that it has been free labour as opposed to indentured or slave labour (see Potts, 1990). For example, in post-war Britain, labour shortages in the National Health Service and London Transport led to widespread immigration of Afro-Caribbeans to fill largely low status positions (Miles, 1982). In late nineteenth century Australia, a similar process occurred whereby labour was recruited from India and China to work on sheep farms in New South Wales (de Lepervanche, 1984). In the present case of Limón, historical analysis of the area is required, pinpointing the reasons for Afro-Caribbean migration. In addition, it is important to examine how the nature of labour market sectors and types of employment have changed over time, and if variations in demand for labour have been ethnically-specific at particular historical periods. As part of this, it should be identified whether as original migrant labourers, Afro-Caribbeans were incorporated into the labour market at the lowest levels and if so, whether employment disadvantage has been reproduced over time.

A related point is the historical examination of ethnic relations and the development of racist attitudes. It has been noted elsewhere how the arrival of migrant labour which is ethnically different from the dominant population often engenders ethnic conflict (see for example, Miles and Phizacklea, 1984 on Britain; Castles *et al.*, 1984 on various European cases). Therefore, these groups (which are usually minority populations), are often perceived as a threat to the majority group who tend to be eager to preserve their own interests, whether these be material or cultural (Miles, 1989). Moreover, these sentiments are often embodied in state policies and legislation (see MacDonald, 1990 on Immigration Law in Britain). In Limón, this issue is particularly interesting because in contrast to most societies, Afro-Caribbeans initially arrived in Costa Rica as a minority group in the country as a whole, but as a majority in the local provincial context. Furthermore, the proportion of Afro-Caribbeans to white/*mestizos* has changed over time which may have important implications for the formation of racist attitudes or for acculturation. ^(assimilation into prevailing culture) In other words, it is important to assess how changes in the status of Afro-Caribbeans from a majority to a minority ethnic group has affected relations with white/*mestizos* in terms of labour market position or employment discrimination, and in turn whether this has had implications for class position, for example. Also important is whether the shift towards a white/*mestizo*

majority and concomitant imposition of Hispanic Costa Rican culture has led a weakening of Afro-Caribbean cultural traditions.

The examination of gender is also important from an historical angle, especially in terms of how women's ^{and men's} involvement in the labour market has changed and how patterns of employment have evolved over time in response to varying demand for labour which may be gender-specific (Beechey, 1986; Benería and Roldán, 1987). In other parts of Latin America, changes in the nature of local economies has been shown to influence rates of labour force participation of women as demand for labour has required a female rather than male labour force (see Chant, 1991a). For example, in the Mexico/United States border towns in the last decade, the relocation of labour-intensive aspects of multi-national manufacturing processes of electronics, textiles and so on has led to the widespread labour force recruitment of women (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fernández-Kelly, 1983). In Peru, Alison MacEwen Scott (1986b) also notes how the expansion of the state in the 1980s and the increased demand for low status, public sector administrative workers has led to increasing involvement of women in the labour market (see also Joekes, 1987) (see below on reasons why women may be a preferred labour force). In Limón therefore, it is important to examine how changes in the local economy over time have been associated with changes in demand for female labour vis-à-vis that of men.

The evolution and intersection of ethnic and gender relations over time is also a key element of an historical analysis. For example, Miles (1989: 88) points out how in historical contexts where ethnically distinct migrant labour has been recruited, it often consists entirely of single men. This may reflect an attempt to prevent the physical/biological reproduction of an ethnic group ^(settlers) and thus to minimise any threat to the dominant population. In other situations however, such as the promotion of white colonisation, women may be encouraged to migrate in order to ensure the physical reproduction of a race in an attempt to impose the interests of the colonising group (see also de Lepervanche, 1984 on nineteenth century Australia). This not only points to blatant racial discrimination, but also to sexist attitudes where women are perceived merely as 'breeding machines'. In Limón, where initial migration of Afro-Caribbeans consisted of mainly of single males, it is important to examine the nature of Afro-Caribbean female migration and in what capacity they arrived (for example, as workers or wives). Moreover, the subsequent formation of gender roles after arrival in Costa Rica is interesting in terms of whether women remained only in the domestic sphere or whether they also entered the labour force in significant numbers.

Overall then, the question can be posed as to how far the intersections of gender, ethnic and class position have altered over time. Within this there are four main components: first, how far back is there evidence of gender and ethnic segregation in the labour force; second, what forms did these possible differences take and why; third, to what extent have historical patterns been reproduced over time, and fourth, to what degree is labour force position linked with class formation and mobility?

Contemporary Perspectives: The Labour Market

Moving on to the contemporary perspective, analysis of the nature of labour market structure and factors operating within this level is required, as well as examination of the household arena. Looking first at the labour market, it is important to identify the main characteristics of activity sectors and types of employment, focusing on patterns of segmentation. In addition, the extent to which these sectors and jobs are occupied by different ethnic and gender groups in the form of labour force segregation needs to be established (see earlier). These patterns may also be viewed in terms of horizontal and vertical divisions. For example, horizontal segmentation refers to the separation of complete production systems or types of employment, where all labour has some common characteristic (see Rodgers, 1989: 8), while vertical segmentation involves the hierarchical division of types of employment belonging to a single production process which recruits labour from different layers of the labour market (ibid: 8). In turn, horizontal segregation denotes types of jobs grouped together at a similar level, yet separated into different occupational categories, whereas vertical segregation refers to the insertion of certain groups at various levels of the occupational hierarchy (Walby, 1988a: 2-3). Bearing these divisions in mind, it is expected that in Limón, distinct patterns of vertical and horizontal segmentation and segregation will emerge in the contemporary labour market, partly because of the historical development of Limón based on the recruitment of gender- and ethnically-differentiated labour, but also depending on a number of additional factors relating to contemporary labour demand.

One of the most important factors in the contemporary labour market is whether employment sectors are capital- or labour-intensive, or whether they recruit manual or service workers, for example. This may lead to the differential employment of men or women (see Chant, 1991a on Mexico), or of different ethnic groups (see Fevre, 1984 on Britain). Looking at gender, it has been noted elsewhere how men tend to be the preferred workforce in capital-intensive employment, involving use of technology and often resulting in higher wages (Aguiar, 1980). Women, on the other hand, may be

associated with labour-intensive sectors in jobs requiring manual dexterity and supposed 'docility' and employed for lower wages (Chant, 1991a; Elson and Pearson, 1981; Fernández-Kelly, 1983), or in service jobs such as cleaners, waitresses or higher status tertiary occupations such as teaching and nursing (Joekees, 1987; Scott, 1986b). In addition, ethnic divisions may be based on similar distinctions between ethnic minority groups being concentrated in labour-intensive sectors, while workers from the majority population may be found in more capital-intensive employment (Fevre, 1984; Miles, 1982; Phizacklea, 1988).

Explanations for the disproportionate concentrations of gender and ethnic groups in certain types of employment may be based on a number of factors ranging from discrimination, to stereotyping and institutional factors such as trade unions and legislation. Conventionally, workers are assigned to different areas of the labour market on the basis of criteria such as educational attainment, seniority or previous work experience and so on, and these are usually accepted without question (Benería and Roldán, 1987). As such, discrimination occurs where a choice is made "between people on the basis of criteria which are inadmissible" (Jenkins, 1989: 311), and usually on grounds of gender and/or race. However, these criteria are not viewed as inadmissible if accompanied by some form of rationalisation which is where the use of gender 'traits' and ethnic stereotypes come into play (Benería and Roldán, 1987). These refer to the association of men or women or members of different ethnic groups with specific jobs or skills, usually on the basis of socially constructed, rather than actual skills (Chant, 1991a: Chapter Three; Dex, 1989; Miles, 1989) (see below). Therefore, employers are probably more likely to assign workers on the basis of stereotypes than openly discriminate against certain groups, albeit inadvertently in many cases. Other institutional factors which may affect gender and ethnic employment patterns is legislation, which in the case of gender may paradoxically raise the costs of employing women compared with men because of protective policies such as maternity benefit for example (Anker and Hein, 1986: 16-19; Brydon and Chant, 1989: 184-5; Heyzer, 1981). Exclusionary practices may also be embodied in trade union activity which have often been identified as being male-dominated or ethnically-dominated, which in both cases may serve to discriminate against women and ethnic minorities (Anker and Hein, 1986; Brydon and Chant, 1989 on gender; Jenkins, 1986,1989; Simpson and Yinger, 1986 on ethnicity).

Although the issues raised above are based on limited samples in specific areas, and accepting that much depends on the composition of local labour market sectors, it is

possible to suggest that the labour market in Limón will be strongly stratified on the basis of gender and ethnicity. Evidence elsewhere based on the existence of widespread gender and ethnic stereotyping of occupations and employment sectors, suggests that areas of 'masculinised' and 'feminised' employment may emerge in Limón, as well as concentrations of Afro-Caribbeans and white/*mestizos*. In addition, other studies also show how women and ethnic minorities are the most disadvantaged groups, and more specifically that ethnic minority women are the most oppressed of all in terms of both gender and race (see also Bruegel, 1989; Carby, 1982; Mama, 1989). On this basis, it is thus possible to propose that ethnic minority women in Limón may be the most disadvantaged group and as a result are likely to be located in the most subordinate positions in the labour market at the bottom of a labour market hierarchy (Phoenix, 1990). The present research aims to assess the extent to which this is in fact the case in Limón.

Contemporary Perspectives: The Household

Turning to the other major element of the contemporary approach, analysis of labour market patterns also requires examination of factors operating at the level of the household.¹⁰ Although the need to adopt an integrated framework which includes issues relating to the workplace and the household has been recognised (Barron and Norris, 1990; Beechey, 1987; Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990), empirical research has usually been restricted to examining one level only (for a fuller discussion see Beechey, 1987:179; Chant, 1991a: 12-13). Although the focus on only one perspective is usually for practical reasons (see Chant, 1991a: 12), this has often resulted in somewhat perfunctory analyses of labour force participation, especially in terms of female employment. Indeed, it is the particular examination of women's involvement in the labour market, which requires investigation of household level issues. In general, male labour force participation is high regardless of household conditions, whereas women's tends to be lower, considerably more variable and more closely linked with the household (Chant, 1991a; Rodgers, 1989; Stichter, 1990). This is mainly because women tend to carry a disproportionate share of reproductive labour, while men are more commonly associated with productive activities (Chant, 1991a, 1992b; de Oliveira, 1990).¹¹ Therefore, the consideration of the household is fundamental in ⁱⁿexamining how women in particular are released into the labour force and often in which types of jobs they are most likely to be employed.

More specifically, recent research has highlighted a series of important household level characteristics which are likely to influence female employment

patterns (Anker and Hein, 1986; Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990). For example, Chant (1991a: 13) groups these into 'personal characteristics' such as education levels, age and migrant status; 'material and demographic aspects of the household' such as income levels and numbers of children; and 'social and ideological issues surrounding family organisation', dealing with gender relations and divisions of labour, for example. While it is important to examine all these factors in the present study of Limón, two issues emerge as most interesting when examining an ethnically-differentiated population. These include household structure and gender and family ideologies.

Looking first at household structure, the configuration of households may differ to include different forms such as male-headed nuclear, women-headed or single-parent and male- or female-headed extended structures, which have been noted as the most prevalent in Latin America (see Chant, 1991a: 18).¹² Recent empirical research has demonstrated a relationship between household structure and headship and levels of female labour force participation (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a; Fernández-Kelly, 1983; González de la Rocha, 1988). For example, if households are male-headed, women are less likely to enter the labour force than if they head their own households (Chant, 1985b, 1991a). In addition, it has been argued that women residing in nuclear households are least likely to engage in paid employment, whereas women in single-parent units are most likely to work. In extended families, participation is seen to be higher than in nuclear, yet less than in women-headed households (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1985b; García *et al*, 1983). Bearing these relationships in mind, it is important to identify how the proportions of these different types of households might vary, which in turn may lead to differential rates of labour absorption outlined above.

It has been argued elsewhere that a whole range of factors including the nature of the local economy, the 'developmental cycle', inheritance patterns, technology and state legislation, may influence the configuration of households to varying degrees (Chant, 1991a: 8). However, perhaps of most relevance to the present study are variations based on culture, ethnicity and class position (Harris, 1981; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Mullings, 1986; Zinn, 1990). In terms of class, 'alternative' or 'non-standard' household forms are often associated with groups further down the class hierarchy (Harris, 1981). However, ethnic differences emerge as most significant. It has been widely documented that high proportions of female-headed households prevail among populations of Afro-Caribbean origin both in the Caribbean itself (Barrow, 1988; Bolles, 1986; Massiah, 1983; 1986; Powell,⁷ 1984) and in other contexts (Amott and

Matthaei, 1991; Bruegel, 1989; Chandler, 1990; Zinn, 1987, 1990). In addition, high proportions of extended households have also been documented for black groups (Phoenix, 1990; Zinn, 1987 - see also Barrow, 1988; Blumberg and García, 1977; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Massiah, 1983 for reviews of the reasons for 'alternative' family formation among black populations). ¹³ Among white/*mestizo* populations in Latin America however, proportions of different types of households have been shown to differ from Afro-Caribbean patterns, mainly in terms of the predominance of nuclear family structures (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1985a, 1985b; 1991b; Fonseca, 1991; ^{Zelin, 1990;} Moser, 1989).

Accepting that these patterns of family organisation are certainly associated with different ethnic groups, this does not imply that ethnicity per se determines the nature of households: as Zinn (1990: 73) points out, "although the family nurtures ethnic cultures, families are not the product of ethnic culture alone". Instead, they are influenced by a combination of various social, economic, cultural and ideological factors which may be self-reinforcing over time (see below). Nonetheless, the important issue here is to identify first, the different types of households found between Afro-Caribbeans and white/*mestizos* in Limón, and also the diversity within these groups, together with possible explanations. Second, if differences emerge, it is important to explore the extent to which this in turn may lead to differential rates of labour force ^{participation} between women of different ethnic groups. Indeed, on the basis of the above evidence, it is perhaps possible to suppose that female-headed households may be more prevalent among Afro-Caribbeans, which in turn might result in higher rates of labour force among these women.

Moving on to ideological factors within the household, it has been widely argued that the family acts as a key transmitter of wider cultural and ideological values of society, which are particularly important in influencing the nature of gender roles and relations (Barrett, 1988; Chant, 1991a; Harris, 1981; Scott, 1986a). These normative patterns of gender may in turn influence the extent and nature of female labour force participation for a variety of reasons. These may include male resistance to, and often outright prohibition, of women working (Chant, 1991a: 13-14), the overburdening of women with reproductive responsibilities such as child-care, housework and so on (Safa, 1990), and the disadvantaged position of women in household decision-making and authority patterns (Stichter, 1990). Having said this, however, these normative gender roles and relations may be re-negotiated as the result of particular economic and social circumstances (see Scott, 1986a, 1990), and most

significantly in the present case, in response to ethnic and cultural variations (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Zinn, 1990). More specifically, it has been recognised that gender divisions of labour are considerably more flexible among Afro-Caribbean communities which may weaken restrictions on women working, even if patriarchal relations still prevail at a general level (Anderson, 1986; Barrow, 1986; Ennew, 1982; Shorey-Bryan, 1986). ¹⁴ In Limón, therefore, the examination of household gender ideologies and divisions of labour between different ethnic groups appears to be critical in investigating reasons for female labour force participation and ethnically-differentiated employment patterns.

In summary, the specific objectives of the present research are to identify and explain labour market segmentation and segregation along lines of gender and ethnicity with recourse to a number of different perspectives ranging from the historical to the contemporary labour market and factors relating to labour demand, and to those influences emanating from the household arena. While each of these issues and scales will be examined separately in the first instance for purposes of clarification, the final objective is to identify their crucial points of intersection and to assess how these may aid our understanding of the complex interrelationships between gender and ethnicity and to a lesser extent, class. It is to the conceptual underpinnings of the research concerning this latter point which the discussion now turns.

Reflections on Conceptual Issues of Gender, Ethnicity and Class

Accepting the epistemological difficulties in disaggregating the concepts of gender, ethnicity and class in the light of their simultaneous existence, the present section aims to clarify the crucial dimensions of each concept before attempting a synthesis of their likely interacting roles in shaping labour market segmentation and segregation.

The Concept of the Labour Market

The first concept requiring discussion is that of the labour market itself which provides a key arena from which to study the interrelationships between the three concepts. Definitions of the labour market vary according to the disciplinary starting point and the theoretical stance adopted. The economists Loveridge and Mok (1979: 27) refer to labour markets "as those mechanisms and institutions through which the purchase and sale of labour power are arranged". However this is rather limited as it refers only to the economic arrangement of the labour market. Duncan and Savage (1989: 187)

extend this to include both territorial and social criteria, defining the local labour market as "a spatial area within which a high proportion of the local residents work and live". Furthermore, it is difficult to draw boundaries around the labour market because it is a dynamic rather than static phenomenon (Duncan and Savage, 1989; Parcel and Mueller, 1983). These definitions are particularly important in light of the emphasis in the current study on various levels and standpoints from which to examine employment differentiation.

Gender

Moving on to gender, this term essentially refers to the social categorisation of male and female (Brydon and Chant, 1989; Elson, 1991; MacKintosh, 1981). This may be further extended to describe the different roles of and relations between men and women (Brydon and Chant, 1989). Controversies over the concept of gender have arisen over the emphasis on women rather than gender-focused studies and the way in which early theories viewed women's subordination as universalistic, presenting gender as a dichotomous category and neglecting the diversity between women (Scott, 1986 a, 1988; Walby, 1990). Indeed, it was this issue and the need to recognise the diversity within the category of 'women' which prompted the call for the inclusion of ethnicity and gender into feminist analyses (see earlier). The other main point of controversy in early feminist debates was the need to recognise gender as a social construct. Although the ontological basis of gender is sexual difference and biological reproduction, it is the social effects of these which have greatest significance when examining relationships between men and women (Mackintosh, 1981). To reduce gender to a biological construct is mistaken, notwithstanding that this usually represents the basis on which discrimination and gender stereotyping is formed (Scott, 1986a).

Race and Ethnicity

Definitions of ethnicity and race are more contentious and have been the source of much debate (Jackson, 1989a, 1989b; Miles, 1982, 1989). The term 'race' has its origins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where it was equated with biological and phenotypical distinctions and also involving a hierarchy based on racial classification. Although in some cases, somatic differences may differentiate certain populations, this is not always true as in the case of Italian and Irish immigrant workers for example (Miles, 1989; Rex, 1970). Therefore, the use of 'race' was soon discredited on grounds that it overemphasised biological factors at the expense of social, economic and cultural ones (for a review of the development of the concept see Banton and Harwood, 1975; Husband, 1982; Miles, 1982). This led to the development of the 'Ethnic School'

tradition in the 1970s which concentrated on issues of culture and identity. The main distinction between ethnic and racial groups within this school of thought was drawn between categorisation of racial groups by an outside group using physical criteria, and the definition of an ethnic group as the result of self-categorization using criteria of culture and ancestral descent (Lyon, 1972). However, the use of ethnicity also came under justified attack for its neglect in recognising power relations, racism and structural disadvantage of minority groups (Jackson, 1989b; Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980; Rex, 1970). As a result, this has led to the re-adoption of the use of 'race', which is currently defined ~~race~~ as a social construction and an ideology which is dynamic and dependent on historical circumstance (Jackson, 1986⁷; Miles, 1989). Indeed, present conceptions of ethnicity follow similar lines, with the only difference being that individuals have choices about their ethnic identity and consciousness, which cannot be said for race (Barrett and McIntosh, 1985).

Also linked with this debate is 'racism' which is a particular form of exclusion. Robert Miles (1989: 3) argues that " racism 'works' by attributing meanings to certain phenotypical and/or genetic characteristics of human beings in such a way as to create a system of categorization, and by attributing additional (negatively evaluated) characteristics to the people sorted into these categories". Like 'race', racism is not a static phenomenon, but is historically specific and may also include discrimination on the basis of cultural traits (Jackson, 1989a). The most common effect of racism is the exclusion or inclusion of certain groups in the process of allocation of resources and services which may often become institutionalised in state mechanisms (Jackson, 1989a; Jenkins, 1986; Miles, 1989). In the present study, the debates concerning the concepts of ethnicity and race are recognised, yet the use of the terms in the text does not imply strict adherence to any school of thought and are used largely interchangeably. For example, the term ethnicity as used here, includes the idea of power relations between dominant and subordinate groups and exclusion and inclusion practices (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990: 109).

Class

Definitions of class are also contentious and open to different interpretation. They usually involve the categorisation of different groups according to their positions in the economic and social hierarchy (Walby, 1990: 11). While some emphasise purely economic difference in terms of ownership of the means of production, others also include differential access to education and so on, which are expressed in terms of levels of wealth, power and status (Ley et al, 1984; Walby, 1990). Of particular importance

here, is that class position is also mediated by gender and ethnicity, although caution must be stressed in term of reducing gender and racial oppression to the notion of class struggle (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Munck, 1988). Moreover, the heterogeneity of class groupings must be recognised in terms of gender and ethnic differences both within and between various groups (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990). In the present research, although the importance of class differences is strongly acknowledged, 'class' is dealt with largely implicitly, first, because the bulk of the literature on gender refers to low-income groups (Brydon and Chant, 1989; Momsen and Townsend, 1987; Nash and Safa, 1986), as does the literature on ethnic and racial groups (Simpson and Yinger, 1986, UNESCO, 1977), and second, because practical constraints allow only the in-depth study of low-income people. Having said this, however, an overall picture of 'class' in Limón is achieved through examination of labour demand factors and more specifically through an employer survey (see below).

Given the complexities of relating the concepts of gender, ethnicity and class, perhaps the most important point is to identify what parallels exist between them, and to what extent intersection or 'cross-cutting' occurs. As mentioned previously, it has been widely accepted within the social sciences that gender, ethnicity or race are social constructs as opposed to biological constructs (Barrett and MacIntosh, 1985; Mackintosh, 1981; Miles, 1982; Wallman, 1979).¹⁵ Yet such conceptions have still to penetrate popular consciousness with the result that gender and ethnic stereotypes are formed on the biological or 'natural' presumption, thereby consolidating discrimination and prejudice (Scott, 1986a; 1988 on gender; Banton, 1979; Jenkins, 1989 on ethnicity) (see earlier). Linked with this is a further parallel in terms of the ineffectiveness of legislation to address gender and racial discrimination (Carby, 1982). While class is also a social construct, its simultaneous interaction with 'naturalistic' interpretations of ethnicity or gender means that it too is often used to 'naturalise' unequal class divisions (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Nash, 1988). This 'natural' notion can be seen more specifically in terms of labour market divisions where a hierarchy of men over women and white over black is perceived as 'natural'. Women's supposed 'feminine' attributes are often manipulated to condone their position in a similar manner that racism justifies the economic subordination of black people (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990). Another important similarity between gender and race and how it intersects with class is the focus on power and conflict which are seen as fundamental to both (Bourque and Warren, 1981; Nash, 1988 on gender; Jackson, 1989a, 1989b on race; Brittan and Maynard, 1984 on both). Nash (1988) notes that most political liberation movements in developing countries have emanated from ethnic,

racial and gender roots and that these concerns are often viewed as more important or equal to consciousness derived from economic exploitation (or class position). Both gender and ethnicity are therefore seen as axes of inequality and as bases of disadvantage which will be further cross-cut by class (Jackson, 1989a).

Although such parallels between the concepts may be established at a rudimentary level, parallelist arguments should not be overstated. First, it is essential to recognise that gender and ethnic relations have different histories with different sets of social consequences (Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Walby, 1990). Second, it was initially thought that the epistemologies used by blacks as a group and by women as a group were similar, especially in terms of oppression, yet this has since been challenged as it becomes apparent that the experience of black women is often anomalous (Collins, 1989). Indeed, as Carby (1982: 213) notes, "the fact that black women are subject to the simultaneous oppression of patriarchy, class and 'race' is the prime reason for not employing parallels that render their position and experience not only marginal but also invisible". Increasingly, it has been recognised that black women have different experiences both in the labour market and in the household than white women because the chief sites of oppression vary ethnically (Walby, 1990). For example, while the household is often seen as the main site of women's oppression, it has recently been argued that for black women the family is a unit of resistance and solidarity against a racist society (Carby, 1982; Hooks, 1984). Therefore it is not particularly useful to conceive of gender and racial discrimination in terms of layers of oppression as is often the case (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990). Instead, points of 'cross-cutting' and intersection must be identified rather than assuming blanket similarities.

A related issue is the idea of the 'social mutability' of gender, race and class. This refers to the relative durability of these concepts as a means of identification, which may in turn influence how they interrelate. Ley *et al* (1984) suggest that class is the most mutable category where subjects may theoretically alter class position fairly easily, followed by race and then gender, which are both 'fixed' categories with much less scope for change. Obviously this trajectory is only a broad schema which is open to interpretation, particularly in terms of overlooking internal differences within categories (Westwood and Bhachu, 1988). Furthermore, evidence of the way in which the 'fixed' notions of gender, ethnicity and class interact is both scarce and contradictory: Momsen's (1984) study of Caribbean agriculture demonstrates that East Indian women farmers identify with other black women farmers to a greater extent than

to men from their own ethnic group, whereas Mullings' (1986) historical account of ~~of~~ class, race and gender in relation to employment in the United States, maintains that class position emerges as the single most important factor.

Notwithstanding these problems, it is interesting in the present research to tentatively develop a hypothetical trajectory of mutability in order to identify the main areas of intersection between gender and ethnicity. As such, gender discrimination and inequality is conceived in terms of 'patriarchy', and ethnic inequality and discrimination in terms of 'racism' (see Mies, 1988). ¹⁶ In turn, it is suggested that under the general rubric of capitalism, patriarchy may emerge as more critical in determining employment patterns than racism. This reasoning is based on the premise that patriarchy might be more likely to operate in both the family and the labour market, whereas racism may tend to occur only within the workplace yet rarely between individual members of households. Accepting the major flaws of this hypothesis, especially the fact that interrelationships are considerably more complex than suggested, it serves as an interesting guideline to bear in mind throughout the research.

Theoretical Approaches to the Labour Market

The use of existing theoretical frameworks in the present study is potentially problematic given the focus on both the household and the labour market, coupled with the fact that conventional labour market theories rarely address gender and ethnicity as important variables. However, the various theories advanced to explain labour market differentiation must be outlined briefly in order to assess their potential validity in the present context.

Neo-Classical Approach

The orthodox, neo-classical view places the individual as the primary unit of analysis where competitive market forces are the major determinant of individual behaviour. The major drawback of the approach with regard to the present study is that "the human subject of neo-classical investigation is a timeless, classless, raceless, and cultureless creature; although male unless otherwise specified" (Amsden, 1980: 13). Within this general theoretical framework is also the 'human capital' approach which analyses individual's productive potential in terms of education, vocational training and on-the-job experience (for example ~~/~~Carvajal and Geithman, 1985). Although notions of 'human capital' may be useful in analysing labour recruitment, gender and ethnicity tend to be accorded the same importance as other 'human capital' variables, whereas in fact

they should be separated because of the particular nature of gender and ethnic discrimination. In short, neo-classical approaches tend to homogenise human experience and pay insufficient attention to gender and ethnicity as fundamental variables influencing employment patterns (Feiner and Roberts, 1990).

Labour Market Segmentation Theories

Criticisms of the neo-classical view led to the development of labour market segmentation theories, often referred to as 'institutional' or 'structural' approaches. These view segmentation as "the historical process whereby political-economic forces encourage the division of labour into separate sub-markets, or segments, distinguished by different labour market characteristics and behavioural rules" (Reich et al, 1980: 233). In other words, the labour market is not viewed as a single, open competitive market, but instead is divided into a number of segments between which access is restricted. While attempting to encompass the heterogeneity of the labour market ^{with} ~~into~~ one approach, what has actually emerged are divergent views on the number of sectors and on the causes of segmentation, concentrating on job discrimination rather than wage discrimination and on institutional barriers within the market affecting mobility between sectors and within sectors (for reviews see Cain, 1979; Dex, 1989; Loveridge and Mok, 1979; Walby, 1988b).

Within the segmented labour market approach various models have been formulated, including the 'dual labour market' model (Piore, 1975). This identifies two main sectors, the primary and the secondary where stability is the major defining characteristic. Variations of this approach include the concept of 'internal labour markets', where competition between candidates for a job is restricted to those already employed in a certain firm (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). This dualistic approach to labour markets has been interpreted as 'informal/formal' dichotomy when discussing developing countries (see Bromley and Gerry, 1979 and Moser, 1978 for origins of the concept). Criticisms of this approach have been widespread, based largely on the grounds that it is merely descriptive, that it implies a misleading homogeneity and that it ignores the intricate relationship between the two sectors which are not in fact autonomous (Moser, 1978). In particular, Marxian interpretations view this relationship as exploitative whereby the 'informal' sector is a feature of a dependent capitalist system and necessary to the accumulation process (Moser, 1978; Portes and Walton, 1981). The issue of gender has been incorporated within this debate where women are seen to predominate in the 'informal' sector and men in the 'formal' (Bienefeld, 1981; Moser and Young, 1981), yet even this has been subject to recent

criticism (Scott, 1988; 1991). Overall, then, the 'informal/formal' view has been largely discredited on explanatory grounds, even if it may still frequently be used as a general frame of reference (see Rodgers, 1989).

Radical and Marxist Feminist Theories

The 'radical labour market segmentation theory' is the only approach which explicitly incorporates gender and race. This perspective maintains that segmentation is best understood from an historical perspective, linked with the transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism (Reich *et al*, 1980). Oligopolistic corporations actively attempt to segregate the workforce into different segments for fear of proletarianisation and labour disruption, and to ensure complete control of the labour force. Therefore, as Reich *et al* (1980: 239) point out, "segmentation is functional primarily because it helps to reproduce capitalist hegemony" (see also Gordon, 1972 on the 'conspiracy' theory). Although the nature of these divisions are often formed on the basis of gender and race, class is seen as considerably more important. In short, gender and race are viewed merely as additional variables rather than fundamental axes of segmentation (Dex, 1987).

Labour market segmentation theories have been criticised on a number of counts, particularly the diversity of approaches under one framework. Further criticisms include the fact that they only represent a critique of neo-classical views rather than a coherent alternative and that, with the exception of the radical approach, they are still essentially neo-classical in their outlook (Cain, 1976). As a theoretical basis for this study, therefore, the approach is rather limited. Nonetheless, it is useful in terms of its historical viewpoint and incorporation of gender and race as lines of labour market segmentation. As such, the term 'segmentation' is used here largely descriptively, rather than one with theoretical loading (see earlier).

Marxist and radical approaches, which are encompassed in some of the various strands of segmentation theories, deal with production and the primacy of classes, as opposed to neo-classical theories which emphasise the market and the individual (Amsden, 1980). In general, Marxist approaches represent a more dynamic view of the labour market in terms of its continuum approach. However, as with most conventional approaches, they are often charged with neglecting racial and gender influences in the face of economic forces (Munck, 1988). Indeed, further inadequacies emerge when a Marxist approach is applied to developing nations. Munslow and Finch (1984) for example, question the universal validity of conceiving of all workers in the

Third World as a proletariat/for example (see also Haworth, 1984). Rex (1977) also levels the criticism that the actual realities of social formation in these countries is much more complex than Marxist analyses would suggest.

Marxist-feminism on the other hand, has attempted to address some of the failings of the classical approach through its emphasis on gender and analysis of female employment patterns. One important concept of the Marxist approach is the 'reserve army' of labour which refers to a situation where labour supply is greater than labour demand. Under such circumstances, surplus population is utilised by capitalism to keep wage levels low, at the same time as providing the means with which to curtail expansion or reduce production at a given moment. Marxist-feminist analyses have suggested that the 'reserve army' may often be constituted by women, and furthermore, that it may act as an 'adjustment mechanism' during periods of recession for example (Beechey, 1987; Moser, 1981; Walby, 1988a). Other important issues highlighted by Marxist-feminists include the 'domestic labour debate' for example, where it is argued that women's domestic work is functional to the reproduction of capitalism (Eisenstein, 1979; Stichter, 1990). However, the most important point raised within this framework is the need to recognise the interconnections between the household and the labour market when examining female employment; and in other words to bring to prominence the continuum between productive and reproductive relations which has so often been neglected in the majority of conventional approaches (Barrett, 1988; Beechey, 1987; Beuchler, 1986; Eisenstein, 1979; MacIntosh, 1981) (see earlier). Although this interrelationship is now well established within feminist research, empirical evidence is more scarce. Having said this, a number of studies have raised critical findings, particularly relating to the need to view all productive and reproductive relations as themselves gendered and not merely functional to employment differentiation or migration processes (for example, Beechey, 1988; Chant, 1991a; Chant and Radcliffe, 1992; Game and Pringle, 1984; Scott, 1991; Radcliffe, 1992). However, the question of ethnicity remains under-researched within this approach; a point which the present study, in adopting a similar perspective to that outlined above, attempts to address.

More recently, criticisms of conventional approaches have led to the development of 'Neo-Marxian' perspectives on the labour market. Although not a theory *per se*, this paradigm attempts to examine labour markets from a much broader viewpoint (this is sometimes referred to as New International Labour Studies (NILS) - see Waterman, 1983). The primary objective is to overcome the universalising tendencies

of Marxism and indeed, of much labour market theorising in an attempt to counter the "previous mechanical vision of economic laws inexorably transforming everything in their path" (Munck, 1988: 62). In addition, the role of gender and race are seen as fundamental axes of differentiation which need to be examined on an equal footing with class relations (Redclift and Mingione, 1985; Roldán, 1985). Also important is the recognition that relations of production are no longer insulated from other dimensions, especially the household. Indeed, household form, organisation and reproductive relations are seen as fundamental within this perspective. In summary, the 'Neo-Marxian' paradigm has above all, allowed the deconstruction of worker as woman or man; black or white as well as advocating the need to analyse productive relations in conjunction with reproductive factors in line with Marxist-feminist perspectives (Munck, 1988). Therefore this paradigm appears to be the most useful when examining the labour market in Limón and it seems ~~to~~^{to} broadly corroborate the objectives outlined earlier. In other words, it allows the examination of gender, ethnicity and class as equally important variables influencing labour market segmentation and segregation as well as facilitating analysis from the perspective of the household.

One final point on theoretical perspectives concerns the increasing importance of post-modernism and post-structuralism. Many of the elements constituted in the Neo-Marxian paradigm are embodied in post-modern approaches especially in terms of advocating movement away from overarching theories based on one causal factor (Walby, 1992). Having said this, there is no specific labour market theory within post-modernism, partly because the paradigm calls for a shift away from emphasising the role of economic relations in explaining the functioning of society. Therefore, while not directly useful in the present research in providing guidelines for examining the labour market, it is influential in a number of other ways. Drawing heavily on the work of Derrida and Foucault, post-modernist theories emphasise 'difference', 'discourse' and 'deconstruction' as opposed to 'structure' and 'causality' and 'metanarrative' (Barrett and Phillips, 1991; Nicholson, 1990). Part of this analysis also includes emphasis on locally-specific factors which are historically variable which is of obvious importance when examining the labour market in Limón. Perhaps the most important aspect here, is the way in which post-modern feminists have stressed the need to deconstruct the category of 'gender' in order to identify ethnic differentiation and in turn, to recognise gender differences within ethnic groups (Mohanty, 1992; Walby, 1992). However, this rejection of unitary social categories has been recognised within other fields of enquiry, such as black feminism for example (see earlier). Therefore, although post-

modernism has elaborated these ideas by placing them within a theoretical framework, these are not essentially new ideas. Other criticisms of this perspective include the danger in stressing diversity at the expense of establishing causal relationships. While there are many benefits in overcoming overly mechanistic, ahistorical and universalising tendencies, in many cases these have been overemphasised. In the case of theorising gender inequalities, for example, Walby (1990: 16) notes how post-modern approaches, "go too far in denying the necessary impossibility and unproductive nature of such a project". Nonetheless, post-modern perspectives which encourage a flexible approach in examining social reality serve as a useful back-drop for the examination of gender and ethnic labour market patterns in Limón. Through this holistic examination, it is therefore hoped that the present research will increase our understanding of how and why gender and ethnic difference may be incorporated in labour market functioning.

Methodology

Having outlined the theoretical parameters of the research, this section highlights the key research methods adopted in the study, with a fuller discussion being presented in Appendices One and Two.

Selection of Limón as a Case Study Context

The city of Limón was chosen primarily because it is one of the few urban areas in Costa Rica which is ethnically diverse. It was felt that the presence of a significant Afro-Caribbean minority population (one-third) along with the majority white/*mestizo* group (two-thirds) in the city, would prove an interesting area in which to examine gender and ethnic employment differentiation. ^(Carranza and D'Amico, 1987: 43) In addition, Limón is Costa Rica's largest secondary city, and indeed one of the fastest growing areas in the country (approximately 64,406 in 1990, IFAM, 1990: 26). This was important in terms of ~~an~~ examining an expanding labour market with a relatively diverse range of economic activities and sectors from which to study the employment distribution of gender and ethnic groups. Also, the study of Limón would build on previous research on intermediate cities both in Costa Rica (see for example, Chant, 1991b, 1991c) and elsewhere in Latin America (Chant, 1991a; Gonzáles de la Rocha, 1988; Radcliffe, 1986). Finally, little research has been carried out in the city and region of Limón, probably because it deviates from the rest of the country in its ethnic composition. Indeed, while there has been some investigation on gender in Costa Rica, there has been very little on ethnicity. Therefore, this study aims to examine not only an under-researched area of Costa Rica, but to address issues previously neglected.

Selection of the Study Settlements

Within Limón, selection of study settlements was based, most importantly, on ethnic composition, although age and tenure were also taken into account in order to establish this. The age of settlements was thought to be influential in initially identifying the location of ethnic groups. As the longest established group in the city, it was thought that Afro-Caribbeans would be residing in the oldest settlements, and white/*mestizos* in more recently developed areas. On a similar basis, it was also thought that Afro-Caribbeans would be more likely to live in consolidated, owner-occupied areas than white/*mestizos*. Moreover, in the preparatory stages of the fieldwork in Limón, it was found that there was a high degree of residential segregation in the city: Afro-Caribbeans were located in central areas and white/*mestizos* in peripheral settlements. After consultation with DINADECO, a government-owned community development organisation, three settlements were selected; Envaco, a newly established, peripheral squatter area where it was expected to find a predominantly white/*mestizo* population (see Plate 1.1); Limoncito, which was older and more consolidated and where it was expected to find some mixing of ethnic groups (see Plate 1.2); Roosevelt, the oldest established housing area in the city located in the city itself and based mainly on rental accommodation, where it was expected to find a majority Afro-Caribbean population (see Plate 1.3). A sample of 250 households were randomly chosen for interview, of which 90 were in Envaco and 80 in Limoncito and Barrio Roosevelt respectively.

Envaco

The settlement grew up around the Envaco card-board box making factory after which it is named in the early 1980s. The area around the factory was initially privately-owned swamp land before it was settled by '*precaristas*' (squatters). Some consolidation has occurred although this is most obvious in the area nearest the factory (and two other road haulage companies now located there). The majority of the population are white/*mestizo* migrants and in the sample population of 90 households, 82.2% were of white/*mestizo* origin, 12.2% were Afro-Caribbeans and the rest were either ethnically mixed households or of indigenous Indian origin (5.6%).

Limoncito

This area is older than Envaco, initially invaded in the mid-1970s. Although not built on swamp land, it is liable to flooding from the River Limoncito which runs through the settlement. The majority of residents have legal title to land and significant consolidation has occurred, although there is also a considerable amount of rental accommodation. In Limoncito, the proportion of Afro-Caribbeans found in the sample of 80 households was slightly higher than in Envaco (17.5%) although the proportion of white/*mestizos* was similar (82.5%) with no other ethnic groups located there.



Plate 1.1 Envaco: View of houses on stilts



Plate 1.2 Limoncito: View from entrance

Barrio Roosevelt

The oldest housing area in the city, Barrio Roosevelt was established at the turn of the century during the days of United Fruit and was initially called Jamaica Town due to the origin of the majority of the residents. The name was changed after a visit from Theodore Roosevelt in the 1950s, who contributed a large sum of money for its community development. Built originally by workers of the United Fruit Company, the area remains the largest single area of low-income Afro-Caribbean groups in the city and in the sample, 73.7% were from this group, with 25% of white/*mestizo* origin and one Chinese household.

Questionnaire Survey

In the random selection of 250 households, both men and women were interviewed because of the emphasis in the study on ethnicity as well as gender, and also due to the need to examine relationships between men and women of different ethnic groups and not just women. ^(i.e. gender) The author asked to speak to the head of the household or the woman of the household in the case of male-headed families. Because of the greater likelihood of women being at home, 76.8% (192) of the total informants were female, with only 23.2% male respondents (58). In terms of ethnicity, 64% (160) of all households were of white/*mestizo* origin, 33.6% (84) were Afro-Caribbeans and the rest were indigenous Indian, Chinese or mixed households. These proportions roughly correspond with the ethnic composition of the city as a whole. The questionnaire survey was divided into three main sections dealing with migration, household structure and employment (see Appendix One). It was designed primarily to identify household and employment characteristics of the two main ethnic groups and more generally, to elicit information on the overall socio-economic situation of low-income groups, focusing on gender and ethnic differences.

Semi-structured interviews

A sub-sample of 45 households was chosen from the broader questionnaire survey, pinpointing those ^{whom} which emerged as particularly interesting from the initial interview in terms of types of employment, international migration (in the case of Afro-Caribbeans) and so on. Having said this, it was tried to keep this as representative as possible in light of the overall proportions of ethnic groups and types of households for example. Of the sample of 45, 25 white/*mestizo* and 20 Afro-Caribbean households were interviewed, of which 25 were women and 15 were men. The interviews involved an open-ended, 'informal' discussion based around a number of key issues such as



Plate 1.3 Barrio Roosevelt: View from main road

relationships with male or female partners and gender ideologies, decision-making and authority patterns, domestic divisions of labour, attitudes to household structure and size, attitudes to international migration and to work and racial discrimination.

Although the semi-structured interviewing was usually carried out on one occasion, the author frequently returned to a number of households on a regular basis which often proved very informative ^{about} ~~as~~ the way the families conducted their daily lives. Indeed, these contacts allowed participant observation in various social events, church meetings and so on, which were very useful in gaining greater understanding of the ways of life in Limón.

Employer Survey

An employer survey was conducted in order to build-up a profile of the main sectors of the local economy and the ethnic and gender composition of the workforce within firms. The choice of employers to be included in the employer survey were chosen during consultation with the Ministry of Work. While it was initially proposed to carry out a random sample of large- and small-scale firms in the city, it was soon discovered that the local labour market in Limón was actually dominated by a number of large firms and state institutions. Therefore, it was decided to interview all the major employers in the city and a random sample of the smaller firms such as a bookshop and restaurant, for example. The survey of 17 employers addressed various issues concerning, most importantly, the proportion of men and women and ethnic groups employed, as well as recruitment policies, labour turnover, pay and legislation, trade union activity, internal occupational mobility and more general questions relating to attitudes towards employing women and ethnic minorities (see Appendix Two).

Thesis Organisation

The thesis contains eight chapters where the first and present one has attempted to place the study within the wider context of existing debates. It has outlined the main rationales and objectives of the research and has raised a number of issues and hypotheses to be dealt with in the following chapters. Chapter Two examines the labour market in Limón from an historical perspective, focusing on the evolution of the local and regional economy over time and the changing ethnic composition of the area. In turn, it assesses the employment patterns of gender and ethnic groups as the labour market has evolved, attempting to identify whether these patterns have been reproduced or have changed over time. It also looks at the nature of gender and ethnic relations in Limón from an historical perspective, which is expanded further in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three examines the role of the state in Costa Rica, looking at its overall role in society. The emphasis is on state intervention through tracing the evolution of legislation which has most bearing on gender and ethnicity. In turn, it assesses the impact of legislative intervention on social groups, particularly ethnic minorities and women, concentrating on whether these have lessened or exacerbated discriminatory practices. These are also viewed in the light of prevailing attitudes at particular periods, and the potential for the state in influencing societal attitudes, values and behaviour. Chapter Four goes on to consider how these practices may be viewed on the ground through analysis of the contemporary local labour market in Limón. Here, the nature of gender and ethnic employment segregation and segmentation is identified, and explanations examined from the point of view of factors relating to labour demand. These include analysis of the employer survey, from which the effect of recruitment practices and institutional factors are assessed. An attempt is made to gauge the role of personnel managers in terms of how attitudes and behaviour may determine the employment of men and women or certain ethnic groups.

Chapter Five introduces the low-income settlements and looks first at employment characteristics of gender and ethnic groups included in the household questionnaire survey. It then goes on to examine quantifiable aspects of households such as headship, composition, size and so on, as well as characteristics of its constituent members such as age, migrant status and education. The influence of these in explaining ethnically-differentiated employment patterns is considered, with an emphasis on female labour force participation. Chapter Six follows on from this, looking at intra-household dynamics concerning divisions of labour and gender ideologies between ethnic groups. The extent to which these differ according to ethnicity is stressed, and in turn, the way in which this may affect female employment patterns.

Chapter Seven synthesises the main levels of analysis discussed in earlier chapters in an attempt to determine how Limón's labour market functions as a whole. It identifies overall patterns of gender and ethnic employment differentiation and assesses how these groups came to be located in certain sectors or types of employment and the potential they have for moving into other areas of the labour market. The different mobility strategies adopted by gender and ethnic groups are highlighted, followed by conceptual implications of the findings. Chapter Eight, sums up the principal conclusions of the study and places them in the context of existing research and concepts of urban labour markets. It goes on to make suggestions for future research and to evaluate the potential for redressing gender and ethnic inequalities in the workplace, and

indeed, in wider society.

Notes to Chapter One

- 1) See for example, Costa Atlántica by Roberto Rivera Mena (1980) and Puerto Limón by Joaquín Gutiérrez Mangel (1973). The racist attitudes encompassed in these writings are discussed by Lorein Powell (1987, 1988).
- 2) Obviously the references cited here on gender and class are not exhaustive, nor those on race and class.
- 3) Even within feminism itself there has been much debate over the issue of race and indeed radical feminists see both race and class as essentially divisive and hence have ignored these variables (Mullings, 1986). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1990) have also pointed out that while Marxist feminists have attempted to include ethnic and racial groups within analyses of economic relations, they have done so in a class-reductionist manner which undermines any integrative approach.
- 4) These classifications compare a two-fold system based on black and white (as used in the United States) with a continuum-like approach used in Latin America which stresses colour gradations. The main conclusions of these studies are that the popular notion of a 'racial democracy' is in fact untenable.
- 5) Pluralism in this sense refers to a colonial society which consists of distinct ethnic segments each with its own set of social institutions, being bound together by one political institution and where one group dominates the other. The concept has been widely criticized first, on the grounds that if the domination of one group were to end then correspondingly, this would mean the end of society itself unless another group established hegemony (Rex, 1977), and second, on grounds that segregation in society is based on free will. Pluralism is also problematic in that there is no consensus within the social sciences as to its exact meaning. It is open to interpretation depending on the disciplinary stance (see Ley *et al.* 1984).
- 6) Indeed, it was research on the role of women in slavery in the United States (Davis, 1982; Hooks, 1982, 1984) which initially prompted the call for the recognition of the interrelationships between gender, race and class.
- 7) The term 'segmentation' was developed within the broader framework of labour market segmentation theories (Reich *et al.* 1980). However, it was criticisms of this approach which concentrates on divisions of the labour market into various segments rather than recognising that the labour force is also differentiated, which led to the development of the term 'segregation' (Walby, 1988b).
- 8) The last Costa Rican census to include ethnicity was undertaken in 1950. The enumeration of racial composition was stopped because it was regarded as racist and irrelevant in a country where ethnic minorities make-up only 2.5% of the total population, of which Afro-Caribbeans represent 2%. The other 0.5% are constituted by indigenous Indians and Chinese (Barry, 1990: 2).
- 9) 'Supply' and 'demand' are not used in the neo-classical sense. Instead, they are used as short-hand ways to describe factors operating at the level of the household (supply factors), and factors occurring within the wider context of the labour market and urban economy (demand factors) (see Chant, 1991a: 28). Indeed, the terms are avoided wherever possible in the text to avoid confusion.

10) A household is defined here as "a residential unit whose members share 'domestic' functions and activities - a group of people who 'eat out of the same pot'" (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 9). Also, while the terms 'household' and 'family' are often used coterminously, households may also consist of members who are not blood relatives as opposed to 'family' which refers exclusively to kin (whether by blood or marriage) (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 8-10). Although it is important to make this distinction, the term family may often be used in the present research to refer to what has been defined here as a household.

11) Definitions of 'reproduction' and 'production' are based on those developed by Brydon and Chant (1989: 10-12). Reproduction may refer to a number of processes, the first denoting 'biological' reproduction which consists of child-birth and breast-feeding. The second, 'physical' reproduction deals with domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing for example, which involves the daily maintenance of the labour force. The final refers to 'social' reproduction which is defined as "the maintenance of ideological conditions which reproduce class relations and uphold the social and economic status quo" (Edholm, Harris and Young, 1978, cited in Brydon and Chant, 1989: 11). Production on the other hand refers generally to income-generating activities, although accepting that there is controversy surrounding certain domestic work within the home which may indirectly generate financial benefits (Brydon and Chant, 1989: Chapter One).

12) Household structure classification is based here on the typology developed by Chant (1991b, 1991c) in her study of Guanacaste, Costa Rica, in turn, based on earlier work in Mexico [for example, Chant, 1985a, 1985b, 1991a; Brydon and Chant, 1989: 135-137]. This schema is outlined more comprehensively in Appendix One, but in brief the categories are as follows:

i) Male nuclear household which consists of a conjugal unit and their children, forming a single unit of consumption.

ii) Women-headed one-parent household where a woman lives alone with her children. This type may also be de facto where female headship may be temporary, or de jure where women are legally or permanently separated from their partner or never set up home with the fathers of their children in the first place.

iii) Extended household which may be male or female-headed and which consists of a core nuclear or one-parent unit residing with other relatives who share in household production and consumption.

13) Briefly, the major reasons proposed to explain these patterns include, 'cultural diffusion' approaches which stress the importance of female-centred African polygonous kinship patterns or slavery and the plantation system which was seen to militate against the formation of nuclear households. The 'structural' or 'social pathological' perspectives on the other hand, emphasise the disorganising effects of Post-Emancipation conditions where widespread male unemployment, landlessness and seasonal migration meant that the formation of male-headed families was unattainable (Barrow, 1988; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978). These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

14) Research on this has been limited as Amott and Matthaëi (1991: 352) point out in relation to the United States, "we were unable to locate any detailed studies of racial-ethnic or class differences in the household division of labor between sexes, and we suspect that study of these differences would yield important insights in to the dynamics of racial-ethnic, class and gender processes".

15) Barrett and McIntosh (1985) point out that the way in which gender and race are socially constructed differs. Whereas gender is a social construct it has a biological referent even though this has been frequently distorted. Race and ethnicity on the other hand have no biological basis as an ideological category in spite of earlier discourse to the contrary.

16) The term 'patriarchy' does not encompass a single concept and has been subject to much debate, especially over whether it is a universal phenomenon which pre-dates capitalism, for

example (see Eisenstein, 1979) and how far it is useful to account for gender subordination and inequality in a wide range of contexts (Beechey, 1987: 95-115; Walby, 1990). Alison MacEwen Scott (1990: 201) defines it broadly as "an institutionalised pattern of gender relations which involves inequalities of power, sexuality, and resource allocation favouring men over women".

CHAPTER TWO - THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIMÓN

Introduction

The growth of the city of Limón within the Huetar Atlántica region bears the indelible imprint of the past on its economic, social and cultural structures (see Figure 2.1).¹ Any analysis of this area demands consideration of its historical development from its origins as a banana enclave economy with an ethnically differentiated population. Indeed the choice of the city of Limón as the area of study was determined by the importance of race in its historical and contemporary development. The examination of race and ethnicity cannot be divorced from their historical context; a fact which also applies to gender and class relations (see Benería and Roldán, 1987:12 on Mexico). This chapter considers the development of Limón bearing in mind the changing relationship between these three issues, focusing on the evolution of gender and ethnic employment differentiation over time.

The chapter is divided into sections roughly correspondent with three main historical stages in the development of Limón. The first describes the period 1870-1936 when Limón was established as a major port after the construction of the Atlantic Railway, and the subsequent development of the region as an enclave, plantation economy under the auspices of the United Fruit Company. The second covers the period 1934-1950 during which time the Company withdrew from the region leaving the population of Limón to attempt to develop an alternative economic base. The final stage from 1950 until the present day, describes the actions of both state and private capital in the contemporary economic development of the region and city (although the final period is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Four). Limón is discussed with reference to both regional and urban development given the dependence of the latter on broader provincial change. Integral to the discussion is emphasis on patterns of segmentation and segregation of the labour market in each historical period, highlighting the changing ethnic and gender composition of the workforce and nature of labour market sectors over time. In addition, broad demographic shifts are assessed focusing on how the gender and ethnic population balance has altered and more specifically, how Afro-Caribbeans have evolved from being the majority to minority ethnic group.

At the outset it is important to emphasise that the area of Limón has been subject to economic, social and cultural influences from three major geographical sources: the Caribbean, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as from mainstream Costa



Figure 2.1: Costa Rica: Provinces, major towns and study area

Rican society. While discussion in the present chapter may imply that Limón is somewhat unique in that it differs substantially from the rest of Costa Rica, it is also essential to note that the region forms part of a cultural belt which transcends the national borders of six Central American countries.² These areas all share three common characteristics; first, that the process of 'hispanicization' has been incomplete; second, that all are characterised by an ethnic diversity which is not present in the rest of the national territory and third, that all are or have been enclave economies with particular kinds of relations with the world economy, notably in terms of the exportation of primary products (Duncan, 1987⁹; Duncan and Powell, 1988). These factors are also significant for the formation of racial discrimination in that migrant labour employed in these enclave economies has been ethnically different from the rest of the population in the respective countries.

Racism and related discriminatory practices are defined in the present chapter as flexible phenomena, with their own specificity which changes over time and in different situations (Jackson, 1989a; Miles, 1989). Although essentially ideological, racism is exemplified by exclusion or inclusion of certain groups in processes of capital accumulation, allocation of resources and treatment by the state, and depends upon particular circumstances (see Miles, 1989: 77-87 for a fuller discussion). In the context of Limón, the evolution of racial discrimination may be viewed in terms of a change from an overtly racist stance to one which is more subtle, as a consequence of the evolution of the labour market and ethnic composition of the area (see also Chapter Three on state policies regarding ethnic relations).

An important related point concerns the implications of the spatially peripheral position of the region in national terms. It is significant that the geographical marginality of Limón also corresponds with the region's status as an economically 'lagging' province (Carvajal, 1989; Smith and Murillo, 1989). While such regional inequality is linked with Limón's historical development, ethnic diversity in the region may also corroborate this, thereby having important consequences for racial stereotyping and discrimination. In other words, this may imply a 'regionalisation' of race, which when coupled with economic disadvantage, creates an image of black backwardness and white/*mestizo* economic dynamism (see also Wade, 1989).³ The ensuing discussion will establish the validity of this argument in the case of Limón, as well as assessing the role of gender and class relations in the region's development.

The Railway and United Fruit Company Era: 1870-1936

Railway Construction

During pre-colonial and colonial times, Limón remained relatively untouched by external influences. When Columbus landed in 1502, the Indian village of Cariari was situated on the present site of the port of Limón. However, Cariari was virtually forgotten for three centuries until 1852 when commercial activities in the village were established, and not until 1865 was Limón declared the principal port of the Caribbean coast. It was during this period that the name 'Limón' was coined, derived from a lemon tree growing adjacent to the government buildings (IFAM, 1986).

The small regional population in pre-colonial times was dominated by indigenous Indian groups of the Bribrís, Cabécares and the Tiribíes engaged in subsistence agriculture (Murillo, 1988). The hostility of the wet, tropical climate of the coast, the availability of land in the highlands and the precarious political control shifting between Spanish and English forces, precluded any significant colonial development of the region beyond some limited (and largely unsuccessful) attempts at cacao cultivation in the Matina valley in the seventeenth century. ⁴ The only point of major significance for historical development was that African slaves were used on the cacao plantations. ⁵ This marked the introduction of a black population into the region of Limón, setting a precedent for more important migratory movements during the nineteenth century and the establishment of the area as ethnically distinct from the rest of the country (Carvajal and Driori, 1987).

It was not until the decision to construct a railway from the Valle Central to the Caribbean coast that any major economic development occurred in the region. This was to have important implications for the subsequent evolution of the urban and regional economy and the further ethnic diversification of the population of Limón. The decision to build the railway was prompted by pressure from the large coffee producers in the Valle Central on the national government to facilitate coffee exportation from the eastern coast to their main market in Europe. ⁶ Minor C. Keith, an Englishman, was contracted by the government to construct this railway from the highlands to the nascent port of Limón. ⁷ Construction began in 1874, financed by British capital, and was not completed until 19 years later with the loss of 4,000 lives (Seligson, 1980: 52). The railway represented the largest and most capitalised enterprise undertaken in Costa Rica until that time, creating a large demand for labour which could not be satisfied within the country itself. Minor C. Keith's company (Meiggs-Keith), therefore had to find an alternative labour supply outside Costa Rica marking a turning point for the ethnic

composition of the country.

Initially, Meiggs-Keith recruited Italian, Irish and Central American labour (from Panama, Honduras and Belize). At this time, black or Asian workers were prohibited from entering the country by the 1862 *Ley de Bases y Colonización* which explicitly pinpointed these groups as 'undesirables' (Aguilar, 1989; Duncan and Powell, 1988; see also Chapter Three). However, European and Central American workers were unable to withstand the harsh working conditions and in 1872 the law was waived enabling Keith to recruit first Chinese and then Afro-Caribbean labour (mainly from Jamaica). The Afro-Caribbean labour force proved to be the only group able to endure the quasi-slavery conditions of railway construction and a permanent supply of labour was guaranteed because of the depressed nature of the Caribbean economy at the time - following Emancipation, the sugar economy in the islands experienced a major upheaval resulting in the withdrawal of British capital, which left a large untapped labour reserve of freed slaves who had three options open to them: subsistence agriculture, wage labour on the remaining plantations, or international labour migration (Duncan and Powell, 1988; Nettleford, 1978; Petras, 1988). Those who opted for the latter migrated either to Panama for the construction of the Panamanian railway or later as workers on the Canal, or to Costa Rica (often migrants went first to Panama and then to Costa Rica, returning again to Panama) (Carvajal and Driori, 1987; Duncan and Powell, 1988).

The first ship from Kingston arrived in Limón in 1872 with 123 men and 3 women (IFAM, 1990: 24; Meléndez and Duncan, 1989: 72); by 1874 a total of 1,000 Afro-Caribbeans were resident in the region (Duncan and Powell, 1988: 62). This heralded the beginning of extensive Afro-Caribbean labour migration into the area. Returning briefly to the novel *'Más Abajo de la Piel'*, Abel Pacheco (1978: 9) instills a sense of dignity into this migration, attempting to counter the belief that it was a form of slavery,

*"El negro aquí no fue traído, fue llamado y vino.
El fue quien rompió el farallón y cruzó el río
para partir con el ferrocarril los montes y abrir
un nuevo país al mundo".*

"The black man here was not brought, he was called and he came.
It was him who broke through the ridge and crossed the river
to split the mountains with the railway and to open
a new country to the world".

In terms of the composition of the workforce at this time, it should be noted that initial Afro-Caribbean migration to Limón consisted almost exclusively of single males who came on a temporary basis to engage in manual, wage labour. This group effectively constituted a black, male proletariat employed at the bottom of the class hierarchy. The migration of Afro-Caribbean women was discouraged, and only 21 black women lived in the region two years after the first male migrants arrived (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989: 72). The reasons for this included the lack of demand for female labour, but also, arguably, because the migration of women signified a permanency (through the physical reproduction of ethnic minorities) which was undesirable to the Costa Rican state. Miles (1989: 88) points out that "in historical contexts where migration and populations of migrant origin have been racialised, considerable concern about the implications for women has been expressed by all classes in the interests of preventing what has been defined as 'racial degeneration'". He goes on to note that women have usually been excluded in order to prevent the reproduction of an 'inferior race' (ibid.). While there is little concrete evidence on the rationale behind discouraging the migration of Caribbean women to Limón during this period, it may be conjectured that both economic and ideological factors played a role.

Ethnic relations during this period were not openly conflictive, yet were characterised by an underlying antagonism between ethnic groups. In the eyes of Costa Rican nationals, the recruitment of large numbers of Afro-Caribbeans posed a threat to white/*mestizo* uniformity in the rest of the country (Costa Rica never had a large indigenous Indian population). Openly discriminatory state legislation which restricted migration of ethnic groups to the country (see earlier) was extended to prohibit the free movement of these groups within the country after the arrival of Afro-Caribbeans. This took the form of a de facto law restricting the movement of this group outside the provincial territory of Limón, which remained in place until 1948 (Duncan et al., 1989; see also Chapter Three). However, Afro-Caribbeans were not passive victims of discrimination, but were themselves ethnocentric (Duncan, 1989; Duncan and Powell, 1988; Purcell, 1985, 1987). Explanations for this include their pride (as Jamaicans) of being citizens of what they regarded at the time as the most powerful country in the world (Great Britain), their ability to colonise the area when Hispanics were unable, and their perception of Costa Rica as a 'backward' nation due to the low socio-economic status of Limón at the time which was ^eviewed as being indicative of the whole country. ¹_(Purcell, 1985, 1987) Their British nationality also encouraged great loyalty to Minor C. Keith, seeing him as their protector rather than their exploiter. Meléndez and Duncan

(1989) point out that patriotism towards the British Empire even extended to labour without remuneration for a period. As such, caution must be exercised when perceiving of the Jamaican population as an 'oppressed proletariat'.

The Development of the Banana Industry: United Fruit in Limón

The creation of the banana economy in Limón came about indirectly rather than as the result of deliberate planning. State financing for railway construction encountered difficulties before completion so that Keith had to finance the remainder with personal capital. In order to ensure the completion of the railway, the Costa Rican government thus had to make various concessions in the form of the Soto-Keith contract (1884) which granted Keith 100,000 hectares of state land in the region as well as transferring the administration of the railway and port to his control (Hall, 1984: 127).⁹ This marked the devolution of state power into private hands in the region which was not to be regained until after 1950 (see later). Climatic conditions in Limón proved to be ideal for banana cultivation and the first batches were exported in the late 1880s. In 1899 Keith's banana company, the Tropical Trading and Transport Company merged with the Boston Fruit Company to form the United Fruit Company. It was United Fruit and the Northern Railway Company (both owned by Keith), which were to play a fundamental role in the economic, social and cultural structuring of the region and city of Limón as an enclave economy with a mixed *mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean populace.

Banana cultivation in Limón proved to be extremely successful and at its peak in 1907, the Limón division of the United Fruit Company produced 20% of all bananas consumed in North America and Europe (Casey, 1979: 161). The success of the Company also depended upon the continued recruitment of Afro-Caribbean migrant labour, made-up of temporary workers who had previously been employed in railway construction, and supplemented by further migration from Jamaica. In 1883 there were 1,858 Afro-Caribbeans residing in the region of Limón, and by 1927 this had increased to 19,136 (Duncan and Powell, 1988: 62). It should be stressed, however, that this second wave of migration also consisted predominantly of single males who came on a temporary basis. It was not until later that women arrived in significant numbers (as wives and daughters rather than workers), thereby signifying a greater degree of permanency (Casey, 1979).¹⁰

Perhaps a further key to the success of banana cultivation was the paternalistic nature of United Fruit which aside from controlling the plantations, also administered the transportation system including the port and railway (the Northern Railway company), provided schools and hospitals and even ran a company funeral train which

carried the dead to the cemetery in Puerto Limón (Municipalidad de Limón, 1992; Olien, 1977). In fact it is possible to suggest that the Company constituted a de facto state in the area, as Bell (1971: 24) points out, "it was a power unto itself and its area and was in every sense, except by formal definition, a colony". However, there is considerable controversy over whether United Fruit acted as the benefactor or exploiter in Limón, as in the case of most multi-nationals (see Cubitt, 1988: 166-72 for a summary). Accepting the paternalism of the company provided substantial benefits for the region and city of Limón, the underlying motive for its location in the area was profit. This was attained largely through the employment of Jamaican workers who as migrants had no legal rights or claims upon the Company, exemplified in the fact that United Fruit provided no form of social guarantees for its workers such as pensions, for example (Palmer, 1986; Ruiz, 1989) (see later).

Moving on to social consequences, it has been argued that the broadly temporary nature of Afro-Caribbean residence in Limón served to strengthen cultural traditions (Olien, 1977; Purcell, 1985, 1987). Accepting that from another perspective this could equally lead to a weakening of cultural practices (see Miles, 1982), in Costa Rica it is more widely thought that Afro-Caribbean migrant workers maintained their own cultural identity because they planned to return to the Caribbean. This was further exacerbated by the geographical isolation of the region and the attitude of the United Fruit Company which had little interest in promoting cultural integration (Olien, 1977; Purcell, 1985, 1987). Such traditions included the speaking of English, Protestantism, the perpetuation of the British/Jamaican education system, architectural styles, Caribbean food and the practice of sports such as cricket (Olien, 1977; Purcell, 1985, 1987). Olien (1977: 143) goes as far as to say that Limón became an 'outpost' of the Caribbean, especially Jamaica. The persistence of Caribbean culture was directly related to black sentiments of superiority. Purcell (1987: 30) notes that from the point of view of blacks, the difference in culture "was in terms of strict opposites: civilised versus uncivilised". This view was easily maintained due to the structure of the United Fruit Company and its employment policies.

United Fruit and the Local Labour Market

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, regional and urban development was almost completely dominated by the United Fruit Company.¹¹ Although the city of Limón initially experienced independent growth, the structure of its labour market became subsumed under the wider regional economy of the Company. By 1927, Puerto Limón had 7,639 inhabitants making it the second largest urban area in Costa Rica

(Olien, 1977: 139). As a flourishing administrative centre for United Fruit and the focus of its rail and shipping activities, Limón was said to be in its 'golden age'.¹² Indeed, the position of the city as the apex of surrounding population centres, was reflected in the hierarchical structure of the United Fruit Company itself (Purcell, 1985).

As with most multi-national enterprises, the United Fruit Company had a hierarchical occupational structure (Carvajal, 1989; Purcell, 1985, 1987; Kepner, 1936). This hierarchy was divided in a number of ways, the most important being race and more specifically, colour gradations of employees (Purcell, 1987). A distinct racial pattern may be identified within the Company: white North Americans held top managerial positions, coloured or black Afro-Caribbeans tended to occupy middle levels as supervisors, clerks and timekeepers, while white/*mestizo* Costa Rican nationals or Nicaraguans were located at the very bottom, employed as farm labourers (Olien, 1977; Purcell, 1985, 1987; Ruiz, 1989). Even within these broad tiers, divisions were made within ethnic groups where for example, lighter-skinned black workers were employed in higher positions than darker-skinned blacks (Purcell, 1987). On the other hand, Purcell (1987: 28) points out that the employment structure may also be conceptualised as a two-tiered class hierarchy comprising of white owners and black and Hispanic workers. Accepting this distinction, the most important point is that among the bulk of the labour force, Afro-Caribbeans held a relatively advantageous position. This was due first, to their ability to speak English which allowed them to communicate more easily with the North American managers, and second, to their previous experience in Jamaican plantation agriculture (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989; Olien, 1977; Purcell, 1987). Therefore, while the overall structure of the Company was hierarchical, Afro-Caribbeans were not employed in the bottom sectors, but instead occupied relatively high status positions vis-à-vis white/*mestizo* Costa Rican workers. Indeed, this pattern was contrary to the conventional colour/class correlation existing in the Caribbean at the time, where a small minority of white European capitalists were found in the upper echelons of society, followed by mulattos further down, and finally the largest group comprising the peasant classes of mainly African descent, located at the bottom (see Beckford and Witter, 1980; 44-48 on Jamaica).

While in many ways the employment of Afro-Caribbeans in intermediate levels of the company structure may be attributed to language and previous experience, it has also been argued that United Fruit actively pursued a divisive recruitment policy in order to play on the ethnic diversity of the workforce for its own ends (Purcell, 1985).

In other words, as an economic entity premised on the pursuit of profit, United could not afford to allow labour disruptions to endanger production levels. Therefore, the recruitment of blacks to higher positions than Hispanics, payment of higher wages to the former and discouraging blacks from learning Spanish, served to encourage conflict between ethnic groups rather than against the Company itself (Kepner, 1936; Purcell, 1987). ¹³ More specifically, the promotion of Afro-Caribbeans to relatively high status occupations may be seen as a way to placate the largest and thus most potentially threatening group. In short, the active manipulation of ethnic groups within the Company structure ensured that the primary objective of profit maximisation was fulfilled (Purcell, 1985).

The reinforcement of ethnic employment differentiation was also compounded by United Fruit's policy of social and residential segregation amounting to what Purcell (1985: 5) refers to as 'de facto ^hapartheid'. On the plantations, personnel were distributed into various 'camps' with an American as the head occupying the most prestigious dwelling; foremen and timekeepers, usually Jamaican blacks and coloureds, lived in lower quality dwellings; labourers, composed of blacks and Hispanics, were housed in 'long camps' shared by several people (ibid.). In spite of proximity of dwellings, there was little social interaction between ethnic groups. In Puerto Limón, a similar pattern prevailed where Americans lived in an area called 'the Zone' on the northeast side of the city where non-whites were forbidden to enter unless they worked as domestic helpers, Afro-Caribbeans lived in delineated *barrios* with lighter-skinned blacks located in areas closest to the centre and Hispanics in outer areas (Purcell, 1987: 26). ¹⁴ Social closure on grounds of ethnicity also extended to sport where baseball was the only activity involving all ethnic groups, even if the actual clubs were segregated (ibid.). Even hospital beds in the United Fruit medical centre in 1913 were arranged into wards according to ethnic origin (Casey, 1979: 115). In addition, any activities which represented a threat to United were immediately quashed, such as those of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded in Limón by Marcus Garvey in the 1920s (Ruiz, 1989). ¹⁵ For example, workers found to be members of UNIA were dismissed, the circulation of the UNIA publication 'Negro World' was prohibited, and pressure was exerted on the North American consulate in Costa Rica to deny visas to UNIA members (Ruiz, 1989: 65).

While United Fruit aimed to divert conflict away from the Company itself and towards inter-ethnic antagonism through employment and social policies favouring Afro-Caribbeans, this was not entirely successful. For example, at the beginning of the

twentieth century, there was a series of strikes by both black and Hispanic workers as the result of increasing dissatisfaction with poor working conditions. However, neither group ever joined forces, reflecting perhaps the success of United's divisive economic and social policies. In the first instance, some black workers initiated a number of strikes at the beginning of the century: in 1913 there were two strikes at Barmouth, Siquirres and in Sixaola where the latter resulted in the intervention of 150 armed soldiers from the government, and in 1918 a violent strike in Talamanca resulted in two deaths and many injuries suffered by black workers at the hands of white 'strike-breakers' brought in by the government (Duncan, 1989: 17). Later in 1934, Hispanics staged a strike but failed to secure Afro-Caribbean support, the latter preferring "to take an ethnic rather than class position" (Purcell, 1985: 6) (see also Nash, 1988 on the mobilisation of workers on grounds of ethnicity for the achievement of class goals).

Until the 1930s, the demographic balance in favour of Afro-Caribbeans, along with the geographical isolation of the province from the rest of the country, and the de facto control of the area by United Fruit, reinforced the relative privilege of this group. However, as the population balance gradually shifted with increased white/*mestizo* immigration, this privilege was undermined and ethnic tension heightened. For example, in 1883, 63.2% of the regional population of Limón were Afro-Caribbeans and 9.1% were Costa Rican nationals (Carvajal and Driori, 1987: 35). By 1927, while Afro-Caribbeans remained the dominant ethnic group (59.2%), the proportion of Hispanics rose to 36% (Casey, 1979: 238; Duncan and Powell, 1988: 62). As their numerical significance grew, white/*mestizo* resentment towards Afro-Caribbeans intensified; they felt they were losing out to Afro-Caribbeans who were essentially foreigners in their country (they were not entitled to citizenship until 1949; see Chapter Three). This heightened resentment led to a series of complaints presented to the Costa Rican government in the late 1920s by white/*mestizo* nationals towards both Afro-Caribbeans and United Fruit. These culminated in a petition to Congress, resulting in government requests for guarantees from United Fruit that they employ no less than 60% of Costa Ricans (and hence white/*mestizos*) in their workforce (Carvajal, 1989: 64) (although evidence suggests that this was not in fact implemented). ¹⁶ This effectively marked the beginning of discriminatory state intervention in the area, and a gradual erosion of Afro-Caribbean privilege in Limón.

During this period, it is interesting to note the flexible nature of discrimination as ethnic relations changed. The attitudes of each group in society were based on

different rationales. For example, United Fruit used ethnic hierarchisation and segregation of the workforce to ensure profitability; the Costa Rican state adopted a discriminatory attitude because Afro-Caribbeans represented a threat to the national culture of ethnic homogeneity; Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic workers in the area were resentful of one another because the former believed their culture to be superior and the latter that blacks posed competition for their jobs. It is hardly surprising therefore, that conflict ensued, as Miles (1989: 131) points out, " the consequence of racism and related exclusionary practices, which have the effect of placing and confining certain groups of people to such positions, can be to encourage the development of political resistance which can lead, in turn, to conflicts of various sorts".

United Fruit and Gender

Whereas evidence of the racial composition of the population and workforce during the days of United Fruit is fairly readily available, information on gender composition is more difficult to obtain, possibly due to absence of women workers. As mentioned earlier, the gender composition of the population gradually altered in the 1920s, redressing the imbalance of males to females. While the migration of Afro-Caribbean women as wives and mothers did increase (Bernard, 1987), this should not be overstated as a large proportion of the population still resided in Limón on a temporary basis.¹⁷ The 1927 census reveals that the average household size in Limón was 2.7 (half the Costa Rican average) and that 41% of all households consisted of a single person only. This was probably due to the nature of labour demand within the United Fruit Company which still required a predominantly male workforce. Indeed, the only reference to female workers in Company plantations was in its operations in Sixaola, Talamanca where a number of indigenous Indian women were employed (Casey, 1979).

Having said this, Afro-Caribbean women who did migrate to Limón usually secured employment which was in some way related to United Fruit, albeit in 'informal' or tertiary activities. Evidence suggests that many Afro-Caribbean women were employed in 'higglering' (informal street trading), mainly of agricultural produce, and many often acted as traders between small farmers who sold bananas and cacao to United Fruit (Olien, 1977). There is also evidence that these women worked in the commissary stores set up by United (Bernard, 1987). Most importantly however, a significant proportion of Afro-Caribbean women were employed as domestic servants in the homes of the North American managers living in 'the Zone' area of the city. The only 'formal', high status employment of women at this time was of Jamaican teachers who were contracted on a short term basis to work in the private schools which were

supported by the Company (Casey, 1979). Also, evidence exists concerning the prevalence of prostitution which was higher than the Costa Rican average and which was also dominated by Afro-Caribbean women.¹⁸ It appears then, that these women were employed predominantly in activities which lay outside the heavily masculinised primary labour market, although most worked in occupations linked with the Company. This was facilitated by their ability to speak English which was necessary for example, for work in the homes of United Fruit managers as well as in agricultural trading in commissary stores. There is no documentation on the employment of white/*mestizo* women at the time, which perhaps implies that these women were not involved in income-generation outside the home, and that Afro-Caribbean women occupied the majority of available posts in the urban economy. Similarly, the North American wives of United Fruit officials did not appear to be involved in any form of paid employment at the time. These patterns therefore point to the overall marginalisation of the female workforce during this time, although Afro-Caribbean women had significantly higher rates of labour force participation than white/*mestizos* or North Americans.

In short, the regional and urban labour market of Limón in the era of railway construction and the United Fruit Company was highly stratified on grounds of ethnicity and gender, as well as class. The primary labour market was heavily masculinised, comprising white, North Americans in the most prestigious occupations, followed by Afro-Caribbeans employed in intermediate, relatively high status positions, and finally, white/*mestizos* located at the bottom in low status occupations. Outside the main productive structure, women were employed in 'informal' and tertiary jobs, of which the majority were Afro-Caribbeans. The relatively advantaged position of Afro-Caribbeans (both men and women to an extent) within United Fruit, was linked with the development of racial discrimination both in Limón and Costa Rica in general which was to have far-reaching implications for contemporary employment patterns in the city. The following section deals with how employment differentiation changed as the local economy underwent radical change with the withdrawal of United Fruit from the region.

The Demise of the United Fruit Company and the Search for Alternatives: 1936-1950

After the peak in banana exportation between 1904 and 1913, production gradually declined and as early as 1927 United Fruit was buying 75% of its bananas from independent producers (Carvajal, 1989: 65).¹⁹ Reasons for this included the spread of Panama disease which attacked banana leaves and roots, as well as soil depletion

arising from extensive banana cultivation. ²⁰ By 1930 United Fruit had begun to search for alternative areas for production within Costa Rica. A situation of declining production, reduced demand for labour, a fall in salaries and increased ethnic conflict between workers, resulted in labour disputes controlled by the powerful trade unions in the area. While the unions were dominated by Afro-Caribbeans, ironically it was ^a strike in 1934, which proved most debilitating for United. It was engineered by the Costa Rican Communist Party under the direction of Carlos Luis Fallas and supported by Hispanic rather than Afro-Caribbean workers (Seligson, 1980). ²¹ It is not known whether the strike was more significant because it was supported by the Communist Party and the Hispanic workers rather than Afro-Caribbeans, but whatever, it contributed strongly to the demise of United Fruit in the region.

These factors along with the spread of a second banana disease, Sigatoka (see note 20), the effects of world recession, and finally a hurricane in 1936 destroying 50% of all crops, prompted United Fruit to negotiate an agreement with the government to transfer its operations to the Pacific coast of the country. ²² In 1942 the last shipment of bananas left Limón and the collapse of the plantation economy was complete. Perhaps the worst affected area in the region was the city itself which had served as the principal nexus for all Company activities. Although the port remained in operation, its main export had disappeared and the city underwent not only economic but infrastructural decay as the United Fruit Company also transferred a substantial amount of railway rolling stock, machinery and so on to the Pacific coast. The operation of the railway system was significantly curtailed, the commissary stores were closed and medical facilities were withdrawn. Effectively, by the mid-twentieth century, the region was transformed into a subsistence economy leaving a largely disenfranchised and displaced black population (Purcell, 1987).

Although the transfer of United affected all sectors of Limón society, it was the Afro-Caribbeans who were most profoundly affected. Not only had racial discord intensified by this time, representing an accumulation of resentment on behalf of white/*mestizos* since the late 1930s, but Afro-Caribbeans were legally restricted from moving to the Pacific with United. Indeed, this prohibition was one of the most blatantly racist policies ever formulated by the Costa Rican state, and was argued on the basis that the movement of blacks would "upset the racial pattern of the country and possibly cause civil commotion" (May and Plaza, 1958: 208 cited in Olien, 1977: 145). Moreover, this was compounded by the maintenance of the 'ethnic barrier' between Limón and the rest of the country (see earlier). Abel Pacheco (1978: 9) comments on the injustice of

this situation for Afro-Caribbeans noting that " *La Patria le pagó aislándolo. Cerrándole con una ley de tierras altas.*" ("The country repaid him by isolating him. Closing him in with a law of high lands"). Therefore, Afro-Caribbeans not only lost their economic livelihood, but were also subject to open discrimination by incoming Costa Rican migrants and by the state, who were both increasingly hostile towards them (Purcell, 1987). Given redundancies and salary reductions immediately prior to the collapse, Afro-Caribbeans had few alternatives open to them. Although many remained in Limón, those who could afford it either returned to Jamaica, or migrated to the Panama Canal or the United States: the latter represented the first wave of international migration by Afro-Caribbean men in Limón (Municipalidad de Limón, 1992).

This period of transition saw control of the economy transfer to the state and to private Costa Rican concerns. Although there is little evidence of the exact nature of the employment structure during this time, it is widely accepted that the dominant position previously held by North American interests was taken over by wealthy white/*mestizos* from other parts of Costa Rica, as well as by the state (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989). By 1942, Hispanics held prominent positions in independent farming, law enforcement, transportation, shipping and local government (Purcell, 1985). The Afro-Caribbean population on the other hand, was increasingly marginalised (Purcell, 1985, 1987). Although United Fruit returned to the province briefly between 1942 and 1945 to develop rubber and hemp plantations and provided some employment for Afro-Caribbeans, this was short-lived and by 1950 all United plantations had been abandoned (Carvajal, 1987).²³ The only opportunities for Afro-Caribbean men were in cacao or subsistence agriculture on land vacated by the Company, or in employment in what was left of the port and railway sectors in the city itself (Purcell, 1985). The situation for Afro-Caribbean women was even worse as they lost their positions as domestic servants, and the drastic decline in agricultural production also meant their role in informal trading was reduced considerably. It is probable that these women continued to be employed in the informal sector, engaging in activities of a different nature such as food production and retailing. Their continued employment was probably made even more necessary in the light of reduction and indeed virtual disappearance of formal sector work for men in United Fruit.

The demographic composition of the area during this period, reflected further immigration of white/*mestizos*. After 1940, agricultural colonization began by groups from the Valle Central and Guanacaste migrating and settling on land previously owned by United Fruit as well ^{as} new lands on the 'agricultural frontier'. Indeed, Limón represented

an 'agricultural frontier' for landless peasants until the late 1980s after which availability of land declined considerably (Anderson, ^L199⁰₇). ²⁴ Between 1927 and 1950 the Hispanic population in the region increased from 12,545 to 25,972, and the black population decreased from 18,003 to 13,749 (Carvajal and Driori, 1987: 39-41). As mentioned previously, this decrease in the Afro-Caribbean population can partly be attributed to their return to Jamaica, but more importantly to labour migration to Panama and the United States. The previously small Chinese population also increased during this time, and was largely due to the withdrawal of commissary stores and the opening-up of the commercial sector in the city. ²⁵ Indeed, the Chinese population represented another axis of ethnic segmentation in the labour market which still exists today and although it is not numerically significant, its presence illustrates the ethnic diversity in the city which is not solely dependent upon a dichotomy of a white/*mestizo* and an Afro-Caribbean group. It should also be noted that the indigenous Indian population also increased in this period as they returned to their lands which had been possessed by United Fruit (Carvajal and Driori, 1987). However this group is not particularly important in the present context because of their geographical isolation and dependence on subsistence agriculture rendering their role within the regional economy minimal. There is little evidence supporting changes in the gender composition of the population at this time, although it is expected that the sex ratio altered to include an increased proportion of women. ²⁶ This was probably due to the increase of Costa Ricans who migrated to Limón as agricultural colonisers who came in family groups rather than as individuals.

In the transitional period from 1936 to 1950 there was therefore a change in the economic base of Limón which was increasingly dominated by white/*mestizos*, compounded by both shifts in the demographic composition of the population and increasing influence of the state in the development of the province. As a result, ethnic relations between the two groups became more hostile as Afro-Caribbeans lost their livelihood and previous privilege, and white/*mestizos* gained control of the area. The following section deals with the introduction of state institutions in the region and more specifically the impact on the Afro-Caribbean population and ethnic and gender labour market divisions.

State and Private Responses to the Integration of Limón into the Costa Rican Space-Economy: 1950-Present Day

The 1948 Revolution marked an important turning point in the development of Limón in that the emergent liberal political group enacted a series of reforms advocating a democratic societal structure, changes in the national economy and a social welfarist policy, all of which were to influence this previously isolated region. ²⁷ The most significant of these reforms was the extension of the franchise to women and the granting of full rights of citizenship to the children of Afro-Caribbean migrants in Limón (see Chapter Three). Previous restrictions on the movement of people of Afro-Caribbean origin outside the province of Limón were abolished hence allowing them in theory, greater participation in Costa Rican life.

However, this situation had contradictory effects for black *Limonenses* who whilst they had attained equal legal status, were also subjected to the imposition of state institutions which disregarded their culture and language. This partial cultural incorporation is best illustrated through the education system. For example, after 1948 it became compulsory for blacks to attend state Spanish-speaking schools rather than English-speaking private schools. This effectively allowed for the promotion of Costa Rican national culture and ideals (Purcell, 1987) and, as some have argued, the destruction of Afro-Caribbean culture (Bernard, 1987; Ruiz, 1989). The provision of public sector schools was impressive: before 1951 only six public schools existed in Limón, yet under the term of office of President Figueres (who had led the revolution), forty-seven schools were built in one year (Olien, 1977). Inevitably, the shift in the education system also contributed to the demise of English as a symbol of prestige for Afro-Caribbeans (Purcell, 1987). Indeed, the fact that their English was Creole, meant that most second and third generation Afro-Caribbeans preferred to use Spanish as they consider it more 'decent' (and still do today) (ibid: 33). ²⁸

In the economic sphere, the government enacted a series of policies from 1950 onwards, in an attempt to reassert state control over the regional economy. This meant the incorporation of Limón, formerly under foreign influences, into the national system. Essentially the government was faced with a region in a state of collapse and the task of replacing the role which United Fruit had formerly played in its economic and social development. This involved resuming banana production through the purchase of plantations belonging to United Fruit, as well as an increase on taxes levied on banana exportation (see Chapter Four). However, the policy aimed at breaking dependence on transnational activity was not successful (Ellis, 1983; Garnier *et al*, 1987; Goluboay

and Vega, 1987). Indeed, in 1956, the government encouraged the entry of the Standard Fruit Company into the region, followed in subsequent years by various other multinational banana enterprises such as United Brands (see Chapter Four). Essentially this undermined the government's original intentions and revindicated the status of the region as an enclave economy (Carvajal, 1989). In spite of this, there was an awareness of the need to diversify agricultural production and accordingly, private production of African palm, cacao, ornamental plants, timber extraction as well as cattle ranching in Guácimo and mining in Talamanca, was encouraged (Smith and Murillo, 1989).

Although the government failed to reassert state control over the banana industry (except on the administrative side), the establishment of various state institutions, particularly in Puerto Limón, ensured state dominance in all other fields. In 1963, the Port and Economic Development Board of the Atlantic Coast (*Junta de Administración Portuaria y de Desarrollo Económica de la Vertiente Atlántica*/JAPDEVA) was created as the first institution in Costa Rica with the responsibility for promoting regional development. It was based in Puerto Limón and marked the first of many institutions which were to provide employment through the state as opposed to private concerns. Following the creation of JAPDEVA came the nationalization of the railway and port infrastructure which meant further transference of a large proportion of the workforce of the city from private to state hands. JAPDEVA also administered other infrastructural projects such as the improvement of existing port facilities, the reconstruction of the port at Moín, the construction of a road from San José to Limón (completed in 1975) and the creation of a 'free trade zone' just outside the city. This predominance of government-promoted job creation in the city was strengthened by the building of the only oil refinery in the country (*Refinería Costarricense de Petroleo*/RECOPE) in 1965, the construction of the Tony Facio hospital and expansion of the social security system (*Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social*/CCSS). In addition, other government ministries were de-centralised to regional offices such as the Combined Institute of Social Assistance (*Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social*/IMAS), the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development (*Ministerio de Planificación*/MIDEPLAN), the Institute of Electricity (*Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad*/ICE) and the Ministry of Work and Social Security (*Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social*/MTSS)(Carvajal, 1989; Carvajal and Driori, 1987; Murillo, 1987). This period, therefore, saw a massive re-structuring of the labour market of Limón towards public sector employment which still dominates the city in that in 1981, 40% of the economically active population was engaged in government-related employment

(Carvajal and Driori, 1987: 57).

The development of an industrial base in the city through the use of private capital was also a major concern of the government in the 1960s and 1970s albeit with little success. Most of the industries established were intimately related to the banana industry such as the production of cardboard boxes for shipment of the fruit. The creation of the *Zona Franca* (Free Zone) did little to encourage industrial development perhaps due to the history of labour disputes in Limón which continued at regular intervals after the first major strike in 1934 and in recent years it has been inactive.

²⁹ Other private companies which were established in Limón during this period were those linked with the port. Although the port was administered by JAPDEVA, this institution contracted the services of private cargo companies which were involved in the loading and unloading of the ships, and today these companies still provide a significant proportion of all employment in Limón (Smith and Murillo, 1987).

Moreover, between 1960 and 1984, the area under banana cultivation increased from 1,200 hectares to 20,934 hectares, and from 1,816 boxes exported to 46, 643,095 (ibid: 34).

In terms of the structure of the labour market in this period it appears that divisions created during the United Fruit era have been relatively inert. The major economic activities of the region and the city have not changed dramatically in that the economy is still inexorably linked with banana production. It has only been the ownership of these activities which has altered in that the state has taken over the tasks formerly performed by United Fruit. As might be expected, the demand for male labour in the primary sectors of port, railway and in the plantations has persisted, while women have remained employed in secondary, often 'informal' activities. Therefore historically, the division of the labour market into a 'masculinised' primary sector and a 'feminised' secondary sector appears to have been reproduced in Limón over time. In terms of ethnic employment differentiation, Afro-Caribbean men have continued to be employed in the port and the railway, although the introduction of technology in both areas, coupled with competition from road transport, has led a reduction in job opportunities for this group (Carvajal, 1989; Girod, 1989). In rural areas, Afro-Caribbeans have also ceased to work on banana plantations and have been replaced by internal migrants mainly from Guanacaste, and international migrants from Nicaragua and Honduras. White/*mestizo* men have secured employment in all sectors of the labour market, although they have become concentrated in manufacturing. Afro-Caribbean women have also continued to be employed in the 'informal' sector, although in the post-

war period they were increasingly entering vocational training to become teachers and nurses (Bernard, 1987). These contemporary employment patterns are discussed in more detail in Chapters Four and Five, yet before concluding, it is important to examine demographic factors from 1950 onwards.

At the time of the last census to include data on the ethnic composition in 1950, the Afro-Caribbean population in Limón represented 33.2% of the regional total and the white/*mestizo* population represented 62.7% (Censo de Población, 1950). More recent estimates indicate that the relative balance of different ethnic groups has remained reasonably stable and in 1984, for example, the Afro-Caribbean population represented approximately 29.7% and the white/*mestizo* group, 60% (Carvajal and Driori, 1987: 43).³⁰ However, these figures conceal the international migration of the many Afro-Caribbeans. As mentioned earlier, the first wave began after the withdrawal of United Fruit in the 1940s and involved labour migration of men to Panama and the United States. The ~~the~~ second wave which occurred in the 1960s, however, consisted mainly of women who went to work as domestic servants in New York and Los Angeles and because of this has been called "*la emigración de los vientres*" (migration of the wombs) (Municipalidad de Limón, 1992: 131). While the extent of this migration is not known as no official figures exist, Eulalia Bernard (1987: 9) suggests that in the 1960s, 1,500 to 2,000 women lived in New York. The reasons for this gender differentiated migration are not clear and could have been the result of the labour demand in the United States at the time which required female rather than male workers (see Hamilton and Chinchilla, 1991, on Central American migration to the United States), although undoubtedly this was compounded further by lack of employment opportunities for both Afro-Caribbean men and women in Limón.

The implications of this migration at the household level in Limón are particularly significant. Afro-Caribbean female migrants usually left their children in the care of their mothers which gave rise to a high proportion of grandmother-headed and extended households in the 1960s and 1970s, which remain a feature of family organisation in contemporary Limón (Sherman, 1984; Osorio *et al*, 1980; see also Chapter Five). In addition, women also became the major economic providers for their families in Limón through the transfer of remittances (see also Chapter Six). Indeed, this period was instrumental for Afro-Caribbean women in that they became protectors of the family and the community; first, through labour migration and second, through education, where many women trained to be professionals in teaching and nursing (Bernard, 1987; see also Chapter Six). However, on the other hand, this period is

often interpreted as one where Afro-Caribbean culture became fragmented in Limón through the loss of the women who had previously held it together, through increased miscegenation of the population and through the nationalisation of the economy (Bernard, 1987; Municipalidad de Limón, 1992). It is also important to note briefly that in the late 1970s, there was a reversal in the gender-selectivity of international migration as Afro-Caribbean males began to migrate to the United States to work in New York or in Miami on Caribbean cruiseliners. This pattern has continued to the present day and is discussed in greater detail in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Conclusion

The historical development of Limón is fundamental in explaining labour market segmentation and segregation along lines of gender, ethnicity and class. In particular, an understanding of the evolution of the enclave economy is crucial in assessing ethnic employment patterns as it highlights how Afro-Caribbeans came to be found in Limón in the first place and how their relationship with the local economy has changed over time. Even though the manner in which gender, ethnicity and class have intersected has obviously changed in certain respects since the 1880s, it is important to stress the high degree of continuity of various labour market segments from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Although contemporary patterns are discussed in Chapters Four to Seven, a number of key continuities which are rooted in historical patterns can be identified. In terms of gender, these include the continued employment of the male workforce in core sectors of the labour market, and of women concentrated on the periphery of the urban economy. While ethnic employment differentiation has also persisted, there have been certain significant changes. Under United Fruit, Afro-Caribbean men held relatively privileged positions particularly vis-à-vis white/*mestizo* Costa Ricans, yet they have become increasingly marginalised over time due to the withdrawal of United and the incorporation of Limón into the national scene after 1950. While today, this group remain employed in port and transport activities, this concentration reflects a high degree of inequality which is discussed in Chapters Four and Seven. Perhaps most interesting is the employment evolution of Afro-Caribbean women, who were initially employed as domestic servants and in 'informal' activities, yet appear to have achieved a significant degree of labour market mobility as a result of their contemporary concentration in the education and health sectors (the causes and consequences of this are discussed in Chapters Four to Seven). All these patterns owe in part to the fact that Limón's economy has remained fairly undiversified, yet at the same time has experienced a transfer of control from private to state hands after 1950.

^{has}
~~have~~ This shift in control, coupled with the changing ethnic composition of the region, had important ramifications for understanding the nature of racial attitudes. The present chapter has shown how flexible conceptions of racism have been heavily dependent on historical juncture and economic circumstance. For example, ethnic relations and discrimination, took a different form during days of United Fruit than when the Costa Rican state effectively replaced the Company. With respect to the state, its position has changed from an overtly racist stance until 1949, after which discrimination became more subtle (see Chapter Three). Since then, racist attitudes have been exemplified by attempts to integrate Limón into the rest of the country through the imposition of state institutions which actively promote Costa Rican ideals and values. The state has subordinated regional interests (and therefore, Afro-Caribbean culture), to national interests which is itself implicitly discriminatory.

The geographical position of Limón is also of critical importance in accounting for the evolution of ethnic relations and the implications for changes in the labour market. Until the 1950s, the Afro-Caribbean population formed a localised majority in an isolated region, enjoying a privileged status in the economy and society. As we have seen, the shift in the demographic balance over time, has effectively contributed to increasing antagonism between groups due to competition for jobs and resources. Essentially the locally dominant group has shaped the values of the rest of the population. Therefore today, the geographical integration of Limón means that Afro-Caribbeans represent an ethnic minority group whose interests remain peripheral to mainstream society. The implications of this will be examined in Chapters Four to Seven in relation to low-income groups in Limón. First, it is important to examine the role of the Costa Rican state, which has such importance in Limón.

Notes to Chapter Two

1) Huetar Atlántica is a planning term used to describe the province of Limón and the district of Horquetas in the province of Heredia. This term was designated in 1978 by OFIPLAN (the Office of Planning, now MIDEPLAN, the Ministry of Planning). The term the 'Atlantic Region' is also used and refers to province of Limón which is made up of the six cantons of Pococí, Guácimo, Siquirres, Matina, Limón and Talamanca.

2) This cultural belt extends from Puerto Barrios in Guatemala to Puerto Colon in Panama and also includes Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Belize. In all six countries this area is referred to as the Atlantic Coast (Costa Atlántica), the Atlantic region (Región Atlántica) or simply just 'the Coast' ('la Costa') (Duncan, 1989: 13).

3) Peter Wade (1989) discusses this issue in the Chocó region of Colombia which, like Limón, has an ethnically differentiated population. The regionalisation of race and racism may lead not only to the creation of regional inequalities but also to the reproduction of these as well as the regionalisation of racism. This too may have implications for the development of regionalism or nationalism which uses racial or ethnic consciousness as a rallying point for mobilisation (Miles, 1989).

4) The success of the cacao plantations was undermined by raids by English pirates and Miskito warriors who were reported to have kidnapped African and Indian slaves to sell in other Caribbean islands (Carvajal and Driori, 1989) as well as the high costs in transporting cacao to foreign markets (Olien, 1977). The difficulties encountered by the Spanish in asserting political control over this area was based on the threat from English-led forces who were attempting to establish a foothold in Central America at the time (ibid).

5) Traditional histories of Costa Rica do not acknowledge the presence of a black population in the country until the entry of labour migrants from Jamaica in the late nineteenth century, yet more recently this has been challenged as evidence shows a substantial population in Nicoya, Guanacaste (200 in 1611) and in Cartago (70 in 1611) (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989: 42). This has been attributed to the use of African slave labour on cattle ranches in Guanacaste and on the cacao plantations in Matina which at this time belonged to the province of Cartago: indeed estimates of African slaves are as high as 200 in the Matina area (Olien, 1977: 138). Within the province of Limón, the existence of further groups of blacks have been documented in the seventeenth century along the Talamancan coast. These were Afro-Caribbean groups from Bocas del Toro and Almirante in Panama who gained their livelihood from turtle fishing along the coast from Panama to Nicaragua and who settled permanently in Costa Rica (Palmer, 1977).

6) Until the late nineteenth century Costa Rican coffee producers had to depend upon the Pacific port of Puntarenas which meant coffee had to be transported around the tip of South America at exorbitant costs. Given that coffee had become the country's major (and practically the only) export crop, the producers had considerable power in pressurizing the government in their attempts to find an alternative outlet for international trade (Olien, 1977).

7) Minor C. Keith was the brother of Henry Meiggs who built the Andean railway system. Henry Meiggs was initially contracted by the Costa Rican government to construct the Atlantic railway but, soon discouraged by the difficult terrain, handed responsibility to his younger brother.

8) The antagonism felt by the Afro-Caribbeans towards the national population can be illustrated by the fact that they referred to Spanish as 'bird language' in that it was the *"idioma para pájaros, porque se habla con el pico"* (language for birds, because it is spoken with a beak) (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989: 103).

9) The Soto-Keith contract also demanded the completion of the railway in three years as well as the granting of state lands which constituted almost 8% of the total land area of Costa Rica.

It also included a 99 year lease on the railway, exemption from taxes for twenty years and waiving of import duties on construction materials for the railway (Seligson, 1980: 52).

10) Casey (1979: 227) points out that the sex ratio in Limón (according to the censuses) changed from 306.6 men for every 100 women in 1883, to 233.6 in 1892, to 120.7 in 1927.

11) Whereas the United Fruit Company certainly dominated the regional and urban economic structure, the entire population was not employed exclusively by the Company. There were many smaller private farms (owned by Jamaicans and Costa Ricans) in operation at the time, although these too were usually linked to the Company as they had either to use United's transport system or sold their bananas to the Company (Casey, 1979). In addition, many depended upon United Fruit for supplies, medical assistance and the education of their children (Olien, 1977).

12) Monge (1943: 121, cited in Carvajal and Driori, 1987: 38) notes, "*La ciudad y Puerto Limón pasó por su estado de oro: calles pavimentadas, residencias preciosas manifestaban su progreso y bienestar; la United tuvo sus oficinas en ese puerto y la actividad humana llegó a nivel increíble*". ("The city and port of Limón passed through its golden age: paved streets, beautiful residences showing its progress and well-being; United had its offices in this port and human activity attained incredible heights").

13) Putman (1913: 107, cited in Olien, 1977: 154) notes that West Indian blacks earned fifteen cents per hour on the docks for night work and ten cents an hour for day work. The 'Costa Ricans' on the other hand received twelve cents for the same night work and eight and half for day work.

14) Even within Afro-Caribbean *barrios*, there was segregation between Jamaicans and French Creole-speaking migrants from St Lucia (Purcell, 1987: 26).

15) Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association which emerged in the United States in the 1920s as a black nationalist movement advocating repatriation to Africa. Garvey's aim was to found a black state in Africa to which negroes from the Western world could be transported specifically on the Black Star Line shipping company. The company was a failure yet the ideas of Garvey continued to be important for black nationalists around the world and, more specifically for the Rastafarian Movement which emerged in Kingston, Jamaica in the 1950s and for whom Garvey was a 'prophet' (Smith, Augier and Nettleford, 1978). It is significant for the formation of black nationalism in Limón that a Black Star Line existed in the port and that Garvey lived for a short time in Limón in the 1920s, working as a timekeeper for the United Fruit Company (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989) (see also Lewis and Bryan (1988) for a discussion of the work of Marcus Garvey and his impact on black nationalism).

16) The petition was signed in 1933 by 543 whites from Limón soliciting that blacks be prohibited from such posts as clerical work, selling and technical jobs and that all Jamaicans be deported. The petition also included the following: "It is not possible to live with them, because their bad customs don't permit it: for them the family doesn't exist, nor the honour of women, and because of that they live in promiscuity which endangers our houses, founded in accordance with religious beliefs and good Costa Rican customs.....A law definitely ought to be passed which prohibits their naturalization because they are a race inferior to ours" (Seligson, 1980: 70).

17) Often the Jamaican population had little choice in remaining in Costa Rica as many could not afford to return. This idea of the temporary nature of the Jamaican migrants even remains today as the author's own investigations in Limón revealed one aging man who still had not constructed his house beyond a corridor as he was certain that one day he was going to return to Jamaica.

18) In 1896 it was estimated that there were 18 prostitutes for every 1000 men in Limón

which was twice the national average (Casey, 1979: 230). This was also differentiated by race as only 26% of the prostitutes were white/*mestizos* or indigenous Indians, 47% were Jamaican migrants and the rest were Afro-Caribbean migrants from other Caribbean islands (ibid: 232).

19) Between 1917 and 1927 the average annual exportation of bananas was 8 000 000 bunches and by 1932 this had decreased to 4 313 379 (Carvajal, 1987: 65).

20) The principal diseases were Panama (*Fusarium cubense*) which attacks the roots of the plant, and Sigatoka (*Cercospora musae*) which leads to spotting on the leaves. The former was prevalent in Limón from 1890 onwards and the combined effect of both diseases contributed to the decision by United Fruit to withdraw from the area (Olien, 1977).

21) Carlos Luis Fallas is perhaps better known for his novel, Mamita Yunai (1941) (the title loosely translated as Mother United after United Fruit). The book depicts life in Limón during the days of the company and has become one of Costa Rica's most popular novels.

22) United Fruit also negotiated an increase in the price of bananas, but these were only valid for producers who had legal title to land. This excluded the majority of small Jamaican farmers who were renters or squatters (Carvajal, 1989).

23) Hemp is a fibrous plant belonging to the banana family which is used in rope making and was in great demand during the Second World War when access to the traditional area of production, the Philippines, was blocked.

24) Augelli (1984) notes that the 'agricultural frontier' in Costa Rica precluded the development of a grossly inequitable system of land tenure up until the 1960s. The frontier also served as 'safety net' for small farmers, who in times of crisis, could move to other areas of the country. In 1961 the *Ley de Tierras y Colonización* (Land Colonisation Law) was passed prohibiting this form of spontaneous settlement. In relation to Limón, Anderson (1997) notes that the region was unable to absorb increasing migration for land settlement by the late 1980s because both banana and cattle companies operated a policy of retaining large tracts of unused land in case they were required for cultivation in the future.

25) The Chinese population has been, and still is concentrated in the lower and middle-level entrepreneurial class. Traditionally they have interests in the restaurant and retail trade and are geographically situated in San José, Guanacaste and Limón. In rural Limón they also act as middlemen, buying and selling cacao and bananas (Beisanz et al, 1987; see also Chant, 1991b).

26) Data on the sex ratio for the 1930s does not exist and the only available figures note that it altered from 120.7 women to 100 men in 1927 to 112.8 in 1950 (Casey, 1979: 227).

27) The Revolution was fought between the conservatives who represented the old aristocracy and a more liberal group advocating reform led by José (Pepe) Figueres. More specifically civil war ensued as the result of electoral fraud in 1948. Neither side would give in to demands and so armed struggle was seen as the only answer by the Liberals who began their "War of National Liberation". The fighting lasted six weeks with a death toll of 2, 000. A peace settlement provided for a '*junta*' (governing committee) headed by Figueres which undertook dramatic social reforms that laid the institutional framework of Costa Rican society today (Barry, 1990).

28) The grammatical structure of Costa Rican Creole has changed substantially over time due to the influence of Spanish. For example, one no longer says "How old are you?", but instead, "How much years do you have?" which is derivative of "*Cuántos años tiene?*" in Spanish (Purcell, 1987: 34) (see also Herzfeld, 1987 on the development of Costa Rican Creole).

29) There has been recent discussion about the possible re-activation of the Zona Franca by the present government but it is still not clear if and when this will occur (La Nación, 10 August,

1990).

30) These estimates are not entirely accurate given the difficulties in collecting data of this type, although they do provide a rough idea of the ethnic composition of the population. These figures also coincide with another study carried out by the Presidential Information Office in 1976 which states that 32.7% of the population of Limón was of Afro-Caribbean origin and 63.4% of white/*mestizo* origin.

CHAPTER THREE - ETHNICITY, GENDER AND THE STATE

Introduction

The previous chapter on Limón indicated how state institutions have been important at national and local levels in Costa Rica. Indeed, the state has been instrumental in governing economic, social and political relations since the nineteenth century. More particularly, since the Constitutional Convention of 1949 and the adoption of an interventionist approach, the state has been labelled as benefactor, welfarist or protectionist (Barry, 1990; Torres-Rivas, 1987). In relation to this, promotion of social democratic ideals has earned Costa Rica the title of a progressive and egalitarian society (Beisanz *et al.*, 1987). However, commitment to democracy on behalf of the state has been questioned in general (Barry, 1990; Stone, 1975; Torres-Rivas, 1987). The present chapter proposes to assess levels of democratic and egalitarian commitment of the state with particular reference to gender and ethnicity.

While there has been much debate on the nature of the state, it is possible to differentiate between its role as decision-maker in terms of policies which are formulated and implemented, and the way in which state structures and institutions embody certain ideological preferences (Charlton *et al.*, 1989). The aim here is to emphasise state intervention and assess the impact on various social groups, while bearing in mind the underlying attitudes which have shaped policies. This will involve an analysis of the evolution of the institutions and legislation which have a bearing on gender and ethnicity and the way in which they may have lessened or intensified discriminatory practices.

Theoretical Perspectives on the State

In relation to the Latin American state, Enzo Faletto (1989: 69) points out that "the State always reflects the complex set of economic, social and especially power relations that are formed in a society". Due to this complexity, the state as a concept has been controversial and its exact nature difficult to define. Broadly speaking however, it refers to government, judiciary, bureaucratic and political functions (Ward, 1986). Theoretical orientations on the state are generally concerned with the extent to which the state acts autonomously or in the interests of particular groups in society, as well as the extent to which the international division of labour affects internal class interests (Alvarez, 1990; Charlton *et al.*, 1989). The first of the three main approaches is the

'liberal-pluralist' approach, which views the state as politically neutral and autonomous, acting as the arbitrator between conflicting interests and allowing benefits to spread throughout society. The Marxian 'instrumentalist' approach on the other hand, sees the state as the instrument of the dominant classes operating to ensure that their interests are maintained. This maintenance is achieved through the predominance of representatives from this group as functionaries of the state who in turn, ensure that their values and ideologies are imposed throughout state institutions. The final is the Marxian 'structuralist' perspective, where the state is accorded greater autonomy and recognises internal divisions within the dominant classes. As such, the state may act against the dominant group in order to maintain and reproduce the capitalist structure (for reviews of these approaches see Charlton *et al.*, 1989; Gilbert and Ward, 1982, 1985; Krasner, 1984; Ward, 1986).¹ Although these latter two approaches are usually interpreted as alternatives, Gilbert and Ward, (1982) point out that they are essentially similar in that both view the state as operating in the interests of the dominant classes. It is only their emphasis which differs, where instrumentalists stress the role of agents and structuralists stress the role of structures (Gilbert and Ward, 1982: 86).

Although these theories are important as guidelines, it is generally accepted that a single theory is unable to explain the complexity and diversity of the state in different contexts (Faletto, 1989; Gilbert and Ward, 1982, 1985; Ward, 1986). Moreover, conceptualisations of the state are likely to vary as the particular interests served and the relative autonomy of the state change in place and time. While a number of approaches have encompassed these broader analyses such as the 'statist' approach, where the state is seen simultaneously as a coercive, bureaucratic, legal, and normative order from an historical perspective (Charlton *et al.*, 1989: 4), it is from the post-structuralist standpoint that these ideas have recently gained most credence. Based on the work of Foucault, the state is seen as embodying a series of power networks and alliances which are not imposed from above nor necessarily derived from an opposition between classes. As such, the state is a collection of these power relations which cannot be defined in a coherent manner to refer to a unitary, homogenous entity which exists 'outside' society (Pringle and Watson, 1992). Although these more recent perspectives have accepted the need to view the state as encompassing diverse interests over a range of circumstances, these, and all conventional analyses, have failed to take directly into account the specific role of gender and ethnicity (Charlton *et al.*, 1989; Sassoon, 1987; McIntosh, 1978). As Sonia Alvarez (1990: 22) points out in relation to gender,

"a regime's policies concerning gender form part of the structural and ideological grid upon which State power is based. That grid has a class, a racial/ethnic, and a gendered content, and is not fixed, but rather constantly in flux, reflecting the class, race, and gender struggles that take place both within and outside the state".

In the late 1970s, feminist analyses of the state set ^{out} ~~about~~ to redress this situation, based initially on attempts to adapt Marxist approaches and to counter liberal feminist views which assumed neutrality of the state, and which failed to consider political implications of gender subordination in all areas of society, particularly the family. However, there have also been criticisms of Marxist feminist approaches in that 'instrumental' feminist views which have associated the state with rule by men cannot account for such figures as Margaret Thatcher, for example. Also, 'structural' feminist perspectives which suggest that capitalism and the state reproduce patriarchy, do not account for social actors which challenge the ultimate power of the state (see Charlton et al, 1989; Eisenstein, 1979, McIntosh, 1978; Pringle and Watson, 1992). All these feminist approaches have since been criticised in terms of the recent questioning of homogeneity among 'women' as a group, which fail to take into consideration other axes of inequality such as class and ethnicity. As such, it is important to assess how the state may influence gender relations across ethnic and class lines and which may differ between women from developed and developing countries (Alvarez, 1990; Bourque, 1989; Charlton et al, 1989). In terms of theories of the state and ethnicity, research has focused on the 'institutionalisation' of racism in society whereby the state implements legislation reflecting inherently racist attitudes (see Husbands, 1982; Miles, 1982; Miles and Phizacklea, 1984 on Britain). This type of racism usually centres around issues of immigration legislation and other exclusionary state practices relating to housing and so on (Smith, 1986).

Bearing in mind the theoretical perspectives outlined above, it is from the historical perspective that the discussion now turns to examining the development of the Costa Rican state. This serves to illustrate the evolution of an interventionist approach and at the same time, to question the widely-held belief in Costa Rican democracy.

The Development of the Costa Rican State

Faletto (1989: 70) notes that the nature of the Latin American state depends upon the way in which capitalism as an economic and social force, has been established in each country. Costa Rica's colonial experience, achievement of independence and subsequent

economic, social and political evolution, differed from other Latin American countries. This divergence is viewed as contributing to the relative ease in establishing democracy in the country and to the development of a benefactor state (Gayle, 1986). Given the absence of mineral wealth, the driving force behind Spanish colonisation was the small farmer rather than the *conquistador class*. As a result, Costa Rica developed in poverty and isolation, culminating in the achievement of Independence in 1821 without bloodshed. ² The first President of the Republic, Braulio Carrillo (1835-1842), set the precedent for state intervention directed at the social sphere with his emphasis upon education and the replacement of Spanish laws with less restrictive legal codes (although he also declared himself dictator for life in 1842) (Ameringer, 1982; Bird, 1984). Successive presidents continued this tradition, particularly Próspero Fernández (1882-85) who enacted the Liberal Laws of 1884 restricting church control on secular matters and establishing a public education system (Ameringer, 1982; Bird, 1984). ³ Between 1906 and 1936 the so-called 'generation of 1888' represented by presidents Cleto González Viquez (1906-10 and 1928-32) and Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno (1910-14, 1924-28, 1932-36) advocated classic nineteenth century liberalism, encouraging universal suffrage, freedom of expression and the need to separate the church and state (Ameringer, 1982).

However, it was not until the 1940s that Costa Rica was essentially transformed into a benefactor or welfare state. It was at this time, then, that predominance of the state in all major decision-making was most forcefully endorsed (Ameringer, 1982; Barry, 1990; Bird, 1984). In 1940, Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia assumed the presidency and enacted reforms which still constitute the basis of the social welfare system. Calderón Guardia established a system of social security involving a series of social assistance programmes including unemployment, disability, accident and old age benefits. In addition, a Labour Code was enacted in 1943, allowing for the provision of a Ministry of Labour to safeguard the rights of workers, as well as re-opening the University of Costa Rica (Barry, 1990; Garnier, 1991). Politically, this period was one of contradictions; Calderón was seen as an idealistic reformer, a populist and yet was also forced to make alliances with both the Church and the communist Popular Vanguard Party (PVP) (Ameringer, 1982; Bell, 1971). A paradoxical coalition formed in opposition to Calderón comprised of the conservative coffee oligarchy (who wanted to abolish the social reforms) and middle-class Social Democrats (calling for democracy and reforms). ⁴ After complaints of fraud during the 1948 election, the opposition coalition overthrew the *calderonistas*, culminating in the Revolution of 1948, led by José (Pepe) Figueres. Figueres, representing the Social Democratic element, governed

Costa Rica for 18 months before ceding power to Otilio Ulate Blanco and the conservatives in 1949. During this period, Figueres instituted the Constitution of 1949 strengthening the role of the state further. The social guarantees of Calderón remained in place and in addition, the army was abolished, banking was nationalised and a civil service was created along with other government institutions. Figueres was re-elected in 1953 as leader of the newly constituted National Liberation Party (*Partido de Liberación Nacional*/PLN) and expansion of the state continued.

Widespread approval of these reforms ensured the maintenance of the welfare state until the late 1970s with support from the Social Democrats, industrialists, middle-classes, state bureaucrats and the public sector workforce (Barry, 1990). State interventionism extended to economic and social spheres. Nationalisation of banking, public utilities (electricity, water, telephones) and transport (railways) ensured an efficient infrastructure to allow for economic growth including measures for the provision of subsidised credit and the creation of various corporations ~~to~~ actively ~~to~~ promote development (for example, the Costa Rican Development Corporation/CODESA) (Garnier, 1991). Indeed, Barry (1990: 8) points out that the "Costa Rican state became not only a promoter of economic modernisation but also a participant". In addition, the state provided for the basic needs of society through housing, health and education services. An expansive state apparatus consisting of decentralised autonomous and semi-autonomous government institutions was created. ⁵ Underlying these reforms was the development of an extensive system of legislation including the Labour Code (1943), the Family Code (1974) and the Penal Code (1970) which institutionalised the state's responsibility for economic and social reform, while at the same time, separating them from political change. These developments created a state which was not only a productive sector itself, but also a social actor (see Faletto, 1989: 77-79). Such was its influence that by the early 1980s, one in every five Costa Ricans was working in the public sector (Ameringer, 1982: 94).

The permanence of state power (essentially encompassed in government institutions) has been achieved through the curtailment of presidential authority involving the decentralisation of power within the government itself, from the president to the executive branch and the Legislative Assembly with the aim of strengthening representative democracy. ⁶ As a result, the state has remained largely insulated from changes in the political arena despite significant differences in the attitudes of the two major parties. The PLN, which was instrumental in shaping the contemporary state, advocates a mixed economy and a multi-class society yet with a strong emphasis on

welfare and ultimate authority resting with the state (Ameringer, 1982). The main opposition party until 1976 was the National Unification Party (*Partido Unificación Nacional/PUN*) which has since been displaced by the Social Christian Unity Party (*Partido Unidad Social Cristiana/PUSC*). The latter is more conservative than the PLN and historically has consisted of two ideological blocs; the reformists in the tradition of Calderón in the 1940s and the private sector business elite who advocate the restructuring and dismantling of the welfare state (Barry, 1990; Beisanz *et al*, 1987). However, until the economic crisis in the 1980s, ⁷ any attempts at dismantling state mechanisms on behalf of PUN or PUSC had been thwarted in the light of constitutional measures laid down by the PLN. This has been corroborated further by the fairly regular alternation of power every four years, inhibiting any fundamental restructuring of the state (Gayle, 1986). Besides, it is also important to remember that there is some convergence between the two parties insofar as both are essentially dominated by middle-class interests even where the state reflects a commitment to multi-class society.

At first examination, the Costa Rican state appears to conform to the 'liberal-pluralist' view where it acts as a progressive entity in the interests of society at large. However, not only is this an outmoded approach in general (Gilbert and Ward, 1985; Ward, 1986), but its applicability to the Costa Rican case may be seen as erroneous. In addition to criticisms levelled at the ability or the desire of the state to act in the interests of society, the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s has called into question the role of state interventionism in Costa Rica. First, the 'liberal-pluralist' view fails to take divisive class relations into consideration. In Costa Rica, class interests have influenced the development of the state, although conflict has been avoided (Garnier, 1991; Sojo, 1989). Ana Sojo (1989: 105) notes that the state "has proven to be an effective promoter of compromises among different and often opposing interest groups, such as entrepreneurs and low-income sectors". Therefore, while it is true that the state has rarely ignored demands from different groups, this may be interpreted as a means of averting conflict and maintaining control rather than ensuring justice (see also Ward, 1986: 2 on Mexico). Barry (1990: 10) refers to this as a 'social contract' where claims from popular sectors are placated with social reforms and favours. In this case, the 'structuralist' approach may be seen as most expedient.

The state has invariably responded to demands through the creation of new state agencies or programmes. For example, in the 1960s the problem of increasing landlessness was met with the establishment of the Lands and Colonisation Institute

(Barry, 1990). Indeed, one of the most common criticisms has been that lack of central planning has produced an inflated state bureaucracy where government institutions have become self-perpetuating and/or are duplicated (Ameringer, 1982).⁸ The institutionalisation of the system has rendered reform impossible and resulted in 'immobilism' (Denton, 1971: 56). The duplication of government institutions may also ensure avoidance of conflict: when certain personnel represent a threat, a new agency can be created and hence their authority undermined without open conflict (see Ward, 1986). Indeed, as Peter Ward (1986) argues in relation to Mexico, "a distended bureaucracy may be highly functional to the state" (p.39). In line with the 'instrumentalist' argument, the public sector employs a large proportion of white-collar workers which ensures not only the growth of the middle-class, but also that their interests are prioritised. The PLN in particular has been seen as responsible for using the bureaucracy as a means for reducing unemployment without addressing the cause, as well as diverting university graduates and intellectuals from subversive political activity and hence maintaining the status quo (Ameringer, 1982). The political system also serves to inhibit innovation where the alternation every four years from right-wing to centre/left parties can be perceived as detrimental to progress producing inconsistent development and a lack of strategic planning (Ameringer, 1982; Beisanz *et al*, 1987; Gayle, 1986).⁹ Diego Palma (1989) has a slightly different view, stating that "the key to Costa Rica is the political ability of its dominant class to impose a system that corresponds to that group's interests, and to have society as a whole accept this system as legitimate" (cited in Barry, 1990: 9).

Perhaps the most pertinent criticism however, is the fact that by the late 1970s, the state in Costa Rica had exceeded the capacity of the economy to support it. The onset of economic crisis which afflicted the country from 1979-1982 and which has continued with periods of stabilisation ever since, exacerbated this. Concomitant with recession has been the imposition of structural adjustment measures since 1985 through agreements with the IMF and the World Bank and increased dependence on external financing. The state bureaucracy has been blamed for many of the country's economic problems and as a result, rationalisation has been implemented through privatisation of a number of public sector institutions by corporate investors, reduction in social service provision and the abolition of various government subsidies such as those granted to small farmers (Barry, 1990).¹⁰ Public sector employment has been reduced, affecting mainly the middle-classes, while it has been reported that cutbacks in the public expenditure have affected the poorest sectors of society (Pollack, 1989; Rojas, 1987; Trejos, 1990).¹¹ Indeed, during the 1980s the proportion of the

population below the poverty line increased from a quarter of the total population to one third (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 40).

However, while it has now been accepted that the Costa Rican state has undergone necessary transformation to cope with economic crisis, there have been differences of opinion as to the extent to which legitimacy of the state has been undermined (see Barry, 1990; Garnier, 1991; Pollack, 1989; Sojo, 1989). Ana Sojo (1989) argues that while there has been a reduction in real wages and government spending on social sectors between 1975-1985, this has not entailed the dismantling of the welfare state (see also Garnier, 1991). She cites the inertia of institutions, continued commitment by political parties to promote a redistributive material base and the high profile of low-income groups who have been institutionalised within the state system, as the reasons why the state has been pared rather than dismantled (Sojo, 1989:111). Overall from this perspective, it has been argued that low-income groups have been protected from the worst effects of the crisis (Sojo, 1989; Garnier, 1991). Since the period dealt with by Sojo however, political and economic circumstances have changed in that economic indicators have worsened since 1986 (GDP growth and real wages have fallen, underemployment and inflation have increased) (Economist Intelligence Unit Country Profile, 1991). ¹² In 1990 a new structural adjustment programme was implemented, conditional on further restructuring of the state bureaucracy (ibid.). On the political scene, the PUSC gained power in 1990 and have adopted even stricter neoliberal policies which have further impinged upon state power, compared with more gradual policies implemented during the PLN administrations (Sojo, 1989). Indeed, Calderón and the PUSC have decided to pursue economic reform at the expense of social reforms which has been met by opposition from all sectors (Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report, 1991). ¹³ Undoubtedly, the state bureaucracy will be further undermined; on election the PUSC created a new minister for state restructuring with plans to dismiss 7,000 public employees (ibid: 21). Barry (1990: 10) notes that "by the year 2000 only skin and bone may remain of the protections and services offered by government at the beginning of the 1980s".

The economic situation of the country in the 1980s has therefore had important consequences for the nature of the welfare state and for democracy in the country. Rojas (1987: 25) points out that democracy has been reduced to a set of formal rules determining the election of governments. The original aims of the state based on representative democracy and a more equitable social and economic distribution of society, have been undermined as the government and the state gradually lose their

legitimacy (Trejos, 1990). The delicate balance between elitism and egalitarianism which has explained many of the contradictions found within Costa Rican society (Gayle, 1986; Stone, 1975) is now being questioned further. However, it has been shown that even before the 1980s, the efficacy of state mechanisms was being challenged. In particular, as well as challenging the effectiveness of legislation, its nature must also be examined, given that progressive laws may not always be implemented. ¹⁴

Notwithstanding that changes in class relations have accompanied the changing nature of the state, the following section examines more specifically how ethnic and gender relations have been affected by successive legislation. The emphasis in the following sections is on the extent to which discrimination has actually become embedded in certain state actions, and, conversely, the effectiveness of the state when it has tried to counteract such forces. Two factors must be borne in mind: whether the state acts only to avert conflict, and whether the interests of the dominant classes (which are arguably white and male), are reflected in government legislation (in line with either 'structuralist' or 'instrumentalist' approaches).

Ethnicity and the State

In Chapter Two the development of ethnic diversity and spatial concentration in Costa Rica was outlined with particular reference to Limón. The formation of a racist ideology was discussed, and the importance of the state in the region established. Accordingly, it is essential to examine these two issues together within the national context since the character of any legislation will reflect the attitudes of the national population or at least those of the major decision-makers within government. The rationales behind state policies and their efficacy in preventing, or indeed promoting, discrimination are examined from an historical perspective focusing on the development of legislation regarding ethnic relations.

Within Costa Rica as a whole the proportion of the total population represented by ethnic groups is only approximately 2.5%. The relative ethnic homogeneity of Costa Rica is in contrast to other Central American countries whose economic and social development has advanced at a considerably slower pace. Hence an attitude emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which equated development and progress with a predominantly white/*mestizo* population which still persists today (Beisanz *et al*, 1987; see also Wade, 1989 on Colombia). As a result, 'whiteness' has evolved as part of national pride (Beisanz *et al*, 1987) and "this pride is often tinged with racism and an alienating elitism" (Barry, 1990: 2). ¹⁵ Although state rhetoric suggests that every

sector of society be represented, evidence of racial discrimination invalidates this view even further. Trevor Purcell (1987: 35) notes that, "it is therefore difficult to have a Costa Rican admit that there is racial discrimination in spite of overwhelming evidence that there is". The development of legislation must therefore be seen within the context of a minority ethnic population whose interests are even more peripheral to the decision-making process than those of low-income sectors. ¹⁶

The first evidence of legislation relating to ethnic issues was the *Ley de Bases y Colonias* (a law of settlement) in 1862. This prohibited the immigration of Africans and Chinese while at the same time establishing a government fund to encourage immigration of 'white Europeans' who were to be granted ten to fifteen *manzanas* (plots approximately 5 metres square) of land per family (Duncan, 1989: 16). This blatant racism against Africans and Chinese was extended in similar laws in 1891, 1892, 1904 and 1942. For example, the establishment of the Agricultural Bank for the Colonisation of Costa Rica (Banco Agrícola) in 1892 explicitly prohibited the inclusion of 'beggars, invalids, criminals, Asians and Blacks' (ibid). Perhaps the most far-reaching formal evidence of racism of the period was the Costa Rican State-Francisco Mendiola Boza contract of 1893. This was signed by Mendiola Boza who was commissioned to bring Spanish settlers to the country on the conditions set by the state: that the colonisers would be white and from the provinces in the North of Spain to guard against possible 'contamination' of the existing Spanish 'blood' (Duncan, 1989: 16). In 1904 the Costa Rican Migration Regulations identified Arabs, Turks, Armenians, Syrians and Gypsies as 'undesirables' (Seligson, 1980: 65), to which were added Blacks, Chinese, delinquents and madmen in 1942 (Duncan, 1989).

These laws and regulations illustrate not only xenophobia, but also the overtly racist character of the Costa Rican state at the time. The irony of this racism was the aim of maintaining the ethnic and racial heritage of the Spanish *hidalgos* (noblemen), when the population was already highly miscegenated through intermarriage between the colonisers and the Indian population (Beisanz *et al*, 1987). The implication therefore, was that the Costa Rican claim to 'whiteness' was in fact unfounded in the first place. ¹⁷ The impetus for such explicitly racist legislation was extensive Jamaican migration to Limón during the period, which was probably perceived as threatening the ideal of a white, predominantly Spanish population fostered in the Francisco Mendiola Boza contract. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Minor C. Keith obtained special permission from the Costa Rican state to contract first Chinese, then Jamaican, labour. However, this was permitted only on the grounds that migrants (who were equated with madmen

and delinquents) would return to their country of origin when their employment had terminated, and because the interests of the state were at stake insofar as migrant labour was essential to complete the railway (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989; Purcell, 1985, 1987). As such, migrant labour not only suffered on account of its status as a temporary proletariat in a country dominated by a 'middle-class mentality' (Beisanz et al., 1987: 60), but also due to its ethnic origin.

In the 1920s and 30s, the realisation that the Afro-Caribbean migrants were settling permanently in Limón, coupled with an influx of Hispanics into the region, led to increased racism on behalf of the state and society, expressed in an attempt to ~~spatially~~ ^{spatially} confine them. ¹⁸ A de facto law in existence since initial Jamaican migration to Limón, restricted their movement beyond the provincial boundary, past the city of Turrialba which acted as an informal ethnic barrier. ¹⁹ The 'ethnic barrier' remained in place until 1949 serving as the dividing line for the notorious contract law between the state and the United Fruit Company in 1934. When the Company decided to move its operations to the Pacific coast, the state intervened decreeing that "the proportion of Costa Ricans who should work for the banana industry be determined, and coloured people be prohibited from being employed in the Pacific zone" (Seligson, 1980: 69). Government insistence that nationals be more strongly represented in employment was also enforced in Limón due to complaints of unfair competition from Afro-Caribbeans (Purcell, 1987).

State-endorsed racism in the early twentieth century, which denied Afro-Caribbeans the rights to citizenship and curtailed their geographical mobility, appears to have been coterminous with attitudes shared by society as a whole. A petition presented to Congress in 1933 by white workers denouncing all Afro-Caribbean culture ²⁰, and a letter to the newspaper La Prensa Libre, exemplify this racist stance. The latter lamented that "There is no such thing as a black Costa Rican....the blacks do not integrate themselves with our customs, nor do they like to learn Castilian; the blacks born in Limón, the sons of Caribbean fathers are not Costa Rican" (Duncan, 1989: 17). The legislation operating at the time reflected this viewpoint. Although the first migrants from Jamaica held British citizenship, the first generation of Afro-Caribbeans were denied both British and Costa Rican nationality. A law also existed prohibiting land ownership and although many squatted on land, many were subsequently threatened with eviction by white Costa Ricans using 'official' papers which they did not understand (Beisanz et al., 1987: 67). This was exacerbated by the increasing contracting of banana cultivation to independent farmers in the 1930s, leading to further migration of

Hispanics to the area (Purcell, 1987).

With withdrawal of the Company in 1942, control of the region was passed to the state. Purcell (1985: 7) states that "in effect, Limón which was a closed community under the plantation regime became incorporated into wider society, but at a lower level". It was not until 1949 that the state, transformed under the newly established Republic with its commitment to representative democracy, changed its blatantly racist policy and granted Afro-Caribbeans full rights as citizens of Costa Rica.²¹ The new Constitution abolished restrictions on the geographical mobility of Afro-Caribbeans and aimed to integrate them socially and politically into mainstream Costa Rican society. In 1960 a law was passed prohibiting discrimination in employment on grounds of race and in 1967 Costa Rica signed the International Convention for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (Duncan, 1989). Despite this, a law limiting access to certain sports centres, hotels and bars remained in effect until 1968 when the black deputy, Carl Neil, finally secured its repeal (ibid.). In addition, with respect to political participation, the granting of suffrage to the Afro-Caribbean population was not accompanied by the widespread election of black representatives to ministerial posts or to the Legislative Assembly. In 1951, a group called 'Black Whiz' was founded in Limón to encourage the political participation of the black population. Petitions sent to the major political parties were ignored by all except the PLN who still enjoy political patronage by Afro-Caribbeans (Duncan, 1989; Sawyers Royal, 1989).²²

Evidence of continued racial discrimination in spite of claims of equality encompassed in the Constitution and subsequent legislation, appears to support the idea that the Costa Rican state has acted to avoid conflict rather than necessarily prioritising the interests of subjugated groups (see earlier). After the withdrawal of United Fruit, blacks were economically displaced (Purcell, 1985, 1987). Given the history of ethnic conflict in the area and a situation of economic hardship among Afro-Caribbeans, the granting of legal rights may be interpreted as an attempt to pacify a potentially threatening section of the population. Whatever the rationale, subtle racial discrimination has continued, compounded by the small size of the Afro-Caribbean population in national terms. Indeed this fact has contributed to a tendency for blacks to be graded according to their closeness to Hispanic Costa Rican ideals (Purcell, 1985: 9). The subtlety of discrimination may also be seen in the two most important sets of legislation in Costa Rica, the Labour Code and the Family Code, neither specifically mentioning race or ethnicity. Although the anti-discriminatory law referred to earlier prohibited racial discrimination in the workplace, it is not actually included in the

Labour Code which acts as the main source of reference for labour issues. Likewise, the Family Code promotes the ideal of the nuclear family and makes no reference to the particular configuration of Afro-Caribbean families which are more likely to be extended or woman-headed (Osorio et al, 1980). Some have argued that this failure to take into account the particular experiences of the Afro-Caribbean population is itself the most virulent form of racism, essentially amounting to ethnocide, or the systematic destruction of a culture (Duncan, 1989).

The most obvious example of the latter was the introduction of the Costa Rican education system in Limón, which in 1949, replaced English language schools based on the Jamaican system (see also Chapter Two). Purcell (1987: 33) points out that "the system of education intervened between the West Indian and his world as the principal transmitter of the Hispanic way of life, ultimately a form of political control". This also contributed to the decline in the use of English by the Afro-Caribbean population who gradually began to view it as a negative rather than positive attribute (ibid.). Calls for bilingual education were consistently ignored by the state and as late as 1976, there were cases of teachers charging students fines for speaking English in schools (Purcell, 1987). ²³ An interesting study was carried out in Costa Rica and Panama in 1986 on the extent of racism among primary school children. It concluded that black children had lower self-esteem than white and *mestizo* children and were the subject of racial prejudice from their peer group (Ruiz, 1989). This is further corroborated by the stereotypical depiction of ethnic groups in educational texts which has served to increase alienation (Murillo, 1988). Therefore, although the Costa Rican educational system formally promotes racial and ethnic equality, discrimination prevails in more subtle guises.

Although this section has emphasised the Afro-Caribbean population it is also important to mention briefly the legal treatment of indigenous Indian groups. Indigenous people were also granted citizenship in the 1949 Constitution yet their treatment by the state has suffered from similar disparities between policy and practice in terms of legislation. In the 1960s a congressional investigation led to the creation of the National Commission of Indian Affairs (CONAI) and in 1977 a law (*Ley Indígena* 6172) was passed to protect the land and resources of the Indians through the establishment of Indian Reserves (Barry, 1990; Murillo, 1988). However, evidence shows that these reserves did not protect the rights of Indians when multi-national agricultural enterprises were involved, with the result that land invasions occurred regardless of the legal protection (Murillo, 1988). ²⁴ The law also interfered with the

traditional power structures of indigenous society, artificially creating Communal Development Associations which were used for political ends by CONAI, who^{ich} often operated contrary to the interests of the Indians themselves (ibid). In addition, there have been complaints from Indian leaders that reserves have become tourist attractions and that their traditional agricultural practices have been interfered with (Barry, 1990). This ethnic group represents an even more marginal population than the Afro-Caribbeans, yet state policy in terms of a formal commitment to their protection and disregard of the same in practice, exemplifies the general attitude of the state to all ethnic groups.

In conclusion, it appears that the state in Costa Rica has a history of racist legislation initiated largely in response to the settlement of Afro-Caribbeans in Limón in the late nineteenth century. Since the 1970s state legislation seems to have eliminated all previous forms of overt racism, yet the efficacy of this formal commitment to equality must be challenged in the same way that Costa Rican democracy and the role of the state must be questioned in more general terms. It appears that legislation regarding ethnic groups has served the interests of the ruling class to pacify demands and avoid confrontation and indeed, subtle racism appears to have been maintained. Essentially the state promotes Hispanic Costa Rican cultural values at the expense of Caribbean or indigenous culture found mainly in the region and city of Limón. The ethnic diversity of this region, which has contributed considerably to national development, appears to have been overlooked in policy formulation and implementation as a result of indirect racial discrimination.

Gender and the State

Although a patriarchal system which is further reinforced by *machismo*, predominates in Costa Rica (as in most Latin American countries), the state has proclaimed a formal commitment to gender equality. In spite of this, Costa Rican women have remained in a disadvantaged position and have consistently been subjected to discrimination (Méndez, 1988). This calls into question the efficacy of legislation where culturally embedded structures of patriarchy and *machismo* may be undermining any formal advances, as well as the very nature of this legislation and its claims to promote 'equality'. Indeed, in Costa Rica an examination of the legislative history with regard to gender, indicates that discrimination and institutionalised sexism have until recently, been inherent in most legislation advocating gender 'equality' (Facio, 1989a). Yet Costa Rica differs from most other Latin American countries in the passing of the recent 'Law Promoting

Social Equality for Women' (March, 1990) which aims to redress the inequalities experienced by women through a series of reforms of existing legislation as well as other innovative measures. However, the dilemma remains as to how far legislation can be effective when it differs so radically from the reality of the cultural and social practices of a society.

Historically, the national heroine, Pancha Carasco, who was the first woman general of the army in nineteenth century, was also the first woman to make a formal complaint of domestic violence to the courts. ²⁵ Yet this affirmative action was the exception during this period. Although the Constitutions of 1844 and 1847 established equality of all Costa Ricans before the law, the idea of a woman sharing equal rights with her husband was completely alien to those who drafted the Constitutions. For example, the 1847 Constitution (Article 35) distinguished between all inhabitants who were obliged to abide by the laws of the state, and all Costa Ricans which referred only to the male population (Facio, 1989a: 72). The Constitution of 1848 (Article 9) was the most explicitly discriminatory, referring to the exclusiveness of citizenship for men, which Facio (1989a: 72) attributes as a reaction to the emergence of a suffragette movement in Costa Rica. ²⁶ This attitude of conferring political and social rights to men at the exclusion of women, persisted until 1949 when the Constitution granted universal suffrage and equal status to women. Article 91 established 'citizenship and political rights to Costa Ricans of either sex, over the age of eighteen' (Facio, 1989a: 72). However, the 1949 Constitution was not free from discrimination on grounds of gender and in Article 33 the term 'all Costa Ricans' was replaced with 'all men', thereby calling into question the precise nature of 'gender equality' in the newly established Republic (ibid). Indeed only in 1968 was the Constitution amended to include the prohibition of discrimination which was 'contrary to human dignity' (ibid).

In addition to the general Political Constitution, the issue of gender figures in other forms of legislation, namely the Family Code, the Labour Code and the Penal Code. Although the 'Law Promoting Social Equality for Women' has led to some substantive reforms of these Codes, it is important to outline the main features as they illustrate how the state has discriminated against women in the last four decades. The Family Code, established in 1974, is the most directly relevant to the position of women in Costa Rica. Women are invariably confined to the domestic sphere through their reproductive roles as wives and mothers, which legitimises their status in society in general (Chant, 1991b; Facio, 1989a; Méndez, 1988; Sherman, 1984). The rather dubious manner in which the term 'equality' is used in all Costa Rican legislation, can

also be applied to the Family Code. Whilst formally prescribing 'equality' between partners in a conjugal unit (Article 2), the Code essentially reflects the inequalities of the patriarchal system within which it was conceived. Article 35 contradicts this assertion of 'equality' through the designation of the husband or male partner as the economic provider and hence assigning the woman the domestic role (Facio, 1989b).

Further contradictions can be found in Article 16 which prohibits the remarriage of women for 300 days after divorce or annulment whereas men may remarry the following day; in Article 85 where a mother is unable to reveal the name or circumstances leading to the recognition of the father of a child born out of wedlock; in Article 138 where the father has the right to decide in cases of conflicts over the custody of children unless a court intervenes to the contrary (see Chant, 1991b; Facio, 1989b for a fuller discussion). The Code also reformed the inequality between men and women with reference to the grounds for divorce (Article 48), yet in reality the judicial system still operates on the assumption that circumstantial evidence for adultery is sufficient to apportion blame on the woman whereas evidence of concubinage must be proven to indict a man (Facio, 1989b: 63).²⁷ The Family Code therefore embodies overt discrimination on the grounds of gender in spite of its declaration of 'equality', indicating how the state endorses the maintenance of a patriarchal society.

Although the Family Code promotes the ideal of a strictly delineated sexual division of labour assuming men to be breadwinners and women to be wives and mothers, the increase in female labour force participation in recent years has led to a growing role for the Labour Code in the lives of Costa Rican women. Between 1950 and 1987 the proportion of economically active women in the labour force increased from 17.3% to 29.4% (Facio, 1989a: 46), yet the Labour Code has remained in a similar form since it was conceived in 1943 (despite some amendments in 1990). The Code classes women and minors of less than eighteen years of age as one group in Chapter VII, Article 87 (Vincenzi, 1988). This has three important implications. First, both groups are treated as peripheral to the main body of the legislation; second, women are categorised along with children rendering their value as insignificant; and third, the restrictions on heavy, unhygienic and dangerous work are extremely arbitrary and often serve to exclude women from employment which is highly remunerated (Facio, 1989b; see also Brydon and Chant, 1989: 184-86 for a discussion of the adverse effects of gender-specific protective legislation in other countries).

More recent reforms of the Labour Code have included a section (Articles 94-

100) on maternity leave and unfair dismissal due to pregnancy. This makes legal provision for paid maternity leave, which originally allowed for one month before birth and one month after, and which was amended recently to three months leave after birth. Article 94 prohibits dismissal on account of pregnancy or breast-feeding, yet the ability to enforce this is seriously hampered by the lack of any legal measures to ensure the reinstatement of the employee when illegal dismissal has occurred (Facio, 1989b; Vincenzi, 1988). ²⁸ Indeed, employers often choose to dismiss women on a permanent basis, paying the four months maternity leave outright in order to avoid fulfilling their legal obligations with regard to breast-feeding (Facio, 1989b). ²⁹ The discrimination which is inherent in this section may also be detected in Chapter VIII of the Labour Code which refers exclusively to domestic service. The very fact that it exists as a separate section implies that legal protection which applies to other forms of work is not applicable to domestic service. Indeed, minimum salary requirements, the length of the working day, and holidays are all subject to different conditions, hence reinforcing the idea that domestic service, which is dominated by women, is one of the most highly exploitative occupations in Costa Rica (Facio, 1989b). For example, domestic servants are paid at a lower rate than the minimum wage because their 'board' and 'food and 'drink' are supposed to be included in their salary. Perhaps the most important clause included in the Labour Code and probably the most ineffective, is that which states equal pay for equal work regardless of sex (Article 167). Although Costa Rica has the lowest differentiation in salaries within Central America, women earned roughly 20% of men's wages for similar work during the 1980s (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 257). ³⁰

The Penal Code of 1970 deals with issues of rape, abortion and domestic violence reflecting once again the disadvantaged position which women hold in Costa Rican society. The Code does not consider rape within marriage or of a prostitute illegal, nor is rape without 'carnal penetration' considered a crime. Abortion is illegal as in most Latin American countries, and is permitted only on the grounds that the woman's life is in danger or when she has performed her own abortion as the result of rape (Articles 121 and 93) (Facio, 1989a). This effectively promotes illegal abortion which is extremely dangerous, often resulting in death. ³¹ Sterilisation is also illegal although it is the second most common form of birth control in the country (approximately 25% of women have been sterilised) (Barry, 1990). It may also only be granted on the grounds of fulfilling a series of conditions and on the approval from a medical council, therefore stigmatising any woman who desires it. Domestic violence is not considered a serious offence, and the perpetrator is subject from two to thirty days imprisonment or the payment of a small fine which is arbitrarily decided according to the severity of the

injuries (Facio, 1989a; Molina, 1989). Indeed the leniency of legal reprisals has been a source of discontent among women's groups in Costa Rica where domestic violence is widespread and to all intents and purposes accepted by many women (Molina, 1989).

All three Codes illustrate how the state has reflected and indeed promoted (by default if not by design), the patriarchal attitudes of Costa Rican society, even when legislation has ostensibly been concerned with equality. In more general terms this has contradicted the very nature of the democratic ideals which supposedly form the basis of society. In light of this, not only is democracy a questionable concept in the forms outlined in the earlier section, but it is also extremely contradictory in terms of gender equality. In the 1980s this situation began to change with the ratification of the UN 'Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' in 1979 (Pietilä and Vickers, 1990). The Political Constitution of 1949 decreed that all international conventions could overwrite national laws, implying that the legislation discussed previously was in fact nullified. This led to increasing pressure on the state for reform from non-governmental women's organisations and from within the state itself, largely from the National Centre for the Development of Women and the Family (CMF). In 1985 the PLN candidate, Oscar Arias Sánchez responded to this call for change in his presidential campaign which promised the creation of *"un gobierno con alma de mujer"* (a government with the soul of a woman) (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 202). ³² The 'Project of Real Equality for Women' was officially recognised in March 1988 by the First Lady at the time, Margarita Penón de Arias and the progressive 'Law Promoting Social Equality for Women' was finally passed in March 1990. ³³

The law essentially aims to validate the concept of equality through the promotion and guarantee of truly equal rights for women through the reform of the Family, Labour and Penal Codes as well as the creation of a number of additional radical measures. The main achievements of this recent law include politically, the obligation of all political parties to guarantee the participation of women at all levels of the political process; the creation of the 'General Defence of Human Rights' to protect all human rights, particularly those of women; the establishment of a 'Woman's Defence' to ensure the implementation of equal rights and opportunities and to create a permanent investigation of the causes of inequality. In terms of social rights, all housing obtained under social development programmes requires the compulsory joint registration of property in marriage or the registration in the woman's name in cases of common-law unions; adequate funding for child day-care centres in rural areas and the provision of day care in state institutions where the total number of children of employees is more than

fifteen; and reinstatement of women by employers in situations of unfair dismissal due to pregnancy. Sexual protection has also been strengthened in that a female judge is required to preside over cases of sexual violence; in instances of domestic violence, the perpetrator must leave the home providing sufficient funds to meet household expenses for eight days. The fundamental importance of education in changing societal attitudes is emphasised and school texts are forbidden to portray men and women in traditional roles which are 'contrary to social equality, or maintain the woman in a subordinate position'; all sports and recreation are required to satisfy the needs of both boys and girls; provisions are made to establish a professional training department within the National Training Institute (see Chant 1991b for a fuller discussion). ³⁴

Although the new law amends many of the major areas of discrimination within the existing legislation, it was subject to a number of modifications in the course of its passage through Congress. The main source of contention was the proposal of positive discrimination where women be given preference for public positions and where a fixed quota system for government representatives be introduced so that the number of woman deputies be proportional to the number of female voters in a given electoral area (see also Chant,1991b). This is particularly relevant given that in 1988 women made up 49% of the electorate, yet they only held 12.2% of the seats in the Legislative Assembly (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 201). In spite of this massive disparity, these clauses were excluded from the final draft of the law on the basis that positive discrimination was unconstitutional. ³⁵ However, this is clearly incorrect if the UN 'Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women' is taken into account. The Convention includes the promotion of positive discrimination in order to ensure the elimination of gender inequality and is essentially accorded superior authority than the national Constitution. It would therefore appear that those who opposed these clauses were in fact acting unconstitutionally as well as contradicting the very spirit of the new law.

The party politics involved in the promulgation of the law are particularly interesting and have implications for the political treatment of gender issues in general and for the birth of women's movements in Costa Rica. In the vote on the law in the Legislative Assembly, those who opposed it were exclusively members of the PUSC, including one woman. ³⁶ While this may be explained by the fact that the law was conceived by the opposition PLN, it is more likely to reflect the traditional divisions which have existed in Costa Rican politics between the PLN and the PUN/PUSC parties. Although the emergence of women's movements occurred within the Popular Vanguard

Party (communist) with the creation of the Alliance of Costa Rican Women (AMC) in 1952, demands from the AMC led to the adoption of many of their recommendations by the PLN to promote the equality of women within its social welfare programmes (García and Gomáriz, 1989a). ³⁷ The commitment of the PLN to issues of gender resulted in the creation of state institutions to safeguard the rights of women which had been ignored by the opposition party. In 1975 the National Centre for the Development of Women and the Family (CMF) was founded under a PLN administration with the objective of increasing the consciousness of women and the dissemination of information on their legal rights through the creation of workshops. Together with the Feminine Movement of the National Liberation Party founded in 1979, and with the support of some 150 governmental and non-governmental women's organisations, the CMF led the campaign for the realisation of the 'Law Promoting the Social Equality for Women' (García and Gomáriz, 1989a). ³⁸ The PUSC has therefore had little to do with the recent law or indeed with the development of state institutions or departments campaigning to redress the subordinate position of women in Costa Rica.

Having outlined the major points of the new law and the conditions under which it was conceived, it is now important to turn to the prospects for the improvement of women's status. The law is faced with the task of changing the entrenched ideology of patriarchy inherent not only in societal attitudes, but also in the pre-existing legal framework. Where legislation departs from accepted cultural patterns and attitudes, the more difficult it is to implement. Thus, the general reaction of Costa Rican women is that the law represents a useful tool from which to begin to alter society. Even the women most intimately involved in the campaign for the project express their doubts over its effectiveness. For example, Ana Elena Badilla, a lawyer at CMF, considers that "a law is unable to resolve the problems of the women of Costa Rica because discrimination and the subordinate position of women in society, are cultural and historical conflicts which mean more than mere legislation". ³⁹ However, the fact that the law reached the statute books in itself represents a victory for women, especially as it has increased the awareness of men and women to the issue of gender inequality both in society in general and within the government. The overall consensus appears to be that a progressive legal framework now exists and so it is up to Costa Rican women to take advantage of their newly improved formal political, economic and social position in society.

Evidence from the present study carried out in Limón is relatively encouraging with regard to this. Of the forty-five semi-structured interviews conducted, all the

respondents (both men and women) had heard of the law, indicating that media coverage had dealt efficiently with the dissemination of information. The reaction to the law in terms of whether it was deemed as beneficial or detrimental was highly polarised between the male and female respondents. All the women considered it to be 'a good thing' although the majority also doubted whether it would be effective. On the other hand, a number of men interviewed regarded it as dangerous in that it would give women too much sexual freedom who as a result of the law, would neglect their domestic duties and probably be unfaithful to their partners. The case of Olga who is 22 and lives in a non-formalised union with her partner and two children, is particularly encouraging with regard to the effectiveness of the law. During the five years of their union her partner has beaten her on repeated occasions (because she was '*malcriada*' or behaved badly, which involved speaking when she was not supposed to). However, since the ratification of the law in March 1990, he has not struck her in fear of police coming to arrest him. Therefore, although it is impossible to assess the implementation of this legislation at such an early date, the preliminary reactions would indicate some success.

In tracing the history of legislation regarding gender equality, it appears that until recently, it has reflected the patriarchal society upon which it was attempting to exercise some control. Hidden within proclamations of equality has been an inherent discrimination against women, serving to maintain female subordination. Returning to the initial discussion on the nature of the state, it seems again that the interests of the dominant classes (which are essentially male) have been maintained and that men hold all positions of power within the state. Indeed, Charlton et al., (1989: 8) note that states in general "reflect this gender inequality insofar as their institutions are staffed and controlled by men and their policies reflect male domination of women's lives" (see also Alvarez, 1990). In Costa Rica, demands from feminists have secured various reforms yet the status of women has not improved dramatically (Barry, 1990; García and Gomáriz, 1989a). The economic crisis has put further pressure on women who invariably bear the brunt of recession (see Chant, 1991a; 1992b; González de la Rocha, 1988; Vickers, 1991 for a fuller discussion). While the ratification of the 'Law Promoting Social Equality for Women' represents a divergence from previous legislation and from societal norms, it remains to be seen whether the state has the ability to change attitudes. None the less, the law is a major advance for women in Costa Rica, as well as being unprecedented elsewhere in Latin America.

The discussion of the legislation regarding gender and ethnicity in Costa Rica

within the national perspective, has obviously omitted the important situation of Afro-Caribbean women concentrated in the region of Limón. Yet, Bourque (1989: 116) points out that "we must understand how gender is used in conjunction with or in opposition to class, racial and ethnic divisions to secure state purposes". Although no legislation exists dealing specifically with this group, they have in practice suffered from both ethnic and gender discrimination within the existing legal framework. Moreover, the particular circumstances in which these women live which differ from white/*mestizo* women's experiences, has not been taken into account in the formulation of the legislation. The higher labour force participation rates of Afro-Caribbean women (Osorio *et al*, 1980; Sherman, 1984) means that the Labour Code's discriminatory articles apply more to them than other women in Costa Rica (although economic recession has resulted in higher employment rates of all women). In addition, the different types of household structures prevalent among Afro-Caribbeans, which are often woman-headed or extended (Osorio *et al*, 1980), is contrary to the ideals promulgated within the Family Code, therefore rendering much of this inapplicable. Although the recent 'Law of Social Equality' will undoubtedly benefit Afro-Caribbean women in a general manner, the omission of any reference to ethnicity or race and the absence of a similarly radical document dealing with these issues specifically, will no doubt mean continued discrimination on at least one count. In reality, their continued double oppression is more likely.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the importance of the state and its related institutions in Costa Rica. The belief that the state embodies ideals of equality and democracy (in line with the liberal-pluralist argument) has been challenged. Marxian approaches appear to have greater validity where the dominant class ensures the maintenance of its own interests. However, in Costa Rica this has been tempered by what Barry (1990: 10) calls a 'social contract' between different social groups. Essentially the state has enacted uncoordinated reforms in response to potential conflict with the result that the state bureaucracy has become distended, therefore reducing its effectiveness. State action does not have uniform effects across class, ethnic or gender lines (Charlton *et al*, 1989) which is particularly pertinent in the present case. More specifically, legislative history dealing with gender and ethnic relations has illustrated that although concessions have increasingly been made to these groups over time, subtle discrimination remains inherent in state actions. Even such advances as the 'Law

Promoting the Social Equality for Women', representing a radical improvement in the formal status of women, are viewed skeptically given doubts about the effectiveness of legislation per se in altering attitudes. The irony of the situation, however, is that while institutionalised discrimination has been gradually dismantled, the state itself is presently undergoing fundamental restructuring in response to economic crisis. While it is still too early to assess specific effects of this, it is expected that women and ethnic groups are likely to suffer adversely. The following chapters will provide evidence for assessing the efficacy of state actions and the extent of discrimination at the grassroots level among the poor in Limón.

Notes to Chapter Three

1) The 'instrumentalist' views are primarily based on the work of Miliband (1969) while the 'structuralist' approach is advocated by Poulantzas (1973).

2) The name Costa Rica (which translates as Rich Coast) was a misnomer based on the belief that there was great mineral wealth to be found in the colony. When Columbus landed in the present port of Limón in 1502 the indigenous Indians (the Bribrís, Cabécares and Tiribles) offered gifts of gold, yet this proved to be misleading and no deposits were ever found. Colonial settlement was eventually concentrated in the territory now forming the centre of the country where the economy was based on small-scale farming using Spanish rather than indigenous Indian labour (the majority of the indigenous population fled to the remote mountain regions). Even the founder of the colony, Juan Vásquez de Coronado worked his own plot (Ameringer, 1982; Bird, 1984). Costa Rica therefore evolved in a manner quite distinct from other Spanish colonies with little opportunity for the emergence of a leisured class and where even the Roman Catholic church was poor. This led to a sense of individualism and an egalitarian spirit which many argue can still be detected today (see Ameringer, 1982; Beisanz *et al.*, 1987). Costa Rica achieved Independence largely by default as isolation meant that they shared little part in the Independence movements in neighbouring colonies nor in the separation of the captaincy of Guatemala from Spain which also set a precedent for peaceful solutions to problems in the new Republic (Ameringer, 1982).

3) The Liberal Laws of 1844 established a free and compulsory public education system as well as expelling the Jesuit order, declaring marriage a civil contract, permitting divorce and secularising cemeteries. The University of Santo Tomás in San José was also closed on grounds that it had become dominated by Jesuit control and that it was too elitist (Ameringer, 1982: 19).

4) Coffee production has been of fundamental importance in Costa Rican economic, political and social evolution. First promoted by Braulio Carillo, coffee became the mainstay of the economy at the beginning of the nineteenth century and has remained as such ever since. By the mid-nineteenth century a coffee oligarchy had developed, constituting the Costa Rican social and political elite. Particularly in politics this oligarchy has played an integral role whether as part of the governing or opposition party; the interests of this group have affected all major political developments in Costa Rican political history (see Ameringer, 1982; Hall, 1976; Gudmundson, 1986).

5) By 1978 the number of these institutions had risen to 182, of which 96 had been created since 1950 and included among many, the Central Bank of Costa Rica (BCCR), the National Insurance Institute (INS), the National Council of Production (CNP) and the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE) (Ameringer, 1982: 42).

6) Also included in the measures to weaken the presidency was the provision that the president was elected popularly every four years and originally could not resume office until eight years had elapsed. This was further amended in 1969 when it was decreed that presidents could only hold a single term of office (Beisanz *et al.*, 1987). The personal power of the president is limited and while able to appoint and remove ministers, is unable to initiate any legislation without the consent of the appropriate minister. While having the power of veto over legislation, this may be overridden by a two-thirds vote by the Legislative Assembly. Similarly all other power, including preparation of the budget and conduct of foreign relations, are subject to the approval of the Assembly. Ameringer (1982: 39) notes that effectively "every president is a lame duck, with the prospect, depending upon his will and personality, of either being ignored or being unable to act boldly or above politics".

7) From 1979 to 1982 Costa Rica underwent a severe economic crisis largely brought about by rising interest rates which the government was paying on its external debt which was the

highest per capita debt in Latin America at the time. A number of other factors further exacerbated the economic situation including rising international oil prices, the structure of the national economy based on agro-exports dependent on declining world markets, and wide-scale public borrowing from international banks to fund the expansive state bureaucracy. Although by the mid-1980s, the Costa Rican economy appeared to have recovered, by 1987 recession had set in once more and has continued until the present, worsening in the early 1990s (see Barry, 1990; Garnier, 1991; Pollack, 1989; Sojo, 1989).

8) The duplication of state institutions can be shown when the Carazo administration (1978-82) extended the responsibilities of the Office of Information of the Presidential House to include the preparation of planning documents. However, the Oduber administration (1974-78) had previously created the Ministry of National Planning (OFIPLAN) which still remained functioning in spite of Carazo's new reforms (Ameringer, 1982: 106; see also Ward, 1986 on Mexico).

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9) John Gayle (1986: 70) notes when discussing Costa Rica that "Democratic pluralism has become a fine art which perhaps imperils itself, like an elaborate opera which loses intense audience involvement despite habitual applause".

10) Structural adjustment packages have been implemented in three phases. The first, PAE I (*Programma de Ajuste Estructural*), covered the period 1985-1988 and emphasised the diversification of the agro-export economy, the second, PAE II, from 1988-1990, stressed industrial investment and finally, PAE III from 1990 onwards deals with state reform and has emerged as the most controversial (interview with Ignacio Sáenz Aguilar, MIDEPLAN, 14 August, 1992). The most recent developments under PAE III include the selling of subsidiaries of the Costa Rican Development Corporation (CODESA) to private buyers and threats to privatise the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICE), the three largest state banks (Banco de Costa Rica, Banco Nacional and Banco Anglo-Costarricense), the National Production Council (CNP), the oil refinery (RECOPE) and other state monopolies such as Fertica (fertiliser manufacturer) (Barry, 1990; Economist Intelligence Unit, 1991; Garnier, 1991).

11) In 1978 it was estimated that 130,000 persons (20% of the total working population) were employed in the public sector (Ameringer, 1982: 94). In 1989 this proportion represented 16.4% of the workforce (167, 957 persons) (MIDEPLAN, 1990: 10). Government spending on health, education and housing has been reported to have decreased from 51.3% to 41.5% between 1975 and 1984 (Rojas, 1987: 23). However, these figures are debateable as Sojo (1989: 111) notes that it has actually increased from 35.6% to 42% during this period.

12) GDP growth has been erratic since 1986; in 1986 per annum growth rate was 5.5%; this fell to 3.8% in 1988, but rose to 5.5% in 1989. In 1990 and 1991 growth fell again (3.6% and 2.2% respectively) (Economist Intelligence Unit Country Profile, 1991: 5). Inflation also increased from 11.8% in 1986 to 20.8% in 1988 and 19.0% in 1990 (ibid.). Official figures show that unemployment is actually falling (from 6.0% in 1986 to 3.8% on 1989), yet underemployment is increasing (Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report, 1991: 31). Wage adjustments have fallen behind inflation and it is estimated that an increase of 64.75% is needed to restore real wages to their 1986 levels (ibid.).

13) Opposition to Calderón's policies has come from increasingly militant unions as well as the private sector. The latter claims that the government is favouring exporters (with its Certificados de Abono Tributario (CAT) subsidies) and that domestic industry will be sent into irreversible decline (Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report, 1991: 21). Calderón's ability to legislate has been called into question. For example, in 1991 the Supreme Court ruled that the dismissal of 2,000 public employees should be revoked, and threat of a massive strike by trade unions in opposition to a new sales tax (13% instead of 10%) forced Calderón to withdraw (ibid: 22).

14) While legislation has appeared to be far-reaching in content, caution must be exercised. Beisanz *et al* (1987: 192) point out that the symbolic solution to a problem exemplifies Costa Rican democracy and note, "Costa Rica is often called a nation of laws; but many of the laws

exist simply as evidence of good intentions". Therefore this commitment to legislation must be viewed with a certain degree of skepticism particularly when dealing with the treatment of its relation to gender and ethnicity.

15) In Costa Rica the term 'race' or '*raza*' has developed in popular usage to refer to skin colour (Meléndez and Duncan, 1989) in spite of academic discourse to the contrary (see Chapter One).

16) Camacho (1967) (cited in Beisanz *et al.* 1987: 64) notes that in Costa Rica " racial groups of other types are so small that the white majority does not feel the need to discriminate against them", although undoubtedly members of these 'other' groups do not share the same opinion.

17) As in the rest of Latin America very few Spanish women came to Costa Rica in the early colonial period and so there were many unions between Spanish men and Indian women. In addition, Beisanz *et al.* (1987) also note that around fifty Indian chiefs were granted the status of *hidalgo* corroborating further the fallacy of 'racial superiority' in that that the majority are in fact *mestizo*. Indeed the Costa Rican scholar, Isaac Felipe Azofeifa notes that 'Most Costa Ricans can trace their lineage back to an indigenous great-grandmother' (*The Tico Times*, 22 June, 1990, p.11).

18) This policy of spatial containment was also exercised before the turn of the century. Seligson (1980: 65) notes that a National Archive document of 1899 shows how the state prohibited Chinese or blacks to work in a state-owned sugar refinery in Nicoya, Guanacaste, giving the contractors the right " to introduce into the country immigrants dedicated to the work on the farm.....with the precise condition that said immigrants cannot be of the black race nor of the yellow race".

19) At this time, the railway was the only transportation link between Limón and the Valle Central. As such, the control of the movement of Afro-Caribbeans was relatively easy. When trains arrived at Turrialba, the last stop in the banana zone, the black crew from Limón was replaced by white employees allowing the train to proceed to San José (Seligson, 1980: 66).

20) This petition vehemently criticised the presence of Afro-Caribbeans in the country stating that, "a law definately ought to be passed which prohibits their naturalisation because they are a race inferior to ours" (Seligson, 1980: 70).

21) During the 1948 Revolution, the black population of Limón ignored government requests to join their side and instead moved to join Figueres. In the creation of the new Constitution, Figueres was therefore honour-bound to secure equal rights for the Afro-Caribbean population (Seligson, 1980).

22) The PUN (now PUSC) rejected the petition from 'Black Whiz' on the grounds that they did not want foreigners names on their membership records as this would damage the party (Sawyers Royal, 1989). Indeed, the formation of the new government in 1990 under the leadership of Rafael Calderón Fournier of the PUSC party, included no ministers of Afro-Caribbean origin and only two Afro-Caribbeans held positions as deputies, Marcel Taylor and Clinton Kruscand.

23) In Puerto Limón a number of private schools based on the Jamaican system and funded largely by the Protestant Church still exist. The Escuela San Marcos is the most well-known of these schools and although teaching is primarily in Spanish, it aims to promote Afro-Caribbean culture and to counter what is termed 'psychological racism' which results in the self-denigration of children in the belief that they are 'inferior' to their white and *mestizo* peers (interview with Joyce Sawyers, Director of San Marcos School, August 3, 1990). A large proportion of Afro-Caribbean children who attend the state schools also have private tuition in English (where they can afford it) and up until about thirty years ago black children attended both state and private schools (one in the morning and another in the afternoon).

24) In the case of the Chirripó Reserve, Talamanca, a foreign company invaded Indian land and would not leave until the state had paid 900 000 US dollars indemnity. After this experience the state ceased to intervene in similar cases (Murillo, 1988: 104).

25) Article, 'New Office to Offer Protection for Women'. In The Tico Times, June 1 1990, p. 29.

26) In Article 9 of the 1848 Constitution, it is stated that " The Costa Ricans are male citizens who have the following qualities...." (Facio, 1989a: 73).

27) In Costa Rica the majority of divorces are granted on the grounds of mutual consent (88.9% in 1982) and generally the person who wants the divorce renounces any rights to alimony. However, evidence suggests that more women express the desire for a divorce, therefore losing all access to maintenance from their ex-husband, even though the opportunities for gaining an economic livelihood are much reduced for women (Facio, 1989b).

28) Dismissal on grounds of pregnancy is only illegal when a medical certificate has been presented to the employer beforehand. Ignorance of this clause in the law has led to many unfair dismissals of woman who attempt to hide their pregnancy for fear of losing their job and therefore with no legal provision for reprisal towards the employer (interview with Silvan Martínez Sflu, Regional Director, Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Limón, 21 August 1990)

29) Provisions are made in Article 97 allowing women with new-born babies to breast-feed for fifteen minutes every three hours, obliging employers to provide a suitable location within the workplace (Vincenzi, 1988: 37). Problems arise where no such place is provided, where creche facilities are unavailable and women must arrange for their babies to be brought to the workplace, and/or where permission to leave work in order to breast-feed is denied by the employer (Facio, 1989b: 64).

30) The average wage gap between men and women in Central American countries was 25% with the lowest in Costa Rica and the highest in El Salvador (30%) (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 257). The reason for this regional difference is related to the extent of female employment in the public sector, where the higher the proportion, the more likely protective legislation will be enforced (ibid).

31) It is estimated that about half the deaths of pregnant women in Latin America are due to illegal abortions (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 198; see also Dixon-Meuller, 1990).

32) Ironically however, Arias included only one woman in his cabinet on his election to power (García and Gomariz, 1989a)

33) As part of the Presidency of the Republic, the First Lady is obliged to devote her time to issues concerning women through the constitutionally created Office of the First Lady (García and Gomariz, 1989a: 212).

34) Ley de Promoción de la Igualdad Social de la Mujer (Ley No. 7142). Published in La Gaceta, Año CXII No. 59, 26 March 1990, San José.

35) Omar Obando, a PUSC deputy from Puntarenas, claimed that this article was 'unconstitutional' in that it 'discriminates against men' (interview in article ' Womens' Law Boosts Education'. The Tico Times, March 9 1990, p. 10).

36) The law was passed by 39 votes during the third debate, where there were 5 votes in opposition all from the Social Christian Unity Party. Indeed, most of the opposition to the law came from PUSC although many finally gave it their support (La Nación, 2 March 1990, p. 6A).

37) The AMC continued to be the principal woman's organisation until the 1970s and still remains one of the most important today. Although the AMC maintained its links with Popular Vanguard Party until 1987, it has also worked in close cooperation with the PLN. Interestingly, the AMC was instrumental in mobilising women in the banana zones of the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts in calling for their integration in the existing male-dominated trade unions (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 210).

38) Within the government, there are various departments or institutions (both autonomous and semi-autonomous) which have programmes dedicated to improving the position of women, including the Women's Defence within the Ministry of Justice, the health section of the Costa Rican Office of Social Security (CCSS), the section of Women and the Family of the the Institute of Agrarian Development (INA), the National Administration for Community Development (DINADECO) and the Combined Insititute of Social Development (IMAS). Those governmental agencies dealing almost exclusively with gender include, the National Childrens Institute (PANI), the Feminist Centre of Information and Action (CEFEMINA) and the CMF. Non-governmental institutions include, the Organisation of Women, Carmen Lyra (OMCAL), the Movement for Female Liberation, the Pancha Carasco Collective and the National Association of Associated Feminist Groups (ASONAGAF) (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 294-98).

39) Interview in the article '*Con la Ley no Basta*'. In Perfil, No. 142, 24 April 1990, p. 14.

CHAPTER FOUR- GENDER, ETHNICITY AND THE CONTEMPORARY LABOUR MARKET: LOCAL LABOUR DEMAND

Introduction

Having examined the historical development and growth of Limón in Chapters ~~Two and Three~~, the present chapter concentrates on the structure of the contemporary labour market and the extent to which segmentation and segregation have occurred along lines of gender and ethnicity. In Chapter Two it was shown that a highly stratified labour market has evolved in Limón, and given that there has been no fundamental restructuring of the economic base of the city, employment patterns have been broadly reproduced over time. The particular aims of the present chapter are first, to examine the nature of labour demand in the city, and second, to assess its impact on the occupational characteristics of different social groups. Labour demand in the present context refers first, to the nature of the local urban economy in terms of the organisation of production and market conditions and how changes in these may affect demand for certain types of labour, and second to the attitudes and policies of employers involved in personnel recruitment (see Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990).

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first provides an overview of employment in Limón examining the main sectors of economic activity and the changes which have occurred since the 1960s. The second looks at gender and ethnic employment patterns drawing on official data sources. Section three analyses data gathered through an employer survey conducted by the author of seventeen firms in the city to consider the structure of key local enterprises and the composition of the workforce. The sample is divided into public- and privately-owned firms as this is expected to have a significant bearing on the gender and ethnic composition of the labour force.¹ The fourth and final section examines the main patterns of segregation and segmentation in the labour market, and the extent to which patterns can be explained with reference to labour demand factors (for example, recruitment policies and practices). The emphasis in the chapter is on 'formal' sector employment due to its more extensive representation in official statistics and the author's sample survey. This does not imply that 'informal' employment is not important in the urban labour market of Limón, indeed, in Chapter Five it is shown how 'informal' activities are an important source of income for many people in low-income settlements.

Employment in Limón: An Overview

In Chapter Two it was noted that the province of Limón has developed and remained as an enclave, agro-export economy, although control over the regional economy has shifted since the 1950s from the hands of the United Fruit Company to an alliance between the Costa Rican state and multi-national banana enterprises. As part of this enclave development, the city of Limón has continued to serve as the nexus of tertiary activity in the region. The state has sought to assert its control over the region through various initiatives which have done little to promote diversification of the regional economy. During the 1950s and 1960s these were aimed at the revitalisation of the banana industry through multi-national and national channels. Once banana production was re-established various development plans were implemented including the National Development Plan, 1969-72 (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo*), the creation of Regional Development Councils, 1978-1982 (*Consejos de Desarrollo Regional*) and the Integral Development Plan for the Atlantic Region, 1984 (*Plan Integral de Desarrollo de la Región Atlántica*). These sought to promote the ideal of integrated development aimed at social as well as economic concerns such as the provision of basic amenities as well as improvements to the economic infrastructure. However, this has proved to be little more than rhetoric as Smith and Murillo (1989: 23) point out: the state has 'invaded' the Atlantic region through the promotion of infrastructural projects, permitting the development of the agro-export economy for the benefit of the Central Region of the country. This is further reiterated by Carvajal (1989: 72) who argues that these developments have occurred to the detriment of local economic initiatives reinforcing the dependent relationship initiated by the United Fruit Company. For example, in 1989, 76.7% of the regional workforce were salaried workers, 18.2% were self-employed and only 2.0% were employers (MIDEPLAN, 1990:19).²

At the regional level, the banana companies have continued to provide the principal source of employment in the province (Vargas *et al*, 1985) (see Figure 4.1). In 1986, the three largest banana companies were the Banana Development Corporation (BANDECO), the Standard Fruit Company and the *Compañía Bananera Atlántica* (COBAL) which together controlled 91.8% of the total banana exports (Goluboay and Vega, 1987: 146). While these companies are all owned by multi-national enterprises, BANDECO and COBAL both contract production to independent national producers who have increased their share of land under banana cultivation from 6.5% in 1960 to 42.6% in 1976 (Smith and Murillo, 1989: 45).³ This can be attributed to efforts by the Costa Rican state to loosen the hold of multi-national corporations on banana production in the

Figure 4.1 Change in Employment Sectors, 1890-1990, Limón

<i>Employment sector</i>	1890	1930	1950	1970	1990
<i>Banana production</i>	United Fruit Company	Collapse of United Fruit	Return of multi-national companies	Expansion of national producers/maintenance of multi-national enterprises	
<i>Port/cargo</i>	United Fruit Company		Re-activation and nationalisation of port/creation of JAPDEVA	Expansion of private cargo companies under auspices of JAPDEVA	
<i>Transport</i>	United Fruit Company		Nationalisation and investment in railway (INCOFER)	Decline in rail transport/increase in road transport	
<i>Commerce</i>	United Fruit Company	Chinese-owned commerce replaces United Fruit stores		Diversification of commercial base	
<i>Community/government services</i>	United Fruit Company		State control of health (CCSS) and education	Expansion of state services and de-centralisation of government institutions (eg. ICE, MIDEPLAN)	
<i>Manufacturing</i>				Creation of RECOPE, oil refinery by state	Development of manufacturing base (box-making and wood products)

region through the creation of a national administrative body, the *Asociación Bananera Nacional* (ASBANA) in 1971 and various regulatory mechanisms devised with the *Cámara Nacional de Banano*. However, while these measures, such as the fixing of export taxes, have been successful in their aim to promote increased national production, the hegemony of the multi-nationals has been maintained (Ellis, 1983; Garnier *et al*, 1987; Goluboay and Vega, 1987). ⁴ In recent years, banana production in the Atlantic region has increased substantially due to the withdrawal from the Pacific coast of United Brands (operating as the *Compañía Bananera de Costa Rica*) in 1984, and a number of legislative measures such as the *Plan de Fomento*, and the *Plan de Restitución* in 1985 which aimed to re-establish Costa Rica as a principal exporter of bananas in the world market (Garnier *et al*, 1987). This has had important effects on the generation of employment in the province both directly in the plantations and indirectly in related activities. The CCSS estimated that in 1986, the banana industry directly provided 18,000-20,000 jobs in the country (the majority in Limón) and generated approximately US\$122,046 in commercial and social activities (Goluboay and Vega, 1987: 149-155).

Banana production has therefore formed the mainstay of the regional economy both historically and more recently, and agriculture in general has remained the most important activity in the province. In 1989, agriculture and fishing absorbed 51.4% of the regional labour force, 22.2% were employed in services and transport, and 7.5% in industry (MIDEPLAN, 1990: 8) which represented a slight decline in agricultural employment during the period from 1984 (*Censo de Población*, 1987: 43-52). ⁵ Although state intervention in agriculture has been directed mainly at the banana industry (in spite of its inability to break the hegemony of the multi-national banana companies), piecemeal attempts have been made to diversify agriculture in the province through the provision of government subsidies for horticultural, timber, cacao and cattle-ranching projects (Smith and Murillo, 1989). While these have been relatively successful, banana production continues to dominate the agricultural sector and a large proportion of the tertiary activity in the province is linked with the banana economy.

As noted previously, tertiary activity in the province has continued to be concentrated in the city of Limón which acts as the service centre and port of export for the banana industry as well as the export of goods in general. Whereas the primary functions of the city have remained unchanged in the long term, ownership of these has been transferred from the United Fruit Company to the state in recent years (see Chapter Two). Whilst complete state control over the rural economy has proved

impossible, Puerto Limón has developed as the main nexus of public sector employment in the region. This was ^{initiated} ~~vanguarded~~ by the nationalisation of the port and railway ⁶ and the creation of JAPDEVA, the port administration authority in the 1960s. ⁷ During the 1970s the state consolidated its dominance of the urban economy through the establishment of RECOPE, the national oil refinery, ICE, the Institute of Electricity and the CCSS, the Ministry of Social Security (see Figure 4.1).

In addition to the provision of employment opportunities, the state has also strengthened its influence over the urban economy through the initiation of regional development projects. These have concentrated on infrastructural improvements in the city, although it should be stressed that these have prioritised the institutional needs of national and transnational capital in order to facilitate the expansion of the export sector and capital-intensive industry (Alfaro, 1985; Carvajal, 1989; Smith and Murillo, 1989). The most important of these projects was the modernisation of the port involving the construction of three new docks, *Muelle Metálico*, *Muelle Nacional* and *Muelle 70* in the 1970s and the completion of the Port Complex of Moín (*El Complejo Portuario de Moín*) and the *Muelle Alemán* in the 1980s. While creating a more efficient system of exportation, these improvements have had adverse effects upon employment opportunities in the city. For example, the new 'roll-on/roll-off' system is based on the transportation of containers which can be loaded at source and transported directly onto the ship requiring very little manual labour (Smith and Murillo, 1989). ⁸ Similarly, infrastructural modernisation of the rail network has led to reductions in labour demand which has been further exacerbated by competition from road transport as the predominant form of carrying passengers and goods (Giro, 1989). ⁹

In spite of extensive state involvement in the urban economy of Limón, the private sector has also developed alongside (and often interrelated to) state enterprises. One of the most important areas in terms of employment generation is that of the cargo companies which have expanded in recent years in response to the increased volume of exports. Initially, JAPDEVA and the railway company operated cargo loading at the port, but since the early 1970s, JAPDEVA has contracted private cargo companies for this (ESTIBA, CADESA, *Estibadores Bananeros, S.A* and more recently, COOPUETBA). The other major area of private sector involvement in the economy is the development of manufacturing industry which has been promoted by the government since the 1970s. Prior to 1960, only four industrial enterprises existed in the province and the majority have been established since 1980 (73% of the total in 1985) (Jiménez,

1989: 161). A study undertaken in 1984 by the Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN) revealed that the most important industry was the production of cardboard boxes for packing bananas, which employed 40% of the region's industrial workforce, followed by food and drink processing (34%) and furniture and wood manufacture (15%) (MIDEPLAN, 1984, cited in Carvajal, 1989: 75). However, it has been estimated that industry employs only 928 workers in total (Carvajal, 1989: 75) which is a reflection of the capital-intensive nature of manufacturing in the city.

Commerce is the only private sector activity which is not intimately related to the banana industry although even here, the pervading influence of the industry has affected its development. Since the withdrawal of the United Fruit Company from Limón, which operated a monopoly on commercial establishments in the city, most shops and restaurants have traditionally been small-scale and owned by the Chinese population. However more recently, various trade unions and cooperatives linked with the major employers in the city have come to dominate the operation of supermarkets in the area which may be interpreted as the reproduction of the system of the commissary store prevalent under United Fruit. This is only in the area of food retailing, and the majority of non-food outlets and restaurants are still owned mainly by the Chinese and a number of *limonenses* (mainly white/*mestizo*).

In contemporary Limón, the overall structure of the employment market therefore consists of a large public sector (notably JAPDEVA, RECOPE, ICE and the CCSS) and a smaller private sector (cargo, manufacturing and commerce). The main branches of activity include the port and related activities, transport, government services, industry and commerce (see Figure 4.1). Census figures highlight this where in 1984, 26.5% of the economically active population in the urban area was employed in services, 18.8% in transport, 14.9% in commerce and 9.1% in manufacturing industry (Censo de Población, 1987: 52). In spite of some diversification of the urban (and regional) economy, the city has essentially continued to operate as an enclave. The main productive sectors have remained closely tied to the banana industry even if control has shifted from private to public hands.

One further point in relation to Limón's development as an enclave economy is the maintenance of higher average wage levels than in the rest of Costa Rica. This can largely be attributed to the precedent set by United Fruit who initially paid wages in US dollars and thereafter in *colones* at a higher rate than earned elsewhere. The continued presence of multinational banana companies and related enterprises in the area has

ensured above average salaries. Research on multinational activity elsewhere has found a similar pattern (see for example, Humphrey, 1982⁵ on Brazil; Roxborough, 1984 on Mexico; Foo and Lim, 1989; Pineda-Ofreneo, 1988 on South-East Asia). The reasons for this lie in the scale of production where expenditure on local wages is small in comparison to the overall profits of corporate companies at a global level (Cubitt, 1987). More specifically in terms of banana companies in Central America, a cooperative workforce is an imperative given that bananas are highly perishable and any disruption in production could result in huge losses for the company. The payment of high wage rates therefore ensures a more docile labour force (see Burbach and Flynn, 1980 on Del Monte operations in Guatemala). However, although salary rates are higher in banana plantations than other agricultural sectors, it is port workers who are crucial to the marketing process and hence it is here where the highest average wages are earned (ibid.). Trade union activity has also been important in securing high average earnings (Burbach and Flynn, 1980; Roxborough, 1984) ¹⁰ and in Limón this has been reflected initially in the preponderance of powerful unions within the plantations under United Fruit and amongst the cargo companies in the contemporary context.

In addition, the nature of employment in the cargo companies while intensive and often involving working at night, is also erratic. In order to retain workers, therefore, average earnings are high. Indeed, ESTIBA, one of the cargo companies included in the employer survey, reported average earnings of up to 70,000 *colones* a month (US\$823) in loading and unloading bananas. Compared with the legal minimum salary of doctors, lawyers, architects and engineers which is 34,200 *colones* (US\$402) a month, these salaries are obviously very high. ¹¹ However, as noted previously, port work is unstable and often more than half the workforce of cargo companies are temporary workers due to the inability of the firms to plan for the arrival of ships with differing labour requirements. ¹² Notwithstanding this, official figures for 1989 illustrate that average earnings in Limón are the highest outside the central Metropolitan area. The national average is 17,531 *colones* per month (US\$206) and in Limón the average is 17,154 *colones* (US\$202). In Guanacaste province, on the other hand, this figure is only 13,440 *colones* (US\$158) and in Puntarenas 15,555 *colones* (US\$183) (MIDEPLAN, 1990: 53).

Finally, it is important to outline briefly the socio-economic implications of the development of the labour market in Limón. As pointed out previously, the flow of government investment has been directed towards encouraging and maintaining banana

exports through infrastructural improvements. This has been to the detriment of investment in social welfare facilities as Smith and Murillo (1989: 43) point out: between 1975 and 1982, 83.4% of state investment in the region was directed towards infrastructure and only 3.4% towards funding education, health and housing projects. When combined with the capital-intensive nature of industrial development and the inherent instability of work in the port and in the 'informal' sector, the effect of infrastructural improvements has led to unemployment levels which in 1988 were the highest in the country (in spite of the highest wages) (MIDEPLAN, 1989). In the same year open unemployment in the region stood at 7.5%, compared with a national average of 5.5% (ibid: 2) and underemployment was 30% (Carvajal, 1989: 76).

High rates of unemployment and a growing 'informal' sector have been further affected by continued in-migration to the region and city. Between 1973 and 1984, the regional population increased by 46% compared to a national average of 29.1% and while the increase in the Central canton of Limón was only 28.8%, this rate of growth is significant when compared with other regional capitals, for example, Puntarenas grew by 18.4% and Liberia by 28.9% (MIDEPLAN, 1985: 25-9).¹³ In Limón, these growth rates are most probably related in the rural context to employment opportunities on banana plantations which provide permanent rather than seasonal work as well as the highest agricultural wages in the country (Carvajal, 1983; Chant, 1991b, 1991c; Taylor, 1980).¹⁴ Migration to Puerto Limón is generally linked with perceived employment opportunities in the port and again with the overall higher wage levels and better public facilities.

Migration to the city of Limón has led to intense pressure on housing provision and on social amenities such as education and health care, particularly in the last ten years (INVU, 1987). Lack of adequate housing is the most serious problem in the city and as a result, spontaneous, irregular settlements have emerged on the periphery, largely on marshland prone to flooding and inappropriate for permanent settlement. Approximately ten irregular settlements exist in the city and in 1987 the estimated population of the five largest was 39% of the total urban population (INVU, 1987). Deficiencies in health care provision can be illustrated in the general mortality rate for Limón which was 4.6 per 1,000 in 1984 compared with the national average of 3.8; and the infant mortality rate which was 28.1 per 1,000 compared with the national average of 19.1 in the same year (IFAM, 1987: 363). Indeed these mortality rates for Puerto Limón are the highest in the region, reflecting the pressure on resources in the urban area (Cubillo *et al.*, 1989). In terms of education, 10% of the population of Limón had

no schooling compared with 3% in San José and only 8% of the population of Limón had a completed secondary education compared with 15% in San José (ibid: 141). These figures reflect overall deficiencies in social welfare provision in the city which have emerged, as argued earlier, as a result of the prioritisation of state investment for economic infrastructure.

The above situation has led to increased social conflict in the city in the last fifteen years, culminating in the creation in 1989 of a Federation of Provincial and Canton Workers and a Permanent Council for the Study and Solution of Problems of Limón (CPESPL), which aims to promote regional identity and greater autonomy for Limón as well as fight for greater state investment in social services (Barry, 1990; Smith and Murillo, 1989; Municipalidad de Limón, 1992). Together with the urban based trade union movement, particularly the Union of Port and Railway Workers of Limón (*Sindicato de Trabajadores Portuarios y Ferrocarrileros de Limón*) which has emerged as the most powerful in Costa Rica, these groups have spearheaded numerous demands on the state, mainly in the form of strikes. Indeed, between 1975 and 1985, 64% of all strikes in Costa Rica were concentrated in the province of Limón (Smith and Murillo, 1989: 49) and in 1989, the CPESL led a national strike protesting against reductions in wages and public services (Barry, 1990). The increase in social mobilisation in Limón also has an ethnic dimension in that the Afro-Caribbean population which has been historically associated with the trade union movement and political action in the region, has been at the forefront of calls for socio-economic improvements and for the preservation of cultural identity in the area (Barry, 1990; Carvajal and Driori, 1987; Vargas and Requeyra, 1983).

Having examined the general nature of the employment market in Limón, the discussion now examines the conceptual underpinnings of factors relating to labour demand, highlighting the process of gender and ethnic stereotyping.

Conceptual Perspectives on Gender and Ethnic Employment Patterns

The first point is that divisions within the labour market based on gender and ethnic characteristics are relatively similar in the way that workers are assigned to various segments of the productive structure. Divisions on the grounds of other social differences, such as age, are widely accepted and intelligible insofar as they have relevance to the ability and/or experience necessary for different kinds of jobs. Yet,

assignment along lines of gender and ethnicity is extremely controversial since this implies discrimination on grounds which are inadmissible (Jenkins, 1989). Discrimination may be direct in terms of employer decisions involving value judgements or indirect through the use of credentialism where one group may possess differing levels of qualifications on a gender or ethnic basis (ibid.). However, what is important is that gender and ethnicity may be constructed in similar ways which affects their treatment in the labour market. Both have an ideological basis which shapes decision-making processes of managers and workers through the use of gender 'traits' and ethnic stereotypes. These effectively act as rationalisations for associating certain jobs with skills attributed to men and women or particular ethnic groups (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Miles, 1989; Nash, 1988). However, it should also be noted that employers rarely 'use' these characteristics consciously to divide the labour market. The identification of 'traits' are more likely to be the result of subjective prejudices which are borne unwittingly (see Jenkins, 1986, 1989). These may be influenced by such factors as socialisation in the household and prevailing attitudes to gender and race (Stichter, 1990). In addition, in practical terms it is very difficult to ask employers whether they make decisions based on these assumptions except at a superficial level (see later). Accepting this, Barron and Norris (1991) point out that employers are more likely to distinguish between employing men or women on the basis of stereotypes because these are often seen as 'natural' by society at large.¹⁵ However, this does not imply that ethnicity does not form a basis for segregation, nor that both may exist together as in the case of ethnic minority women. Rather, employers are more reluctant to point out discriminatory assumptions or indeed are unaware that they are acting in a prejudicial manner (ibid.).

However, this is not to say that segregation and segmentation are not useful to employers. Walby (1990: 53-54) points out that segregation is predicated on the desire to minimise direct competition between groups, to allow the dominant group to retain higher status and remuneration and to provide a cheap source of labour for employers. Dex (1989: 295) elaborates on this, stating that this is often a way for men to ensure that women remain dependent on them; a point which may be extended to include ethnic domination of the majority group over the minority. Discussion on gender and ethnic stereotyping will elucidate further the reasons for segregation.

Gender-typing and Ethnic Stereotyping

As noted above, employer's decisions will probably be influenced (whether consciously or not) by assumptions about the suitability of men and women or particular ethnic

groups for different jobs based on 'gender traits' and/or ethnic stereotypes. First, gender-typing involves employers basing recruitment decisions around what are perceived to be appropriate tasks for men and women (Chant, 1991a: 99-101). Undoubtedly, suitability for jobs is linked with skill differentials, yet it is now recognised that the definition of 'skills' is socially constructed and that 'actual skills' and 'perceived skills' rarely coincide (Beechey, 1988; Dex, 1989; Sinclair, 1991). Alison MacEwen Scott (1986b: 160) notes how occupations are endowed with "notions of femininity and masculinity which are not technically part of the job but become part of its occupational culture". Therefore, once these definitions become entrenched, occupations evolve into 'men's work' and 'women's work' thus forming the basis of occupational segregation (see Chant, 1991a: 103). Concomitant with this is the placing of women in occupations associated with domestic characteristics (Anker and Hein, 1986; Babb, 1986; Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a), which in turn leads to the non-recognition or undervaluing of female 'skills' because they are acquired in the home (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Sinclair, 1991). Although employers often employ women preferentially, this is usually on grounds of their docility, acceptance of lower wages and hence, exploitability (Chant, 1991a: 104). Conversely, traditionally male tasks are linked with physical strength and technology although both relationships have been proven to be somewhat spurious in any practical sense (Anker and Hein, 1986).¹⁶

Ethnic stereotyping also revolves around the assignation of jobs based on socially constructed criteria which have little to do with the possession of actual skills. Stereotypes are usually linked to the jobs performed by ethnic minority groups on their initial arrival in the dominant culture (Miles, 1982, 1989). For example, the Irish in England are associated with low skill levels and employment in the construction sector (Miles, 1982). These stereotypes become reinforced over time and are often used to justify the exploitation of racialised labour and the maintenance of a subordinated work force (Fevre, 1984; Jackson, 1991). In a similar way to gender-typing, the introduction of new technology may also reinforce a racial division of labour. Often ethnic minority workers are not deemed suitable to operate machinery, even if they have similar qualifications as the workforce from the dominant ethnic group (Fevre, 1984). As a result, ethnic minority workers are more likely to be employed in labour-intensive as opposed to capital-intensive industries (Phizacklea, 1988). Jenkins (1986, 1989) also makes a distinction within ethnic stereotyping, differentiating first, between 'suitability' which refers to a worker's competence to perform a task, and second, 'acceptability', referring to the desirability and perceived manageability of the worker (Jenkins, 1986: 235). While both interact to form stereotypes, it is the latter

more subjective element, which is most important in terms of managerial decision-making.

The social construction of skills therefore amounts to an indirect form of discrimination in the labour market which may also be related to wage differentials. In terms of gender, 'female skills' are usually remunerated at a lower level than 'male skills' even where activities are similar. Explanations for this lie at one level in the process whereby women's unpaid reproductive labour in the home is transformed into productive activities in the labour market, and hence is undervalued vis-à-vis male tasks (Beechey, 1988; Dex, 1989; Stichter, 1990). In relation to this, women's pivotal role in the family is often used as a justification for lower earnings in that the man is seen as the primary breadwinner (Blumberg, 1991^a; Heyzer, 1981). In addition, wage levels are associated with gender segregation where the concentration of women in feminised sectors causes competition between scarce female jobs resulting in the maintenance of low pay levels for women and allowing high wage employment to remain the domain of men (Bergman, 1980). Also important is the notion of defining skills where Phillips (1983: 17) points out that jobs become 'unskilled' when performed by women creating 'feminised' areas of work which command lower wages and status compared with areas of masculinised work.

Theoretical Perspectives

A number of points should also be made about the effectiveness of labour market segmentation theories in explaining the existence of gender and ethnic employment divisions (see also Chapter One). One version of these theories, the dual labour market theory distinguishes between primary and secondary sector jobs, where the former is said to consist of a predominantly white, male workforce and the latter of a female or ethnic minority labour force revolving around stability, skill levels and promotion prospects (Barron and Norris, 1990¹; Doeringer and Piore, 1971). However, this schema is too rigid as it was essentially conceptualised for white, working class men in manufacturing industry in the West (Beechey, 1988; Dex, 1989; Game and Pringle, 1984). It also fails to disarticulate earnings and status - where a low status manual job may command higher wages than a professional occupation for example, and also disregards horizontal mobility between sectors. Also the complexities of the interrelation between gender and ethnicity are overlooked in that women's work (from whatever ethnic group) is still undervalued compared to men's in both pay and status (again from whatever ethnic group). Indeed, this has more to do with social and ideological constructions related to women's work and employment of ethnic groups than

their objective skills (Beechey and Perkins, 1987). As the gender/feminist theories point out; rather than viewing gender as functional to segregation and segmentation, it must be seen as an integral part of labour market functioning to the point that both productive and reproductive relations are themselves gendered (Beechey, 1988; Game and Pringle, 1984; Scott, 1986b). In relation to this, social reproduction does not refer solely to dynamics at the household level, but as we have seen, is transferred to the productive level through the type of work that women carry out in the 'formal' sector (see Beechey, 1988; Kenrick, 1981).

The radical labour market segmentation theories are considerably more useful, although gender and ethnicity are still only considered indirectly. Gordon (1972) discusses a version of the 'conspiracy theory' in relation to the reasons for a highly differentiated labour market. He argues that the segmentation of the labour market into more and less privileged sectors reduces employee solidarity and the development of class consciousness. This in turn prevents more militant workers from striking and affecting in turn profits (see also Barron and Norris, 1991). Also, by excluding women or ethnic minorities from the so-called primary sector, wages are kept low and worker solidarity is kept at a minimum. There are many flaws in this argument, the main one being (in the present context) the reduction of reasons for stratification to class issues without directly considering the effect of ethnic and gender divisions.

The utility of these approaches when explaining the labour market in Limón are discussed later in relation to the results of the employer survey.

Possible Patterns of Gender and Ethnic Segregation in Limón

Before going on to examine the employer survey, it is possible to suggest a number of ways in which the local labour market in Limón might be configured on grounds of gender and ethnicity, drawing on secondary source material. First, it has been shown that under certain labour market conditions, women are more likely to be employed, as in the case for example, where the service sector dominates the local economy (see Chant, 1991a on Mexico; Scott, 1986c on Peru). Indeed, in Costa Rica as a whole, it has been estimated that in 1984, 74% of all economically active women were employed in the service sector (Facio, 1989b: 77), of which 37% worked in the public sector compared with 23% in the private sector (ibid: 50).¹⁷ In Limón itself, the 1984 census shows that 51.8% of the labour force engaged in services (communal and personal) were women, and 43.1% in commerce. In other tertiary activities such as transport, public utilities and finance however, women made-up only 5.4%, 6.8% and

19.4% respectively (*Censo de Población*, 1987: 52). Therefore, although it may first appear that the predominance of service employment in the city may suggest high rates of female labour force participation (see above), in fact, the most important tertiary sectors such as transport, employ a predominantly male workforce (see also Chapter Two which corroborates this historically). On the basis of this, it is therefore expected that although women will be employed in service occupations, these will remain outside the main productive sectors of the contemporary local labour market which are expected to be male-dominated.

Another related point, is that patterns of vertical and horizontal gender segregation are expected to prevail (see Chapter One for definitions). In Costa Rica in general, it has been shown that women tend to be employed in sectors which reflect their domestic role. For example, in 1984, 91.3% of all secretaries were women, 67% of all teachers and 63% of all health workers, whereas only 3.8% of all engineers and architects were female, 21% of lawyers and 0.4% of mechanics (Facio, 1989b: 80). While this indicates that women are concentrated in certain types and branches of employment on a horizontal basis, it also appears that women are distributed vertically. For example, in health care, 83% of all nurses were women and only 8% were doctors, and in teaching, 76% of primary teachers were female compared with 57% in secondary and 32% at university level (*ibid*: 49). These patterns also appear to be broadly mirrored in the local context of Limón, although lack of data on specific types of employment makes it impossible to assess vertical patterns. However, as noted above, women appear to be horizontally segregated in personal and communal service branches of the labour market, whereas men predominated in transport and communications. Therefore, largely on evidence describing patterns in Costa Rica in general, it is tentatively expected that women will be concentrated into specific branches and at certain levels in the labour market (most probably excluded from the upper levels), although much more in-depth analysis is required in order to assess the exact nature of this segregation.

The examination of the ethnic composition of the labour market is considerably more difficult given the absence of any reference to the ethnicity in either the national census (since 1950) or government data relating to employment. However, based on the historical analysis in Chapter Two, it is possible to suggest that Afro-Caribbean men might be employed in the traditional sectors of the urban economy initially associated with the United Fruit Company, probably in port and transport (Carvajal and Driori, 1987; Vargas and Requeyra, 1983). One of the few studies examining ethnic

differentiation notes that in 1981, 39.3% of the economically active population employed in transport and communications was of Afro-Caribbean origin, compared with 32.5% of whites/*mestizos* (Vargas and Requeyra, 1983: 99). In addition, the former group was largely employed in manual occupations with only 2% - 5% of administrative posts held by Afro-Caribbeans (ibid.). Carvajal and Driori (1987: 47) also note five main areas where Afro-Caribbean men are employed: INCOFER (railway), work on the wharves (cargo companies), RECOPE (oil refinery), JAPDEVA (port) and some in industry. Studies also suggest however, that a significant proportion of this group have migrated to the United States to work in New York or on cruise liners in Miami (Municipalidad de Limón, 1992; see also Chapters Two and Five). Turning to Afro-Caribbean women, evidence on their employment patterns is even more scarce. However, a number of studies suggest that in the 1950s and 1960s this group either migrated to the United States or entered education to acquire professional training in nursing, teaching and secretarial skills (Bernard, 1987; Municipalidad de Limón, 1992; see also Chapter Two). This would therefore suggest that many Afro-Caribbean women now belong to the teaching and nursing professions as well as in administrative departments of large companies in contemporary Limón. Indeed, this may be corroborated by the fact that the health and education sectors, as well as public sector, administrative work expanded in the 1970s in Limón.

Overall however, these are tentative suggestions which indicate the need to examine the local labour market in greater detail in order to assess the degree of gender and ethnic employment differentiation. In addition, in-depth analysis is required to examine the rationales behind these possible patterns in Limón in terms of the attitudes and behaviour of employers for example, or the influence of institutional factors such as state practices and trade unions. Therefore, the discussion now turns to look at data gathered in the employer survey.

Perspectives from the Employer Survey

Here data ^{are} drawn from a sample survey of 17 firms in the city of Limón, to build a profile of labour demand in enterprises characteristic of the main sectors in the city including port-related activities, transport, manufacturing industry, community services and commerce. All the largest employers in the city were included (JAPDEVA, INCOFER, CCSS, RECOPE) of which the majority belong to the public sector, as well as a representative sample of medium and small-scale firms, all of which are privately owned (cargo companies, manufacturing firms, commercial establishments) (see

Appendix Two). The survey had three main aims; first to outline the structure of the firms and the predominant methods used in recruitment; second, to establish the composition of the workforce in terms of gender and ethnicity; third, to examine the attitudes of employers/decision-makers within the process of job allocation. Inherent in this was an attempt to ascertain the extent to which gender-typing and/or ethnic stereotyping prevails as opposed to more overt discrimination as well as an assessment of the role played by institutional factors such as trade unions and labour legislation.

The main limitation of the survey is that whilst representative of the main enterprises in the city, only 'formal' sector firms were selected which essentially excludes many income-generating activities carried out by the low-income population (eg. in petty commerce and other 'informal' activities). As such, women tend to be underrepresented since the 'formal' labour market in Limón appears to be male-dominated.

Structure of the Firms

The internal structure of the firms included in the survey reflects activity, ownership and scale. However, a number of similarities can be observed between those firms which are publicly owned and those belonging to the private sector (see note one). These are discussed below with reference to administrative and manual divisions, social security and welfare facilities, trade union activity and recruitment policies. First, however, it is important to outline briefly the general activities of groups of firms according to sectors: port-related, transport, manufacturing industry, government services and commerce.

Port-related

Firms related to the port include JAPDEVA and the cargo companies, who are administered by the former. JAPDEVA employs mainly dock and construction workers in manual occupations, in addition to a range of clerical and professional employees. With the exception of BANDECO (see note 6), port-related firms are involved in the loading and unloading of general cargo and agricultural exports (mainly bananas). All the firms operate in a similar manner, using a large proportion of temporary, manual workers employed on the wharves (see note 10) with little differentiation between occupations except between supervisors and members of '*cuadrillos*' (sections) of about 130 for each ship. The transport sector is dominated by the railway and hence by INCOFER, whose employees work in the operation and maintenance of the rolling stock. Occupations range from mechanics, drivers, signal operators to security officers. In

addition, the smaller-scale COOPELIMON runs a fleet of ten buses and ten taxis, employing drivers, radio operators and administrators.

Manufacturing

The development of a manufacturing base in the city has been fairly recent and unlike certain areas of Latin America where labour-intensive textile and electronics is widespread, the manufacturing firms in Limón tend to be capital intensive. The firms interviewed in the survey include four medium-scale establishments; ^{firms are} two cardboard-box factories making boxes for banana shipment, a soft drink bottling plant, a plywood manufacturing factory, as well as the large-scale oil refinery, RECOPE. The four factories are based on highly mechanised production methods involving semi-skilled factory floor workers, supervisors and a small administration. RECOPE is the main oil refinery in the country with pipelines to San José, Alajuela and Cartago. Production here is also highly mechanised with the bulk of the workforce employed in semi-skilled jobs, although a large proportion are technical and professional staff.

Government Services

The two government service institutions interviewed include the social security office (CCSS) and the Institute of Electricity (ICE). The CCSS encompasses the Tony Facio hospital and all medical centres in the city: here the labour force is divided into administrative staff, doctors, registered nurses, nursing auxiliaries and cleaning staff. ICE consists of an electricity plant, telephone exchange and administrative office employing semi-skilled workers in the two former departments and technical and professional in the latter.

Commerce

The commercial establishments included in the survey are the smallest of the firms interviewed. Traditionally, commerce in the city has been Chinese-owned and this prevails today in spite of the recent trend for trade union and cooperative supermarkets. One medium-scale firm is included in the survey; a large supermarket which also runs a wholesale department distributing to smaller enterprises in the city, such as *pulperías* (small corner shops), in addition to a Chinese restaurant and bookshop.

Within these four main sectors of activity, distinctions can also be made between firms which are publicly and privately owned. Although only five public sector firms were included in the survey, these together employ 3,087 permanent workers (62.3% of the total) and 443 temporary workers (34.5% of the total), indicating the large scale

of these establishments. The largest of these is JAPDEVA, followed by INCOFER, CCSS, RECOPE and ICE. Cargo companies constitute the bulk of private sector enterprises along with manufacturing industry and commerce. All the firms interviewed are generally divided into administrative and manual departments although the larger firms all have more than two. The main difference in terms of structure between public and private firms is the more extensive nature of administrative departments and company bureaucracies in the former. Ownership status is therefore extremely important, for example, in two similarly sized firms, RECOPE and ESTIBA, administrative workers in the former represent 18% of the total workforce compared with 4.2% in the latter. This pattern undoubtedly reflects the trend of inflated bureaucracies within state institutions throughout Costa Rica (Barry, 1990; Torres-Rivas, 1987).

All firms operate social security schemes for employees in accordance with Costa Rican legislation, including sickness and maternity leave, paid holidays, an '*aguinaldo*' (Christmas bonus) and health insurance. However, public sector firms appear to enforce these statutory requirements more rigorously than the private ones, as in the case of JAPDEVA, which is the only company to provide crèche facilities.¹⁸ In addition, state enterprises provide more additional welfare facilities such as housing, educational grants for employees and their children, travel to work and subsidised canteens (see Table 4.1). Although trade unions and solidarity associations also provide similar benefits, public establishments are more likely to offer additional facilities direct from the company. In general, the provision of welfare facilities and fairly extensive social security payments in 'formal' sector (and particularly public sector) employment, serves to create a privileged workforce. In many ways this pattern also reflects the paternalistic attitudes originating from the days of United Fruit.

The existence of a privileged workforce is reinforced by strong trade union activity within firms which, as mentioned previously, has an historical precedent in Limón. Again, the public/private divide is important in that all public sector enterprises have powerful unions, particularly JAPDEVA and RECOPE. However, employees of INCOFER and the cargo companies all belong to the same union, (the Union of Port and Railway Workers of Limón/ *Sindicato de Trabajadores Portuarios y Ferrocarrileros de Limón*, STPFL), yet it is only within public firms where 100% membership exists (see Table 4.2). The unions essentially ensure labour rights and working conditions for employees through various *Convenciones Colectivas de Trabajo* (Collective Labour Codes), as well as additional welfare facilities as noted earlier. Solidarity associations which serve as worker/management cooperatives providing

Table 4.1 Firms Included in the Employer Survey Providing Additional Benefits for Employees through the Firm itself or through Solidarity Associations (excluding trade unions)

Type of firm	Personal loans	Housing loans	Housing provision	Education grants ^a	Travel to work	Emergency fund	Other ^b
Public Sector							
<i>Port and transport</i>							
JAPDEVA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
INCOFER	x	x		x		x	x
<i>Industry</i>							
RECOPE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Services</i>							
CCSS/hospital	x	x				x	
Institute of Electricity	x	x			x	x	x
Private Sector							
<i>Port and Transport</i>							
ESTIBA	x			x		x	
CADESA	x		x				x
COOPEUTBA		x		x			x
BANDECO	x	x				x	
COOPELIMON (bus)							
<i>Industry</i>							
Box factory	x	x					
Box factory	x	x		x		x	x
Bottling factory	x						
Plywood factory	x						
<i>Commerce</i>							
Supermarket	x						
Book/stationary shop							
Restaurant							

Notes

^a These education grants refer to bursaries made to the children of employees, although some firms also pay for the education of the employees themselves.

^b The larger firms provide other benefits such as a crèche (at JAPDEVA), sports facilities, a company doctor (at DECAR box factory), subsidised canteens and low price supermarkets.

Source: Employer Survey, Limón, 1990

Table 4.2 Trade Union and Solidarity Association Affiliation among Firms included in Employer Survey

Type of firm	Existence of trade union	Proportion of workers affiliated	Existence of solidarity association	Proportion of workers affiliated
Public Sector				
<i>Port and transport</i>				
JAPDEVA	x	100%		
INCOFER	x	97%	x	99%
<i>Industry</i>				
RECOPE, oil refinery	x	100%		
<i>Services</i>				
CCSS/hospital	x	95%		
Institute of Electricity	x	100%	x	95%
Private Sector				
<i>Port and transport</i>				
ESTIBA	x	95%		
CADESA	x	85%		
COOPEUTBA ^a				
BANDECO	x	95%		
COOPELIMON (bus) ^a				
<i>Industry</i>				
Cardboard-box factory	x	98%		
Cardboard-box factory	x	98%		
Coca-cola, bottling factory			x	95%
Plywood factory			x	95%
<i>Commerce ^b</i>				
Supermarket				
Book/stationary shop				
Restaurant				

Notes

^a The structure of cooperatives prohibits trade union and solidarity association activity. However, in COOPEUTBA there exists a *Cómite de Vigilancia* (Vigilance Committee) which operates in a similar way to a solidarity association.

^b There are no unions nor solidarity associations in any of the commercial establishments.

Source: Employer Survey, Limón, 1990

similar facilities to unions, are distributed evenly between public and private sectors, although in the latter they are the only body aimed at ensuring worker protection (see Table 4.2).¹⁹

Recruitment practices of firms are, in theory, more formal within the public sector reflecting the more bureaucratic nature of company structure and management. These formal procedures take the form first, of internal '*concurso*s' (circulars or newsletters) within firms themselves, and then, if necessary, external '*concurso*s' distributed among local enterprises (see Table 4.3). While state firms were anxious to stress the use of such '*concurso*s', the majority also admitted using personal recommendations from present staff in conjunction with bureaucratic procedures. Without such constraints, privately owned firms use either present employee's recommendations or select workers from people who regularly wait outside premises or from waiting lists (see Table 4.3). These informal methods effectively allow greater personal choice (and bias) in the assignment of positions than in state enterprises. Educational prerequisites depend on the position in question, although in general manual posts (in the port and factories) require no educational qualifications and administrative positions at least primary and usually secondary schooling and vocational training.²⁰ Within this, however, manual work in public firms such as RECOPE and INCOFER requires a minimum of completed primary schooling indicating the operation of credentialism. In addition, internal mobility between manual and administrative jobs is more prevalent in manufacturing employment than port employment. This is largely due to greater variation in the number of positions within factory work, for example, unskilled workers loading materials, machine operatives in different sections of the factory and so on. In port employment, however, there is less internal differentiation between jobs with the only potential promotion being from cargo loader to supervisor of a *cuadrillo* (see earlier).

The status of personnel managers also differs between sectors where publicly owned firms formally appoint personnel managers whereas in the private sector this role is usually carried out by the managing director or his personal assistant (or in the case of the plywood factory and the Chinese restaurant, by the wife of the owner). This is largely the result of the scale of the enterprises where the numbers involved in large firms requires specific personnel to deal with recruitment. However, it also reflects the formality surrounding recruitment procedures in these firms which demands greater administrative work. The status of personnel managers therefore also influences the degree of subjectivity surrounding job allocation and may influence the

Table 4.3 Main Forms of Advertising Staff Vacancies within Firms Included in Employer Survey (excluding administrative level)

Type of firm	Main form of advertising				
	Through present staff	Newsletter 'concursos'	Trade union	Radio	Rarely has to advertise ^a
Public Sector					
<i>Port and transport</i>					
JAPDEVA	x	x	x		
INCOFER	x	x			
<i>Industry</i>					
RECOPE, oil refinery	x	x	x		
<i>Services</i>					
CCSS/hospital	x	x			
Institute of Electricity	x	x			
Private Sector					
<i>Port and transport</i>					
ESTIBA	x				x
CADESA	x				x
COOPEUTBA	x				x
BANDECO	x				x
COOPELIMON (bus)					x
<i>Industry</i>					
Cardboard-box factory					x
Cardboard-box factory					x
Coca-cola, bottling factory					x
Plywood factory					x
<i>Commerce</i>					
Supermarket	x			x	
Book/stationary shop	x				x
Restaurant	x				x

Notes

^a Many of the firms reported that people often wait outside the premises on a regular basis in the hope of securing employment whether of a permanent or temporary nature. Waiting lists of these people are also kept and consulted when posts are vacated.

Source: Employer Survey, Limón, 1990

composition of the workforce on gender and ethnic grounds.

Having established the key differences between public and private sector firms in terms of structure and activities, the next section examines the composition of the workforce according to the public or private ownership and activity, with reference to occupational differentiation on grounds of gender and ethnicity.

Gender Composition of the Labour Force

Overall, the gender composition of the workforce in firms is overwhelmingly male with a ~~the~~ total female participation rate of only 14.8%. Besides this, the distribution of women workers throughout the firms included in the survey is extremely uneven; in terms of sectoral distribution, women represent 9.0% in port-related activities, 3.9% in transport, 7.2% in manufacturing, 49.5% in community services and 42.9% in commerce (see Table 4.4). When firms are divided according to ownership, women constitute 20.4% of the public sector labour force and 5.3% of the private (see Table 4.4 and Figure 4.2). Underlying these figures is distinct occupational differentiation between the male and female labour force. In very general terms, the majority of the male labour force is employed in manual occupations and top decision-making posts, whereas the female economically active population is employed in lower-level administrative positions.

Figures from Table 4.4 indicate that public sector firms are more likely to employ women even when the enterprise is located within a traditionally male-dominated sector of the economy (as in the case of JAPDEVA ²¹) (see also Figure 4.2). This is related to the predominant occupational status of women throughout the labour market in white-collar work such as secretaries and clerks (with the exception of the CCSS). The larger size of public sector bureaucracies therefore creates more job opportunities for women (see Scott, 1986c on Peru). Women are also more likely to hold positions of authority in public firms as in the cases, for example, of JAPDEVA (with six women in supervisory roles or as heads of departments), RECOPE (where the personnel manager and two heads of sections are female) and INCOFER (where the head of the administration department is female and two women are supervisors). Although the majority of women occupy low level administrative jobs, public sector management appear to be more likely to encourage female employment and promotion. Unlike any of the private firms interviewed, most public firms reported a recognition, if not implementation, of a policy of gender equality especially in the light of the 'Law for the Social Equality of Women' (see Chapter Three for a detailed discussion) as well as more

Table 4.4 Total Number of Employees, Percentage of Women Employed and Sex of Personnel Manager in Firms included in Employer Survey

Type of firm	Total number of employees		Percentage of women employed (absolute nos in brackets) ^a	Sex of personnel manager
	Permanent/	Temporary		
Public Sector				
<i>Port and transport</i>	2,005	150	11.9% (236)	
JAPDEVA	1,325	150	15.1% (220)	Male
INCOFER	680		2.4% (16)	Male
<i>Industry</i>				
RECOPE, oil refinery	350	220	9.1% (32)	Female
<i>Services</i>				
	732	73	49.5% (362)	
CCSS/hospital	502	70	70.0% (352)	Male
Institute of Electricity	230	3	4.35% (10)	Male
Private Sector				
<i>Port and transport</i>	1167	840	2.8% (33)	
ESTIBA	475	325	0.8% (4)	Male
CADESA	285	95	1.4% (4)	Male
COOPEUTBA	250	400	2.8% (7)	Male
BANDECO	112	20	5.4% (6)	Male
COOPELIMON	45		26.6% (12)	Female
<i>Industry</i>				
	575		2.0% (12)	
Cardboard-box factory	230		3.0% (3)	Male
Cardboard-box factory	150		1.3% (2)	Male
Coca-cola g factory	90		4.4% (4)	Male
Plywood factory	105		2.9% (3)	Female
<i>Commerce</i>				
	128		42.9% (55)	
Supermarket	110		37.2% (41)	Male
Book/stationary shop	8		62.3% (5)	Female
Restaurant	11		81.8% (9)	Female
<i>Total</i>	4,957	1,283	14.8% (733)	

Notes

^a The percentage of women employed is based on the total number of permanent workers.

Source : Employer Survey, Limón, 1990

rigorous enforcement of labour legislation regarding women. JAPDEVA is also the only company to operate a system of flexible working hours for both sexes, which effectively allows women in particular to balance domestic and working responsibilities (in addition to a crèche when children cannot be cared for at home). However, this apparent propensity to employ women must also be seen in view of the fact that the larger administrative sections of public firms compared with private firms, means that demand for low-level female labour is greater in the former.

The case of the CCSS is somewhat different given that 70% of the workforce is constituted by women (see Table 4.4). However, although these women are employed mainly in professional or technical positions as nurses and auxiliaries, this does not necessarily result in decision-making power. Instead, they occupy an intermediate or subordinate position in terms of the overall structure, with the majority of decision-making posts held by men. For instance, of the 69 doctors employed, only 17 are women (24.6%), although of the 262 nurses, only 20 are male (0.8%). The only public sector firm with no women in positions of authority is the Institute of Electricity (ICE) which openly admits a discriminatory policy against women. As in other public enterprises, women are found in the administration department, yet the promotion of women is rare. In the case of ICE, this was justified on grounds that payment of maternity benefits are not economically viable for the company. Indeed, this was widespread within private sector firms. With the exception of commercial establishments, firms which are privately owned are less likely to employ women (see Table 4.4 and Figure 4.3). In addition to the reasons outlined above, the activities carried out in these firms is crucial in determining the gender composition of the workforce. The private cargo companies are the most male-dominated of all areas of employment where only 1.9% of the workforce is female, employed as secretaries, cleaners and in the case of COOPEUTBA, as checkout girls in the cooperative supermarket. (see Table 4.4). Loading and unloading cargo on the wharves is also an exclusively male task with no involvement of women.²² The reasons cited by managers were first, because no women applied; second, because women would distract male workers and would be unable to endure working with '*machistas*'; third, because women did not possess the physical strength to load heavy goods, and fourth, because existing legislation protecting female employees from night shifts and heavy work meant that it was unprofitable and often practically impossible to employ women. Therefore the cargo companies, which are in many ways the mainstay of the urban economy, exclude women virtually completely from employment, except for posts such as cleaning which have a clear female association.

Figure 4.2 Public Sector Employment by Sex

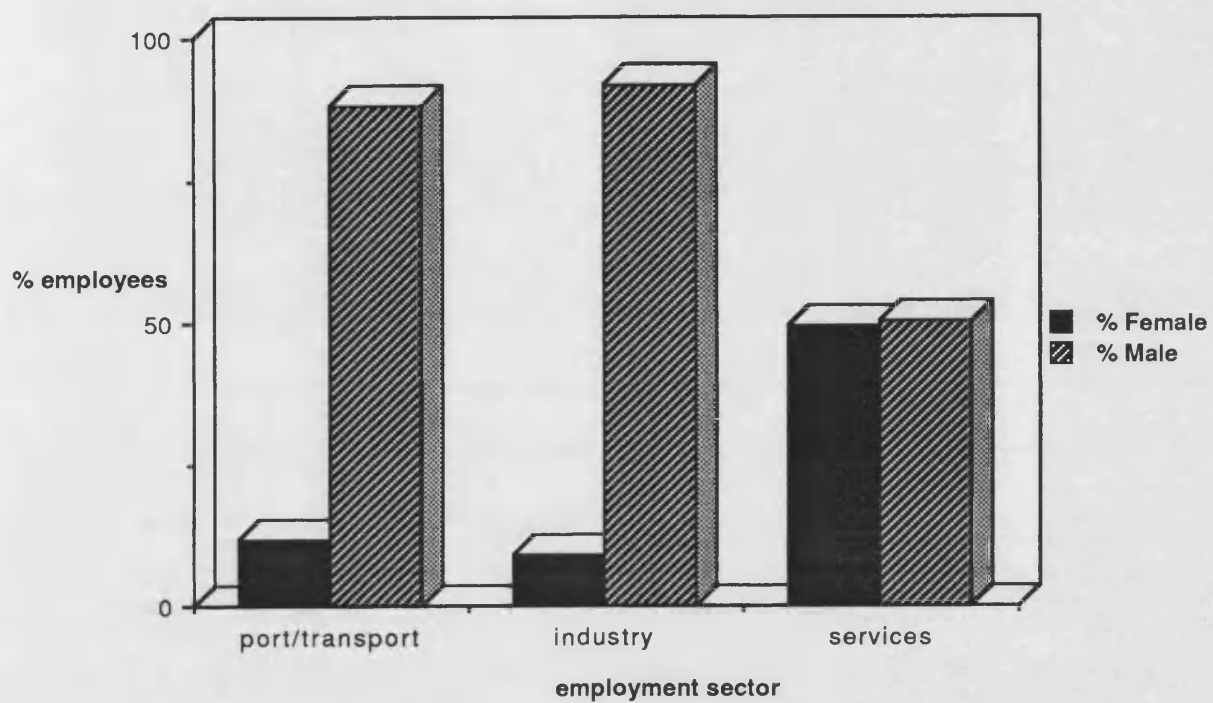
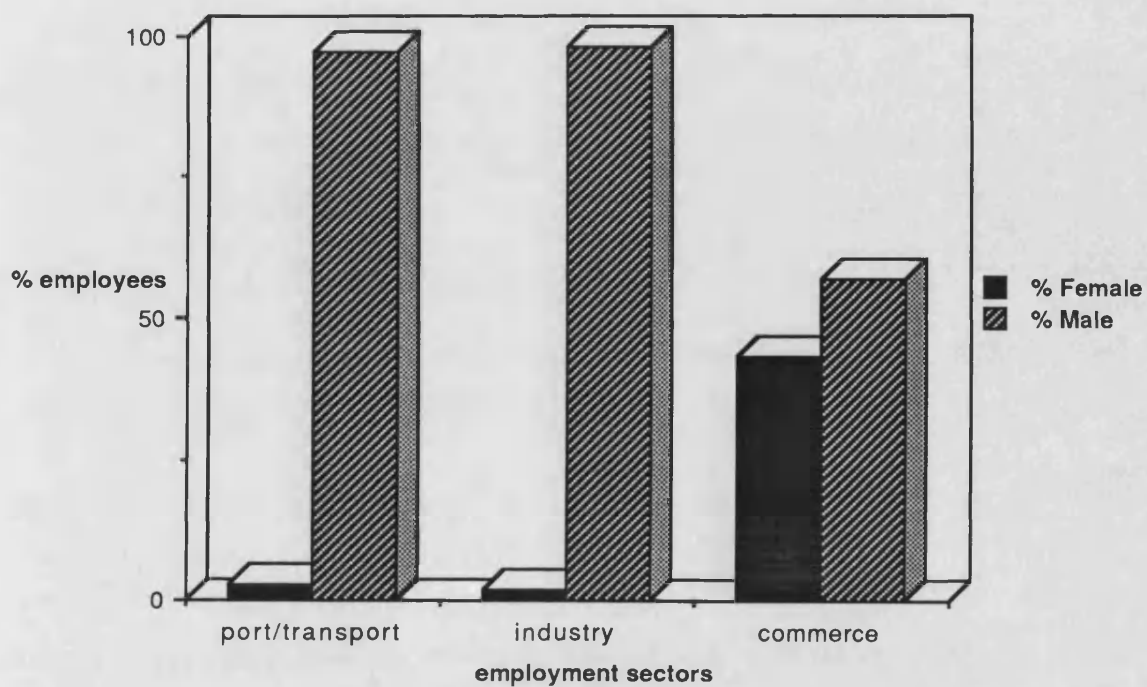


Figure 4.3 Private Sector Employment by Sex



A similar preponderance of male employees occurs in the manufacturing sector where women represent only 2% of the labour force, largely in secretarial and cleaning posts (see Table 4.4 and Figure 4.3). Both managers of the box making factories, DECAR and ENVACO argued that working conditions were not suitable for a female workforce first, due to the need to operate heavy machinery; second, because of prohibitive labour legislation (mainly maternity benefits) and third, because the majority of workers on the factory floor are '*machistas*' who prefer women to remain in the home. The soft-drink bottling plant and plywood manufacture factory do not rely on such high levels of mechanisation as do DECAR and ENVACO, yet female participation rates are also low. Unlike the two capital-intensive firms, both have employed a female workforce in the past, yet apparently production efficiency was undermined by 'sexual problems' between the workers, such as cases ^{of} harassment of female workers and where women complained of men 'leering' at them while they worked (see later). In addition, the manager of the bottling plant attributed these factors to the fact that there was no precedent for women's work in factories in Limón unlike San José where female employment in production is accepted (which might be linked with the strong historical association of women with predominantly 'feminine' jobs in Limón to a greater extent than in the capital). In the plywood factory the reduction of the female labour force to two employees was attributed to legislative difficulties regarding maternity benefits and night shifts. As a result, it is now company policy to employ women over 35 to avoid problems with maternity payments, although marital status itself is not seen as important. ²³ The reason for keeping women on, rests on the fact that the task of selecting woods into varying grades is thought to be performed more efficiently by women because of their supposed greater acuity and attention to detail. Therefore, private sector factory employment is primarily the domain of men and the more highly mechanised the operations, the lesser the likelihood of employing women.

Commerce is the only sector among privately-owned firms where women are employed in significant proportions (see Table 4.4 and Figure 4.3). Having said this, a strong sexual division of labour exists in small and medium scale enterprises for example: women are employed as check-out assistants, sales assistants and waitresses, as it was reported that customers were more receptive to women serving them (see also Chant, 1991a: Chapter Three; Leidner, 1991). These jobs effectively reflect women's domestic roles within the household which are translated into the labour market (see earlier). Men, on the other hand, are employed either in distribution which involves heavy manual, warehouse work (as in the case of the supermarket), or in positions of authority as owners/managers (particularly in the cases of the smaller bookshop and

restaurant), again reflecting the traditional sexual division of labour. In both small scale firms, women are in charge of recruitment although this is only because they are the wives of the owners (see also Chant, 1991a: Chapter Three, where in Mexico female relatives are sometimes occupied in positions of authority in shops and restaurants). One final point is that small-scale shop work is one of the few areas of the labour market where low-income women have relatively easy access to employment in that entrance requirements usually demand only primary education and personal characteristics such as reliability and honesty are thought to be more important.

In terms of wage levels, men generally earn more than women in the firms studied in Limón. In Costa Rica as a whole, men earn 20% more than women, although this wage gap is lower than the average for Central American countries (25%) due to the large proportion of women in public sector employment (García and Gomáriz, 1989a: 257). This is borne out in Limón, where women in state-owned firms earn more than those in the private sector. However, within both public and private sectors and within different types of activity, men's average earnings are more than women's on average (see also Chapter Five). While this may be partly due to the nature of the work, this pattern is consistent even where tasks are similar. The most extreme case is within cargo companies where average monthly salaries for men in port work in Estiba are 70,000 *colones* (US\$ 823) for bananas and 38,000 *colones* (US\$ 447) for general cargo, whereas average secretarial earnings for women are between 18,000 to 19,000 *colones* (US\$ 212 to US\$ 223).

In summary, a number of general points about gender differentiation in employment in firms in Limón may be made. First, women tend to be concentrated in low level administrative occupations within all the major firms in the city (except as nurses in the health sector), with men employed in manual or semi-skilled work in the port, transport and industry. Second, occupations tend to be heavily gender-typed, with women employed in jobs associated with their supposed 'feminine' roles, and men in tasks involving heavy manual labour or the use of machinery. As a corollary of this, patterns of both horizontal and vertical segregation prevail. In most firms, women appear to be vertically segregated in lower order tasks with few employed in positions of authority except in some cases in publicly-owned firms (see also Chant, 1991a: 105 on Mexico). Also, women tend to be concentrated in administration departments, which means that a large proportion of the female population without suitable educational qualifications is unable to enter the 'formal' labour market (unlike the situation for men who can secure employment relatively easily with no such qualifications). Men on the

other hand, are more evenly distributed throughout the labour market, in all sectors and activities and in manual, semi-skilled and managerial positions.

Ethnic Composition of the Labour Force

Analysis of the ethnic composition of the labour force of firms included in the employer survey is more problematic than for gender. Companies keep no records of ethnic characteristics of their workforces and so figures are broad estimates given by personnel managers. Therefore, caution must be exercised due to possible bias or subjectivity in these approximations. In addition, personnel managers appeared to be more reluctant to discuss the ethnicity of the workforce, perhaps for fear of appearing prejudiced in a country which advocates, in principal, a 'racial democracy' (see Chapter Three). Indeed, all managers interviewed reported no ethnic or racial discrimination, except in the case of RECOPE where the personnel manager was an Afro-Caribbean woman. Accepting the above drawbacks, various general patterns can be distinguished.

In all the firms surveyed, Afro-Caribbeans represented 30% of the total labour force, which corresponds with the general demographic situation in the city as a whole (see Table 4.5). When broken down into public and private firms, the proportion of Afro-Caribbeans employed in the former is 37.2% and in the latter, 22.8% (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5). When viewed according to activity sector, Afro-Caribbeans represent 44% in port-related activities, 29% in transport, 27.4% in manufacturing, 40% in government services and 5% in commerce (see Table 4.5). While at first glance, public ownership of firms appears to be crucial in influencing ethnic segregation, the nature of the firm's activities emerges as equally important.

In terms of public sector firms, JAPDEVA which is the largest state institution in the city, is the only firm where Afro-Caribbeans outnumber white/*mestizos* in management positions and where a number of Afro-Caribbean women are employed in higher level positions. This is probably a reflection of the underlying aim of the institution which is to preserve the cultural character of the province (see note 21). In other public enterprises Afro-Caribbean employment rates are also higher than average with the exception of RECOPE, which interestingly is the only firm to employ a female Afro-Caribbean as a personnel manager (see Table 4.5 and Figure 4.4). The low estimate of Afro-Caribbean workers in this case may therefore be due to a greater awareness on behalf of the personnel manager to the ethnic composition of the workforce. In INCOFER, the Afro-Caribbean labour force is concentrated in manual and semi-skilled jobs and is mostly male. The manager reported that there was a tradition for Afro

Table 4.5 Proportion of Afro-Caribbeans Employed and Ethnic Origin of Personnel Manager within each Firm included in the Employer Survey

Type of employment	Proportion of Afro-Caribbean workers ^a	Ethnic origin of personnel manager ^b
Public Sector		
<i>Port and transport</i>		
JAPDEVA	40%	Mestizo
INCOFER	43%	Mestizo
<i>Industry</i>		
RECOPE, oil refinery	23%	Afro-Caribbean
<i>Services</i>		
Social Security/Hospital	50%	Mestizo
Institute of Electricity	30%	Mestizo
Private Sector		
<i>Port and transport</i>		
ESTIBA	50%	Mestizo
CADESA	50%	Mestizo
COOPEUTBA	50%	Afro-Caribbean
BANDECO	30%	Mestizo
COOPELIMON	15%	Mestizo
<i>Industry</i>		
Cardboard-box factory	12%	Mestizo
Cardboard-box factory	40%	White
Coca-cola, bottling factory	12%	Afro-Caribbean
Plywood factory	50%	White
<i>Commerce</i>		
Supermarket	15%	Chinese
Book/stationary shop	0%	Mestizo
Restaurant	0%	Chinese
Total	30%	

Notes

^a The definition of Afro-Caribbean origin is based on the perceptions of the personnel managers.

^b The definitions here are based on the author's own perceptions rather than self identification. The two personnel managers defined as white are North American.

Source : Employer survey: Limón, 1990

-Caribbean employment in railway work and because their recruitment policy depended largely on personal recommendations, this pattern has been reinforced. The CCSS is somewhat different from other public firms in that Afro-Caribbean women form the largest single group employed (see Table 4.5). Of the 50% Afro-Caribbeans employed in the CCSS, the majority are female nurses, although positions of authority, such as doctors and high level administrative posts, are occupied by white/*mestizo* men.

Within private sector firms there is great variation depending on economic activity (see Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5). The cargo companies have the highest proportion of Afro-Caribbean workers of any sector of the labour market, with three of the four firms employing half their workforce from the black population (of which the majority are male) (see Table 4.5). Most Afro-Caribbeans are employed in wharf work and although a small number of black workers hold management and supervisory positions they are outnumbered by white/*mestizos*. In terms of the general concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in port work, the reasons stated by personnel managers included first, a tradition among this group to work in the port since the days of United Fruit and second, because many of these men aspired to work on cruise liners in Miami and the temporary nature of employment allowed them to leave and re-enter the labour market more easily, as well as earn high wages to cover their recruitment and travel expenses to the United States.

In general, white/*mestizos* are more likely to be employed in manufacturing than Afro-Caribbeans (see Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5). Only 12% of the workforce in ENVACO and the bottling plant are Afro-Caribbean, although in DECAR and the plywood factory, the proportion is 40% and 50% respectively (see Table 4.5). In most of the manufacturing firms, Afro-Caribbean men are employed manual positions, whereas white/*mestizos* are most likely to be found in semi-skilled occupations, although having said this, DECAR, ENVACO and the bottling plant all employ black female secretaries. The personnel manager of the bottling plant, himself an Afro-Caribbean, stated that the reasons for the smaller proportions of Afro-Caribbeans in factory employment were first, lower wages in comparison with port work; second, the fact that many Afro-Caribbean men prefer to work abroad on cruise liners; third, that there is a tradition for port work amongst the Afro-Caribbean male population. However, another important factor is that the two firms with the lowest proportions of Afro-Caribbeans are both owned by companies based in San José which appoint management posts in the capital and send employees to Limón and which may reflect some form of subtle discrimination. The other two firms are owned by North Americans who have less

Figure 4.4 Public Sector Employment by Ethnicity

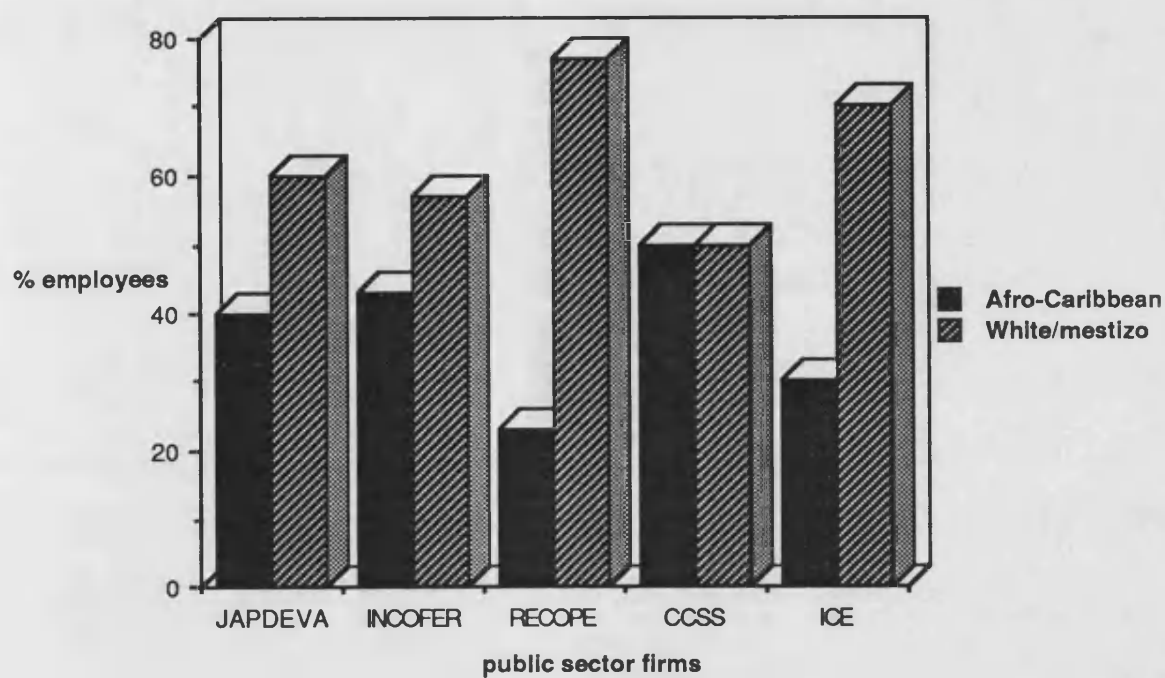
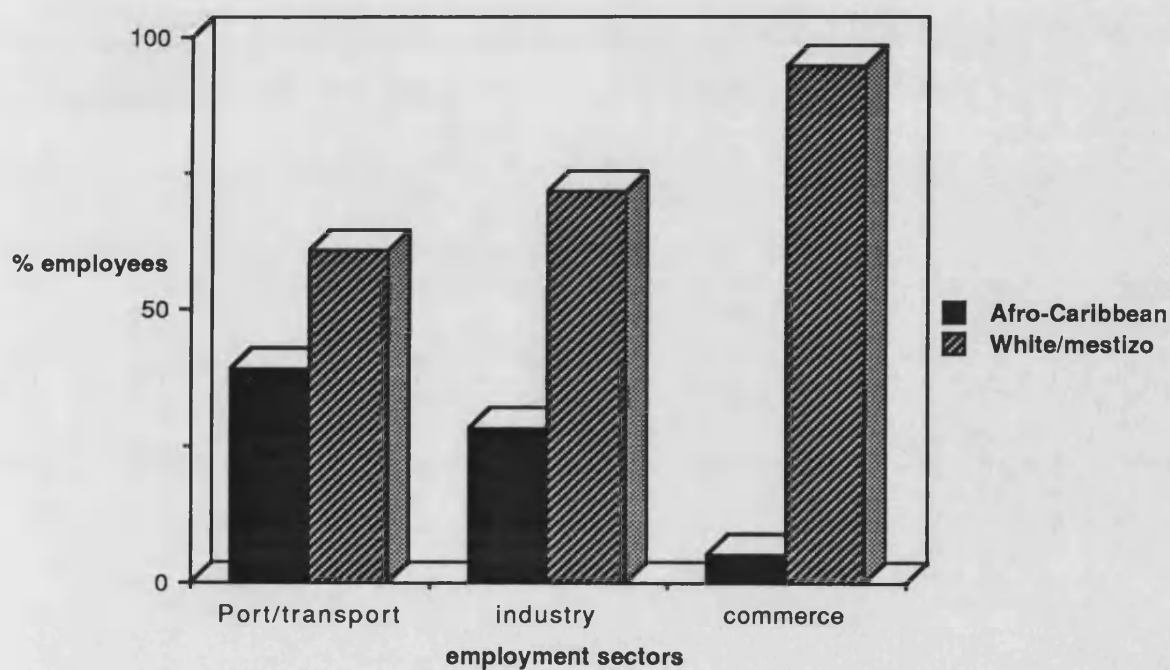


Figure 4.5 Private Sector Employment by Ethnicity



interest in the ethnicity of the workforce.

The issue of wage differentials is particularly interesting in that Afro-Caribbean men are concentrated in the highest paying sector of the labour market, in port work. Indeed, the lower wages in the manufacturing sector was cited as a reason for the low proportions of Afro-Caribbeans employed in factories. In addition, Afro-Caribbean women's aggregate average earnings are higher than white/*mestizo* women, although this is probably due to their concentration in nursing (with average monthly earnings of 35,000 *colones*) and public sector employment and their absence from low-paid commercial establishments.

Overall, it appears that Afro-Caribbean men tend to be concentrated in privately-owned port work, but also in JAPDEVA and INCOFER which are publicly-owned, while white/*mestizo* men are distributed throughout the labour force with particular concentrations in manufacturing employment. Indeed, rather ^{than} ownership or activity per se being important, it appears that Afro-Caribbeans are concentrated in the traditional sectors of the economy, whereas white/*mestizos* predominate in newly established manufacturing more (although they are employed in all sectors). In addition, the majority of Afro-Caribbeans are employed in manual tasks, although some are also found in the upper echelons of state-owned firms such as JAPDEVA. In terms of gender, it seems that Afro-Caribbean women are more likely to be employed in state-owned firms, although this is probably related to greater opportunities in administrative jobs in these enterprises and in education and health sectors. Most interesting, however, is that they do not appear to be employed in the the lowest echelons of the urban economy in for example, commerce where white/*mestizo* women predominate.

In general terms, the labour market in Limón is discernibly male-dominated, with control over firms resting with the numerically dominant white/*mestizo* population. However, this is an over-simplification of a much more complex pattern, particularly in the case of Afro-Caribbean women. Various explanations are examined in the following section in terms of labour demand factors.

Gender, Ethnicity and Labour Demand: A Synthesis

The preceding section illustrates that distinct patterns of segregation and segmentation prevail on grounds of gender and ethnicity. While a number of reasons were suggested, particularly in relation to those cited by personnel managers themselves, these must be discussed in relation to conceptual issues (see also earlier). The present section aims

to determine how far these patterns might be explained by factors relating the structure of the labour market, recruitment policies, the institutional context, and discrimination (direct or indirect).

The Rationale for Occupational Segregation

As noted earlier, while it is accepted that both gender and ethnicity can be considered as bases for stratification in their own right with a number of similarities (Walby, 1988), there has been little research on how the two may interact (see Chapter One). However, just as a monocausal explanation is insufficient in explaining gender segregation (Scott, 1986b, 1986c; Walby, 1985), this also applies when ethnicity is examined. More specifically, it will become apparent that various assumptions made in existing studies must be questioned; first, those which posit that women and ethnic groups are employed only in secondary, low status, low paid work (Beechey, 1988; Jenkins, 1989), and second, that ethnic minority women will be found on 'bottom rung' within this hierarchy (Bruegel, 1989; Petras, 1989). While women in Limón are concentrated in a narrow range of activities with lower pay than their male counterparts, the technical and professional nature of a large proportion of working women (especially Afro-Caribbeans), gives rise to the need for further exploration. In addition, the fact that Afro-Caribbean men are preferentially employed in port-related activities which is the highest paid sector of the labour market, also demands an 'unpacking' of existing assumptions. The discussion moves on to assess the principal findings of the employer survey in light of conceptual issues and current debates.

Gender and Ethnic Stereotyping in Limón

In Limón, the nature of the economic base of the city may affect labour market segregation and segmentation, particularly in the way in which that demand for labour has remained largely male-dominated in both traditional sectors of port and transport and in newer fields of employment such as manufacturing. However, this cannot explain the existence or maintenance of occupational segregation on grounds of gender or ethnicity (Scott, 1986c; Stichter, 1990). Moreover, examination of ideological rationales is needed, especially these which underlie gender and/or ethnic stereotyping, both of which are rationalised as 'natural' in origin (Jackson, 1989b; see also Chapter One). ²⁴

In Limón, analysis of the employer survey data illustrates how strong patterns of gender-typing persist. Women are mainly employed in jobs linked with household-related skills such as nursing, clerical and secretarial work, and men in jobs relating to

physical strength and technological operation in port and manufacturing employment. As such there is little substitution between 'male' and 'female' work, as gender stereotypes are continually reinforced (see also Chant, 1991a: Chapter Three on Mexico). Indeed, in many cases, male employers explicitly stated that it was 'natural' for women to remain in the home, and that women were too 'weak' to be employed in most 'male' jobs. Women were accepted as secretaries and clerical staff, yet seen to be too inexperienced for port or factory work (both of which are viewed 'male' domains) to allow them to move into decision-making positions (see earlier). This therefore reflects the social construction of skills around 'natural' gender traits which have little basis in actual skills, and which are influenced strongly by gender ideologies of wider society. This social construction may also be extended to include wage levels where average male earnings are consistently higher than female earnings, regardless of the type of employment. Moreover, the fact that male-dominated sectors in Limón such as the port, have the highest wage levels of all employment in the city, may further serve to maintain gender segregation. In other words, if women were allowed to enter port work, then increased competition would reduce wage levels, and it is therefore in men's interests to exclude women from these sectors (see Dex, 1989).

Other factors which reinforce gender segregation and stereotyping include issues of sexuality in the workplace. As mentioned earlier, a number of firms, such as the bottling plant for example, had stopped employing women because of problems of harassment of female workers on the factory floor, usually in the form of verbal abuse. On one hand, these issues of sexuality appear to dissuade managers from employing women because of the danger of poor worker relations which might reduce production efficiency, as well as fear of the 'moral turpitude' of the workforce (see also Chant, 1991a: 105-6 on Mexico). On the other hand, however, it was thought that male workers were too '*machista*' to let women work alongside them, and that women themselves would be reluctant to enter male-dominated areas for fear of feeling threatened either mentally or physically (see also Dex, 1989 on Britain). Indeed, this illustrates again how gender ideologies permeate all aspects of labour-market functioning from employer decision-making to the attitudes of the workers themselves (Anker and Hein, 1986; Stichter, 1990). The importance of sexuality in the workplace has been reported elsewhere in Latin America (see for example, Benería and Roldán, 1987 and Chant, 1991a on Mexico) and in other countries (see for example, Ecevit, 1991 on Turkey; Hein, 1986 on Mauritius; Josephides, 1988 on Cypriot women in Britain).

Another important factor highlighted in the employer survey of firms was the

extent to which protective legislation may actually lead to women being excluded from many enterprises. The majority of personnel managers justified the limited recruitment of female labour on the grounds that payment of maternity benefits was too costly. However, the legal basis of this is tenuous in that the Costa Rican Labour Code maintains that the cost of maternity payments should be borne by both the employer and the state (in accordance with the ILO Convention 103 which states that the employer should not be individually liable for such expenses) (see also Anker and Hein, 1986; Brydon and Chant, 1989; Joekes, 1987). Therefore, it appears that employers often use this as an excuse for not employing women at all, or only older women who are unlikely to have more children. Similarly, legal stipulations for the provision of rests or breastfeeding periods for mothers and crèche facilities were further disincentives stated by employers (see also LACWE, 1980). Another major legal justification cited by many employers, especially those that operate around the clock, was the prohibition of female nightwork. However, it is interesting that such restrictions do not apply to the nursing profession for example. On balance, it would appear that legislation is used and interpreted arbitrarily by employers in Limón as a means to exclude women from higher paid, higher status male sectors of the labour market.

In Limón, the issue of age and marital status of women as a means to segregate the workforce does not appear to be as important as has been noted elsewhere in Latin America (see for example, Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a on Mexico). This may be partly due to low rates of female labour force participation in general, and to the concentration of women in professional and technical employment rather than factory work, where, for example, single women are usually preferred by employers because it is thought they are less likely to become pregnant with all the associated problems such as maternity leave, absenteeism and turnover (Bolaños and Rodríguez, 1988 on the flower industry in Costa Rica; Safa, 1990 on the Puerto Rican and Dominican Republic export-manufacturing industry). While in Limón, the question of maternity payments is often used as a reason not to employ a female workforce (see above), age or marital status was never cited as being particularly important, although if an employer stated a preference it was for older married women. Possible explanations lie in the status and scarcity of female employment opportunities. Usually high turnover and absenteeism (for which age and marital position are used as screening devices to prevent) are related to low level occupations (Barron and Norris, 1991). However, in the survey, women are not concentrated in dead-end jobs and once employment is secured it is fairly stable. Indeed, in practice, employers often consider the male workforce to be more unstable in terms of absenteeism and the greater likelihood that they will leave to work in port

employment or on cruise liners in Miami.

Also important in influencing gender-typing is the gender composition of management, particularly of personnel officers. Although it has been noted elsewhere that a female personnel manager may be more likely to employ a female workforce, particularly in small establishments (Chant, 1991a), this does not tend to be the case in Limón. While reasons for this may be attributed to the size of the sample, another important factor is that the female personnel managers in the survey are predominantly the wives of the owners of small-scale, family enterprises who therefore tend to have only a minor say in who is employed. The exception is the public sector firm, RECOPE where the personnel manager stated that her decisions were largely constrained by what the company considered 'male' and 'female' jobs (ie, by gender-typing). Moreover, men resent receiving orders from women whom they deem to know nothing of the work involved nor have a right to assume any responsibility which would challenge prevailing gender ideologies (see above; see Chant, 1991a; Anker and Hein, 1986). The ethnicity of personnel managers is also seen as important in determining the ethnic composition of the workforce (Jenkins, 1986, 1989). However, in Limón, this factor does not appear to be as important as might be expected. In factory employment this issue is more relevant especially where the firm is a subsidiary of a company based in San José, yet in general, the strength of historical associations which contribute to stereotyping are more important, accepting that this is also interrelated with how management make decisions.

This leads on to the examination of ethnic stereotyping ~~of~~ in Limón, which also appears to be fairly strong, at least for Afro-Caribbeans. Indeed, Afro-Caribbeans seem to be consistently associated with traditional port employment, whereas white/*mestizos* are able to secure jobs in all areas, particularly in the recently established industrial sector. In some ways, this may be due to the demographic situation where Afro-Caribbeans form the minority in the city. In other words, if a sector is dominated by Afro-Caribbeans, the invasion of white/*mestizos* may be justified on grounds that an ethnic demographic balance must be maintained. Indeed, this was reported by many employers in the survey. On the other hand, if a sector is dominated by white/*mestizo* workers, the use of ethnic stereotyping^e may be relied upon (albeit unconsciously in many cases), to argue that Afro-Caribbeans are only 'suitable' for employment in traditional sectors of the labour market, or in manual work. In turn, this group^{is} are not deemed 'suitable' to work in capital-intensive sectors where jobs involve the use of machinery. Instead, these jobs are filled by white/*mestizos* who are

not restricted by stereotyping. Underlying these patterns is the historical association of Afro-Caribbean men with traditional sectors of the economy such as port and transport, which has become entrenched over time. This reinforces stereotyping because the association become fixed in the minds of personnel managers as well as the workers themselves. In terms of Afro-Caribbean women, the more recent establishment of a relationship between this group and nursing work, may also reflect ethnic and gender stereotyping. In the past, these women were employed mainly as domestic servants under the United Fruit Company, therefore establishing their association with jobs reflecting a 'domestic' character. Over time, this association has been reinforced even if it now takes a different form through their employment in the health care sector and at a higher levels (see for example, Boyd-Franklin, 1983; Glenn, 1990 on the United States). Moreover, because it has been Afro-Caribbean⁵ rather than white/*mestizos* who have predominated in this type of work, an ethnic association has developed over time. Overall therefore, while racism per se may not be particularly prevalent in Limón, ethnic stereotyping is, and the latter arguably produces much the same kind of outcome as regards occupational differentiation.

The final point shown to be important in Limón with regard to both gender and ethnicity, is the role of trade unions. In terms of gender, trade unions generally operate to protect the interests of male workers (see for example, Anker and Hein, 1986; Brydon and Chant, 1989). In Limón, the long history of union activity has been concentrated in sectors of the economy with a predominantly male workforce. These unions have negotiated pay levels, fringe benefits and hours of work with management which are formalised in the *Convenciones de Trabajo*, with the result that members of the various unions are the best protected in the region and the country. However, as mentioned earlier, the *Convenciones* make no specific reference to gender, undoubtedly in part due to the small proportion of women in the workforce and hence their absence either as members or in positions of authority within the unions. Practical reasons such as difficulties faced by women in attending union meetings due to domestic responsibilities may account for their underrepresentation (see Piza-Lopez, 1991 on Costa Rica in general), yet in Limón, this is more probably linked to the structure of the local economy. In a labour market where the most prominent unions have historically protected the sectors to which women have little access and where wages are high, this pattern has become self-reinforcing. While the health and education sectors are also protected by unions, these are nationally based and in the case of health care, different unions serve female-dominated nursing and male-dominated medicine.²⁵ Essentially, union activity in these fields is less powerful than in male-dominated sectors in that

there is little threat to the sexual division of labour in this type of employment and hence little need to protect against any attempts to challenge socially prescribed roles (as in the port and railway for example). In terms of ethnicity in Limón, trade union activity is also linked with the Afro-Caribbean population, largely as a legacy from the days of United Fruit. Trade union leaders are often of Afro-Caribbean origin (as in the case of RECOPE's union and the Union of Port and Railway Workers of Limón). This may therefore contribute to the maintenance of ethnic occupational concentration in areas of traditional Afro-Caribbean male employment where union activity is strongest.

Returning briefly to labour market theories, a number of points can be made with reference to Limón. First, labour market segmentation theories appear to have some credence in the present context in that they recognise the existence of a highly stratified labour market unlike neo-classical approaches where open competition between individuals is assumed (Amsden, 1980; Anker and Hein, 1986). For example, concepts such as the dual labour market model, may apply to a certain extent, in terms of women being employed in secondary, more peripheral sectors of the urban economy, and men are found in higher status, more privileged areas. However, it is not the case that ethnic minorities are concentrated in the 'secondary' level as the case of Afro-Caribbean women illustrates. The somewhat anomalous situation of the relatively privileged employment of this group in nursing and teaching (albeit in gender-typed occupations) is addressed further in Chapter Five and Six.

The radical labour market segmentation theories also make a number of observations which are relevant to the local economy in Limón, although gender and ethnicity are only considered indirectly in general formulations. Gordon's (1972) 'conspiracy theory' may be particularly important in the present case. According to his line of argument, the institutionalised nature of the labour market in Limón (particularly of male-dominated and Afro-Caribbean sectors) may be interpreted as a way of controlling the labour force. If certain groups of workers are 'bought off' they are less likely to strike or cause labour disruptions. Moreover, the historical slant of this approach is also relevant in the case of Limón, particularly the legacy of United Fruit which has contributed to a paternalistic attitude by employers in the contemporary labour market, and widespread provision of social welfare facilities within firms. The most important issue of 'buying off' various sectors of the labour force is discussed again in Chapter Seven.

Conclusion

To sum up, it appears that various layers of stratification according to gender and ethnicity exist and overlap in Limón. In the contemporary labour market, patterns of gender segregation and segmentation appear to be reflected in women's concentration in sectors which are marginal to the mainstay of the local economy, and in occupations which are predominantly associated with their domestic roles. Moreover, within firms women are concentrated in low level administrative post and excluded from positions of authority (with some exceptions in public sector enterprises). Men on the other hand, appear to be employed in the main productive sectors, in heavy manual occupations or jobs involving the use of machinery. Having said this, men also predominate in the upper levels of the labour market in managerial and executive positions. The underlying rationales for these patterns rest heavily on gender-typing of jobs, which in turn, are reinforced by various institutional factors such as legislation and trade unions for example. Ethnically, the labour market is also heavily segregated and segmented, in that Afro-Caribbean men are concentrated in traditional port and transport sectors, whereas white/*mestizo* men are distributed throughout the labour market, including newly-established and dynamic sectors such as manufacturing. Perhaps most interesting, is the employment of Afro-Caribbean women, not only in secretarial and clerical positions, but also in the health sector (see Chapters Five and Six for further analysis). However, underlying these ethnic patterns, is again, the issue of stereotyping and in this case, the strength of historical association, which appears to be a major influence in affecting the employment of Afro-Caribbeans. Overall, one of the main observations to emerge from the analysis thus far, is that gender and ethnic discrimination and/or stereotyping are found in all aspects of the labour market. The extent to which gender and ethnic differences at the level of the household interact with these influences is one of the key issues of discussion in the following chapter on labour supply.

Notes to Chapter Four

1) Bearing in mind the criticisms of the state and government legislation outlined in Chapter Three, it is expected that state-controlled firms may enforce anti-discriminatory legislation more effectively than private-firms. Therefore, women and ethnic minority groups might be better represented in these firms. Having said this, the issue of racial discrimination is peripheral in most Costa Rican legal codes and thus Afro-Caribbeans may be more likely to be employed in the private sector. In addition, much legislation concerning the employment of women actually reduces the chance of their being employed, thereby decreasing their likelihood of working in the public sector (see section on employer survey; see Chapter Three). Whatever, this division is mainly heuristic and allows clearer analysis of the employer survey.

2) In Costa Rica in general in 1989, 70.7% of the national workforce were salaried workers, 20.7% were self-employed and 4.0% were employers (MIDEPLAN, 1990: 17).

3) The banana companies which still operate in the region are all owned by US multinational corporations. In 1967, the Castle Cook Corporation bought Standard Fruit; in 1969, the United Fruit Company merged to form United Brands which in 1976 bought the Compañía Bananera Atlántica (COBAL) and the Chiriquí Land Company; the Banana Development Corporation (BANDECO) is also a subsidiary of the Del Monte Fresh Fruit/Polly Peck International group (Ellis, 1983; Goluboay and Vega, 1987). In 1986, these three corporations controlled about 60% of global banana production (Porrás, 1987). As stated in the text, BANDECO and COBAL use *productores asociados*; in 1990, BANDECO owned 21 farms run by the company and contracted to 26 Costa Rican farms and COBAL operated exclusively through the use of national associated producers.

4) The most controversial of the regulatory measures devised by ASBANA, in accordance with similar administrative bodies throughout the banana producing countries of Latin America, was the export tax levied on bananas (Garnier *et al.*, 1987). The tax, which was set at US\$1 in 1974, was an attempt to direct profits from foreign-owned banana production towards the countries of origin and to protect national producers. This engendered considerable conflict between the multi-nationals and countries in question known as the 'Banana War'. In the same year, the *Unión de Países Exportadores de Banano* (UPEB) was formed between Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama in an attempt to enforce this tax, yet pressure from the multinationals proved too strong even for the new union. Only in Costa Rica and Panama did the tax come into effect and by 1980 all the UPEB countries had reduced the tax to US\$0.45 - US\$0.55 as the threat of multi-national withdrawal weakened its enforcement. Controversy over this continues in Costa Rica and in other UPEB countries and illustrates the relative strength held by the multinational banana companies in spite of any attempted national control over the banana industry (Ellis, 1983; Garnier *et al.*, 1987; Goluboay and Vega, 1987).

5) Figures for 1984 show that 54.9% of the economically active population in the Limón province was employed in agriculture and fishing, 11.7% in services, 7.2% in transport and communication and 4.5% in industry (Censo de Población, 1987: 43) (see Table 4.1).

6) The railway was nationalised in 1972, transferring control from the British owned Northern Railway Company to JAPDEVA. In 1977, FECOSA (*Compañía Ferrocarriles de Costa Rica*) was formed joining the Pacific and Atlantic railways. However, in 1985, FECOSA was experiencing severe economic problems and so INCOFER (*Instituto Costarricense de Ferrocarriles*) replaced the former in an attempt to rejuvenate the ailing railway system (Giró, 1989).

7) JAPDEVA was created in 1973 by law as the first autonomous regional development institution in Costa Rica, with the aim of administering the port facilities, as well as promoting economic, social and cultural development in the city and region. JAPDEVA requires special attention as it is the largest employer in the city which operates as a paternalistic public

enterprise in a similar way to the United Fruit Company. It provides a savings and loans fund, a housing fund, houses for high level employees (Los Cocos) and educational grants for the children of employees through the *Unidad Técnica de Bienestar Social* (Social Welfare Fund), as well as transport to and from work, a sports centre and subsidised *sodas* (small restaurants). The company is based on a complex bureaucratic structure with an administrative council responsible to the National Assembly, a General Management and three main departments; the port, administration and development.

8) The *Muelle Metálico* consists of three docks one of which is exclusively for the loading of bananas. *Muelle Nacional* is for light and general cargo and *Muelle 70* is for the exportation of coffee. The port complex at Moín has two docks for banana and general cargo and one with a 'roll-on/roll-off' system for oil tankers. The *Muelle Alemán* is the largest dock with facilities for container transport using the 'roll-on/roll-off' system and dealing with all types of cargo (Smith and Murillo, 1989: 32). This system has meant drastic reductions in the port labour force where before 25-30 tons of merchandise could be loaded in six hours using 16-20 workers, yet the new system can carry out the same task in five minutes using only six workers (Smith and Murillo, 1989: 32).

9) In 1983, the railway employed 3,200 people in the region and by 1986, this had been reduced to 2,750. In 1975 the railway carried 50% of all cargo between Limón and the rest of the country. By 1987, this was reduced to 25% and it has been projected that by 1994, the railway will carry less than 20% (Giro, 1989: 122).

10) The workforce within multinational companies is often referred to as the 'labour aristocracy' and there is much debate revolving around whether these protected workers act as a conservative or militant force. On the one hand some argue that this privileged sector operates in the interests of the working class in general and serves to promote the establishment of higher wages throughout the labour market. On the other hand, this labour aristocracy is seen to maintain the status quo and to act in self-interest, therefore increasing the cleavages between privileged and unprotected sectors (see Cubitt, 1987: 166-83 for discussion and references). In Limón, the historical association between the powerful trade unions and the banana companies would suggest they have been an influential force in securing relatively high wages in the province vis-à-vis the rest of the country. This pattern has been continued through the cargo company unions as the banana unions have diminished in importance in recent years.

11) The exchange rate is based on US\$1 = 85 *colones* (During the fieldwork period the official exchange rate rose from 85.18 in February to 95.26 in September, 1990 [Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report, 1991a: 25]). In Costa Rica, minimum wages are determined bi-annually by a National Wage Council in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for most branches of formal employment and occupational groups. In January, 1990 the average minimum wage was approximately 600 *colones* a day or 18,000 *colones* a month (US\$7 a day or US\$212 a month). This ranged from 7,000 *colones* per month (US\$82) for domestic servants of which 50% was for food, to 14,945 *colones* (US\$176) for cooks, 17,000 *colones* (US\$200) for secretaries and 34,200 *colones* (US\$402) for professionals with a university degree (see Lizano, 1981 for a discussion of Costa Rica's employment policies and the National Wage Council).

12) The cargo companies operate a rather complicated system of labour recruitment based on a three-tier system. At the top are the permanent workers, followed by temporary workers known as '*fulines*' (derived from the English 'fill-in') who are registered with the company. When more labour is required on a daily basis, casual workers are recruited from groups of men who regularly wait outside the company offices at the port. Aside from administrative staff, most port employees work on a daily basis depending how many ships are in port at the time. Given that this system applies to all port workers, employment in this branch of activity in Limón is therefore extremely unstable and competition for jobs is high.

13) At the national level, migration to urban areas has increased substantially in the last 15-

20 years. One reason is the expansion of the agro-export industry, which has led to consolidation of land for large-scale, capital-intensive agriculture, resulting in a reduction in labour demand and the expulsion of a large proportion of the rural population to urban areas. Another is improved welfare provision and the possibility of higher wages, particularly in the capital, which has prompted rural-urban migration (rather than employment opportunities themselves) (see Chant, 1991b, 1991c and Hall, 1985 for discussions). However, it should be pointed out that the latter reason does not apply to Limón where high wages are earned in banana plantations.

14) In Limón, banana plantations employ a disproportionate number of workers from Guanacaste where agricultural work is seasonal in nature, salaries are significantly lower and where general employment opportunities are scarce. The labour force of the Standard Fruit Company located in the Valle de la Estrella, consists of 85% *Guanacastecos* (interview with Ricardo Hernández Soto, personnel manager, Standard Fruit Company, 23 August, 1990). The general pattern of migration for people from Guanacaste is initially to secure employment on a plantation in the province where housing and amenities are provided. Once migrants have accumulated some capital, migration to the city of Limón itself occurs where they invariably settle in low-income peripheral settlements and search for employment in port-related activities. Agricultural wage levels are an important factor in movement of *Guanacasteco* migrants to Limón. Average wages in agriculture in Limón in 1989 were estimated at ₡21,966 (US\$258), compared to ₡15,603 (US\$183) in Guanacaste and a national average of ₡16,795 (US\$198) (MIDEPLAN, 1990: 53; see also Chant, 1991b).

15) "Sex, as a criterion for employment market segmentation, is more useful than other social differences not only because sexual differences are highly visible, but because social divisions between men and women are deep seated, without, however, arousing the sort of ambivalent feelings that are associated with divisions between other groups, eg. racial and ethnic groups" (Barron and Norris, 1991: 166).

16) The association between a male labour force and mechanised production is widely accepted and it has been shown how the introduction of capital-intensive technology has led to a decline in female labour force participation (see Saffioti, 1986 on Brazil). However, this relationship is rarely founded on objective skill levels and is more usually rooted in attempts by male workers and male-dominated trade unions to maintain power and control over the production process (Game and Pringle, 1984). Indeed, Shirley Dex (1989: 299) points out "that new jobs and new technologies only modify the gendered distribution of jobs, and that when new jobs are created, old symbolism is drawn on to decide whose jobs they are". Although the relationship between muscular strength and a male workforce may at first appear more tenable, evidence suggests that this may be another device used to exclude women from male-dominated sectors of the economy. In other developing countries (for example, India, Ghana and Nigeria) it is women who perform the heaviest duties, particularly in subsistence agriculture, yet they are constrained from working in such sectors as construction by employer decision-making. Indeed, it has been suggested that this perception can be attributed to the imposition of ideals from industrial nations (Anker and Hein, 1986).

17) Overall rates of female labour force participation have risen from 17.5% in 1960, to 24.3% in 1980. Official figures today estimate women's overall share as approximately 30% (Facio, 1989b; Ramirez-Boza, 1987). However, official figures of female labour force participation must be viewed with caution as these frequently underrepresent women's economic contribution due either to their employment in activities which fall outside data collection (informal sector or part-time work) or to inadequacies in data collection techniques (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 174). In Central America, García and Gomáriz (1989b: 21-22) point out that census data underrecords women's economic activity by between 50-100% and that more realistic estimates are obtained through the use of household surveys. More particularly in Costa Rica, an experimental census carried out in the district of San Juan in San Ramon, Alajuela, found that urban women's labour force participation increased from 31% recorded in the census to 48%, and for rural women from 23% to 45% (Buvinic and Horenstein in Yudelman, 1989: 238). These figures given also illustrate how employment levels vary

considerably according to urban or rural residence and Ramirez-Boza (1987) notes that in the period 1963-83, female labour force participation ranged between 31 and 33% in urban areas, yet in rural areas was only 8 to 21%.

18) Article 100 of the *Código de Trabajo* (Labour Code), states that firms with more than thirty female employees are obliged to provide an area within the establishment where mothers can breastfeed their children (Vincenzi, 1988: 38). While this does not necessarily have to be in the form of a crèche, many firms do not meet with these minimum requirements for child-care.

19) As a reaction to heightened activity amongst urban trade unions in the 1980s, many Solidarity Associations have been established in an attempt to curb union power and to counter any potentially subversive activities. In spite of advantages of the Solidarity Associations which provide resources that the state is unable to meet, there have been vociferous criticisms from trade unions. These have come mainly from the banana workers unions whom the Solidarity Associations have effectively replaced. In the early 1980s, after frequent strikes on the plantations, the banana unions claim that the companies (backed by the government), began a purge of union officials leading to the eventual disappearance of the unions themselves. In a law suit in 1989, the unions charged the government with dismantling workers rights under the Labour Code. Although the unions initially won, the Supreme Court overturned the decision on the grounds that the companies and the Solidarity Associations should have been sued along with the government. The unions still claim that workers are unprotected by these associations and that their formation was merely a way to counter dissent and to allow greater exploitation (article 'Solidarismo Replaces Unions In Banana Farms' in *Tico Times*, 1 June, 1990) (for further discussion see Barry, 1990).

20) JAPDEVA and INCOFER both have internal training centres, (*Centros de Capacitación*).

21) The case of JAPDEVA is somewhat different in that one of the main aims of the creation of the institution was to provide more employment opportunities for women in the city. In the 1970s, limited employment opportunities for women had resulted in the migration of Afro-Caribbean women to the United States. Given that one of the aims of JAPDEVA was to encourage the cultural development of the Atlantic region and that Afro-Caribbean women are the main purveyors of culture (Bernard, 1987), the creation of this institution was an attempt not only to provide more employment for women, but also to preserve the Afro-Caribbean heritage (Interview with Delroy Barton, historian and manager in Department of Development, JAPDEVA, 1 September, 1990).

22) Only in ESTIBA is there any record of women working on the wharves when, in 1989, two Nicaraguan women were employed for a short period. The personnel manager described these women as unlike most of their counterparts in that they were very masculine in appearance and often went drinking with other male workers. Through this he implied that only women who deviated from the societal norm of how women should behave were capable of working in the port. He was also keen to stress that these women were Nicaraguan rather than Costa Rican which more or less amounted to an excuse for their behaviour.

23) According to a study carried out in 1980 in Puerto Limón, the average age of marriage or formation of a consensual union (*unión libre*) was 19-20 years, although half of the women interviewed had already given birth to at least one child by this time. In addition, the main childbearing years for women were between 16 and 26 years (Bermúdez Méndez *et al*, 1982). Therefore, employer preferences for women over 30 or 35 years indicates that they are unlikely to have more children and hence impose any financial burden upon the company in the form of maternity payments. In addition, the indifference of employers towards marital status may be explained by the fact that rates of female headship and consensual unions are higher in Limón than in the rest of Costa Rica (Osorio *et al*, 1980; Sherman, 1984). The reasons for these differences have been attributed to presence of an Afro-Caribbean population in the area (Sherman, 1984) who have traditionally had lower marriage rates and higher proportions of female headed households than Latin America (see Anderson, 1986; Massiah,

1984 on the Caribbean). This issue is dealt with in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six.

24) The issue of whether 'ideology' exists 'autonomously' is embedded or integrated in material practices is a controversial one. It is more usually accepted that both interact and influence one another. For example, patriarchy and racism are both essentially ideologies, yet they are manifest in social and economic relations while still retaining ideological content (See Chant, 1991a; Walby, 1990 on patriarchy and Miles, 1989 in racism).

25) Game and Pringle (1984: 94-118) in their research on Australia point out that gender is the major organising principle in hospitals which reflect the most highly sexualised form of power relations than in any other industry discussed (manufacturing, finance, retailing, computing). The reasons for this revolve around the the symbolism of the family where concepts of doctor/father, nurse/mother and patient/child dominate the definition of jobs and authority patterns (p.94). Gamarnikow (1978) who examines nursing in mid-nineteenth century Britain also reaches similar conclusions relating to the perpetuation of familial gender ideologies within the health professions.

CHAPTER FIVE - ETHNICITY, THE HOUSEHOLD AND LABOUR SUPPLY IN LIMÓN: HOUSEHOLD AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

Chapter Four examined contemporary employment patterns in Limón and revealed marked levels of gender and ethnic segregation and segmentation in the labour market. Explanations included conditions in the local economy, recruitment policies, gender and ethnic stereotyping and institutional factors such as trade unions, for example. While these factors are useful in explaining employment patterns from the perspective of the labour demand at the city-wide level, this is however, only half the picture: analysis of labour supply as influenced by personal and household level characteristics is also needed (see for example, Chant, 1991a: 13-15).

With this in mind, the present chapter draws primarily on a questionnaire survey of 250 households in three low-income communities in Limón (Envaco, Limoncito and Barrio Roosevelt - see Appendix One) (see Figure 5.1) to explore the nature of employment patterns between Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* men and women.¹ In addition, it attempts to assess the influence of individual and household characteristics upon the labour force participation of these groups, with particular reference to women. It examines a range of factors (such as education, migrant status, household size and structure) conventionally thought to have a major influence on female labour supply. One of the main concerns of this chapter is to explore how these characteristics vary between ethnic groups. To this end, an attempt is made to show not only how a range of individual and household characteristics of women in general influence female economic activity, but also how these factors themselves may vary on account of ethnicity, and how in turn they may have different levels of significance for women of different ethnic groups. Incorporated within the analysis of survey results in this chapter are further conceptual discussions reviewing debates in the literature on the influence of household level factors on female labour supply, and the question of household forms associated with different ethnic populations. The relevance of these debates are, in turn, evaluated in light of the findings from the Limón study settlements.

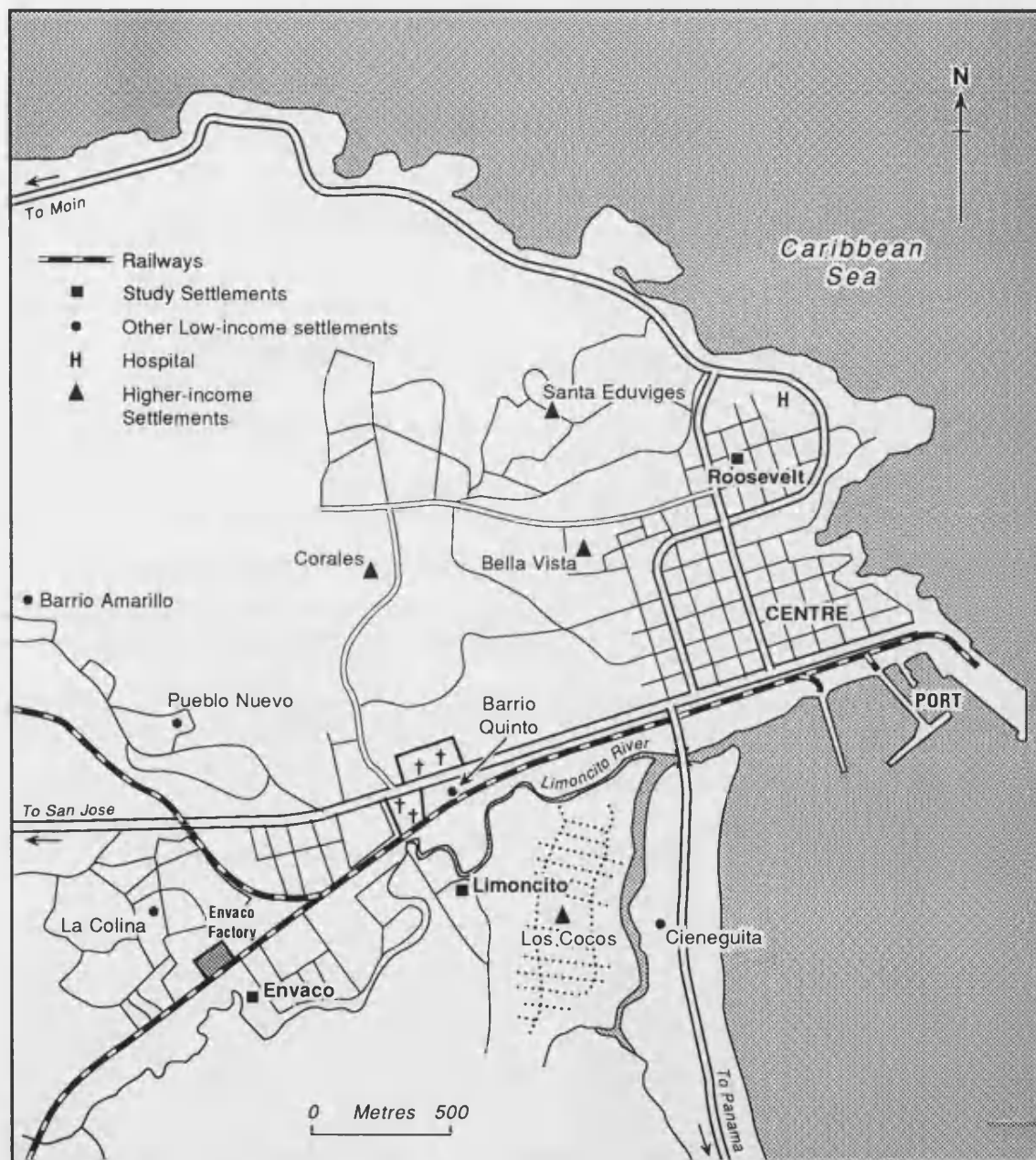


Figure 5.1: Puerto Limón: Major housing areas and location of study settlements

Occupational and Earning Differences between Afro-Caribbean and White/*mestizo* Groups in the Study Settlements

The ethnic composition of the settlements included in the household questionnaire survey is differentiated on a similar basis as estimates for the city itself (see Appendix One). White/*mestizos* represented 64% (160) of the total, Afro-Caribbeans 33.6%, (84), and the rest, mulattos, indigenous Indian, Chinese or mixed households (see Figure 5.2). However, these proportions are not uniform within each individual settlement and in turn reflect ethnic residential segregation. For example, over 73.7% (59) of the households interviewed in Barrio Roosevelt were of Afro-Caribbean origin compared with only 17.5% (11) and 12.2% (14) in Envaco and Limoncito respectively (see Figure 5.3).² Given the difficulties of breaking the analysis down by settlement, aggregate data for the three communities is used in the present discussion of ethnic differentiation and employment. The gender and ethnic composition of the informants interviewed were as follows: 48.8% (122) were white/*mestizo* women, 15.2% (38) were white/*mestizo* men, 26% (65) were Afro-Caribbean women and 7.6% (19) were Afro-Caribbean men (see Appendix One).

The present section aims to build a profile of employment characteristics of different ethnic groups in the three settlements. For purposes of clarity, groups are divided into ethnic and gender groups looking first at white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean males and second, at white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean females. Emphasis at this stage is on outlining patterns of employment, with the importance of position in the household (for example, head or spouse) in influencing labour force participation being examined later.

Occupational differences - white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean men

In terms of the roles of the total number of male heads (n=181) from both ethnic groups in Limón, 84.5% (n=153) of those in the survey were employed full-time, 2.2% worked part-time and the rest were retired, sick or unemployed. Patterns of employment of all male heads working full-time broadly reflect those found in the employer survey (see Chapter Four). Male heads were concentrated primarily in branches of transport, public and private services (both 'formal' such as cargo handling, railway workers and so on, and 'informal' including vendors, fishermen etc.) and industry (mainly factory workers) (see Table 5.1). Men in these sectors were employed mainly as manual workers, although a significant proportion were also in white-collar and skilled manual occupations (see Table 5.2). In terms of specific occupations, port-based cargo handling and manual and semi-skilled construction jobs

Figure 5.2 Proportion of Ethnic Groups in Limón

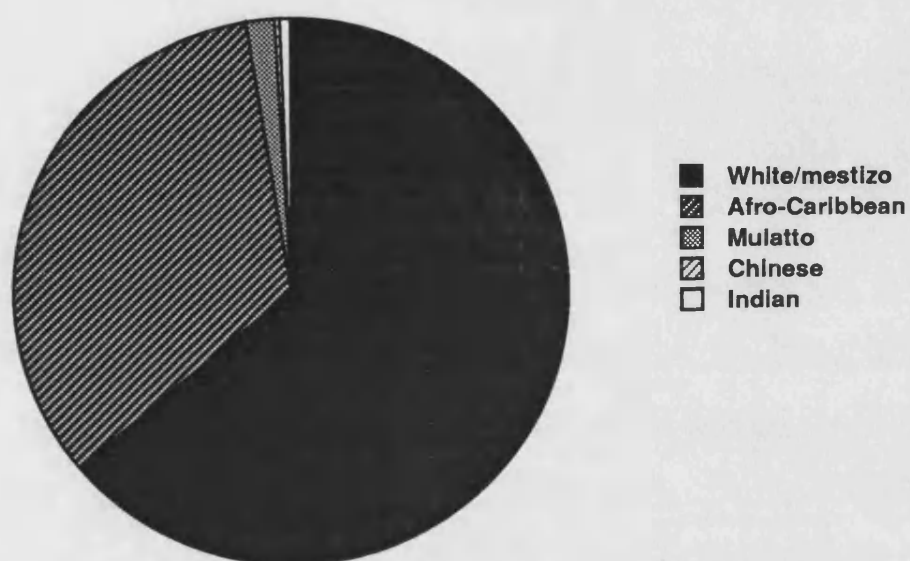
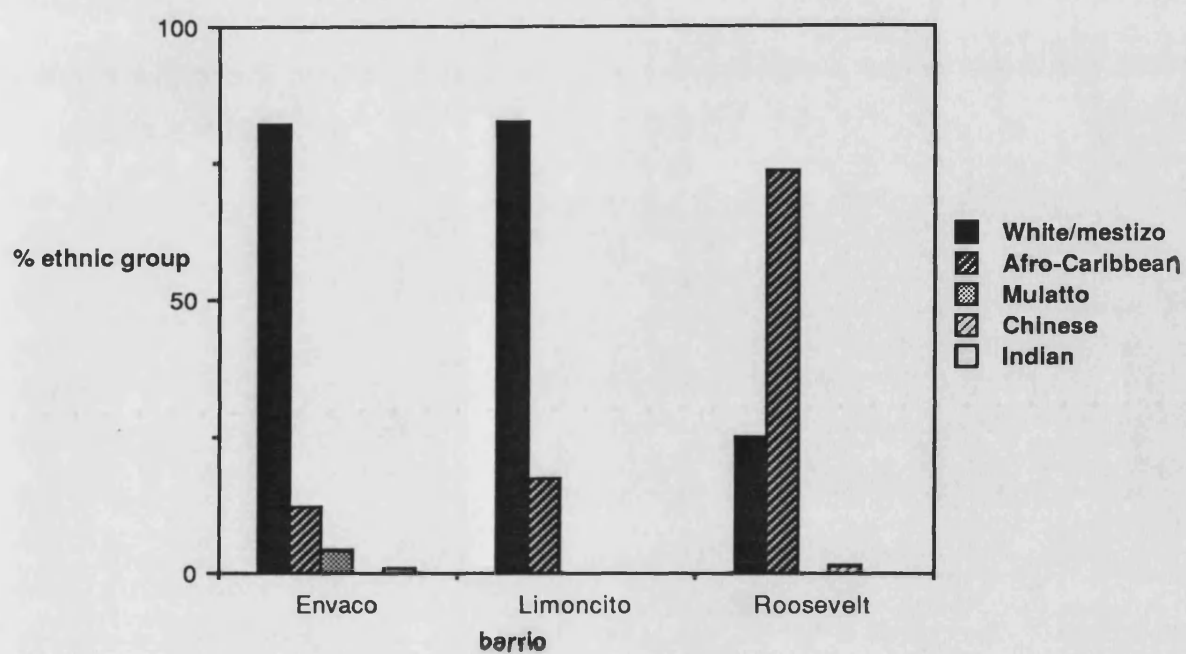


Figure 5.3 Distribution of Ethnic Groups by Barrio



were the most prevalent (see Table 5.3).

Within these general patterns of male employment however, there are variations between ethnic groups. For example, 85.6% of white/*mestizo* males were engaged in full-time income-earning activities (n=114) compared with 75% of Afro-Caribbeans (n=39), which may be explained by the higher proportion of Afro-Caribbeans who were retired or in part-time employment. Beyond this, ethnic segregation is significant both within and especially between branches. Almost one-half of all Afro-Caribbean men were employed in transport compared with one-third of white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.1). Public and private services and construction also employed a significant proportion of Afro-Caribbeans and within these branches ethnic composition reflected the patterns found in the city as a whole. White/*mestizos* on the other hand were employed overwhelmingly in the industrial sector (in DECAR and ENVACO, the cardboard box making factories and in the Coca-cola bottling plant - see Chapter Four). Similarly, the vast majority of all employees in commerce, hotels and restaurants were white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.1). Categories of work do not reflect such high levels of segregation given the predominance of manual work for both white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans (see Table 5.2). According to specific occupational distribution, cargo handling at the port and construction appear to be the main domains of Afro-Caribbean workers and industrial and construction for white/*mestizo* workers (see Table 5.3 and Figure 5.4). Significantly, the only two administrative posts recorded for port firms were held by white/*mestizos*. Other occupations identified at this level reflect similar patterns to those identified above (see Figure 5.4).

The main conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of male employment patterns in the household survey, is that around one-half of male heads are employed in manual work in transport with ethnic segregation being apparent in the heavy concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in the transport sector (specifically in loading and unloading cargo) and in construction. In addition, Afro-Caribbeans are almost entirely excluded from the industrial and commercial sectors. White/*mestizos* on the other hand, are more evenly distributed throughout sectors of the labour market with concentrations in industrial work (see Fig 5.3). Ethnic divisions within sectors are not so prominent, with most activities reflecting the ethnic composition of the city in general. Having found that overall patterns of male employment in the household survey are similar to those found in the employer survey discussed in Chapter Four, the discussion now turns to female employment patterns.

Table 5.1 Male Employment - Branch of Activity by Ethnicity

Branch of employment	Proportion of all economically active male heads	Proportion of white/ <i>mestizos</i> within each branch	Proportion of Afro-Caribbeans within each branch	White/ <i>mestizos</i> as a proportion of ethnic group	Afro-Caribbeans as a proportion of ethnic group
Agriculture, fishing and forestry	5.9% (9)	77.8% (7)	22.2% (2)	6.1%	5.1%
Industry	12.4% (19)	89.5% (17)	10.5% (2)	14.9%	5.1%
Electricity, water, gas	5.95 (9)	88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	7.0%	2.6%
Construction	10.5% (16)	68.75% (11)	31.25% (5)	9.6%	12.8%
Commerce, hotels, restaurants	10.5% (16)	81.25% (13)	18.75% (3)	11.4%	7.7%
Transport and communications	37.25% (57)	68.4% (39)	31.6% (18)	34.2%	46.1%
Finance	1.3% (2)	100% (2)	-	1.7%	-
Public and private services	16.0% (25)	68% (17)	32% (8)	14.9%	20.5%
	n=153 100%	n=114	n=39		

Notes

a Actual values in brackets

Source: Household Survey: Limón, 1990

Table 5.2 Male Employment - Category of Activity by Ethnicity

Category of employment	Proportion of all economically active male heads	Proportion of white/mestizos in each category	Proportion of Afro-Caribbeans in each category	White/ <i>mestizos</i> as a proportion of ethnic group	Afro-Caribbeans as a proportion of ethnic group
Independent worker	11.1% (17)	58.9% (10)	41.1% (7)	8.8%	17.9%
Self-employed	10.5% (16)	81.25% (13)	18.75% (3)	11.4%	7.7%
Employee (white-collar, shop)	15.7% (24)	79.2% (19)	20.8% (5)	16.7%	12.8%
Manual	48.4% (74)	77.0% (57)	23.0% (17)	50.0%	43.6%
Skilled manual	14.4% (22)	68.2% (15)	31.8% (7)	13.25	17.9%
	N=153	N=114	N=39		

Notes

Actual values in brackets

Source: Household Survey: Limón, 1990

Table 5.3 Male Employment - Occupation by Ethnicity

Occupation	Proportion of all men employed	Proportion of white/ <i>mestizos</i> within activity	Proportion of Afro- Caribbeans within activity
Port (cargo)	19.7% (31)	51.6% (16)	45.2% (14)
Port (white-collar)	1.3% (2)	100% (2)	
Railway	8.2% (13)	76.9% (10)	23.1% (3)
Industry (manual and semi-skilled)	11.4% (18)	88.9% (16)	11.1% (2)
Construction (manual and semi-skilled)	19.1% (30)	56.25% (18)	37.5% (12)
Security	6.3% (10)	100% (10)	
Self-employed, home-based (owns shop, repairs, rents rooms)	7.5% (12)	75% (9)	25% (3)
Self-employed (fishing, land clearance)	3.8% (6)	83.3% (5)	16.7% (1)
Lorry driver	3.8% (6)	83.3% (5)	16.7% (1)
Clerical	4.4% (7)	57.1% (4)	42.9% (3)
Shop assistant	3.8% (6)	66.7% (4)	33.3% (2)
Cleaner	3.2% (5)	100% (5)	
Other	6.9% (11)	72.7% (8)	27.3% (3)
	N=157	N=113	N=44

Notes

Actual values in brackets

Source: Household Survey, Limón, 1990

Figure 5.4 Male Occupational Distribution as a Proportion of Ethnic Group

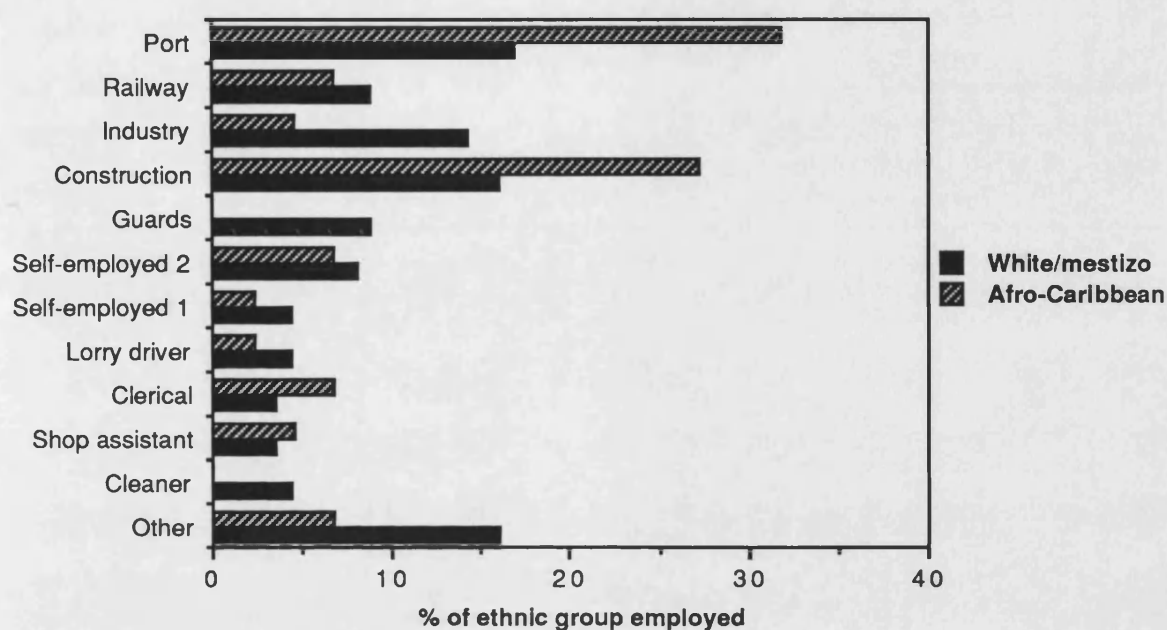
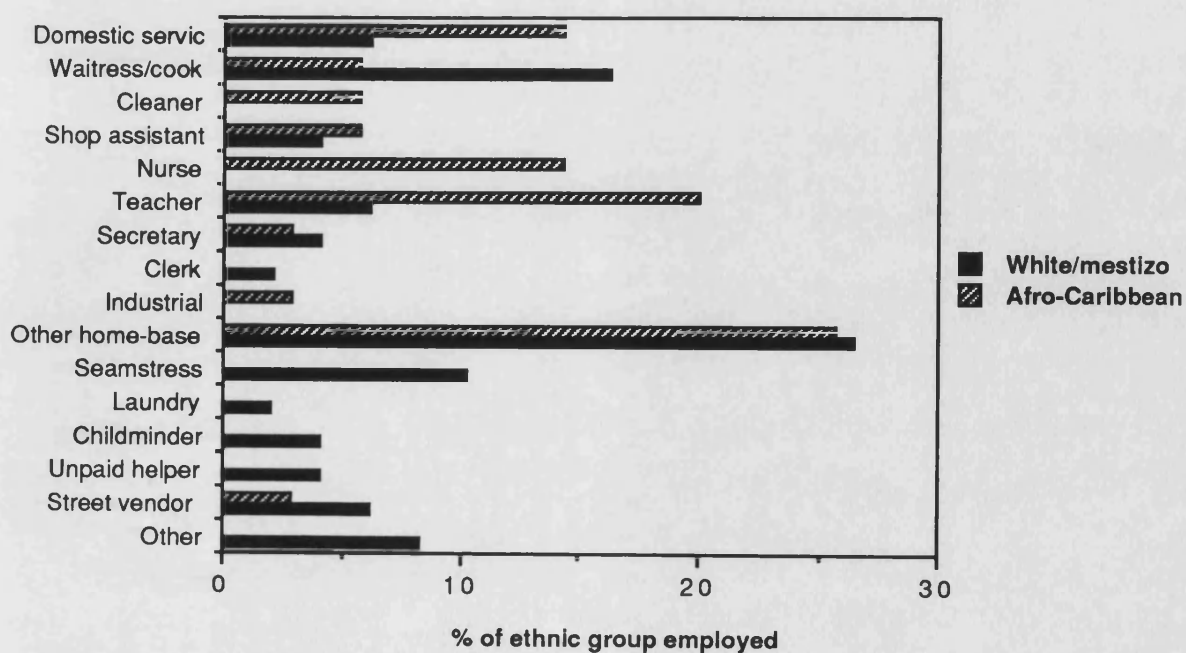


Figure 5.5 Female Occupational Distribution as a Proportion of Ethnic Group



Occupational differences - white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean women

Over one-third (37.7%) (n=87) of the female heads and spouses in the three settlements were involved in income-earning activities, of which 22 worked part-time (25.3%). Full-time female employment appears to be markedly concentrated in two main branches of 'formal' activity: commercial establishments (including shops, hotels and restaurants) and public and private services, reflecting ~~in the a~~ large number of women in white-collar employment (see Table 5.4). When part-time work is included, self-employed home-based work constitutes a much larger proportion of total occupations. Indeed, 'formal' sector jobs such as waitresses, cooks, nurses and teachers represented the same proportion of all economically active women as did self-employed home-based work (see Table 5.5).

Ethnic segregation of the female workforce is particularly marked both within and between branches, and more so than with male employment. The most striking finding was more than one-half of Afro-Caribbean women were involved in income-generating activities compared with under one-third of white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.4). The majority of Afro-Caribbean full-time workers were employed in public and private services while full-time white/*mestizos* dominated the commerce, hotels and restaurant sector (see Table 5.4). Within these branches segregation is strong, particularly in commerce where 72% of workers were white/*mestizo*, and with white-collar and self-employed workers fairly equally divided between white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans (see Table 5.4). Analysis of occupational distribution, which includes part-time work, reveals even greater ethnic segregation in that all nurses and 70% of teachers were of Afro-Caribbean origin, while 80% of waitresses and cooks were white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.5). Indeed, 24.3% of all working Afro-Caribbeans were employed in nursing and teaching (see Figure 5.5). In other 'formal' sector occupations, Afro-Caribbeans were also concentrated in domestic service and cleaning jobs, and the only industrial worker working in a plywood factory was Afro-Caribbean (see Chapter Four). White/*mestizos* on the other hand, predominated in clerical, secretarial and shop work (see Table 5.5). Home-based, 'informal' jobs such as cooking and selling food and/or soft drinks, taking in other peoples' laundry and sewing, employed almost half of white/*mestizo* women compared with one-quarter of Afro-Caribbean women (see Figure 5.5). This also reflects the higher proportion of white/*mestizo* women working part-time (17 women) compared with Afro-Caribbean (5 women).

The most striking observations of female employment patterns from the household survey is that not only do Afro-Caribbean women have much higher rates of

Table 5.4 Female Employment by Branch and Category of Activity and Ethnicity

Branch	Proportion of economically active women	Proportion of white/mestizos within activity	Proportion of Afro-Caribbeans within each activity	White/mestizos as a proportion of ethnic group	Afro-Caribbeans as a proportion of ethnic group
Industry	1.5% (1)	-	100% (1)	-	2.9%
Commerce, hotels and restaurants	38.5% (25)	72% (18)	28% (7)	60%	20%
Public and private services	58.5% (38)	31.6% (12)	68.4% (26)	40%	74.3%
Miscellaneous	1.5% (1)	-	100% (1)	-	2.9%
Category					
Independent worker	7.6% (5)	20% (1)	80% (4)	3.3%	11.4%
Self-employed	12.3% (8)	75% (6)	25% (2)	20%	5.7%
Employee	63.1% (41)	46.3% (19)	53.7% (22)	63.3%	62.9%
Manual	3.1% (2)	-	100% (2)	-	5.7%
Domestic Service	12.3% (8)	37.5% (3)	62.5% (5)	10%	14.3%
Unpaid Labour in family business	1.5% (1)	100% (1)	-	3.3%	-
	N=65	N=30	N=35		

Notes

Actual values in brackets

Source: Household Survey: Limón, 1990

Table 5.5 Female Employment - Occupation by Ethnicity (including part-time work)

Occupation	Proportion of all women employed	Proportion of white/ <i>mestizos</i> in each activity	Proportion of Afro-Caribbeans
Domestic Service	9.5% (8)	37.5% (3)	62.5% (5)
Waitress/Cook	11.9% (10)	80% (8)	20% (2)
Cleaner	2.4% (2)	-	100% (2)
Shop Assistant	4.8% (4)	50% (2)	50% (2)
Nurse	5.9% (5)	-	100% (5)
Teacher	11.9% (10)	30% (3)	70% (7)
Secretary	3.75% (3)	66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)
Clerk	1.2% (1)	-	100% (1)
Industrial worker	1.2% (1)	-	100% (1)
Home-based commerce	11.9% (10)	70% (7)	30% (3)
Home-based food producer and retailer	8.3% (7)	42.9% (3)	57.1% (4)
Other home-based activities	5.9% (5)	20% (1)	80% (4)
Seamstress	5.9% (5)	100% (5)	-
Laundress	1.2% (1)	100% (1)	-
Childminder	2.4% (2)	100% (2)	-
Unpaid Helper in family business	2.4% (2)	100% (2)	-
Street Vendor	5% (4)	50% (2)	50% (2)
Other	5% (4)	75% (3)	25% (1)
	n=87	n=47	n=40

Notes

Actual values in brackets

Source: Household Survey : *Limón, 1990*

labour force participation, but they also predominate in 'formal' sector, full-time technical and professional jobs such as nursing and teaching. White/*mestizo* women on the other hand, have much lower rates of labour force involvement and are mainly employed as waitresses and cooks and in 'informal' sector work based at home (often part-time) (see Figure. 5.5). This therefore reinforces the point made in Chapter Four that Afro-Caribbean women are not located in the most subordinate positions in the labour market, but instead are employed in relatively high status positions. In addition, it highlights the importance of 'informal' activities for white/*mestizo* women which were excluded from the employer survey.

Earning differences - white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean men

Divisions in the labour market are also reflected in differentials in weekly earnings between ethnic groups although differences in male earnings are not as marked as for women. Regarding wages in general, it is important to set average earnings in Limón against the legal minimum wage in the country as a whole. At the time of interviewing, the minimum general weekly wage was 4,200 *colones* (US\$ 49). In Chapter Four it was noted that average earnings in Limón were higher than the rest of the country. Indeed, this is borne out in the household survey where not only were male and female average weekly earnings higher than the minimum wage, but also higher than official statistics on average earnings in the region.³ Male heads earned an average of 5,606 *colones* a week, with roughly similar earnings in the three largest branches, although the highest were in industry (see Table 5.6). Evidence from Chapter Four would suggest that transport workers would earn the highest average wages, yet this is not the case from the household survey. The main reason for this is probably the instability of earnings, particularly in the port, where informants could only give rough estimates of average weekly earnings.

Examination of ethnic differences in earnings clarifies this further. Although there was little overall variation between ethnic groups (white/*mestizos* earned on average 5,559 *colones* and Afro-Caribbeans earned 5,555 *colones*), patterns within branches were highly variable. Afro-Caribbeans working in transport earned substantially more than white/*mestizos* and the general average for this branch (apart from electricity, gas and water where one man working for RECOPE as head electrician earning 16,250 *colones*). The highest paid branch for white/*mestizos* was in industrial work where average earnings were significantly higher than for Afro-Caribbeans (see Table 5.6). In all other branches, white/*mestizos* earned more than Afro-Caribbeans, and this is especially notable in commerce, hotels and restaurants. In general, average

Table 5.6 Average Male Weekly Earnings by Branch and Category of Activity

Branch	Weekly earnings of all male heads (in <i>colones</i>)	Weekly earnings of white/<i>mestizos</i>	Weekly earnings of Afro-Caribbeans
Industry	6,037	6,276	4,000
Electricity, gas and water	7,080	6,750	16,250
Construction	5,103	5,205	4,900
Commerce, hotels and restaurants	5,150	5,438	3,633
Transport	5,796	5,557	6,181
Category			
Independent	5,161	5,850	4,200
Self-employed	4,767	4,708	5,000
Employee (white-collar)	5,759	5,959	4,900
Manual	5,794	5,712	5,926
Semi-skilled	5,715	4,957	6,714

Table 5.7 Average Female Weekly Earnings

Ethnic group	Earnings in full- time work (in <i>colones</i>)	Earnings in part- time work (in <i>colones</i>)
All women	4,489	1,150
White/ <i>mestizo</i> heads and spouses	3,810	795
Afro-Caribbean heads and spouses	4,788	1,959

Source: Household Survey: *Limón, 1990*

earnings were higher for whichever ethnic group was concentrated within a particular branch (see Table 5.6). This perhaps reflects how the dominant ethnic group in a certain sector looks after its own interests through maintaining high wages levels for the majority ethnic workforce. Earnings differentials by category are more complicated, yet in general they corroborate patterns found in branches of activity. For example, Afro-Caribbean manual workers, who are predominantly employed in transport, earned slightly more than white/*mestizos*. Yet white/*mestizo* white-collar workers earned more than Afro-Caribbeans, as did independent workers (see Table 5.6).

Earning differences - white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean women

The differences in average weekly earnings between working female heads and spouses of different ethnic groups are much more marked than for their male counterparts. On average, female heads and spouses working full-time earned 4,489 *colones* a week, which was lower than men's, yet still higher than the legal minimum wage (see Table 5.7).⁴ When part-time work is included, average earnings were much lower with average earnings of only 1,159 *colones*. Overall, Afro-Caribbean women earned considerably more than white/*mestizos*, where the former earned 4,788 *colones* a week on average and the latter only 3,810 *colones*. In general, it is interesting that full-time Afro-Caribbean women workers earned more than the general legal minimum wage of 4,200 *colones* a week whereas white/*mestizo* women earned below this. This may be explained by occupational differences between ethnic groups in that white/*mestizo* women are more likely to be employed in home-based 'informal' sector jobs which are remunerated at a lower level than 'formal' sector employment such as nursing or teaching, where Afro-Caribbeans predominate. A similar pattern is evident when part-time is included in that Afro-Caribbeans earned an average of 1,959 *colones* a week compared with 795 *colones* earned by white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.7). Average female earnings therefore differ greatly between ethnic groups mainly on account of occupational differentiation.

To sum up the general patterns, it appears that from the household level, employment is as highly segregated on grounds of ethnicity as it is at the level of the labour market in general (see Chapter Four). Employment opportunities for low-income men in the household survey are concentrated in transport, industry and construction. Within this however, Afro-Caribbean men are disproportionately employed in transport and more specifically in cargo handling at the port. White/*mestizo* men on the other hand, are more likely to work in industrial or

commercial sectors. Employment of women in the city may be divided into 'formal' sector work in commerce and other services and 'informal' home-based work. Ethnic divisions within this are pronounced where Afro-Caribbean women have higher rates of labour force participation in general, and are also heavily concentrated in technical and professional jobs such as nursing and teaching. White/*mestizo* women on the other hand, predominate in commercial activities in the 'formal' labour market and in home-based work in the 'informal' sector.

Having examined employment patterns of low-income men and women of different ethnic groups in the three study settlements, discussion now turns to reasons why it is important to examine factors at the household level.

Labour Force Participation and the Household: Conceptual Perspectives

In Chapter One it was noted that explanations of labour force participation require the examination of both 'demand' factors operating at the level of the labour market itself and of 'supply' factors at the level of the household. Although conceptually the general relationship between the labour market and the household has been widely acknowledged (Barron and Norris, 1991; Beechey, 1987, 1988, Chant, 1991a; Rodgers, 1989; Sinclair, 1990; Walby, 1988) empirical investigation has invariably been restricted to examination of only one facet of the relationship (for a fuller discussion see Beechey, 1987: 179; Chant, 1991a: 12-13). More specifically, research on developed countries, particularly by feminist theorists, has conventionally tended to focus on analysis of the family in influencing men and women's position in the labour market (Walby, 1988^a). In developing countries on the other hand, emphasis has more commonly been located at the level of the workplace or the economy (Scott, 1990). While the polarisation of the two perspectives has largely been due to pragmatic constraints (Chant, 1991a:12), the result has led to somewhat incomplete analyses of labour force participation.

The need for an integrated approach recognising the interdependence of issues related to the workplace and the household is particularly important when examining female labour force participation. While variations in male labour force participation do exist, it is widely accepted that employment rates for men are generally high, whereas female labour force participation is lower and also varies widely (Rodgers, 1989; Stichter, 1990; Wallerstein and Smith, 1991). In certain situations, the

nature of the local economy results in high levels of female labour force participation and high male unemployment. For example, Fernandez-Kelly's (1983) study of industrialisation on the US-Mexican border and Safa's (1990) account of manufacturing employment in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, illustrate cases where women have preferential access to employment and therefore higher participation rates. Chant's (1991a) study of three Mexican cities also indicates the importance of local labour market conditions in determining levels of female employment. However, these studies are concerned to stress the need to examine the household as a primary site of analysis in explaining female employment patterns: although household factors are obviously important for all household members, they are particularly important for women (Chant, 1991a; de Oliveira, 1990; Selby *et al.*, 1990). ⁵

In exploring the reasons why female labour supply is conditioned to a greater extent than men's by household/family factors, it is useful to consider various conceptual frameworks which have been developed to explain female employment patterns through the analysis of household level characteristics (Anker and Hein, 1986; Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990). Stichter (1990: 39) identifies the most important groups of household level factors as (a) reproductive work (including fertility and distribution of household labour); (b) intra-household productive factors (including age and sexual divisions of labour); (c) income and resource allocation within the household unit; (d) and household structure; and (e) decision-making and power relations. Chant (1991a: 13) uses a similar schema based on (i) personal characteristics, (ii) material and demographic characteristics of the household, and (iii) social and ideological aspects of family organisation. The present section draws on these frameworks to discuss the main issues surrounding the nature of linkages between female employment patterns and the household, with particular reference to Latin America. In terms of ethnicity, the dominant group is assumed to be white/*mestizo*. While this does not imply that ethnic differences are not important in influencing relationships between the family and employment (see below), the discussion is based on general patterns in Latin America where Afro-Caribbeans are a minority group.

Looking first at the reasons why the household acts as a mediator in influencing women's likelihood of taking-up paid employment, the majority of studies emphasise the significance of women's reproductive roles. In most societies women's share of reproductive labour is considerably higher than men's. This may include responsibility for the daily maintenance of the household through childcare, shopping, cleaning and cooking as well as broader 'social reproductive' activities related to collective

consumption such as the provision of education, health care and housing (in conjunction with the public sector) (Brydon and Chant, 1989; Chant, 1992b). Men on the other hand, are usually primarily responsible for income-earning activities. The likelihood of women entering the labour market may therefore depend on practical matters such as the number of resident children, household size and so on (Anker and Hein, 1986; Chant, 1991a, Stichter, 1990). These factors affect women's ability to combine domestic labour with income-generating activities or to delegate their responsibility to other household or family members (Babb, 1986; Bolles, 1986; Standing, 1981).

However, whether these factors constrain the release of women into the labour market or not, depends also on the sexual division of labour and power within the household. Although the power accorded to women differs in specific cultural contexts (Scott, 1990; Stichter, 1990; see below), in general, ideological factors rooted in patriarchal attitudes result in a delineation of labour and power between male and female household members. This is particularly true in Costa Rica and other parts of Latin America where male power permits a greater degree of control over their wives' and daughters' decisions (Chant, 1991a, 1991b; Quiroz *et al.*, 1984; Selby *et al.*, 1990), than in other countries such as Peru (see for example, Scott, 1990; Radcliffe, 1990 on Peru). In practical terms this may mean that women are prevented in the first place from considering taking up paid employment and even if permission is sought from male partners, it is often refused (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a; on Mexico).

The sexual division of labour may also be reinforced by the man's position as main economic provider. If this is the case, male economic power within the household may be translated into power to determine how household income and expenditure is distributed. Indeed, it has been widely argued that resource allocation within households is inequitable with women shouldering major reproductive responsibility yet receiving few of the benefits accrued through male income-generating activities (Blumberg, 1991; Brydon and Chant, 1989; Dwyer and Bruce, 1988). This is exacerbated by a tendency of men to withhold part of their wages from the household budget creating a situation of 'secondary poverty' where women must juggle with the limited resources remaining after the male breadwinner has reserved a cut of his income for personal consumption (Chant, 1985a, 1985b). As such, domestic responsibilities weigh even more heavily on women in their attempt to ensure household survival.

The extent to which men may exercise authoritarian control within the household

unit depends on a number of factors. Most important, as identified above, is that where men are sole providers for households, their resultant economic power may allow them to make decisions within the family, especially on whether a woman is permitted to enter the labour force. However this is also related to income levels where ironically, if household income is low men may feel even greater need to demonstrate their authority through restrictions on other household members to compensate for their lack of economic leverage (Safilios-Rothschild, 1990). As such, there may well be an inverse relationship between the level of income of the male provider and his decision-making status within the household. Overall therefore, it is probably the power derived from men's status as primary breadwinners per se, rather than level of earnings which sustains male control over household decision-making. On the other hand, where other household members are earning, male authority derived from the breadwinning position may be somewhat curtailed. When wages (or part of the wages) of household members are pooled and total household income is higher, households are more likely to act as more consultative and egalitarian decision-making units. As such, exclusive male control may be weakened and female decision-making power correspondingly increased, thereby allowing women greater freedom to decide whether to work outside the home (Chant, 1992b; Stichter, 1990).

Another important reason for women entering the labour market is economic 'need'. At the household level, this may be the result of insufficient income arising through male unemployment or low wages. At a personal level, this may arise through unequal intra-household resource allocation where substantial parts of individual wages (particularly of male breadwinners) are retained. Whatever, the result is that women may often be forced to generate extra income outside the home to supplement existing income to ensure household survival (Chant, 1992b; Stichter, 1990). This is particularly true in households headed by women (Gabayet and Lailson, 1990 - see below). However Stichter (1990: 56) also points out that economic 'need' may also be used as a justification on the part of women in situations where it is deemed 'unsuitable' for them to work for ideological or religious reasons.

In addition to factors operating within the household, the composition and structure of the household itself is important in influencing women's entry into the labour market (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a; González de la Rocha, 1988; Stichter, 1990). Despite paucity of research on this phenomenon, it has been shown that different household structures may place certain members in different positions in relation to the labour market which in turn may lead to differential labour force

participation (Chant, 1991a; Fernández-Kelly, 1983). Briefly, various studies on Latin America have shown that female labour force participation is generally lower in nuclear units (households comprising conjugal partners and children) than in extended families (nuclear or single-parent cores with additional relatives or friends) or single-parent woman-headed households (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a on Mexico; García *et al.*, 1983 on Mexico and Brazil). More rigid patterns of male control in nuclear households may restrict women's ability to take up paid work, whereas in extended units, husband's authority over wives may be attenuated by the presence of other household members, and the general rationale for sharing resources, both productive and reproductive, may give rise to collective decisions to maximise household carrying capacity (Chant, 1991a: 155-156). In short therefore, the presence of other household members is another important factor in weakening unequal power relations between men and women which, in turn may influence female employment patterns. At the same time as women may be freer to enter the labour market for these reasons, they may also find this reinforced pragmatically by the possibilities of receiving domestic help from other household members (Chant, 1991a). In single-parent families, the absence of a male economic provider invariably means that women have little option but to find employment (Gabayet and Lailson, 1990). At the same time however, they are also unconstrained from male authority unlike many of their counterparts in more strictly controlled male nuclear units and therefore have the freedom to choose whether or not to work (see Chant, 1991a:162-171; 1992b for a fuller discussion).

Finally, in those cases where women in male-headed nuclear households do work, (for whatever reasons), their need to reconcile domestic labour and income-generating activities often determines the nature of employment carried out, and the only option may be home-based 'informal' sector work. For example, in the case described by Benería and Roldán (1987) in Mexico City, a large proportion of women were employed as industrial outworkers because this was accepted by male partners as a compromise between working and looking after the home and in a practical sense, it allowed women to devote time to both activities (see also Babb, 1986; Chant, 1992b; Scott, 1990).

The preceding discussion has outlined the various ways that household characteristics and intra-household factors may influence female employment patterns. The nature of the household has been assumed to refer to the predominant patterns found in Latin America. However, the influence of ethnicity in conditioning household characteristics and hence labour force participation, must be addressed, first at the conceptual level and then in relation to patterns found in the low-income settlements in

Limón. Therefore, the rest of the present chapter emphasises ethnic differences in household characteristics, while Chapter Six deals in more detail with ethnic variations in gender relations at the household level. Both chapters thus examine how these differences are likely to influence labour force involvement, yet stress different dimensions of the household sphere.

Ethnicity and the Household: White/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean Comparisons

While the critical role of ethnicity in influencing the links between the labour market and the household has increasingly been recognised, there has been little systematic enquiry into the nature of the linkages (Anthias and Yuval-Davies, 1990; Blumberg, 1991b; Glenn, 1991; Wallerstein and Smith, 1991). Indeed, this has been part of the overall neglect of taking into account the experiences of ethnic minority women both within feminist research and literature on race relations (Glenn, 1991; Higginbottom, 1992; Hooks, 1984; Spelman, 1988). It has been recognised that women from different ethnic groups have varying degrees of labour force participation (Amott and Matthaei, 1991; Bruegel, 1989; Glenn, 1991; Massiah, 1988, 1990; Phoenix, 1990; Westwood and Bhachu, 1989). For example, Afro-Caribbean women have consistently been associated with higher rates of labour force participation than whites and other ethnic minority groups in the United Kingdom (Anthias and Yuval-Davies, 1990; Bruegel, 1989; Westwood and Bhachu, 1989) and in the United States (Amott and Matthaei, 1991; Glenn, 1991, Swerdlow and Lessinger, 1983) as well as in the Caribbean itself (Massiah, 1983, 1988; Wiltshire-Brodber, 1988). Indeed, this pattern is also evident in Limón (see earlier). However, explanations of these patterns are more rudimentary than those relating to female labour force participation in general. Analyses mainly emphasise the historical evolution of labour markets and racial discrimination in affecting the access of ethnic groups to employment (Amott and Matthaei, 1991; Glenn, 1991). On the other hand, some studies also identify a relationship between high rates of female-headed households and high female economic activity rates although few elucidate why this may be so (Bruegel, 1989; Massiah, 1990; Wallerstein and Smith, 1991). It is important therefore to point out not only differences in household types between ethnic groups but also diversity within these groups, and to discuss possible reasons in order to assess how these may impinge upon labour force participation. In the following discussion it is also essential to recognise that households are not static phenomena and that the patterns outlined are generalisations of the major patterns.

White/mestizo household forms

In Latin America in general, discussion of household form refers to the majority white/*mestizo* low-income population. This does not imply that other ethnic groups do not exist, but that there has been little research on ethnic minority households in Latin America, and studies which do examine ethnic minority, tend mainly to deal with indigenous Indian populations rather than Afro-Caribbean groups (Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1987 on Colombia; Radcliffe, 1990 on Peru; but also see Whitten, 1965 on Afro-Caribbeans in Ecuador and Rubbo, 1975 on Colombia). Similarly, although class position may influence the prevalence of certain types of households (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Scott, 1990), research has tended to concentrate on low-income groups which constitute the majority. Therefore the patterns described for Latin America are assumed to refer to low-income white/*mestizos*.

In urban Latin America in general, the predominant household forms are male nuclear, extended (both male and female-headed) and single-parent women-headed (Brydon and Chant, 1989; Chant, 1991a) with case studies showing that nuclear families are the most common type (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1985a, 1985b, 1991a; González de la Rocha, 1988; Selby *et al.*, 1990 on Mexico; Moser, 1989 on Ecuador; Fonseca, 1991 on Brazil; Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1987 on Colombia). This is also the case in Costa Rica (Carter and True, 1978; Chant, 1991b; De los Ríos, 1989; Facio, 1989a; Quiroz *et al.*, 1984; Vega, 1992). However, the preponderance of nuclear units in Costa Rica is rather variable ranging from around 68% in the central Metropolitan area (De los Ríos, 1989) to between 40% and 55% in the northwest province of Guanacaste (Chant, 1991b). Moreover, as noted earlier, extended households are also increasingly important in Latin America, particularly among low-income groups, representing between one-fifth to one-quarter of all households (Chant, 1991a; García *et al.*, 1983 on Mexico; García and Gomáriz, 1989 on Central America, and Chant, 1991b, 1991c; De los Ríos, 1989; Dierckxsens, 1992; Vega, 1992 on Costa Rica). Reasons for their formation have stressed economic exigencies faced by the urban poor. In situations of housing shortages, poor wages and un- and underemployment, the pooling of productive and reproductive labour resources of household members as a means of coping with these circumstances may be extremely attractive. However, while extended households have often been perceived as 'temporary' households in transition to nuclear units, it has increasingly been recognised that they may be a more permanent, viable and positive form of domestic arrangement, especially in the context of structural economic crisis (see Chant, 1991a: 18-20 for a fuller discussion). ⁶

Also of increasing importance is the rise of woman-headed households throughout the region (and indeed in the Third World as a whole) representing between 20%, and in some case up to 50% in some urban areas (see Chant, 1991a: 20-23; Townsend and Momsen, 1987: 52-54 for discussions). In Latin America, Delpino (1990) notes that these household units represent around 25% of all households, although this is likely to be a conservative estimate given unreliable data and under-reporting by women themselves. In Central America, the proportions vary from 15% in Guatemala to 27% in El Salvador (García and Gomáriz, 1989a). In Costa Rica, census figures for 1984 show that women heading households represented 18% for the country as a whole (22.5% in urban areas and 12.5% in rural areas) (Facio, 1989b). These figures are corroborated by case studies in the country, from around 15% in towns in Guanacaste (Chant, 1991b) to 19% in a study of urban areas in the provinces of San José, Guanacaste and Limón (Quiroz *et al*, 1984). Women-headed households may be either de jure or de facto. The former refers to female heads who have no residential male partner on a permanent basis as the result of divorce, widowhood, desertion and so on. De facto woman heads refer to cases where the male partner is temporarily absent, usually as a result of labour migration (see Youssef and Hetler, 1983: 232).

Various reasons proposed for the rise in this type of household formation in Latin America include demographic factors such as the greater life expectancy of women leading to early widowhood, and the gender-selectivity of rural-urban migration dominated by women (Chant, 1991b, 1991c; Chant and Radcliffe, 1992; Townsend and Momsen, 1987). Other factors stress the importance of the cultural prescription of gender roles linked with the ideal of the male breadwinner. In situations of urban poverty where men may be unable to provide for the household, their feelings of failure may lead to desertion of their families. This may be exacerbated by the cultural complex of *machismo* which not only reinforces a strict sexual division of labour, but may also lead to exaggerated displays of masculinity exemplified in the household through domestic violence, retention of financial support and sexual infidelity (see Chapter Six). While this may marginalise the male role within the household causing men to leave, it may also lead to women making a decision to leave their partners. All these are culturally and regionally specific factors which may contribute to the growing incidence of households headed by women in Latin America (see Chant, 1985a, 1985b, 1991a for fuller discussions). However, the prevalence of these households in other areas of Latin America and among other ethnic groups suggests that additional factors may be important in contributing to their formation as discussed below.

Afro-Caribbean household forms

Afro-Caribbean and black households, particularly in the Caribbean and United States, have received considerable attention in the literature (see Barrow, 1988; Blumberg and García, 1977; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Massiah, 1983 for reviews).

Arguably, this attention has been based on the fact that Afro-Caribbean and black household forms do not usually conform to the ideal of the Western nuclear family (Boyd-Franklin, 1983; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Mohammed, 1988). Indeed, Young (1990: 147) points out that normative household patterns in the Caribbean are characterised by "widely divergent domestic practices ...with several alternative forms of marital union, birth status, and household headship practised". In addition, studies concerning household organisation in the Caribbean tend to emphasise the marital status of household head rather than headship or structure per se (Bolles, 1981, 1986; Clarke^E, 1957; Massiah, 1986; Smith, R.T, 1988). ^A7 Accepting some difficulties in comparability, it is possible to ascertain general patterns.

General features associated with Afro-Caribbean households are the high incidence of woman-headed or matrifocal families and a high degree of flexibility in family formation. ⁸ For example, Massiah (1983) points out that around 32% of all households in the Caribbean are woman-headed, although in countries with significant proportions of East Indians (Asians) such as Trinidad and Guyana and countries with large indigenous Indian groups such as Belize, the rates are much lower (see also Patterson, 1990 on Guyana; Momsen, 1984 on the Eastern Caribbean; Williams, 1986). Among exclusively black communities, proportions of woman-headed households are nearer to 50% (see Young, 1990 on St Vincent). In other countries, proportions of female-headed households are also higher among Afro-Caribbean and black households than other ethnic groups (Amott and Matthaei, 1990; Chandler, 1990; Durant-Gonzales and Massiah, 1982; Momsen, 1984; Petras, 1988). In addition, extended households have also been found to be more common among Afro-Caribbean communities (Boyd-Franklin, 1983; Phoenix, 1990; Zinn, 1987). Accepting this however, stereotyping has often obscured the fact that male-headed households represent around 50% -70% of all households in the Caribbean (Massiah, 1983; Young, 1990) and elsewhere (Bruegel, 1989; Chandler, 1991; Zinn, 1987, 1990). Moreover, other family structures, often rare in Latin America, are also found among Afro-Caribbean communities. The most important of these is the grandmother-headed household which consists of a grandmother living with her grandchildren without her immediate offspring. These have long been associated with the Caribbean (Clarke^E, 1957; Goody, 1975; Smith, R.T, 1956), but are also found in parts of Africa (see Brydon, 1979,

1992). Finally, Afro-Caribbean households have also been characterised by their greater flexibility and fluidity based on the existence of extensive kinship networks. These may take the form of additional members resident in the household in the case of extended units or alternatively, may be friends, relatives and neighbours living outside the residential unit (Bolles, 1982, 1986; Durant-Gonzales, 1982; Massiah, 1986; Momsen, 1992; Stack, 1974).

Various conceptual approaches have been formulated to account for these patterns among Afro-Caribbean families and can be broadly divided into cultural or structural approaches. The cultural perspective includes the 'cultural diffusion' and 'social pathological' views. The first sees matrifocality in terms of retentions of African polygenous kinship patterns which were both extensive and female-centred (Herskovits, 1941). The second emphasises the passage to the Caribbean and the slavery and plantation system as contributing to the 'breakdown' of family organisation (Frazier, 1939; Henriques, 1973; Simey, 1946). Under slavery, the prohibition of legal marriage among slaves discouraged nuclear family formation and militated against black men assuming a dominant position in the household (Blumberg and García, 1977). After Emancipation, continued poverty and privation combined with difficulties experienced by black men in securing jobs, meant that marriage and the nuclear family remained unattainable for the majority of the population (Massiah, 1986). Structural functionalist approaches elaborated upon this view, arguing that the family was a response to disorganising effects of post-Emancipation socio-economic conditions, particularly male migration, seasonal employment and landlessness (Clarke, ^E1957; Rodman, 1971; Smith, R.T, 1956). Grandmother-headed households in particular are seen as the result of labour migration where the grandmother is left to raise her grandchildren while her daughter and/or son works elsewhere (Smith, R.T, 1956). Both views however, tended to see the black family as 'disorganised' or 'deviant' (Durant-Gonzales and Massiah, 1982; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Mohammed, 1988). ⁹ Only recently has it been stressed that Afro-Caribbean household forms are adaptive, flexible units emerging in response to contemporary economic problems (Barrow, 1986; Smith, R.T, 1988). All the above approaches can also be criticised for neglecting the role which women play within households, particularly that women may initiate the formation of their own households (but see Barrow, 1986). ¹⁰

There are many problems with general approaches to household structure, particularly in respect of the role of ethnicity. For example, within theories of the family in general, ethnic minority household patterns are usually dismissed as 'special

cultural cases' (Zinn, 1990: 69). Matrifocal and flexible households are often associated exclusively with black communities, yet evidence has shown that these households also exist among white populations in developed countries, among white/*mestizo* groups in Latin America and in other non-black Caribbean communities (Blumberg and Garcia, 1977; Fonseca, 1991; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Mohammed, 1988; Solien de Gonzales, 1969). Related to this, is the 'culture of poverty' view that household structure is linked with poverty (Hutter, 1981). Here, matrifocal and extended units are seen as deviant, not only being the product of, but also in themselves leading to poverty. Given that these types of households are prevalent within ethnic minority groups, the result is often that ethnicity and race are used as explanations for higher levels of poverty (Blumberg and García, 1977; Bruegel, 1989; MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Zinn, 1987). However, there is no evidence that family structure causes poverty in a direct sense (Zinn, 1990).¹¹ Instead, the fact that ethnic minorities have unequal access to material resources as a result of institutional discrimination and racism, is more likely to cause poverty than household form (MacDonald and MacDonald, 1978; Zinn, 1990). Nonetheless, these racist stereotypes of deviant black, matrifocal and extended households prevail, particularly in government reports on ethnicity and poverty (Brittan and Maynard, 1984). However, even when black households are perceived as positive adaptive units, the difficulty remains in assessing how far culture and ethnicity influence household formation compared with socio-economic conditions. Although increasingly there have been calls to reject cultural explanations (Bruegel, 1989; Phoenix, 1990), Zinn (1990: 78) points out that "race creates different routes to female headship".

Prompted by the fact that women-headed households exist in different cultural and historical circumstances, Blumberg and García (1977) have formulated five (predominantly economic) conditions necessary for the emergence of this type of household. These require first, that women should have individual access to labour and property accumulation; second, that access to a means of subsistence is ensured either through their own paid employment, through contributions from children, or through state welfare; third, that employment or subsistence should be reconcilable with childcare; fourth, that women should have access to subsistence at a comparable level as that of men; and finally, that the existence of woman-headed households in no way subverts the political economy of a country, and specifically that this type of domestic organisation is tolerated by the state (ibid. 108-120). These conditions essentially refer to the material conditions which may account for the emergence of female-headed households, yet these must also be considered along with cultural circumstances.

Having said that, the difficulties of disentangling material from cultural and ethnic factors must be stressed. The problems are especially relevant with regard to gender ideologies within the household. For example, among white/*mestizo* families in Latin America we have seen how *machismo* may reinforce unequal gender relations and the ideal of the male breadwinner. As noted earlier, this has implications both for the formation of households and for female labour force participation. Among other ethnic groups however, different cultural and economic circumstances may also affect the nature of gender relations in different ways (Anthias and Yuval-Davies, 1990; Barrett, 1988; Carby, 1982; Hooks, 1984; Walby, 1990). First, it has been suggested that ethnic minority households (particularly black households) act as units of resistance from a racist society rather than being sites of oppression for women (Carby, 1982; Hooks, 1984). Because of this, it has been argued that gender relations are considerably more flexible among ethnic minority groups facing greater exigencies in terms of discrimination and economic privation (Zinn, 1990). More pragmatically, this may imply greater sharing of reproductive labour between men and women as well as greater female decision-making power within the household (see Chapter Six).

Second, it has been widely recognised that Afro-Caribbean women in particular have a substantial degree of authority and power within the household compared with other ethnic groups (Anderson, ^P_A 1986; Antrobus, 1985; Chandler, 1990^I; Glenn, 1990; Moses, 1977; Stichter, 1990; Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow, 1977), even if this power may not be translated into higher status in wider society (Powell, 1986). The roots of this image of Afro-Caribbean women is found in the intermeshing of cultural traditions and economic reality. On the one hand, the colonial past has created an image of women based on an Anglo-Protestant culture which requires that women are submissive, dependent on men and restricted to the domestic sphere. On the other hand, Afro-Caribbean culture has created an image of women as independent, hard-working and resourceful (Barrow, 1986; Brodber, 1982; Massiah, 1986; 1990). While most women aspire to the former image, socio-economic conditions from slavery until the present day have denied them the ability to fulfill this. Under slavery, women were forced to work alongside men and with Emancipation, scarce employment opportunities for men as wage labourers meant that women continued to work to ensure economic survival of their families. From the turn of the century until today, widespread male migration and precarious economic conditions throughout the region have continued to undermine the notion of the male breadwinner and the Anglo-Protestant ideal. The upshot of these historical developments has meant high levels of female household

headship and female employment rates serving to reinforce the dominant, autonomous image of Afro-Caribbean women (Barrow, 1986; Massiah, 1986). However, the dualistic conception of female roles has created what Barrow (1986: 138) calls a 'double consciousness' whereby patriarchal ideals are constantly negotiated. As a result of this, ^{Patricia} Anderson (1986: 303) points out:

"while Caribbean women tend to ascribe formal leadership to males, they participate actively in household decision-making and exercise considerable power derived from their familial roles and their own income-generating activities".

There is therefore an interplay between economic and cultural factors influencing gender relations and household structure which in turn may affect or be affected by female labour force participation. The historical association of Afro-Caribbean women with paid employment and household headship has created a cultural precedent which economic reality has continued to reinforce.

To summarise this section on the configuration of households according to ethnicity, quite significant differences are apparent between general patterns of white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean household forms. Essentially, woman-headed and extended units are thought to be more widespread among Afro-Caribbean households, whereas nuclear families have been shown to dominate among white/*mestizo* groups. The other main point of departure between ethnic groups is in the nature of gender relations within the household where different cultural and economic circumstances have resulted in the portrayal of Afro-Caribbean women as more dominant than white/*mestizo* women. While Chapter Six examines these latter points, the following sections examine how far household characteristics in terms of structure, size and so on, combined with individual characteristics may affect female labour supply in the context of the Limón study.

Afro-Caribbean and White/*mestizo* Households in Limón

Given the general variations in households according to ethnicity discussed above, it is important to briefly outline ethnic differences in households in the three low-income settlements in Limón before going on to relate these variations to female labour force participation.

Examination of household structure and composition among ethnic groups in Limón reveals similar patterns found elsewhere in Latin America. Regarding sex of

household heads, 74.8% of all households in the sample were headed by men compared with 24.8% by women (one was jointly headed by a brother and sister). In terms of the composition of households in the sample as a whole, nuclear families are the most common form of household unit (42%) followed by extended (both male- and female-headed) (29.6%) and single-parent households (8%) (although other household types are also represented) (see Table 5.8).

As might be expected from the previous discussion, differences in household structure between ethnic groups are pronounced. The most important finding is that the proportion of households headed by women was substantially higher among Afro-Caribbean families where they represented 36.9% of the total in this group, compared with 19.4% among white/*mestizo* households. The structure of households reflects this disparity with almost one-half of white/*mestizo* households living in nuclear arrangements compared with just over one-third among Afro-Caribbean households. As might be expected, single-parent woman-headed households were considerably more widespread among Afro-Caribbeans than white/*mestizos*. In addition, the type of woman-headed households varied ethnically in that all white/*mestizo* single-parent families were de jure whereas nine out of the thirteen Afro-Caribbean households were de facto. Contrary to expectations, extended households were more common among white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.8; Figures 5.6 and 5.7). Interestingly, when statistical relationships were examined using chi square analysis, there was no significant correlation between differences in household structure and ethnicity. However, differences in headship between ethnic groups was found to be extremely significant at the 99.9% confidence level. ¹²

Differences in other household characteristics are also pronounced between ethnic groups. White/*mestizo* households were larger on average than Afro-Caribbean (4.9 compared with 4.2 household members). In addition, fertility levels were higher among this group (4.1 as against 3.8 live births) who also had more children living in the household (2.2 as against 1.7 children). In terms of average ages of male heads and female heads and spouses, Afro-Caribbeans were older than white/*mestizos*. Afro-Caribbean women had an average age of 44.4 years compared with 38.6 years among white/*mestizos*, and Afro-Caribbean men were 44.4 years old on average compared with 40.2 years among white/*mestizo* men. Marital status also differed between ethnic groups although only marginally. Almost two-thirds of all those living in partnerships from both ethnic groups were formally married (60.5% of white/*mestizos* and 63.1% of Afro-Caribbeans) and one-third lived in consensual unions (39.5% of

Table 5.8 Household Structure by Ethnicity

	All groups	White/ <i>mestizo</i>	Afro-Caribbean
Male nuclear	42% (105)	45.6% (73)	34.5% (29)
Male extended	17.6% (44)	18.75% (30)	14.3% (12)
Single-parent	8% (20)	4.4% (7)	15.5% (13)
Female-extended	12% (30)	13.75% (22)	9.5% (8)
Couple	5.2% (13)	5% (8)	4.8% (4)
Single woman	3.6% (9)	1.9% (3)	7.1% (6)
Grandmother-headed	2.8% (7)	2.5% (4)	3.6% (3)
Grandfather-headed	3.6% (9)	3.75% (6)	3.6% (3)
Nuclear Compound	5.2% (13)	2.5% (7)	7.1% (6)
	N=250	n=160	n=84

Notes

Number of cases in brackets

Male nuclear refers to a male-headed conjugal unit living with children

Male extended to a male nuclear unit with additional kin or friends resident

Single-parent to a female head living alone with her children

Female extended to a single-parent unit with additional kin or friends

Couple to a conjugal unit living alone with no children

Grandmother to a female head living with grandchildren with no intermediate generation

Grandfather to a male head living with grandchildren and no intermediate generation

Nuclear compound to a number of male nuclear units sharing the same plot of land or living space but dividing financial resources (see Brydon and Chant, 1989: 135-139).

Source: Household Survey: *Limón, 1990*

Figure 5.6 Household Headship - Afro-Caribbean

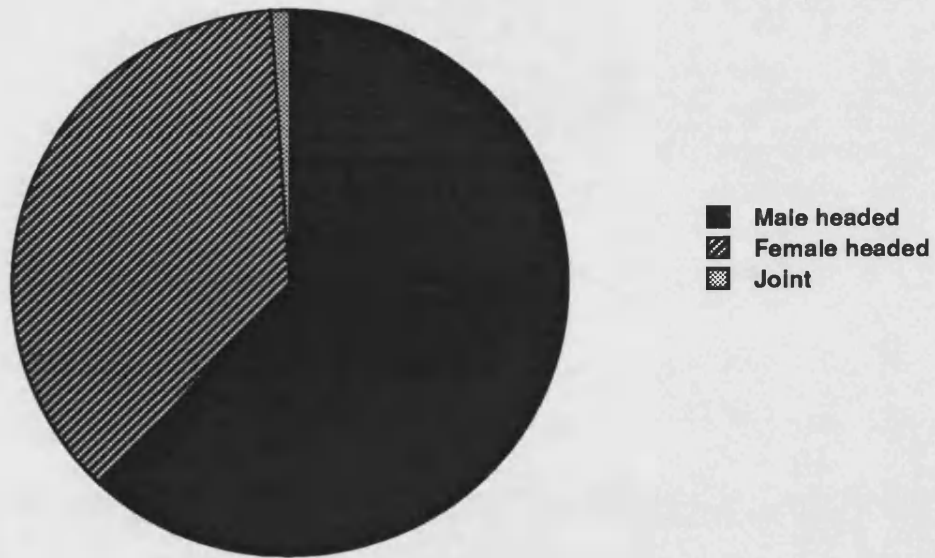
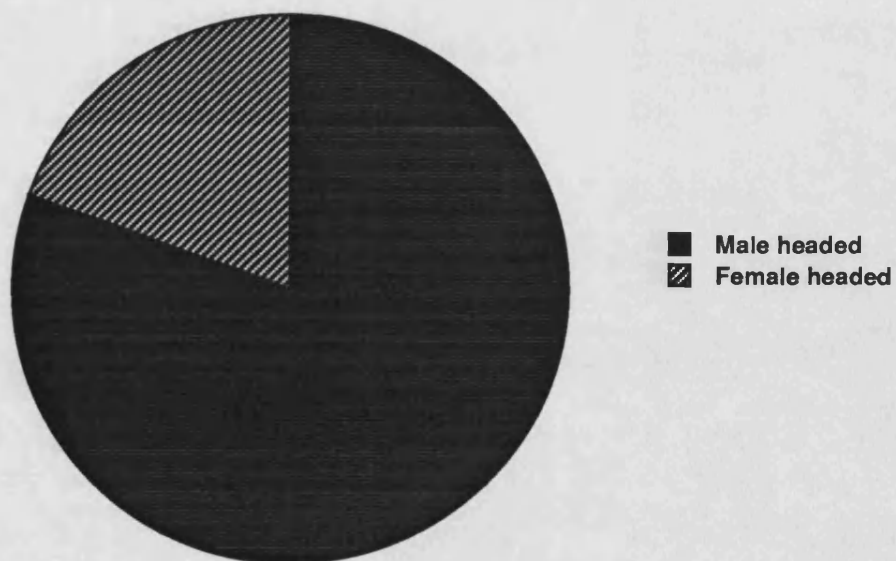


Figure 5.7 Household Headship - White/mestizo



white/*mestizos* and 36.9% of Afro-Caribbeans). These factors are examined in greater detail below in relation to female labour force participation.

Female Labour Supply in Limón: Ethnicity and Household Level Characteristics

Earlier in the chapter it was noted how labour force participation differs between ethnic groups. In the case of male employment, participation rates are similar between ethnic groups, although the nature of employment varies. In terms of female employment on the other hand, both rates of participation and occupational distribution varies between Afro-Caribbeans and white/*mestizos*. Given greater disparities in the nature and rates of women's economic activity, coupled with the fact that household level factors are more likely to influence female labour supply, the present section concentrates on how differences in these characteristics affect the entry of Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* women into the local employment market in Limón. More specifically, it aims to determine why Afro-Caribbean women have higher rates of labour force participation than white/*mestizos*. While emphasis here is on ethnic variation in household level characteristics and differences between households, Chapter Six concentrates on ethnic differences in gender relations within the household.

Household headship and structure

Earlier it was noted that despite fairly scant comparative empirical evidence, household structure and headship is thought to play an important role in influencing female labour force participation in Latin America (Chant, 1991a; Fernández-Kelly, 1983; González de la Rocha, 1988 on Mexico; Safa, 1990 on Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic). As noted previously, if households are male-headed, women are less likely to engage in income-generating activities than if they head their own households (Arizpe, 1990b; Chant, 1985b). This may be modified further if household composition is taken into account. Rates of female employment are likely to be lowest where women reside in nuclear households and highest where women head single-parent units. In extended units, participation is likely to be higher than in nuclear families although less than those headed by women (Chant, 1991a; García *et al.*, 1983 on Mexico).

In the Caribbean empirical evidence is also somewhat limited, made more difficult by lack of comparable data on households. Notwithstanding these constraints, a somewhat different picture from Latin America emerges. In general, the hypothesis that women heading their own households have higher rates of labour force participation

than their counterparts in male-headed units, appears to hold in the Caribbean (Massiah, 1986; Powell, 1984). However, the importance of household headship and structure do not appear to be as critical as in Latin America. For example, in St Vincent (part of St Vincent and the Grenadines), Young (1990) found similar rates of female employment in households headed by women as in those headed by men. In a study of working women in various firms in Kingston, Jamaica, Bolles (1986) found that while women who were female heads outnumbered those living in male-headed families, the disparity was not significant. Similarly, Safa (1981) points out that among female factory workers in Mexico and Jamaica, the relationship between female employment and female headship was much stronger in the former than the latter and that the impact of employment on the sexual division of labour was more marked in Mexico. She attributes this to weaker patriarchal attitudes in Jamaica where the tradition of female-headship and female employment is already entrenched.

In the case of Limón, household headship and structure and female labour force participation appear to be closely linked. However, distinctive patterns emerge when ethnicity is taken into account. When examining both ethnic groups together, household headship is undoubtedly an important factor in conditioning female employment, in that 42.4% of ^{women in female-headed} ~~all~~ households headed by women were working (full and part-time) compared with 35.7% of women who lived in households headed by men. When ethnicity is included in the analysis however, headship remains important only at the general level, as differing participation rates between ethnic groups somewhat modifies its influence. Among white/*mestizo* households participation rates were similar for male and female-headed units, with 30.5% of women heads of households working compared with 30.8% of female spouses in male-headed households. Among Afro-Caribbeans overall participation rates were substantially higher and there was a larger differential between male and female-headed households. In female-headed households, 56.7% of women worked and 48.9% in households headed by men. Differences in headship and economic activity were found to be statistically significant at the 99.5% confidence level for Afro-Caribbeans and 95% for white/*mestizos*, although these chi square tests do not illustrate the variations in participation rates between ethnic groups which appears to be of most importance here. Indeed, the most significant pattern to emerge is that white/*mestizo* women have much lower participation rates than Afro-Caribbeans regardless of whether the household is male or female headed. Ethnic variations also emerge in terms of the type of employment between male and female-headed households. Among Afro-Caribbeans, there was little variation between households with similar proportions of female heads and spouses working as nurses and teachers for example or

Table 5.9 Household Structure and Women's Activity by Ethnicity

	Full-time housework	Full-time work	Part-time work	Sick, retired studying	Unpaid work
White/mestizo					
Nuclear n=73	65.75% (48)	19.2% (14)	8.2% (6)	4.1% (3)	2.7% (2)
Male extended n=30	66.7% (20)	13.3% (4)	16.7% (5)	3.3% (1)	
Single-parent n=7	71.4% (5)	28.6% (2)			
Female-extended n=22	54.5% (12)	22.7% (5)	9.1% (2)	13.6% (3)	
Couple n=8	50% (4)	25% (2)	12.5% (1)	12.5% (1)	
Single woman n=3	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)		
Grandmother n=4		100% (4)			
Grandfather n=6		33.3% (2)	33.3% (2)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)
<hr/>					
n=153					
Afro-Caribbean					
Nuclear n=29	55.2% (16)	37.9% (11)	3.4% (1)	3.4% (1)	
Male extended n=12	33.3% (4)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	
Single-parent n=13	15.4% (2)	69.2% (9)	7.7% (1)	7.7% (1)	
Female-extended n=8		50% (4)		50% (4)	
Couple n=4	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (1)		
Single woman n=6	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	66.7% (4)		
Grandmother n=3	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	33.35% (1)		
Grandfather n=3		66.7% (2)	33.3% (1)		

n=78

Notes:

Number of cases in brackets

Nuclear compound households are excluded

Source: Household Survey : Limón, 1990

among those working in 'informal' activities. Among white/*mestizos* however, female heads were more likely to be employed in commerce, restaurants and domestic service whereas female spouses were more likely to be found in 'informal' home-based activities (see Chapter Six).

Variations in women's economic activity rates were also found within different types of households for both ethnic groups. For example, the lowest rates of female employment in both full-time and part-time work are found in male nuclear households (31.4%) and the highest in single-parent families (60%). Women in extended households appear to be more likely to enter the labour force than women in nuclear families although interestingly, rates are higher in extended units headed by men (38.1%) as opposed to among those headed by men (36.7%). However as with household headship, consideration of ethnic differences produce somewhat different patterns with regard to household composition. Among women living in nuclear families, only 27.4% of white/*mestizos* were involved in paid employment compared with 41.3% of Afro-Caribbean women. This disparity is even more pronounced for women in single-parent households where 28.6% of white/*mestizo* women were employed compared with 76.9% of Afro-Caribbean women. Similarly, in extended units one-half of Afro-Caribbean women were working compared with less than one-third of white/*mestizos* (in households headed by men and women) (see Table 5.9). Again, chi square analysis found a strong relationship between difference in household structure and woman's economic activity within both groups at a high level of confidence (99%).

The overall impression from these findings is that household structure and headship are important in influencing female employment patterns, yet they are not overriding factors once ethnicity is taken into account. On the one hand, high rates of labour force participation among Afro-Caribbean women do appear to be related to a high incidence of female-headship, particularly of single-parent units. On the other hand, low rates of labour force participation among white/*mestizos* seem to be linked with low rates of female-headship and single-parent families. Indeed, what is also interesting among this group is that female economic activity is actually marginally higher within male-headed families which contradicts patterns found elsewhere (see Chant, 1991a). However, the most striking observation is that even when household structure and headship are taken into account, labour force participation rates for Afro-Caribbean women are consistently higher than for white/*mestizo* women regardless of household composition. For example, economic activity rates for Afro-Caribbean women in

nuclear households (where lowest levels of employment for this group are found), are higher than for white/*mestizo* women in female extended families (where highest rates for this group are found). Accepting that caution must be exercised given the small number of cases in some of the household categories, the question of why Afro-Caribbean women have higher activity rates than white/*mestizos* even when household structure and headship are discounted, must be addressed. Given the fact that Afro-Caribbean women have higher rates of employment than white/*mestizos* in all types of households it is appropriate to look at individual characteristics as well as examining other household factors in greater detail. Headship of households is also included in the following analysis.

Individual factors in female labour supply: education, age, marital and migrant status by ethnicity:

Education levels, age and marital status are usually argued to be the most important individual 'human capital' variables when dealing with female labour supply (Anker and Hein, 1986; Carvajal and Geithman, 1985, on Costa Rica; Standing, 1981, on Jamaica). While not household characteristics in themselves, these factors are interrelated with the family, particularly with the stage of the household in the 'developmental cycle' (referring to phases of household evolution based on age, marriage, birth of children and so on) (Goody, ^(ed) 1958). Rarely however, have these factors been related to households of different ethnic groups which may in themselves give rise to differential labour absorption. The aim here then is to examine how individual factors differ between white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean households and to relate this to labour force participation.

Education

Studies elsewhere have pointed out ethnic differences in educational attainment both between the sexes and between ethnic groups. In the case of the United States for example, Amott and Matthaai (1990) note that while Afro-American women have equivalent or lower levels of education than their white female counterparts, they have significantly higher levels than men from their own ethnic group. Higginbotham (1983) and Boyd-Franklin (1983) also note the importance attached to education among black women in the USA since the slavery period, both as a means of social mobility and, more specifically, as a way for black women to escape domestic service in the homes of white women. Similar patterns have been noted in the Caribbean, where women tend to achieve higher levels of education than men (McKenzie, 1986). Female economic independence and male unemployment has been cited as an important factor in

Table 5.10 Educational Levels by Gender, Ethnicity and Headship**Female**

Level of education	White/mestizo		Afro-Caribbean	
	Heads and spouses	Heads	Heads and spouses	Heads
No education	11.8% (18)	22.6% (7)	6.4% (4)	9.6% (3)
Incomplete primary	32.3% (54)	48.4% (15)	24.4% (19)	29.0% (9)
Completed primary	30.1% (46)	16.1% (5)	16.7% (13)	22.6% (7)
Incomplete secondary	17.0% (26)	12.9% (4)	23.1% (18)	16.1% (5)
Completed secondary	2.6% (4)	-	11.5% (9)	3.2% (1)
Higher education	3.3% (5)	-	19.2% (15)	19.4% (6)
	n=153	n=31	n=78	n=31

Male

No education	14.2% (18)	-
Incomplete primary	27.9% (36)	24% (12)
Completed primary	30.2% (38)	30% (15)
Incomplete secondary	14.2% (18)	26% (13)
Incomplete secondary	7.1% (9)	8% (4)
Higher education	5.5% (7)	12% (6)
	n=126	n=50

Notes

Number of cases in brackets

Source: Household Survey : *Limón, 1990*

Table 5.11 Women's Educational Levels by Ethnicity and Activity

Occupation of female head or spouse	None	Incomplete primary	Completed primary	Incomplete secondary	Complete secondary	Higher education
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White/mestizo

Housewife n=90	13.3% (12)	30% (27)	34.4% (31)	18.9% (17)	2.2% (2)	2% (2)
Full-time work n=30	3.3% (1)	33.3% (10)	23.3% (7)	23.3% (7)	6.7% (2)	10% (3)
Part-time work n=17	5.9% (1)	47% (8)	35.3% (6)	11.8% (2)		
Sick/etc n=5	20% (1)	60% (3)	20% (1)			
Retired n=8	37.5% (3)	62.5% (5)				
Unpaid worker n=3	33.3% (1)	66.7% (2)				

n=153

Afro-Caribbean

Housewife n=25	4% (1)	24% (6)	12% (3)	40% (10)	20% (5)	
Full-time work n=35	20% (7)	14.3% (5)	22.9% (8)	8.5% (3)	34.3% (12)	
Part-time work n=5	20% (1)	40% (2)	20% (1)		20% (1)	
Sick/etc n=3	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)			
Retired (3) n=10	10% (1)	30% (3)	30% (3)			30%

n=78

Notes

Number of cases in brackets

Source: Household Survey : Limón, 1990

explaining higher levels of education among Afro-Caribbean women vis-à-vis men (Ellis, 1986b). As a corollary of this, it has been suggested that while men might seek economic opportunity through migration, women do so through education (Momsen, forthcoming).

Patterns in Limón corroborate these findings. Gender differences in education are roughly comparable, but ethnic differences are quite marked. Afro-Caribbeans in general had higher rates of educational achievement than white/*mestizos* in that fewer had no schooling or only primary level and more had secondary and higher education (see table 5.10). Among white/*mestizos*, male heads had higher educational levels overall than female heads and spouses, yet the reverse was true for Afro-Caribbeans (see Table 5.10). Indeed, Afro-Caribbean women had higher levels of education than any other group with fewer possessing no educational qualifications and more with higher level education. For women of both ethnic groups, this is accentuated further when headship is taken into account in that Afro-Caribbean female heads had significantly higher levels of education than white/*mestizo* heads. In addition, among white/*mestizos*, heads of households tended to have lower levels than averages for heads and spouses together, yet among Afro-Caribbeans the difference between heads and spouses was negligible (see Table 5.10).

In relation to employment, a positive correlation between women's educational attainment and rates of labour force participation has usually been postulated: education is thought to facilitate economic activity by improving women's competitive position in the labour market (Arriagada, 1990; Standing, 1976). However, empirical evidence is contradictory, partly due to variations in the nature of the local economy and household characteristics which may modify the conjectured relationship (Standing, 1976). For example, the preponderance of 'formal' sector employment requiring educated female labour is more likely to produce a positive relationship than under labour market conditions where women predominate in 'informal' sector employment (Standing, 1981). From the perspective of the household, factors such as marriage, child bearing and age may reduce the positive effect of higher educational levels in that domestic responsibilities may constrain women from entering the labour force or cause them to interrupt their employment, especially in their major reproductive phase of the life-cycle (15-45 years) (Powell, 1986; Standing, 1981).

In Limón, differences in educational levels between women from both ethnic

groups appear to be related to economic activity in that overall, white/*mestizo* women had lower levels of education and lower rates of labour force participation while Afro-Caribbeans had higher employment and education levels. More specifically, however, among white/*mestizos*, the general trend indicates that full-time workers were more likely to have secondary or higher education (40%) than those working part-time (11.8%) or housewives (23%) (see Table 5.11). Indeed, statistically speaking, chi square analysis found a significant difference between educational levels and economic activity among this group with a high degree of confidence (99%). In terms of headship however, significant relationships were found only among spouses. This may imply that white/*mestizo* female heads may be under greater economic pressure to work regardless of educational levels, whereas spouses may only enter the labour market if they possess high levels of education. Whilst educational levels are substantially higher among Afro-Caribbean women, this does not appear to influence labour force participation. For example, both housewives and full-time workers had similar levels of secondary and higher education (see Table 5.11). This is borne out statistically where chi square values were not significant when examining this relationship either for heads and spouses together or separately.

In summing up, ethnic differences in education seem to be extremely important both when examining the link with female employment rates and in more general terms. The major finding is that Afro-Caribbean women had substantially higher educational attainment than white/*mestizo* women. The impact of this on employment patterns is particularly interesting since it appears that when overall educational levels are higher (among Afro-Caribbean women), the effect on participation rates is less important, yet when educational attainment is lower (among white/*mestizo* women), education becomes more influential in determining whether women work or not (see Arriagada, 1990 on Latin America). Moreover, difficulties in overcoming domestic constraints in order to take up paid employment appear to be more widespread among those with lower levels of education (white/*mestizos*) than those with higher levels (Afro-Caribbeans) (ibid.). Although there is no clear-cut relationship between education and economic activity rates, levels of schooling are related to occupational patterns between women from each ethnic group. Earlier it was noted how Afro-Caribbean women were concentrated in technical and professional positions (mainly as teachers and nurses) requiring higher education (see also Powell, 1984; Wiltshire-Brodber, 1988 on the Caribbean; Boyd-Franklin, 1983; Higginbotham, 1983 on the United States). White/*mestizo* women, on the other hand, tended to be employed in the 'informal' sector or 'formal' commercial sector jobs where educational requirements are not as high or may even be non-existent.

Therefore, while some Afro-Caribbean women may not utilise their high educational attainment in order to enter the labour market, those who do, are in occupations which require high levels of qualifications. Among white/*mestizo* women on the other hand, the generally lower levels of education attained by this group as a whole means that they are more commonly found in jobs with no major educational requirements (see also Chapter Six).

From a broader perspective, higher educational levels among Afro-Caribbeans compared with white/*mestizos* reflects the historical importance of education for this group in Limón (Duncan, 1989). While the English/Jamaican education system transferred to Costa Rica at the turn of the century served to maintain educational standards until the 1950s, Afro-Caribbeans appear to have adapted well to the Costa Rican system (Duncan, 1989; Purcell, 1985; 1987; see Chapter Two). ¹³ This is particularly true for women whose educational levels exceed those of their male counterparts (Bernard, 1987). Indeed, there seem to be many similarities with the situation in the Caribbean where women seek social and economic betterment through education while men do so through labour migration. In Limón, the preponderance of black women in nursing and teaching may be contrasted with the occupational distribution of Afro-Caribbean men who are predominantly employed in manual jobs at the port (where no educational requirements are needed) (see earlier). While education is an important factor in understanding the differentiation of the labour market in Limón, other factors are also significant.

Age and marital status

The effect of women's age on female labour force participation is highly variable both within and between regions although no studies examine the influence of ethnicity *per se* (Stichter, 1990). On one hand, it is heavily dependent on the family lifecycle which in turn is linked with other household characteristics such as marital status, fertility and household structure. The rationale from this perspective is that when women marry and have children their increased domestic responsibility constrains them from taking up paid employment outside the home (Benería and Roldán, 1987). On the other hand, variations may also depend upon the nature of the local economy, for example in cases where young, single women are the preferred factory labour force (Fernández-Kelly, 1983). Stichter (1990) suggests that this is the most common trend in Latin America, yet Chant (1991a: 124-5) highlights the variability in Mexico where she found older women were more likely to work than younger women except where they headed their own households (see also De Oliveira, 1990). ¹⁴ The effect of age on participation rates

Table 5.12 Mean Age of Women by Activity, Ethnicity and Headship

Occupation of female head or spouse	White/ <i>mestizo</i>			Mean age		
	Heads	Spouses	Both	Heads	Spouses	Both
Housewife	48.2	34.4	36.2	56.5	33.9	37.5
Full-time worker	33.0	33.5	33.4	39.7	42.0	40.3
Part-time worker	47.0	38.4	39.6	64.0	52.0	56.8
Sick/unemployed	63.0	53.0	61.0	66.0	-	66.0
Retired	69.2	74.0	71.6	69.4	63.5	68.1
Unpaid worker	43.4	43.0	43.0	-	-	-
Mean age	49.5	35.9	38.6	52.7	39.6	44.5

Source: Household Survey : *Limón, 1990*

is also important in the Caribbean (Standing, 1981) although generally high levels of female employment means that age has less effect on participation rates than elsewhere (Safa, 1981). The effect of marital status is also of less importance in this region given greater flexibility of marriage patterns, higher rates of consensual unions and high proportions of female headship (Powell, 1984).

In the case of Limón, differences in ages between women from households of both ethnic groups are not particularly significant *per se*, although differences emerge when examined in relation to economic activity. Evidence from the Employer Survey (see Chapter Four) suggested that age and marital status were unimportant, although if a preference was stated it was usually for older, married women. In spite of limitations in the data from the household survey (i.e. that it is restricted to women living with/married to men and/or mothers), it is possible to determine general patterns. Among Afro-Caribbean heads and spouses, full and part-time workers were substantially older than housewives (see Table 5.12) and indeed, 51.4% of all working women were aged over 39 years. This accordingly substantiates the view that older women have fewer domestic responsibilities and are therefore freer to enter the labour force. Statistically, chi square analysis found that differences in average ages and economic activity rates were significant at the 99% confidence level. Patterns among white/*mestizo* heads and spouses however were the reverse, in that full-time workers were slightly younger on average than housewives (although part-time workers were older) (see Table 5.12). Again, this relationship was statistically significant at the 99% confidence level although it proves that the reverse pattern is true for white/*mestizos*. When examined by headship, female heads who were working full and part-time were older than spouses among both ethnic groups, although this pattern was stronger for white/*mestizos* (see Table 5.12). This implies that female heads have greater economic 'need' to work. Another interesting point is that no white/*mestizo* women over the age of 47 years were working, unlike Afro-Caribbean women who continued working throughout their forties and fifties. Moreover, in terms of employment type, these older Afro-Caribbean women were mainly employed in the teaching and nursing professions which may corroborate the view that employment is through choice and personal satisfaction rather than economic necessity (see also Chapter Six).

In terms of marital status, more interesting findings highlighting ethnic differences emerge. Among those living in partnerships in both groups, married women had higher labour force participation rates than those living in consensual unions.

However, the major findings were that white/*mestizo* married women were most likely to be working (48.8%), followed by women in consensual unions (31.7%) and those heading their own households (17.1%). Among Afro-Caribbeans on the other hand, female heads had highest rates of economic activity (47.3%), followed by married women (35%) and those living in consensual unions (17.5%). The statistical relationship for both groups was strong with chi square values significant at the 99.9% confidence level, although obviously the nature of the relationship was different for within each ethnic group. A possible reason for this pattern among white/*mestizos* may be related to the type of employment undertaken by this group. Those who were married were more likely to be working on a part-time basis in 'informal', home-based activities. In these cases, women are more able to reconcile domestic work with productive activities and overcome male objections to working outside the home. Women in consensual unions on the other hand, were found in full-time occupations outside the home which is more difficult to combine with reproductive labour and more likely to engender objections from men (see Chapter Six for a fuller discussion).

Differences in migrant status were also important between ethnic groups and in terms of the relationship with labour force participation. Among white/*mestizos*, migrants formed the majority compared with Afro-Caribbeans who were predominantly natives of Limón (72.5% of white/*mestizos* were migrants and 23.8% of Afro-Caribbeans). Over one-half of white/*mestizo* migrants were internal migrants from Guanacaste province, whereas all Afro-Caribbean migrants were foreign (from Nicaragua [Bluefields] and Panama [Boca de Toro]). In terms of labour force participation, it has been generally noted that migrants are less likely to work because of lower levels of education, lack of knowledge of the employment situation and so on (see Albert, 1982; Chant, 1991a; Chant and Radcliffe, 1992). In Limón however, this was the case among Afro-Caribbeans, but not among white/*mestizos*. Indeed, only 26.5% of white/*mestizo* women born in the city were working compared with 34.4% of those who had migrated. Among Afro-Caribbeans, only 25% of migrants were working compared with 54.7% of women who were native to Limón. In the case of these foreign migrants, low rates of labour force participation may also be exacerbated by the fact that Spanish is their second language (the first being English), as well as their lack of familiarity with Costa Rican culture. By contrast, internal migrants do not face these kinds of problems and hence may be more likely to enter the labour market. Type of employment is also important here, in that migrants in both ethnic groups were more likely to be involved in 'informal sector' activities suggesting that they were unable to enter the 'formal' labour market for the reasons mentioned above. In the case of

white/*mestizo* migrants, this pattern may also indicate the need to work for economic reasons given that general income levels among migrants are lower than among non-migrants (per capita incomes of 5,467 *colones* among migrant households compared with 6,990 *colones* among non-migrant households).

To sum up the findings, education, age, marital and migrant status appear to be important in influencing female labour supply although their effects differ ethnically. The reasons for higher labour force participation rates among Afro-Caribbean women in terms of individual characteristics, may be attributed to higher overall educational levels, older average ages, lower proportions of migrants and a higher incidence of female headship. Among white/*mestizos*, women who possess higher educational levels, are younger and married and who are migrants are more likely to work.

Household characteristics: fertility, household size and dependency ratios

Household characteristics such as fertility levels, the number of children in the household and the presence of other household members working are also likely to influence whether women are employed. Ethnic differences in these characteristics may also explain why Afro-Caribbean women have higher participation rates than white/*mestizos*. The effect of fertility on female labour force participation has been particularly controversial (Standing, 1981; Stichter, 1990). However, while criticisms have centred around dependence on neo-classical theories drawing on nuclear families in developed countries (Stichter, 1990), the general model assumes that the higher a woman's fertility, the lower her labour force participation given that she must devote time to child-care and domestic labour (see Ramírez, 1989 on Costa Rica).

In Limón, there does not appear to be any distinct pattern in fertility levels and whether women are employed for either ethnic group (see Table 5.13). Having said this, chi square tests found a statistical relationship for white/*mestizos* (at 95% confidence level), yet not for Afro-Caribbean households. More specifically, the only notable variation was among those women working part-time where fertility was considerably higher (6.4 children for Afro-Caribbeans and 4.1 for white/*mestizos*). This may suggest that women with more children have greater pressure on them to take-up paid employment in order to support them economically, yet they must work on a part-time basis to reconcile their domestic responsibilities (see Benería and Roldán, 1987 on piece-work in Mexico City). In terms of headship, however, female-headed households had significantly higher fertility rates than those living in male-headed units for both ethnic groups although the disparity was greater among white/*mestizo* families

Table 5.13 Fertility and Number of Resident Children According to Women's Activity and Ethnic Group

Occupation of female spouse or head	White/ <i>mestizo</i>		Afro-Caribbean	
	Fertility	No. of resident children	Fertility	No. of resident children
Housewife	3.8	2.4	3.6	2.3
Full-time worker	3.7	2.9	3.6	1.9
Part-time worker	4.9	2.8	6.4	2.4
Sick/unemployed	6.8	1.4	3.0	0.7
Retired	7.1	0.1	4.4	0.1
Unpaid worker	4.0			
Female-headed	5.2	1.6	4.6	1.7
Male-headed	3.8	2.3	3.4	1.8

Source: Household Survey, Limón, 1990

(see Table 5.13). These findings are in no way conclusive and perhaps more indicative is the number of children who are resident in the household; one could imagine that the more children in the household then the greater the likelihood that women will work (see Chant, 1991a: 128). Again however, there are ethnic variations in that white/*mestizo* women who were working had more resident children than those who were housewives, yet Afro-Caribbean housewives had more children living in the household than those who were working (see Table 5.13). As with fertility, chi square values found a statistical relationship only among white/*mestizos* (at 95% confidence), yet not among Afro-Caribbeans. Overall, differences in fertility and resident children are marginal, although if anything, white/*mestizo* women are more constrained by child-care and domestic responsibilities than Afro-Caribbeans because of a lack of kinship and support networks which facilitated the latter's ability to enter the labour force (see Chapter Six).

Household size may also be influential in whether women work or not. Elsewhere it has been noted that women in larger families may be more likely to be employed than those in small families (Chant, 1991a: 128). However in Limón, this seems to be more applicable to white/*mestizo* households than Afro-Caribbean. White/*mestizo* families with women working, were larger than those where they were housewives, whereas Afro-Caribbean households were smaller where women were working full-time, yet larger when they were housewives (see table 5.14). Chi square analysis found a significant relationship in terms of differences in household size and women's economic activity for each ethnic group (at 95% confidence). There were also variations in terms of headship, where Afro-Caribbean female-headed households were smaller than white/*mestizo* and than male-headed for both ethnic groups. Overall, however, the question of whether women are pressurised into working due to larger household sizes is not clear unless the number of other household members who have paid work and the number of dependents in the household is assessed.

This may be examined through the calculation of dependency ratios which examine the total number of workers in the household in relation to household size and the number of dependent members (Chant, 1991a: 128). For both ethnic groups, dependency ratios were high among households where women were housewives, particularly among Afro-Caribbean families (see Table 5.14). This suggests that households with working women were better off in that there is more than one wage contributing to the household budget. When headship was considered, it is interesting that white/*mestizo* households headed by women had lower dependency ratios than male

Table 5.14 Mean Household Size, Number of Workers, Dependency Ratios by Women's Activity and Ethnic Group

White/mestizo

Occupation of ratio female head or spouse	Household size	No. of workers	Dependency
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Housewife	4.8	1.3	1:3.7
Full-time worker	5.4	2.1	1:2.6
Part-time worker	5.5	2.1	1:2.6
Sick/unemployed	4.4	1.8	1:2.4
Retired	2.7	1.0	1:2.7
Unpaid worker	3.3	2.0	1:1.7
Female-headed	4.4	1.4	1:3.1
Male-headed	5.0	1.5	1:3.3

Afro-Caribbean

Housewife	4.6	1.1	1:4.2
Full-time worker	4.1	1.6	1:2.6
Part-time worker	6.2	2.0	1:3.1
Sick/unemployed	4.7	1.0	1:4.7
Retired	2.6	0.2	1:13
Female-headed	3.8	0.9	1:4.2
Male-headed	4.6	1.4	1:3.3

Source: Household Survey : Limón, 1990

-headed units, yet for Afro-Caribbean families, the reverse was true (see Table 5.14). At first glance it appears that Afro-Caribbean women have greater need to work than white/*mestizos* as they have more dependents to support. However, it is difficult to assess this without looking at actual household incomes and earnings of household heads.

Household Incomes

The effect of household incomes on women's work can be viewed in terms of the influence of male earnings, the overall per capita income, and whether the household receives any external or alternative sources of financial support. It has been shown elsewhere that where male heads' earnings are low then women may take up paid employment in order to compensate (Chant, 1991a: 129). In Limón, this rationale seems applicable to white/*mestizo* households but not to Afro-Caribbean. Among the former, average male earnings were only 5,276 *colones* where women worked full-time and 5,692 *colones* in cases where women were housewives. Among Afro-Caribbeans the reverse was true where average male earnings were highest when women were working full-time (5,876 *colones* where women worked full-time and 5,264 *colones* where women were housewives).

The total per capita incomes of households differed fairly substantially between ethnic groups in that white/*mestizo* families had average per capita incomes of 6,860 *colones* whereas Afro-Caribbean households had incomes of 8,012 *colones*. At a general level this may be attributed to higher rates of labour force participation by Afro-Caribbean women than white/*mestizos*. This may also be compounded by the fact that Afro-Caribbean women earn substantially more than white/*mestizo* women (whereas there is little difference between average pay of male heads from different ethnic groups) (see earlier). When analysed more closely, it emerges that in households where women were working full-time, per capita incomes were higher, although the disparity was more significant for Afro-Caribbeans (see table 5.15). Indeed, it appears that contributions made by Afro-Caribbean working women are more important for overall household incomes than for white/*mestizos*, yet the effect of this on whether women work or not is unclear.

Ethnic differences in household incomes must also be analysed in terms of whether other sources of financial support are received in addition to wages from household members. Indeed, although higher average earnings among Afro-Caribbean women were important in explaining higher per capita household incomes among this group, these households also received more additional support than white/*mestizos*

Table 5.15 Household Incomes by Women's Activity and Ethnicity

Occupation of head or spouse	Per capita household income (in <i>colones</i>)	
	White/ <i>mestizo</i>	Afro-Caribbean
Housewife	6,865	6,611
Full-time worker	9,519	10,316
Part-time worker	6,300	8,580
Sick/unemployed	6,250	3,750
Retired	3,257	6,633
Total mean	6,860	8,012

Source: Household Survey : *Limón, 1990*

(57.1% of Afro-Caribbean and 35.6% of white/*mestizo* households). Forms of support among white/*mestizos* included state benefits (incapacity, widow's pensions etc.)

(10.6%), contributions from other household members not living in the household (22.5%) and extra income generated by odd jobs by men and women (52.5%). Among Afro-Caribbean families however, pensions accounted for only 10.7% of other sources (although the majority were private pensions from previous employers etc.) and 72.3% in the form of remittances from non-resident relatives (mainly absent husbands and sons and daughters). The greater dependence of white/*mestizo* households on transfer payments from the state compared with Afro-Caribbeans may reflect the historical development of Limón whereby the legacy of United Fruit and independence from state control has imbued a sense of reluctance or indeed resistance on the part of Afro-Caribbeans to turn to the state for help. Another point of diversity in terms of these alternative forms of support is that around 70% of these remittances among Afro-Caribbeans were received from abroad (from the USA). Indeed, the majority of these families had one or more relatives working in the United States and among households headed by women, all nine *de facto* households received financial support from absent partners working on cruise liners in Miami. What is particularly interesting is that while Afro-Caribbean women not only have higher rates of labour force participation in jobs which are more highly remunerated than white/*mestizos*, they are also more likely to receive remittances from abroad to supplement already higher than average household incomes. This is accentuated for women who head their own households where 74.2% received other forms of financial support compared with only 48.4% of white/*mestizo* female heads. This would seem to indicate therefore, that Afro-Caribbean women are less likely to enter the labour market as the result of economic pressure to support their families than white/*mestizo* women.

To summarise, ethnic differences in household characteristics are pronounced. Fertility levels, numbers of resident children and household sizes are smaller for Afro-Caribbean households than white/*mestizos*, while household per capita incomes are higher. However, in terms of directly influencing whether women work, none of these factors are critical either independently or in conjunction with one another; indeed, only smaller family size seems to exert any real influence on (positive) participation rates. It appears therefore, that Afro-Caribbean women have high economic activity rates for reasons independent of household characteristics. For white/*mestizo* women on the other hand, these household factors appear to be more important. Not only are fertility levels higher, do more children live in the household, and households are larger overall, but these are more directly linked with women's activity rates. This is reflected in

occupational patterns where white/*mestizos* are more likely to work in part-time employment in home-based activities than Afro-Caribbeans whose occupations are not affected by these household characteristics.

One final point on the overall class position of ethnic groups should be made. In general, it might be argued that Afro-Caribbeans as a group, appear to be found at a slightly higher class and socio-economic level than their white/*mestizo* counterparts in terms of educational levels, type of employment, average earnings and total household incomes and so on. However, while this is true in a broad sense, the main observations from analysis of the household survey suggest that there is a great deal of class heterogeneity within ethnic groups, and indeed, within households. For example, many professional Afro-Caribbean women with higher educational levels, live with partners who are manual cargo handlers at the port, yet at the same time, both usually earn similar wages. Therefore overall, the Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* groups analysed in the household survey have broadly similar class status, notwithstanding that there appears to be significant diversity spanning a number of areas.

Conclusion

The above set of results illustrates the extent to which individual and household characteristics differ between ethnic groups in Limón. The most distinctive differences between white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean households are that the former have much lower rates of female headship, are larger and have more children resident in the household. In terms of individual characteristics, white/*mestizo* women have lower educational levels, are younger on average and are more likely to be married or living in consensual unions than Afro-Caribbeans. The starting point of the analysis was first, that differences in these factors would influence rates of female labour force participation between ethnic groups and second, that they would account for higher employment rates among Afro-Caribbean women compared with white/*mestizos*. However, when household and individual characteristics were examined in relation to activity rates, it emerged that white/*mestizo* women were more likely to be affected by these factors than Afro-Caribbean women. While some characteristics such as age and household size did influence whether Afro-Caribbean women worked or not, on the whole these women had high participation rates regardless of household factors. Having said this, on one level the most important factors appear to be household headship and structure in that women heading households are more likely to work. Because, Afro-Caribbeans have a higher incidence of female headship, female labour force participation rates are higher. On another level however, Afro-Caribbean women have higher

employment rates regardless of headship or structure, in that more women were working in households headed by men than in those headed by women among white/*mestizos*.

Overall then, discussion of household factors does not adequately explain ethnic differences in labour force participation. Having said this, the present chapter has not examined such factors as the sexual division of labour within the household and women's attitudes to work and how these may differ between ethnic groups. Indeed, the earlier section introducing ethnic differences in households in Latin America and the Caribbean, would suggest that cultural differences rooted in historical precedents (*machismo* and slavery) may be instrumental in explaining why Afro-Caribbean women have higher employment rates than white/*mestizos* even when more objective conditions are taken into account. Chapter Six goes on to examine these factors in Limón using data gathered in semi-structured interviews and emphasising differences in gender relations between ethnic groups and how this may affect female labour force participation. It must also be remembered that demand for labour interrelates with household factors and Chapter Seven attempts to bring together both perspectives to explain gender and ethnic segmentation and segregation of the labour market in Limón.

Notes to Chapter Five

1) Other ethnic groups such as mulattos (where one parent is Afro-Caribbean and the other, white/*mestizo*), indigenous Indians and Chinese were also found in the household survey. However, the proportion of these other groups is too small to include in the general analysis (see Appendix One). Therefore emphasis is on the two largest groups, white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans.

2) Ethnic residential segregation in Limón has persisted since the days of United Fruit, where white North Americans lived in an area called 'the Zone' in the northeast of the city, with Afro-Caribbeans located in *barrios* nearer the centre and Hispanics on the outskirts (Purcell, 1987: 26) (see also Chapter Two: Figure 2.1). While there has been some mixing of ethnic groups since this time, residential segregation remains. Afro-Caribbeans continue to live nearer the centre of the city, with white/*mestizos* located further out. One of the settlements included in the household survey, Barrio Roosevelt, was established during the United Fruit era (then called 'Jamaica Town') and remains the traditional area of Afro-Caribbean residence in the city. Indeed, 73.7% of the households interviewed in this settlement were of Afro-Caribbean origin (25% were white/*mestizo* and 1.25% were Chinese). In Limoncito, the older of the other two peripheral settlements, 82.5% of households were white/*mestizo* and 17.5% were Afro-Caribbean. The lowest proportion of Afro-Caribbeans (12.2%) were found in the youngest settlement, Envaco, with 82.2% white/*mestizo*, 4.4% mulatto and 1.1% indigenous Indian (see also Appendix One).

3) As noted in Chapter Four, exchange rate is based on US\$1=85 *colones* which is an average of the official exchange rate during the period of fieldwork in 1990. Official figures from the Ministry of Planning for 1989 show that national average earnings were 4,088 *colones* a week and 4,004 *colones* in Limón (the highest outside the Metropolitan area) (MIDEPLAN, 1990: 53). These can be compared with average earnings in the household survey of 5,606 *colones* a week for men and 4,489 *colones* a week for women.

4) It should also be pointed out that in Costa Rica in general, women are more likely to earn below the legal minimum wage. For example, for every seven women who earned below the minimum salary in 1987, there were only two men (Colectivo Pancha Carrasco, 1988: 31).

5) The importance of household organisation in influencing member's employment has been recognised by Chant (1991a: 8):

"the household should be conceived as occupying a pivotal position between the individual and the wider economy, mediating the release of different members into the labour force and at the same time reshaping itself in response to the changing activities of individual members".

6) The general literature on household development has tended to focus on extended and nuclear families. The commonly held view of household change under urbanisation and economic development is the movement along a trajectory from extended households in rural areas, transforming into nuclear families in the city. The argument states that with capitalist development, the workplace becomes separated from the home and dependence on kin networks decreases. The small more adaptable nuclear family is therefore thought to be more conducive than the extended unit to the accumulation of capital (see Chant, 1985a, 1991a). Both Modernisation and Marxist perspectives support this idea, albeit for different reasons. The former sees this transformation in terms of an individualistic ideology and the latter in terms of ensuring an exploitable labour force. However, empirical evidence has questioned the validity of this form of household evolution as extended households have been shown to be widespread in urban areas and nuclear families have been reported in rural contexts (see also Brydon and Chant, 1989:139-145 for a fuller discussion).

7) Household organisation in the Caribbean is usually based on the following types:

i) Stable co-residential unions which may include those legally married and those in consensual or common-law unions and which are male-headed.

ii) Visiting unions where women head households and have a visiting boyfriend who may or may not contribute to household income.

iii) Single women who are heads and sole supporters of their households (Bolles, 1986: 68; Massiah, 1983; Powell, 1986; Smith, R.T, 1988).

These definitions are also those used in the Caribbean censuses (Massiah, 1983).

8) There is considerable controversy surrounding the term 'matrifocality'. While in general, it is used interchangeably with the terms 'single-parent', 'mother-child', and 'female- or woman-headed' household, there is some debate over whether it necessarily refers to female headship. Although it essentially requires that the role of the mother is structurally, culturally and effectively centred within a household (Massiah, 1983), R.T Smith (1973) also maintains that a household may be matrifocal even when male-headed (see also Blumberg and Garcia, 1977; Durant-Gonzales, 1982; Solien de Gonzales, 1968).

9) On the basis of work on the Caribbean, Simey (1946: 82-85) developed a typology identifying the 'Christian family', defined as a patriarchal unit based on legal marriage and 'faithful concubinage' which was also patriarchal but without legal sanction. These both referred to upper and middle-class households. He also classified 'companionate unions' or 'consensual cohabitation' of less than three years duration and the 'disintegrate family' which consisted of a woman residing alone with her children or grandchildren. These latter two were applied to working class households. Henriques (1953: 105-107) developed a similar typology, renaming the 'disintegrate family' the 'maternal' and the 'companionate' the 'keeper' family.

10) The desertion of men by women in the Caribbean has historical precedents as Brodber (1982) points out in the case of nineteenth century Trinidad. She refers to a public notice in the Trinidad Gazette in 1872 where a husband denounced his wife for leaving him, "My wife Elizabeth Bellevand having left my house without reason, the Public is warned against giving her credit as I shall not be responsible for any debts". In Barbados in 1975, Massiah (1983) notes that dissatisfied wives presented twice as many petitions for divorce as dissatisfied husbands.

11) Although household structure per se may not cause poverty, it has been argued that in cases of nuclear households with authoritarian male heads for example, a situation of 'secondary poverty' may arise whereby the male breadwinner withholds a portion of his wages from the household budget, leaving other household members to survive on very meagre resources (see Chant, 1985a, 1985b on Mexico).

12) Chi square analysis is a nonparametric statistical test restricted to nominal data, referring to frequencies and distinct values as opposed to continuous or discrete variables. However, discrete data may be used as long as it is grouped into categories. For example, data on years of education is usually discrete until it is arranged into bands of levels of schooling (ie. 0-5 years = incomplete primary). Essentially chi square tests compare an observed set of frequencies produced by a sample survey, with expected distributions which are randomly selected. For example, in the present case, the existence of different types of households within two ethnic groups are examined to ascertain whether there is any statistical link between them. In other words, what is the difference between the expected and the observed frequency for each category. When the chi square statistic is calculated it is compared with a table of critical values based on degrees of freedom (representing the size of the sample) in order to discover whether the null hypothesis (that there is no statistical relationship) can be rejected or not. Critical tables also provide various levels of confidence that the relationship is non-random and these range from 90% certainty that the link is systematic to 99.9% certainty.

13) Quince Duncan (1989: 15) also points out that Afro-Caribbeans who migrated to Costa Rica did so largely to generate enough money to ensure a 'good education' for their children. This idea of educational advantage had been instilled by British colonial authorities in Jamaica and other British Caribbean colonies. Although English/Jamaican schools no longer exist in Limón,

many Afro-Caribbean children are sent to private English lessons. One informant in the household survey, Barzillah, was a 71 year old private English tutor who had previously worked in the 'Zone' in the days of United Fruit. She taught standard (as opposed to Creole) English to Afro-Caribbean schoolchildren, although she noted that it was usually only the wealthier Afro-Caribbeans who sent their children to her. In addition, it is also interesting that the majority of Afro-Caribbean informants in the questionnaire survey who were aged around 50 years or over, had attended both English and Spanish-speaking primary schools. Indeed, one Afro-Caribbean informant, Eduardo Caldwell, told of how he went to English school in the mornings and Spanish school in the afternoons. He complained that he got no further than primary level because he was always tired from doing so much schoolwork and because he could not master the English monetary system of pounds, shillings and pence!

14) In addition, the effects of economic recession has more recently been shown to reduce the effect of age on female labour force participation (Alba and Roberts, 1990; Gonzalez de la Rocha, 1988). For example, Dierckxsens (1992) notes that in Costa Rica the greatest increases in female participation rates in the 1980s have been among women in their primary reproductive years and thus with most domestic responsibility (see also Chant, 1992c).

CHAPTER SIX - GENDER, THE HOUSEHOLD AND LABOUR SUPPLY IN LIMÓN: INTRA-HOUSEHOLD FACTORS

Introduction

Chapter Five outlined the nature of employment segregation and segmentation between men and women from different ethnic groups in Limón. The most prominent lines of labour market division and the greatest differentials in rates of employment were found between Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* women; the former having high rates of labour force participation and being concentrated in professional and technical occupations, with the latter having low rates and being employed in the 'informal' sector and in commerce. The importance of household level factors in explaining these patterns was stressed, relating these patterns first, to characteristics of individuals within households such as educational levels and age, and second, to characteristics of household^S themselves in terms of composition, headship, size and so on. Analysis found that differences in household structure and headship varied according to ethnicity which in turn exerted some influence on female employment patterns; high incidence of female headship was related to high participation rates among Afro-Caribbeans while low incidence of female headship was related to low rates of participation among white/*mestizos*. However, this relationship was not clear-cut in that economic activity rates were generally high among Afro-Caribbeans and generally low among white/*mestizos* regardless of household type. In addition, examination of other characteristics such as education, household size, fertility and so on, did not provide adequate explanations for the patterns. In order to take the analysis further, the present chapter looks beyond objective, quantifiable household characteristics at intra-household factors such as gender ideologies, sexual divisions of labour and authority patterns (see Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990; see also conceptual section in Chapter Five).

Intra-household factors such as these are important to consider since it is widely argued that in addition to households being key bearers of cultural and ideological values of given societies, they are particularly significant in shaping normative patterns of gender (Barrett, 1988; Chant, 1991a; Harris, 1981; Kuzesnof, 1989; Scott, 1986a). In turn, these will be critical in affecting the extent and nature of female labour force participation. At the same time as it is important to recognise that normative gender roles and relations are themselves subject to change and renegotiation in response to changing social and economic circumstances (see Scott, 1990), it is also essential to

bear in mind their likely variability on account of ethnic and cultural differentiation (Fonseca, 1991; Scott, 1986a, 1990; Zinn, 1990). As Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1990: 116) point out: "so many, if not all ethnic cultures,.....have as central the construction of a specific form of gender division" (see also Chapter Five). ¹ As such, while the emphasis in the present chapter is on gender and more specifically on ideological and cultural aspects of gender relations within households and how this affects female entry into the labour force, ethnicity is also an integral part of the analysis.

Using data gathered in semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of 45 respondents from the questionnaire survey (see Appendix One) ², the present chapter explores the major differences in gender ideologies between white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans in Limón, and asks to what extent these contribute to explaining their different levels of labour force participation. Key analytical criteria include gender divisions of labour within households, reproductive responsibilities and child-care, authority and decision-making patterns, and attitudes to work of both men and women. This in-depth household level analysis is preceded by a brief review of the literature on ethnic variations in gender relations, with particular reference to the concept of what may be termed 'flexible patriarchy'.

Patriarchy: White/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean Variations

At a conceptual level, the notion of patriarchy underlies any analysis of gender relations. However, use of this term has been one of the most contested in the social sciences (see Barrett, 1988; Eisenstein, 1979; Mies, 1986). Alison MacEwen Scott (1990: 201) defines patriarchy most succinctly as "an institutionalised pattern of gender relations which involves inequalities of power, sexuality and resource allocation favouring men over women". Without entering the debate on the changing meaning of the concept, it is interesting in the present context to briefly point out the most recent developments. From the theoretical standpoint, post-modernists and post-structuralists have criticised the term as referring to a static, unitary phenomenon applicable to all women and which disregards historical change (Walby, 1992). From a wider perspective, black feminists have made similar charges relating to the inadequacy of the term to account for ethnic differences and inequalities (Amos and Parmar, 1984; Carby, 1982; Hooks, 1984; see also Chapter One). Therefore, not only is patriarchy flexible and often dependent on historical circumstance, but it may also change on account of class or ethnicity. The present chapter addresses these issues in relation to Limón illustrating

how "patriarchy comes in more than one form; each form can be found to different degrees" (Walby, 1990: 200).

In Costa Rica, as in other parts of Latin America, patriarchy is usually seen to take the form of a cultural complex of '*machismo*' among the predominantly white/*mestizo* population. As with the basic tenets of patriarchy, *machismo* encompasses various forms of unequal gender relations. Having said this, *machismo*, like patriarchy is also open to different interpretations and there is no consensus over its exact meaning (Scott, 1990). Historically, it is probably a legacy of Spanish colonisation and the pervasive influence of Roman Catholic ideals of female passivity, chastity and obedience (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 16-18; Cubitt, 1988:103-4; Scott, 1990). In a more contemporary sense, *machismo* refers to male dominance and power, not only through cultural values, but also through social structures and institutions (Scott, 1990; Piza Lopez, 1991). At the interpersonal level of gender relations within the household, *machismo* tends to contribute to a strict sexual division of labour which delineates the male role as that of breadwinner and economic provider and the female role as wife and mother. Male attitudes towards spouses and daughters are characterised by suspicion and jealousy which may result in restrictions on their freedom and/or in domestic violence (Méndez, 1989; Quiroz et al, 1984). Relationships with other men are founded on demonstrations of masculinity and virility in the form of drinking, gambling and boasting of sexual infidelities with the greatest number of partners proving one's manliness (Chant, 1991a: 21-22; Cubitt, 1988: 103-104; Scott, 1990). Women on the other hand are expected to remain at home and to subordinate all other interests to those of reproductive labour. These often include restrictions on taking up paid employment, even in situations where the household needs extra income in order to survive (Chant, 1991a: 13). Indeed, Piza Lopez's (1991: 115) study of women's groups in Costa Rica found that women "tried to avoid the public sphere to 'avoid problems with the *compañero* (partner) in front of the children". Women's acceptance of these restrictions and behaviour has sometimes been viewed as a result of a polarised concept, *marianismo* (Cubitt, 1988; Stevens, 1973). Under *marianismo*, which as the term suggests draws on symbolism surrounding the Virgin Mary, women are expected to be self-sacrificial to their children, submissive and passive to the demands of men, yet at the same time, possess spiritual fortitude as the pillar of the family (see Cubitt, 1987; Stevens, 1973).³ While *machismo* and *marianismo* are most clearly manifested at the household level, they are also reinforced in wider society through gender inequalities in political representation, educational attainment, labour force participation rates and occupational segregation (Chant, 1991a on Mexico; Piza Lopez,

1991; Quiroz et al , 1984; Sherman, 1984 on Costa Rica; see also Chapters Three and Four).

Although *machismo* is a pervasive ideology in Latin America with ramifications at all levels of society, its universality should not be assumed. First, gender ideologies differ according to household composition (Chant, 1991a; Safa, 1990). A strict delineation between the sexes is more likely to prevail within male nuclear households, than among those which are extended or where there is no male present in the family (Chant, 1991a; see Chapter Five). Second, class position is likely to influence gender relations where middle-class or more educated families may conform to a more liberal gender ideology (Scott, 1990). Finally, ethnic differences may also affect gender divisions within society. For example, *machismo* has greatest influence among the white/*mestizo*, predominantly working class population, yet research on indigenous Indian communities illustrates that gender relations are considerably more equitable demonstrating high degrees of complementarity (Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1987; Radcliffe, 1990; Scott, 1990). This is also the case among Afro-Caribbean populations.

In Chapter Five we saw how the historical development of Caribbean society, particularly regarding slavery, has given rise to more flexible patterns of gender relations based on female economic independence and headship of households coupled with male marginality (Anderson,^P 1986; Brodber, 1982; Massiah, 1984). ⁴ In spite of this reality, a paradoxical situation has emerged whereby the patriarchal notion of the male breadwinner and dependent spouse, encompassed in the Anglo-Protestant ideal, is constantly aspired to yet has rarely been attainable for the majority of Afro-Caribbean women. As a result, a somewhat equivocal patriarchal tradition has evolved in that social structures and institutions reflect a patriarchal ideology, yet at the level of the household women have considerable economic power and familial authority whereas men remain marginal in both senses (Anderson,^P 1986; Powell,^D 1984; Shorey-Bryan, 1986). This situation has led to the temptation of labelling Afro-Caribbean societies as 'matriarchal' (Clarke,^E 1957). However, instead of a matriarchy, the reality is an ambiguous notion of patriarchy which Barrow (1986: 170) describes as a 'double consciousness' referring to the simultaneous aspiration to the patriarchal Anglo-Protestant ideal and the Afro-Caribbean reality of independence. Women therefore continue to be restricted by male dominance of societal structures and by their psychological dependence on men, yet at the same time maintain their independence and resourcefulness through constant renegotiation of gender roles (Barrow, 1986). ⁵

Afro-Caribbean men on the other hand, remain at a psychological and often economic disadvantage. Male children are taught to accept the role of primary economic provider, while female children are also taught to fend for themselves (Ellis, 1986a; Moses, 1977). Consequently, women are able and often prefer to maintain an autonomous position, yet men adhere in theory to an ideology of dominance, aggression and sexual prowess while remaining dependent on women in practice (Shorey-Bryan, 1986). Indeed, male virility is often socially measured in terms of the support of simultaneous partners and the bearing of many children (Ennew, 1982, MacCormack and Draper, 1987). In some ways the fact that many Afro-Caribbean men are economically marginal, increases their desire to assert their dominance through personal relationships, perhaps even more so than their Latin American counterparts. In addition, while the Anglo-Protestant ideal of motherhood is not attainable for the majority of Afro-Caribbean women, this role continues to be important although it is combined with that of economic provider (see Glenn, 1991; Zinn, 1990 on the United States on the 'cult of domesticity' between different ethnic groups). Moreover, the bond between mother and child may be even stronger given the marginal position of men as spouses. Thus women invariably derive their self-esteem and self-worth through their children (Barrow, 1986; Durant-Gonzales, 1982; Ennew, 1982; MacCormack and Draper, 1987; Powell, 1986). As ^{Dorian} Powell (1986: 83) points out "a woman may ^e forgo becoming a wife, but she ought to become a mother".

The sexual division of labour among Afro-Caribbeans is therefore not predicated on the male breadwinner and the female spouse restricted to the domestic sphere. Although more restrictive notions may be silently aspired to, traditions of female economic activity and woman-headed families have now become culturally accepted among Afro-Caribbeans. Indeed, these two factors have ensured the continuation of a gender ideology whereby women attain their own independent status rather than passively deriving it through their partners (Anderson, 1986; Barrow, 1986; MacCormack and Draper, 1987). This however, coexists with male attempts to prove their manliness through personal relationships, particularly through sexual promiscuity, rather than their role as breadwinner (Shorey-Bryan, 1986). Therefore, it should be stressed that while gender relations among Afro-Caribbeans may be more flexible than among white/*mestizos*, they are also conflictive (Barrow, 1986).

⁶ This also calls into question the argument that ethnic minority households act as units of resistance against a racist society which may result in more egalitarian relations (Carby, 1982; Glenn, 1991; Hooks, 1984; see Chapter Five). In fairness, however, these studies stress the fact that the family may not be the main site of women's

oppression. What is missing from this research is that there may be simultaneous intra-household gender inequalities along with racial oppression from outside the household (Barrett and McIntosh, 1983; Blumberg, 1991b; Walby, 1990).

This account of the flexible nature of patriarchy in two ethnic contexts illustrates the difficulties in defining a single patriarchal ideology which is bound up with historical antecedents, the pervasiveness of values and ideologies *per se* and the extent to which these are altered as the result of family composition or the economic status of women (see also Scott, 1990). What is interesting is that in spite of very different circumstances, patriarchy remains the fundamental starting point for all social relations, albeit in different forms. Certainly the general position of Afro-Caribbean women is considerably better than white/*mestizo* women, yet there are remarkable similarities in the resilience of patriarchal ideals particularly in the ways in which white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean men attempt to assert their dominance and power. However, the difference between these groups and their concomitant ideologies is the extent to which they impinge upon women's freedom. Among white/*mestizos*, male authority patterns within the household and restrictions on whether women work are considerably more stringent than in Afro-Caribbean households. Among the latter, female economic activity and the prevalence of female-headed households have shaped cultural values over time with the result that female authority, particularly within the household, is firmly entrenched. The following section examines how far these general observations on gender ideologies and their influence on female labour force participation are relevant in the case of Limón.

Gender Roles and Relations among White/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans in Limón

This section looks at various aspects of intra-household gender relations among white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean families (based on in-depth interviews with 25 white/*mestizo* and 20 Afro-Caribbean informants). The first part of the discussion looks at how men and women from different ethnic groups in Limón perceive their roles in general, before going on to ascertain which particular factors are likely to affect labour force involvement.

Gender Ideologies and Patriarchy among White/*mestizos*

The low rates of female labour force participation among white/*mestizos* in Limón discussed in Chapter Five, would suggest a strong attachment to the ideal of male

breadwinner as the person at the pinnacle of the household unit and female as dependent wife and mother. Indeed, this appeared to be the case in that the majority of women who lived in male-headed units reported that their partners held the position of power within the household due to their role as economic provider. The most commonly cited phrase by women was that their husbands or partners '*manda*' (commands or orders) or that he was '*el mandón*' (the ruler). All major decisions in the family were taken by male household heads and some women complained that the only power they had was to decide what the family would eat or when the washing would be done. Another frequent statement in relation to their husbands was that '*uno tiene que respetar*' (one has to respect) and in most cases, this was seen as synonymous with obedience. In fact, the concept of respect and obedience was cited with regard to all interpersonal relationships, not only on the basis of gender between husbands and wives but also on seniority between parents and children as well as young and old (see also Scott, 1990, on Peru).⁷ A number of women reported being subject to pressure to conform to their roles as 'perfect' wives and mothers which often had deleterious effects on their self-esteem (see also Quiroz *et al*, 1984 in a study of San José, Guanacaste and Limón, Costa Rica). For example, one interviewee, Olga who was a 22 year-old houseperson with two young children and a husband of four years, claimed that she was a "bad wife" and referred to herself as "*malcriada*" (badly behaved - a term more usually used to describe children). The reason she saw herself as "*malcriada*" was that she was inept at dealing with the household finances. As a result, her husband always did the shopping (see also Chant, 1991b on Guanacaste, Costa Rica)⁸ and he even told ^{her} that he didn't want her to have any more children until she learned to behave better. In addition, deference to male authority was seen as the norm by many woman living in male-headed families. In one more extreme case, Urgina who was a 34 year-old housewife, stated how she often needed her "*exigente*" (demanding) husband to tell her how to behave as she did not always realise that she was wrong. These examples by no means imply that all white/*mestizo* women are submissive and passive acceptors of their subordination. Indeed many showed defiance of impositions of male authority. One woman, Carmen Maria, for example, overcame her *compañero's* restrictions on leaving the house for fear of sexual infidelity, by making her eldest son accompany her on her trips to go shopping or to pay bills. In this way her *compañero* could not accuse her of seeing other men when outside the home. However, the main thread running through the interviews with women was that it was culturally expected that a woman's 'place' was to look after the home and care for children, while it was a man's responsibility to support the family economically, from which in turn, he gained power and authority within the household. This viewpoint was also reiterated during interviews with white/*mestizo* men.

Underlying the social construction of this gender division of labour and ascription of roles among white/*mestizos* was *machismo*. Women and men in all types of households were asked to describe what they understood by this or '*machista*' - the latter tending to be the usual term in common parlance. Of the white/*mestizo* women interviewed, the majority referred disparagingly to *machistas* as "*inculto*" (uncouth), "*orgulloso*" (proud), "*exigente*" (demanding), "*bravo*" (fierce), "*un hombre que pone la ley*" (a man who puts down the law) and "*un hombre que hacen maldades*" (a man who does wicked things). Of those living in male-headed units, the majority of women stated that their partners displayed some characteristics of *machista* behaviour, although this was usually stressed in cases where women had experienced domestic violence. All but one of the men interviewed admitted to being a *machista* or at least "*un medio machista*" (half a *machista*). The terms used by men differed from women's interpretations in that they referred to themselves and other *machistas* as "*podoroso*" (powerful), "*fuerte*" (strong), "*celoso*" (^ajealous) and "*un hombre que gana por la familia*" (a man who supports his family).

The most common examples of *machismo* reported by women included the control of their actions and opinions by men usually in the form of restrictions from going out with friends or from working outside the home (see below). The incidence of domestic violence was also widespread and usually occurred when partners came home drunk or resulting from arguments over sexual infidelity (see also Chant, 1991b on Guanacaste). Interestingly, self-confessed *machistas* admitted to resorting to physical violence to assert their authority at home and many admitted to having other women outside their marriage or relationship, seeing both as their 'right'. Men were more reluctant to discuss domestic violence in detail, preferring to briefly state how it was often necessary when a woman was disobedient. Many women on the other hand, discussed their experiences and many had encountered violence at some time in their lives ranging from slapping to throwing pieces of furniture and threats with knives, *machetes* and even guns. Incidents of domestic rape were also reported, usually in conjunction with drunkenness and violence (see also Chant, 1991b).

The case of Soveiby and Mario demonstrates a number of these points. Soveiby was a 28 year-old housewife who lived with her three children, her mother and her second partner, Mario who was 29 years old and worked loading bananas at the port. Soveiby had been living with Mario for two years since she split up from her first partner who was the father of her three children. Soveiby left her first partner with

whom she had lived for seven years, after continual fights over sexual infidelity and frequent incidents of physical violence. Her relationship with Mario was little better and she still experienced physical abuse at least once a week. One of the most serious incidents was when Mario came home drunk one evening and demanded sexual relations. When she refused, he slapped her and then forced her to submit by threatening her with a *machete*. This was made even worse by the fact that her three children and her mother were watching from an adjoining room. Soveiby had made several attempts to leave Mario but he always broke down in tears and begged forgiveness. In fact she said she felt pity for him because as he was regularly incontinent. Mario himself admitted to being a *machista* and he made distinctions between "good" women who stayed at home and cared for their family and 'bad' women who smoked, drank beer and went out dancing. Indeed, Soveiby had previously done all these things with her first partner (who, interestingly, was Afro-Caribbean), but was later forbidden by Mario. Mario noted various reasons for ^{his} behaviour. First he said that his father had acted in an authoritarian manner towards his mother and he often saw him hitting her when he was a child. He was ashamed that he duplicated his father's behaviour but said he couldn't help himself. Second, he blamed his behaviour on his work at the port, saying that hard, physical labour loading boxes all day filled him with frustration which he released when he came home. Finally, he blamed the weather in Limón, saying that the humidity and heat caused him to get angry. Mario's excuses point to the fact that he felt the need to assert his power in some way and his only channel was through physical violence against Soveiby.

The prevalence of domestic violence also appeared to be exacerbated by jealousy. Indeed, many relationships between white/*mestizos* were characterised by mistrust. From the male perspective, one informant described how Costa Rican women were 'afflicted with a character defect' involving jealousy and possessiveness which if not curbed through a man's authority, would make a woman turn into "*una mujer verde*" (a green woman) which he viewed as some sort of wild creature who made demands on her husband. From the female perspective, one woman described how the only way she could prevent her husband seeing other women was if she "*camina en su paso*" (walks in his footsteps). In balance, however, men were more likely to resort to physical violence in arguments over infidelity although some women did fight back. Those who did accept infidelity and abuse usually bowed to the fact that it was the '*derecho del hombre*' (right of men) to behave in this way.

As mentioned earlier, the nature of gender ideologies and the extent to which

patriarchal norms influence behaviour depends on the type of household (Chant, 1991a; Safa, 1990). In Limón, the most vociferous comments on male authoritarianism (apart from experiences of female heads) were from women living in nuclear families. Women living in these households were more likely to refer to their partners as *machistas* and most cases of domestic violence were reported among this group. Also, women's self-esteem appeared to be lowest in nuclear units (see the cases of Olga and Urgina above). Strict gender divisions were also noted among male-extended households, although restrictions on women's freedom were not as heavily enforced. Among women-headed households, patriarchal constraints were obviously virtually absent at the interpersonal level, although in some cases older sons appeared to have adopted a position of authority usually through their economic role. What is most significant is that the majority of female heads noted the advantages of living alone in terms of escape from physical and mental abuse regardless of whether they had initiated the separation (see Chant, 1985b). Six of the 7 female heads interviewed had been deserted by their partners and one woman, Maria Ester, had finally asked her partner to leave after 9 years of abuse towards her and her children. He was a "*marijuanero*" (person who took marijuana) and he shouted at her constantly creating "*escándulos*" (scandals) with the neighbours. The final straw came after she discovered he had been "*grosero*" (vulgar) with two of her children (she implied implicitly that they had been sexually abused). She asked him to leave immediately, although they had had one reconciliation of two days during which time she became pregnant again. After this she vowed never to see him again and said she wanted nothing from him - she had not filed to receive alimony as she was frightened he would come to the house again and punish her (see Chant, 1985a and b, 1987 for a fuller discussion of the emergence of female-headed households). However, given that 80.6% of the total sample consisted of male-headed households, it may be assumed that gender relations among the vast majority of white/*mestizos* are characterised by male power and decision-making and strict delineation between male and female roles. These patterns have obvious implications for female economic activity and are examined below. First however, the nature of gender roles and relations among Afro-Caribbeans are discussed.

Gender Ideologies and Patriarchy among Afro-Caribbeans

As noted previously, the ^masymmetry of gender roles where men dominate the productive sphere and women are confined to the reproductive domain, is not necessarily the reality among Afro-Caribbean populations, and was also true in Limón. Among women and men interviewed, the ideal that it was man's duty to provide economically for the family was often cited, yet in reality many women were working and heading their own households.

Interestingly, the majority of women who lived with men cited the main advantage of having a man in the household was to discipline the children rather than provide economic support. Nonetheless, the role of the man as "*el mandón*" was never referred to and none of the women reported any restrictions on their leaving the house or working. The concept of respect was also seen as important, yet in a different context to white/*mestizo* perceptions in that men were said to have respect for women if they gave them freedom (see also Anderson, 1986 on the Caribbean). Women also showed respect for male partners by telling them where they were going, yet not asking their permission in the first place. One interesting case illustrates the divergent nature of gender relations between both cultures. Judith was a 34 year-old houseperson with 8 children who lived with her partner, uncle and sister. Judith recounted how she would never allow her partner to impose restrictions upon her. She never asked his permission to go out saying "I'm not here, I'm out", "I'm not a child, I is a big woman" and "I no is his daughter". This is in sharp contrast to that of Olga mentioned previously. Women generally dominated decision-making within the household in both male and female-headed units. In the former, however, a number of women described how they often let a man think he was in charge despite their ultimate control. Indeed, Joyce, a 42 year-old cook in a hotel, noted how her husband often called himself the head of the household even when she made all the decisions; she usually complied with this to make him feel better (see also Barrow, 1986; note 5).

Afro-Caribbean women were also asked for their opinions on *machismo* and *machistas*, partly to ascertain the degree of cultural assimilation of white/*mestizo* culture. One-half of the women interviewed had never heard of the terms, although they did describe male behaviour in similar ways as white/*mestizo* women. The most commonly used term for men was "irresponsible" based on the fact that men wanted girlfriends rather than partners or wives. Many pinpointed the fact that the majority of men wanted to go to the United States to work as the basis for their irresponsibility in that they did not want any ties. A number of women also noted how male irresponsibility was the reason why many Afro-Caribbean women preferred to live in visiting unions (although this obviously is to male advantage as well). Alcohol and domestic violence were also mentioned but only by women living in female-headed households as further justification for their living alone. Overall, the most common grievance of Afro-Caribbean women against men was that "all men look outside the house" referring to their sexual infidelities. Margory, a 37 year-old female head who worked as a domestic servant, had lived with two partners both of whom had been consistently unfaithful to her. She was of the opinion that men were incapable of

fidelity and that the only reason they lived with women was to get their washing and cooking done. Judith (see above) also stressed the sexual connotations of *machismo* describing *machistas* as "facey men" or men who were "facey" with women, by which she meant men who leered or were lecherous towards women. Interviews with Afro-Caribbean men were interesting in that they talked in a similar manner as white/*mestizos* about their authority and power. They all admitted that women's freedom was important, but insisted that their decisions overruled women's (contrary to what women reported). Another interesting point made by all Afro-Caribbean men was their assertion that they treated women better than white/*mestizos*. However, at the same time, they all reported the "need" for black men to have other women outside the home because they were more "passionate" than white/*mestizos* (or what one Afro-Caribbean man, Roger, described as being more "*perro*" [dog/animal like]).

Although Afro-Caribbean women appear to have more power within their households than white/*mestizos*, gender relations can not be described as harmonious and complementary given the general attitude of women that men were irresponsible. This is further reinforced by the fact that Afro-Caribbean men continually tried ~~and~~^{to} assert their authority over women even if largely through promiscuity and infidelity.⁹ Reasons include male feelings of inadequacy and resentment in the light of women's economic roles and power within the household. This is exacerbated by pressures from white/*mestizo* colleagues at work etc. and from wider society where they are expected to act according to the Latin culture of *machismo*. While this may initially suggest that Afro-Caribbean men have assimilated to Costa Rican culture to a greater degree than women, it must be remembered that the behaviour of those in Limón may be similar but the underlying reasons are different.¹⁰

The impact of household structure on gender ideologies among Afro-Caribbeans is particularly important. The numerical significance of female headship among this group in practical terms means that a larger proportion of women are free from male constraints and therefore adhere to a different set of values. However, the history of female headship has contributed to the incorporation of ideals of greater female power in more general patterns of gender relations. Therefore, even in male-headed households, women maintain much greater control over decisions than their white/*mestizo* counterparts whose culture is premised on the male-headed family. As mentioned above, none of the Afro-Caribbean women interviewed reported any restrictions on their freedom whether they lived in male or female-headed households. Although lip service was often paid to the authority of male heads, women shared equally or, indeed, dominated

decision-making in the household (see Anderson, 1986; Powell, 1986 on the Caribbean).

General perceptions of gender roles and relations in the family and in society at large appear to be highly distinctive between Afro-Caribbeans and white/*mestizos*. A more stringent sexual division of labour appears to predominate among white/*mestizos* while a more flexible and indeed female-oriented gender ideology seems to prevail among Afro-Caribbeans. ¹¹ Before going on to examine how this may affect female labour force participation, it is interesting to point out briefly the situation of interracial marriages/relationships which illustrates the interplay between the two ethnically distinct gender ideologies within the household. In the household survey as a whole, interracial marriage represented 7.6% of the total sample (19 households). Of these, 52.6% (10) were of Afro-Caribbean women living with white/*mestizo* men, 42.1% (8) of white/*mestizo* women with Afro-Caribbean men and one Chinese man who lived with an Afro-Caribbean woman. In the sub-sample, only five of these households were included, yet some interesting comments were made with regard to the nature of gender ideologies. In four of the cases, informants explicitly cited how differences in gender ideologies were an important reason for choosing a partner from a different ethnic group. The Afro-Caribbean men living with white/*mestizo* women stated that they preferred white women as they were more submissive unlike black women who were "argumentative" and "bossy". They therefore felt more in control with a white/*mestizo* partner. White/*mestizo* women with Afro-Caribbean partners however, stressed their increased liberty and greater help with domestic labour than with previous white/*mestizo* partners. In these instances, intermarriage was viewed as beneficial to both sides albeit for different reasons. While not conclusive in any way, these examples again highlight the differences in gender ideologies between ethnic groups. The chapter now goes on to explore how more specific aspects of gender ideologies are likely to influence female labour force participation between ethnic groups.

Determinants of Female Labour Force Participation

This section looks at why white/*mestizo* women in Limón have consistently lower economic activity rates than Afro-Caribbean women regardless of the type of household in which they live. More specifically, it examines how different aspects of ethnically differentiated gender ideologies constrain and/or facilitate female labour force participation. These gender ideologies may be reflected in how women view their reproductive responsibilities and what strategies are used to overcome constraints, the

extent to which restrictive male attitudes impinge upon women's likelihood of taking-up paid employment, and attitudes of women themselves towards work and why they think it necessary or desirable to enter the labour force.

Domestic Labour

The issue of domestic labour and reproductive responsibilities is central to the concept of gender ideologies. While general differences in the nature of gender roles and relations between white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans have been established, it is important to examine how variations in the more specific issue of domestic labour affects how women are placed to enter the labour force. Sinclair (1990: 17-18) points out that the presence of children and housework per se does not preclude women from taking up paid employment. Although material conditions such as child-care facilities and so on are influential in determining whether women are exclusively responsible for domestic labour, she stresses the influence of ideology in prescribing women's roles within the household. Therefore, it is proposed that ethnic differences in gender ideologies are likely to influence how far domestic labour constitutes an obstacle to female labour force participation. Evidence from the sub-sample demonstrates how a combination of differing material and ideological circumstances contributes to a pattern whereby domestic labour and child-care presents more of a constraint on white/*mestizo* women compared with Afro-Caribbeans.

In general, white/*mestizo* women identified strongly with the household as their domain and their work within it as a labour of duty. A number of women cited this as a major reason why they did not engage in paid work outside the home, many preferring to devote time to their children and housework to ensure family unity. As one woman, Gerardina, a 40 year-old housewife who lived with her husband and three children put it, *"uno tiene que luchar para los niños, no para la plata"* (one has to struggle for one's children, not for the money) which she saw as men's role. Among Afro-Caribbeans however, women considered housework and child-care an important element of their lives, yet not a serious impediment to labour force involvement. While some Afro-Caribbean women who were not working stated that they preferred to remain at home while their children were young, this was not perceived as a restriction as such, but more of a temporary limitation related to the 'developmental cycle' of the household (see Chant, 1991a: 154). In fact, many Afro-Caribbean women (especially female heads) stated that they worked in the first place for their children's benefit (see also Durant-Gonzales, 1982, on the Caribbean). In contrast, the majority of white/*mestizo* women said that the reason they did not work was for the benefit of their children. At an

ideological level therefore, the way in which ethnically defined gender ideologies affect perceptions of domestic labour and child-care between ethnic groups encourages white/*mestizo* women to remain at home and Afro-Caribbean women to enter the labour force. This also illustrates the differing concepts of motherhood between ethnic groups. Both viewed this role of paramount importance, yet the manner in which they demonstrated this was through different channels; one through remaining at home, the other through working outside the home. Therefore, not only is the term 'flexible patriarchy' appropriate when assessing Afro-Caribbean gender relations, but also what may be termed 'flexible motherhood'.

At the practical level, the gender division of labour among both Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* households was premised on the ideal that women had major responsibility for reproductive tasks, although this division was considerably more flexible among the former. Women in both groups were seen as being primarily responsible for daily tasks of cooking, washing, cleaning and child-care. Men in both groups were reluctant to help with domestic chores, although outright refusal was more likely among white/*mestizos*. White/*mestizo* men sometimes helped with minding children and heavier chores such as mending furniture or cleaning yards, but most refused to do washing, cleaning or cooking except when their wives were ill. In effect, they were reluctant to carry out any tasks which were associated primarily with women's work (see also Scott, 1990). Afro-Caribbean men on the other hand, were more likely to help in the home, albeit on an erratic and temporary basis (see also Barrow, 1986, on Barbados). This included child-care, heavier tasks outside the house and cooking. ¹² However, this by no means implied any fundamental renegotiation of traditional gender-assigned tasks within the household among Afro-Caribbeans. Children from both groups often helped with household tasks and although many women agreed in theory to male children doing their fair share of duties, girls were invariably required to help out more in comparison with boys (see Chant, 1991a, on Mexico; Ennew, 1982, on Jamaica; Ramirez Boza, 1987, on Costa Rica).

Accepting that women from both groups carried a disproportionate share of domestic labour, the main differences on grounds of ethnicity were the strategies employed to overcome this burden in order to engage in paid employment. In Limón, there was limited provision of child-care facilities either by the government or by private firms and therefore women had to depend upon their own resources (see also Chapter Four). Among white/*mestizos*, women usually had sole responsibility for domestic labour, especially in nuclear families. For this reason, many women were

unable to work outside the home unless household tasks were delegated to other members. Elsewhere it has been reported that women in nuclear households are more likely to work if co-resident daughters in their teens are able to take over domestic chores. This obviously depends on the stage in the developmental cycle of the family, with older women whose children have left school being less restricted in taking-up employment outside the home (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a; Ramirez Boza, 1987). In Limón, however, this was not a widely utilised strategy among white/*mestizos* with most women preferring to remain at home. In the sub-sample, only two women in nuclear units worked outside the home and neither depended on female children to take over housework. For example, Isabel, a kitchen helper in a restaurant, worked shifts from 2 to 10 pm, and accordingly she did all her housework in the mornings. Her three small children (all under 10 years old) were looked after by her mother who lived nearby and came to the house for the afternoon, or by her husband when he wasn't working (as a cargo handler at the port he had erratic working hours). The rest of the economically active women in nuclear families worked in the 'informal sector' usually based at home in such occupations as making *tamales* (maize, vegetables and meat wrapped in banana leaves), dress-making or crocheting *tejidos* (ornamental mats). These occupations tended not to require delegation of domestic duties to other household members, as women could combine them with housework and child-care (see also Babb, 1986, on Peru).

In extended households, women reported greater help with domestic tasks especially if the additional members were female, which allowed the release of women into the labour market (see Chant, 1985b; 1991a, on Mexico; De los Ríos, 1989, on Costa Rica). However, in general, the presence of other members had little influence over whether a female head or spouse worked and it was more likely that these additional members were themselves economically active rather than the head or spouse. As with nuclear households, the small proportion of working women in extended units were more likely to work part-time in home-based commerce or food production where reproductive tasks could be combined with productive work, than engage in paid employment outside the home. Even among female-headed households where labour force participation was also low, women cited reproductive responsibilities as one of their reasons for not working. The majority of female heads were older, with grown up children, and so where possible older sons or daughters would work. In two cases, female-heads with young children received social security payments from the government (a single mothers' allowance) which in their view paid more than they would earn working as a domestic servant, particularly if they had to pay for child-care on top

of this. One female head also survived on the weekly payments from the father of her two children. Where female heads were economically active, other female members such as daughters, sisters or mothers, would assume responsibility for housework. María Dolores had worked as a domestic servant for 7 years since her husband left her for another woman. Initially, her mother moved in with them to look after the children, and after she died her 14 year-old daughter left school in order to look after the home. However, María Dolores did not consider her daughter's help indispensable and said she would prefer her to find a husband who could maintain her and thereby reduce household expenses. Overall, white/*mestizo* women did not actively look for strategies to allow them to enter the labour force regardless of the type of household they lived in or their stage in the life cycle. The practical implications of a gender ideology which prescribes that women have major responsibility for domestic tasks, appears to have been largely accepted and internalised by most white/*mestizo* women. Although some women did manipulate various resources to allow them to work, such as help from daughters or other women resident in the household, on the whole they seemed to consider their reproductive role more important than income-generating activities, if and when an alternative economic source was available (see below on perceptions of work).

Among Afro-Caribbeans on the other hand, while cultural expectations of women remain centred around child-care and domestic duties (Barrow, 1986; Durant-Gonzales, 1982; Massiah, 1983; Powell, 1984), a number of strategies have been developed to overcome the constraints of reproductive labour on women's workforce involvement (Ellis, 1986a). Indeed, contrary to white/*mestizo* culture, the tradition of female economic activity and woman-headed families among Afro-Caribbeans has encouraged the widespread use of coping mechanisms to deal with productive and reproductive responsibilities which have been incorporated into the lives of these women over time (Barrow, 1986).¹³ In Limón, these strategies took the form of delegation of domestic chores to daughters, kinship and friendship networks and fostering of children to grandparents (see also Barrow, 1986; Durant-Gonzales, 1982; Massiah, 1983; Moses, 1977, in the Caribbean). On average, Afro-Caribbean women who had full-time jobs were older and accordingly tended to have older children resident in the household to delegate chores to, particularly the minding of younger children; a factor particularly relevant where older children were females. In a number of cases, women worked shifts (particularly nurses) and thus a rota system was often developed whereby younger offspring were looked after by older sisters even if they still attended school. However, the value attached to children's education meant that this strategy was only employed if it was compatible with school hours (see also Massiah, 1983, in the

Caribbean). While this form of domestic help was most common in both male nuclear and single-parent households, in extended households, female relatives (as opposed to male) became the main source of domestic support for working heads or spouses (see the case of Sandra below).

In addition, if women were unable to delegate household labour to resident daughters or other household members, they would even turn to friends or relatives outside the household. Among women not engaged in paid employment, many looked after children of friends and neighbours in a practice which Phillips (1973, cited in Ennew, 1982: 557) refers to in Jamaica as the "shuffling around of children". Another common coping mechanism widespread among all types of Afro-Caribbean households in Limón was the fostering of children to grandmothers, either temporarily or on a more permanent basis. The phenomenon of 'granny fostering' has a long history both in the Caribbean (Clarke, 1957; Ennew, 1982; Goody, 1975; Smith, R.T, 1988) and in Africa (Brydon, 1992; Nelson, 1987). This has usually been related to patterns of rural-urban migration where younger women migrate to the city in search of work leaving children behind in the charge of grandmothers, or alternatively when children have been born in urban areas and are sent to grandmothers in rural areas if women cannot cope with looking after them. However in Limón, fostering children to grandmothers is common within the city itself when women were unable to assume full responsibility for child-care either economically and/or because of labour force commitments. Over half the Afro-Caribbean women interviewed in the sub-sample had at least one child who had been brought up by grandmothers who lived nearby. Most commonly, the first child was fostered if the woman was a single parent still in her teens and either studying or starting her career. Sometimes children returned to their mothers when further children were born and/or they could afford to keep them, although this also depended on whether alternative forms of child-care could be found. A case in point is that of Sandra, a 38 year-old female head, who lived with five of her seven children and her mentally retarded sister. Sandra's first two children were fostered by her mother because she was only 13 years old when the first was born. In addition, she was still in secondary school and was unable to support the children and so her mother took them in and raised them as if they were her own. Sandra never paid maintenance for them, nor did they ever return to live with her. She had since had five more children and ran her own bakery while her sister assumed the child-care and household responsibilities. Another example of fostering, on a more temporary basis, was that of Perla. Perla (36 years old) was a cook in a primary school who worked from 7 in the morning until 5 in the evening. Her husband also worked all day as a

carpenter and so neither of them were able to look after their three children, all under 10 years of age. Perla overcame this problem by sending the children to live with her mother to whom she paid basic maintenance costs. The children returned home every weekend and during school holidays (which Perla also had free). Although Perla said how she missed not having her children at home, she did not consider giving up her job. This case suggests that some Afro-Caribbean women do not give undue primacy to their reproductive role, but instead incorporate a number of support systems into their daily lives to allow them to enter the labour force.

The discussion of domestic labour between the two ethnic groups demonstrates how both white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean women considered reproductive duties within the household their major responsibility. However, the main difference in terms of ethnicity was that white/*mestizos* in all types of households perceived their domestic role as more important than paid employment and thus were less likely to manipulate various resources to allow their release into the labour force. Among Afro-Caribbean women on the other hand, the tradition of female headship and economic activity meant that the development and utilisation of resources to overcome their reproductive burden had become entrenched in their way of life. Therefore, regardless of the type of household they resided in, women were more likely to find alternative ways to combine child-care and housework with income-generating activities.¹⁴ Therefore, at ideological and material levels, domestic labour was less of a constraint on female labour force participation for Afro-Caribbean women than for white/*mestizos* which is crucial in explaining different rates of economic activity between ethnic groups. The way in which restrictive gender relations are manifested at the household level, particularly among white/*mestizos*, is explored further in relation to attitudes of men towards female employment.

Male Attitudes to Women's Work

Another major difference between white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean households was the extent to which men limit women's actions. Among the former, the gender ideology that women should remain in the home was reflected in greater male resistance to female employment, and, in turn, was reinforced by the higher proportion of male-headed households. Among Afro-Caribbeans however, women were free to take up employment regardless of whether they lived in male-headed families. Given the absence of male resistance to the labour force participation of Afro-Caribbean women, the present section concentrates exclusively on white/*mestizo* households. In all the male-headed households in the sub-sample, those women who were not working had been forbidden by

their husbands to do so, and even when they had requested permission this was often refused (see also Sherman, 1984; Piza Lopez, 1990; Quiroz *et al.*, 1984). What is also interesting is that all the women who worked in part-time occupations were also prevented by their partners from working outside the home. However, part-time work was not usually considered as 'proper employment' by men or indeed by women themselves, nor did it challenge any of the reasons why men objected to women working.

The reasons for male restrictions centred around the perception of a series of threats to male power and superiority, and fear of subverting the traditional sexual division of labour. The primary reason cited by men was that child-care and domestic chores would be neglected if women worked outside the home (see above). Since most men considered this as women's fundamental role, they were strongly opposed to any change in this order. Another major factor was that women were likely to come into contact with other men if they went out to work. Such was the mistrust and fear of sexual infidelity that men were very reluctant to allow their wives any opportunity to meet other men (see also Chant, 1991³ on Mexico). Although men were more opposed to women working in places such as hotels and restaurants (one man said that only '*putas*' ('whores') worked in bars or hotels), this also applied to office jobs. A case in point is that of Saida, a 32 year-old housewife who had done a secretarial course after completing her secondary education yet had not worked since her marriage 10 years before because her husband would not give her permission. Only once had she ever applied for a job, at JAPDEVA, yet her husband refused to let her attend the interview because he had heard a rumour that women had to have sexual relations with managers before they were accepted for a post. Another reason related to the ascription of gender roles was that men viewed female labour force participation as undermining their position as breadwinner. Many men perceived this role as sacrosanct and any attempt to change this was seen as a threat to their masculinity. One of the men interviewed, Idanoel, was a 31 year old father of three who worked as a night guard at the RECOPE oil refinery. His wife Flori also worked as a shop assistant in Limón centre during the day while Idanoel took care of their youngest daughter (the older two were at school). Idanoel did not object in theory to women working or to caring for the children, yet he said that he felt "less of a man" by doing it. He commented at length on the psychological "damage" this caused, in turn compounded by pressure from his *compañeros* at work who would tease him about being a housewife. In fact, he had decided that he would stop his wife from working as soon as they had enough money saved to move to a new house. Also related to this was the fear that women may actually usurp men's position as

breadwinner, especially if they earned more. Rafael, a 36 year-old office clerk in JAPDEVA expressed such sentiments: his wife Diela was a university-trained primary school teacher yet had never worked. He was proud of his wife's achievements but would not allow her get a job, ostensibly because she had to care for their 3 and 7 year-old children. However, Diela thought the main reason was jealousy of her professional status and earning power, and Rafael's feelings of inferiority. The only way he could prevent his wife from achieving economic independence and maintaining his own control over the household was to forbid her to work (see also Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a, on Mexico for similar findings).

These objections demonstrate how far the prevalent gender ideology among white/*mestizos* impinges directly upon women's freedom to take up employment. Men perceived it in their interests to safe-guard their position as primary breadwinner which they enforced through their role as decision-maker and the additional power derived through their control of economic resources (see also Chant, 1991a). Thus, strict gender divisions within the family were continually reinforced. In instances where women work on a part-time basis, male objections can usually be overcome. In such cases, women can remain in the home and continue to devote time to child-care and housework, they do not come into contact with other men, their work is essentially invisible and therefore unlikely to pose any threat, and finally the nature of part-time work does not allow women to accumulate a great deal of income and *ipso facto* bargaining power (see Babb, 1986; Benería and Roldán, 1987). Overall, attitudes on the part of white/*mestizo* men played an important role in restricting women's entry into the labour force, especially in full-time positions. Although women who headed their own households among this group were obviously free from male restrictions, the proportion was small and therefore had limited influence over the general patterns. Afro-Caribbean women on the other hand, faced no constraints of this nature, compounded in turn by a high incidence of woman-headed households. Freedom from male restrictions thus often reinforced the advantageous position of Afro-Caribbean women vis-à-vis white/*mestizos* in terms of their release into the labour force.

Women's Rationale for Labour Force Participation

While the previous two sections examined various constraints on female labour force participation, the discussion here looks at the reasons cited by women themselves for entering the labour force or not. It examines first, the different attitudes of women towards paid employment in the two ethnic groups, and second, practical reasons why they entered the labour force.

As might be expected, the attitudes of women towards employment outside the home were quite different between white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbeans reflecting the general variations in gender ideologies between both groups. Women were asked to explain the main reasons why they were presently economically active or had been in the past, which produced very different reactions on the basis of ethnicity. At a general level, white/*mestizo* women tended to cite economic necessity as the major reason why they were working or had worked previously, regardless of whether they lived in a male or female-headed household. Most women stated that if they had a choice, they would prefer to remain in the home. While some women cited economic independence as important, this was usually with reference to their employment before they were married or had children. The prevailing view was that it was important for women to study and find a job when they were younger, but that once they had set up their own home their responsibility lay with the care of their families unless they were forced into the labour market for financial reasons. Gerardina's case reflects these sentiments. She was a 40 year-old housewife who had 3 children between the ages of 12 and 15 years, and whose husband, Ramón was a handy-man at the Tony Facio hospital. Before Gerardina got married at 23 years-old, she worked in three different shops in the centre of Limón. At the time she enjoyed her independence and having money of her own. However, she told me how she regretted having worked until she was 23 because it was bad for a woman to marry so late. She stopped work as soon as she got married as she wanted to devote all her time to her family and she no longer saw any reason to work as her husband earned a sufficient wage at the hospital to support the household.

The general consensus among white/*mestizo* women was therefore that labour force participation was desirable only in cases of economic need. At the practical level, a number of circumstances were identified where financial necessity had required women to enter the labour force. A small proportion of women had stated working when their husbands or partners lost their jobs. However, this was usually only on a temporary basis and women were usually restricted from maintaining their labour force involvement once their husbands found employment again. Moreover, in a number of instances, men even refused to grant their wives permission to work under these circumstances, preferring to wait until they themselves found alternative employment rather than undermine their dignity by allowing their wife to work (see also Chant, 1991a, on Mexico; Quiroz *et al*, 1984, on Costa Rica). The case of Olga illustrates this point (see also above). Although Olga was a housewife at the time of interview, she had worked selling lottery tickets for 6 months in the previous year when her husband lost

his job as a mechanic. During the first three months he would not allow her to work but finally conceded when their savings ran out. However, on finding a new job as a guard, he demanded that Olga give up work. Olga continued clandestinely for a few weeks until her husband found out and instructed ~~to~~ her boss to sack her. As a result, Olga gave in and had not worked since.

Other factors which led women to enter the labour force on a temporary basis included various emergencies or instances where households required extra income for a short period. For example, in 1990 Lillian (35 years) was a housewife who lived in a nuclear household and whose husband would not allow her to work outside the home. However, in a further interview in 1992, her husband had waived these restrictions and Lillian was working in a furniture factory. The reason for this change was that the family was building a new house after their original one was damaged in the earthquake of April 1991. They therefore needed the extra income to pay for the house. Lillian was unsure whether she would remain in her new job after the house construction was completed. Labour force involvement by women was also precipitated by other circumstances such as low earnings on the part of husbands or the retention of the male earnings for personal expenditure (see Chant, 1985a, 1985b, on the concept of 'secondary poverty'). In these cases women were most likely to engage in part-time activities such as food production and selling which generated extra income for the family yet did not threaten their husbands's position as breadwinner (see earlier). The generation of extra income was for the survival of the family as a whole and not for personal consumption (see also Blumberg, 1991a). Indeed, women who engaged in all forms of income-generating activities (full and part-time work) contributed all their earnings to the household budget.

Another interesting case illustrates how one woman used her entrance into the labour force as a weapon against her husband with whom she was arguing at the time. Graciela (32 years) was a Nicaraguan migrant who had come to Costa Rica in 1979 with her husband, Marvin and daughter, Evelyn. In Nicaragua, Graciela had always worked, yet after their arrival in Costa Rica her husband would not permit her to find a job. She accepted this while her children were young and until she and her husband started having arguments over a suspected sexual infidelity on his part. Graciela saw the most effective way of making her husband value her was to find a job. Without requesting Marvin's permission she secured a position in a hotel in the centre of Limón as a chamber-maid. When Marvin discovered she was working he went to the manager of the hotel and handed in Graciela's notice and forbade to ever enter the hotel again. Such was

the impact on Marvin's dignity of Graciela's move, that their arguments ceased. What is also interesting is that soon after this episode, Graciela began making and selling *tamales*, first to neighbours and then to the canteen at the nearby ENVACO factory. Although Marvin objected, he did not consider this an affront to his ego and an attempt to undermine his authority. This example demonstrates how the threat of taking up a job may act as a powerful form of negotiation between men and women.

Finally, the extent to which economic necessity encouraged the release of women into the labour force depended on the type of household in which they lived. Although women in all types of households stated that they only worked for economic reasons, this was even more prominent among women who headed their own families (see Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990), especially single-parents who had sole responsibility for economic survival, and particularly where children were young. Having said this, the majority of single parents were older and depended on earnings of their children wherever possible (see earlier). In extended households, financial reasons remained the main rationale for female labour force participation, although again, if additional household members were economically active and contributed enough for household survival, female heads were unlikely to work.

Overall, low rates of female labour force participation among *white/mestizos* was related to the perception of paid employment as necessary only when financial necessity demanded. Among Afro-Caribbeans, however, not only were economic activity rates substantially higher, but work was viewed in a different light. While some women cited economic necessity as a major rationale, the majority also stated that they enjoyed the independence and satisfaction of having a job. At the same time, however, women said that they needed this economic independence because of the irresponsibility of men who could never be relied on to support a family (see also Anderson, 1986; Ennew, 1982; Massiah, 1983 on the Caribbean). Indeed, the most common statement among women in both male and female-headed households was that they worked to 'defend themselves'. This view was firmly entrenched in female attitudes and many women reported how their mothers and grandmothers had advised them of this need to assert economic autonomy from an early age and not to allow themselves to be at the mercy of men (see also Anderson, 1986). Following from this, women in a number of cases had followed in their mother's footsteps into careers as nurses or teachers. The case of Ana Gisenne who was a 23 year-old woman living by herself is typical here. Ana was working as a nursing auxiliary at the Tony Facio hospital, and although having completed a secondary education, was planning to go to San José to do formal nursing training. Ana's mother

also worked as a nurse at the hospital and she had always advised Ana that she had to study and find a stable job as it was unrealistic to depend on a man's support. This ethos of economic independence being carried through the generations was seen as very important not only on an ideological level, but also in terms of encouraging social mobility. In a number of cases, women told me how their mothers had migrated to the United States during the 1960s to work as domestic servants and they had been left in the care of their grandmothers (see earlier). These mothers had sent remittances for their children's upkeep and most importantly for their education. Therefore, not only were these women encouraged by their mother's example to seek a career, but remittances facilitated the pursuit of such careers economically. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, many women said their main rationale for working was so that their children could have a good education and future. ¹⁵

Unlike white/*mestizo* women, the tradition of female economic activity was firmly entrenched in Afro-Caribbean culture which is crucial in explaining why female labour force participation was consistently higher among Afro-Caribbeans in both male and female-headed households. In practical terms, Afro-Caribbean women accepted their economic role as a matter of course rather than entering the labour force as a form of contingency in response to short-term male actions. As a result, employment stability was greater among Afro-Caribbeans than white/*mestizos*. Although some women in male-headed units stopped working for a short time while their children were young, the majority returned to work. This was corroborated further by the professional nature of many occupations; many women were reluctant to give up work to devote time primarily to their family if they had relatively high status, well-remunerated jobs. In addition, most of the women in male-headed units who were teachers or nurses earned considerably more than their partners, thereby reducing the likelihood of them giving up their jobs to assume a domestic role. This also reinforced female decision-making power within the household. Another important factor why Afro-Caribbean women worked was the fact that many Afro-Caribbean men in Limón migrated to work in the United States. ¹⁶ The effects of this included first, the perception that reliance on men was unrealistic given the likelihood of migration and second, if already in a partnership with a man who had migrated, work was necessary as a form of insurance against husbands not returning. Indeed, all *de facto* female heads whose husbands worked abroad were working, even they all received remittances (which were usually fairly regular).

Afro-Caribbean women's perceptions of work were therefore intricately bound

up with cultural traditions of maintaining economic independence and autonomy in the light of their inability to rely on men as economic providers. Regardless of the type of household they lived in, Afro-Caribbean women perceived employment not only as necessary, but as a source of satisfaction. This was in contrast to white/*mestizo* women who viewed paid employment mainly as an economic necessity to be undertaken when male income-generating activities were insufficient to support the household even in households headed by women. These attitudes are accordingly fundamental in explaining why Afro-Caribbeans have higher rates of economic activity than white/*mestizos*. While the different perceptions may be attributed to ethnic variations in gender ideologies, material conditions are also influential, particularly demand for labour.

Demand for Female Labour

This issue was dealt with in Chapter Four, but it is important to point out how women themselves perceive opportunities in the labour market as this may influence their propensity to seek work in the first place. Among white/*mestizos*, women complained of the lack of female job opportunities in Limón. The most common grievances were the absence of factory employment for women and of credentialism within the labour market. Reportedly, a minimum of three years secondary education was required for posts as shop assistant and cleaners in the hospital. Given that the majority of white/*mestizo* women had no more than primary education (see Chapter Five), their options were severely limited. Indeed, many stated that the only jobs they could secure were as domestic servants where wages were not enough to support a family. As a result, many women accepted that they would be unable to obtain a job and so did not consider labour force participation a possibility in the first place. Indeed, this may further explain the predominance of white/*mestizo* women involved in part-time employment in the 'informal sector'. Afro-Caribbean women on the other hand, rarely complained of the lack of opportunities probably because of their higher level of education vis-a-vis white/*mestizos*. In Limón, where demand for female labour was primarily limited to white-collar occupations or to jobs in the service sector which demanded high levels of education, Afro-Caribbean women were therefore at a distinct advantage. In other words, labour force involvement was perceived as a possibility for Afro-Caribbean women which it was not for white/*mestizos* with low levels of education. Therefore, in addition to factors discussed in this chapter, labour demand appears to reinforce further the higher rates of female employment found among Afro-Caribbeans compared with white/*mestizos* (see Chapter Seven for a fuller discussion).

One final point relates to the fact that although Afro-Caribbean women appear to

have a considerable degree of autonomy within the household in terms of decision-making and so on, this does not necessarily mean equality (see also Afonja, 1991 on Yoruba women in Africa). Women still bear a disproportionate share of domestic labour even if they have developed strategies to deal with their responsibilities. In the workplace, while their employment in teaching and nursing is certainly of a higher status than the majority of jobs undertaken by white/*mestizo* women, these professions remain strongly gender-typed and most Afro-Caribbeans are generally excluded from any positions of authority within the health and education sectors (see Chapter Seven). Therefore, while Afro-Caribbean women may be better placed in many ways to achieve a degree of equality than their white/*mestizo* counterparts, their relative autonomy should not be translated as equity.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored various reasons why female labour force participation in Limón is substantially higher for Afro-Caribbeans than for white/*mestizos*. It has concentrated on intra-household factors revolving around differences in gender relations between the two ethnic groups, and how these may constrain or facilitate labour force involvement. Gender ideologies were found to be very different between groups for reasons rooted initially in historical and cultural conditions, but which have also been reinforced by contemporary conditions. Gender ideologies among white/*mestizos* were based on very strict divisions between male and female roles. Through the examination of a number of aspects of intra-household relations both ideological and material, it was demonstrated how constrained white/*mestizo* women were from entering the labour force. White/*mestizo* women themselves were more likely to identify primarily with the domestic domain, which in cases of male-headed households, was exacerbated by male resistance to female employment. In addition, in all types of households domestic responsibilities such as housework and child-care were perceived by women as a major obstacle to working outside the home and the delegation of these tasks elsewhere were not considered a priority among these women unless economic necessity was so great that they had no choice. The numerical significance of male-headed families among this group also accentuated the reinforcement and perpetuation of a strict sexual division of labour. In this situation therefore, labour force involvement was not deemed desirable, or indeed seen as attainable by a majority of women; a fact exacerbated by the nature of labour demand in the city.

Among Afro-Caribbeans, however, a very different picture emerged. The

tradition of economic activity and women-headed households coupled with male marginality has contributed to the formation of a gender ideology premised on a less stringent division of labour between the sexes. This was evidenced in the greater exercise of female power within the household as well as freedom from male constraints (corroborated by a high proportion of female-headed households). Women identified with both domestic and productive spheres and a series of coping mechanisms to deal with domestic responsibilities allowed them to reconcile the two. Therefore, a cultural context combined with a support system which encouraged female economic activity both as necessary and desirable has led to high rates of labour force involvement among this group regardless of the types of household in which they live. In addition, the higher levels of education found among Afro-Caribbeans has given them greater opportunities in a labour market where demand for female labour is overwhelmingly concentrated in white-collar employment. Therefore, distinct variations in intra-household factors between ethnic groups in Limón has contributed not only to the disproportionate release of Afro-Caribbean women into the labour market compared with white/*mestizos*, but has corroborated segregation and segmentation of employment patterns on grounds of gender and ethnicity. This is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

Notes to Chapter Six

1) Two related points of clarification must be made with regard to the difficulty of disentangling material, economic conditions from cultural, ethnic and ideological factors when accounting for differences in households and rates of labour force participation between ethnic groups. First, ethnicity and culture are not used coterminously. Cultural differences are only one element of variations between ethnic groups along with social and economic factors such as access to employment and resources (Jackson, 1987). Cultural values are merely associated with the behaviour of different ethnic groups as the result of shared historical circumstances for example, and are subject to change over time and space (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Phoenix, 1990; Zinn, 1987, 1990). While these values permeate all aspects of society they are perhaps most easily identified at the household level, as Zinn (1990: 74) points out: "as racial categories are formed and transformed over time, the meanings, practices and institutions associated with race penetrate families throughout society". However, this is not to say that culture is not an important element of examining ethnic difference and indeed, Michèle Barrett (1988: x) asserts that recent attention paid to the concepts of ideology, subjectivity and culture has greatly enriched the understanding of ethnic relations and wider social structures. The other main point is that cultural values which are encompassed in ideologies are the product of cultural and socio-economic forces as Walby (1990: 91) states, "traditionally ideology and culture have been considered to be best understood as a set of beliefs which are related in some way to other social phenomena. More recently writers in this field have argued that it is inappropriate to theorize ideology outside the material relations in which it is embedded".

2) Of the sub-sample of 45 respondents, 25 were white/*mestizo* households and 20 were Afro-Caribbean. Of this, ~~25~~₂₀ were women and 15 were men.

3) The term '*machismo*' is used in everyday speech in Latin America along with '*machista*' (a man who adheres to this behaviour). '*Marianismo*' on the other hand, is not used in common parlance and is more usually referred to in social science literature.

4) MacCormack and Draper (1987) discuss how male powerlessness in Jamaican society can be traced to the days of slavery. While British plantation owners were rarely resident in Jamaica, their overseers and artisans (also British) invariably went to the Caribbean without their wives or children. As such, sexual relations with black and coloured women was officially encouraged. Existing relationships among the slave population were not recognised by these men with the result that slave women were often forced into sexual relations with the full knowledge of their partners. In addition, slave women often cooperated with their masters in their own self-interest as acquiescence often brought exemption from hard labour in the fields and some influence in the domestic running of the plantation house. As MacCormack and Draper (1987: 145) note, "in this social milieu of trans-racial sex and procreation, a black women had potential advantages while a black man had much to lose". Under slavery then, black men were constantly undermined, being unable to assert any authority over their partners at home and even in the fields women and men worked together with no preferential treatment for male slaves. This marginal position has been reinforced ever since.

5) Barrow (1986: 170) sees the dual characteristics of dependence and independence among Afro-Caribbean women as complementary strategies where they "have used deference and submission to charm and manipulate a man thereby gaining materially and enhancing their economic autonomy".

6) Barrow's (1986) study of Barbados highlights the conflictive nature of gender relations by drawing attention to male resentment of women who did not adopt the passive, dependent role. As a result, men referred to women as 'avaricious, demanding and materialistic' whereas men were perceived as 'overbearing and bossy'. This resentment was often manifested in physical violence or 'beatings' (p.57).

7) The idea of respect in Costa Rica is reflected in the use of '*señor*' and '*usted*' (polite form of

'you') to address husbands. However, at the same time, it is also common for men to address their wives using 'vos' (familiar form of 'you') (Beisanz *et al.*, 1987: 109). Children are also taught to use 'usted' instead of 'vos' or 'tú' to ensure that they are brought up to learn respect and never refer to an elder using the familiar form.

8) In a study of the north west province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica, Chant (1991b) points out how shopping was one of the few domestic tasks which men would carry out. However, often the reason for doing this job was actually to reduce women's control over the household budget rather than alleviate their domestic load.

9) Sanday (1974, cited in Anderson^P, 1986: 320) points out that 'sexual antagonism is sharp where female power exists in contradiction to the ideology'.

10) Interview with Joyce Sawyers, Director of the Escuela San Marcos (August 3, 1990). More specifically, she saw the root of black men's psychological problems lying in the fact that Limón lay at the intersection of the Latin American and Afro-Caribbean cultures. Therefore at home, men were accustomed to ceding to female authority and the influence of Afro-Caribbean culture, yet at work they had to adopt behaviour more akin to *machismo*. She also links this confusion with the damaging effect of slavery on black men's consciousness (see also MacCormack and Draper, 1987).

11) A good example of the difference between ethnic groups is the experience of a woman's group in Limón. This group, called ABC (*Artículos Básicos de Consumo*) was run by the Costa Rican Episcopal Church with the aim of working with low-income women developing projects to help them stretch resources and create new sources of livelihood for themselves and their families. The meetings were held once a week in a hotel converted into function rooms in the centre of Limón and also in Barrio Limoncito on the outskirts of the city. The session being run at the time of interview was on dress-making which initially enrolled 20 women of both white/*mestizo* and Afro-Caribbean origin and was held at the hotel. However, five weeks into the course, only Afro-Caribbeans were left because apparently the husbands of the white/*mestizos* found out that meetings were being held in a hotel and so forbade their wives to attend. Even though the hotel was no longer in use as such, white/*mestizo* men still associated it with a place of ill-repute and a possible place to meet other men. In order to overcome these problems the organiser of the project had to arrange alternative classes in Barrio Limoncito (in a church hall) so that the white/*mestizo* women could attend. In contrast, the Afro-Caribbean women on the course came across no such difficulties with their partners (Interview with ABC Woman's Group, Hotel Puerto, August 9, 1990).

12) What is interesting about the predilection of Afro-Caribbean men towards cooking is that Jamaican style cooking (usually rice and beans cooked with coconut) is seen as a delicacy of the province and is famous throughout Costa Rica. Many men boasted of their ability to cook Jamaican food because of a certain prestige value attached to it (and also a symbol of ethnic resistance). However, most men only cooked for important occasions such as parties etc. and it was women who cooked on a daily basis.

13) Joycelin Massiah (1983: 57) points out that Afro-Caribbean women "have been socialised essentially for parental, conjugal and domestic roles, but historically have been associated with considerable occupational role performance". The most important factor in their success in manipulating these roles has been their ability to combine income-earning activities with household responsibilities. In the case of Jamaica, residential patterns allowed women greater ease in manipulating their various responsibilities. Brodber (1981) discusses how rental 'yards' in Kingston were crucial to women's daily struggle to combine domestic and income-generating activities. Rented mainly by women, these yards were seen as the main source of material and emotional support for women in the form of reciprocal child-care arrangements and help in times of need.

14) This difference between Afro-Caribbean and white populations has been noted elsewhere. For example, Bryan *et al.* (1985) discuss how in Post-War Britain a gender ideology re-

establishing women's domestic role was promulgated by the government and society at large. However, during this period, Afro-Caribbean women were actively encouraged to work in the National Health Service. While this essentially reflects the racism endemic in Britain at the time, it also demonstrates how Afro-Caribbean women were able to overcome constraints of domestic labour by eschewing a gender ideology stressing their domestic role to the exclusion of income-generating activities.

15) In relation to this, one woman pointed out the difference between Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* women when it came to supporting their children. She stated that the former rarely went to the *Patronato Nacional de la Infancia* (National Children's Institute) to file for alimony in cases of male desertion. Instead black women, unlike 'Spanish' women, were always able to support their children through their own jobs without going to the government for help.

16) Joyce Sawyers estimated that approximately one-half of all Afro-Caribbean men who were born in Limón were working or had worked in the United States (interview, August 3, 1990).

CHAPTER SEVEN - GENDER AND ETHNIC DIVISIONS IN THE LABOUR MARKET: A SYNTHESIS

Introduction

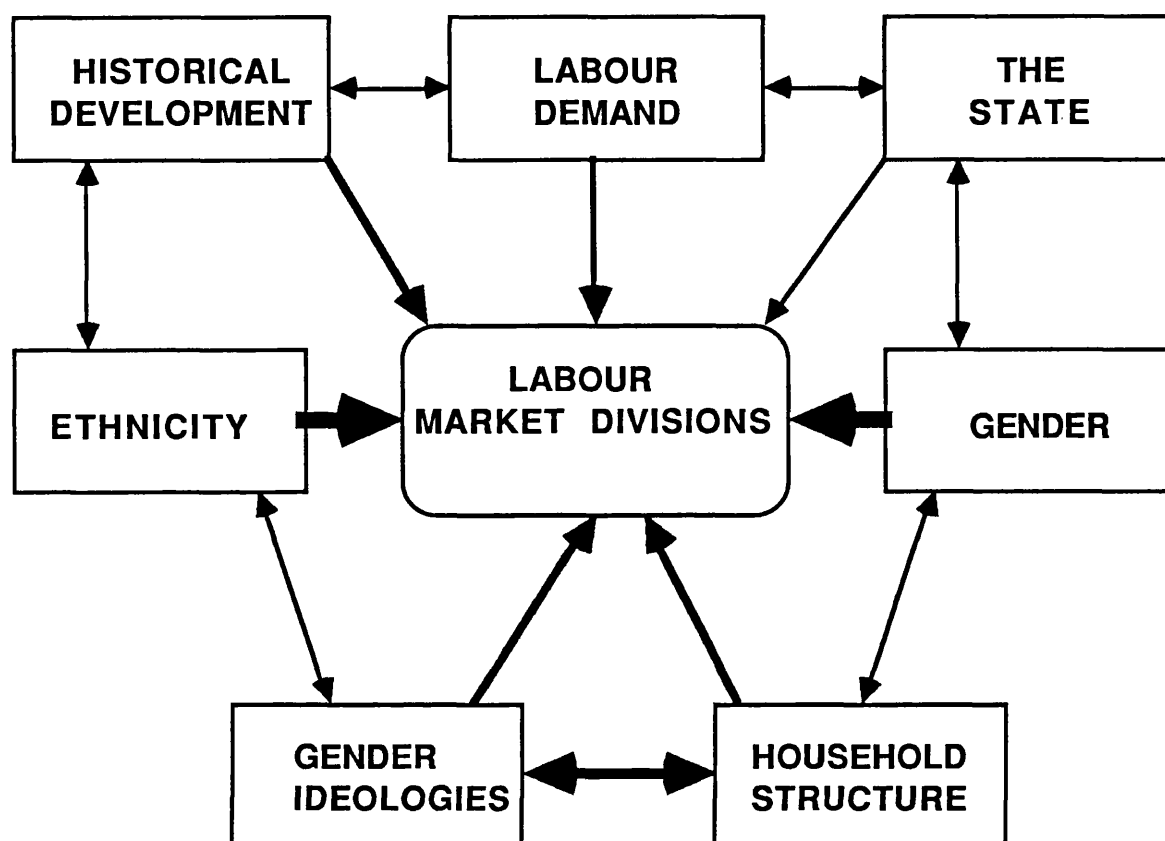
The preceding chapters have shown how the labour market in Limón is highly segmented and segregated on grounds of gender and ethnicity. The labour market is segmented into various branches and types of employment which are filled by different ethnic and gender groups, and within these segments in turn, there is also segregation of the labour force on grounds of ethnicity and gender.¹ Examination of these divisions have been explored from a number of standpoints and scales within the present research ranging first, from historical perspectives on changes in the city and province over time, including the evolution of the Costa Rican state; second, from the point of view of contemporary labour demand, employer recruitment practices and institutional factors at the city-wide level; third, from the level of the household in terms of structure, size and the characteristics of its constituent members; finally, from within the household itself with particular reference to intra-household dynamics through examination of divisions of labour and gender ideologies. Each perspective yields insight as to how the labour market is segregated and segmented, and suggests reasons why this may occur. While each level exerts different types of influence on employment patterns, all are interrelated (see Figure 7.1).

The present chapter tries to bring together the various levels of investigation and to assess the factors with most influence in explaining gender and ethnic employment differentiation. Bearing these in mind, it then goes on to assess conceptual implications of the findings, stressing the need for flexible approaches in investigating labour markets which are strongly differentiated by gender and ethnicity.

Patterns and Determinants of Labour Force Segmentation and Segregation

Before attempting to identify and explain the most critical factors accounting for gender and ethnic divisions in employment in Limón, it is important to synthesise the findings from the different levels of analysis and to summarise the overall picture of labour market differentiation. At a general level, and looking first at gender, overall rates of labour force involvement in Limón are higher for men than women with men tending to occupy the most prestigious positions and women being marginalised and/or excluded from the key primary segments of the labour market. In terms of ethnicity, patterns in

**Figure 7.1 Factors Influencing Labour Market Segregation
and Segmentation in Limón**



Notes:

The thickness of the lines represents the strength of the influence

In the outer circle, ethnicity and gender interact with all other factors

Limón do not accord with those usually found in ethnically-differentiated labour markets where the minority group is located in the lower echelons of the occupational hierarchy: on the contrary, Afro-Caribbeans in Limón tend to be employed in intermediate sectors. This has particular significance for Afro-Caribbean women, who, on account of their gender and their race, might be expected to be found in low-level positions at the bottom of the labour market.

Explanations for these overall patterns may be grouped, very crudely, into three categories, all of which interrelate. First, determinants of male employment patterns are most likely to be related to the structure of the urban economy and overall labour demand: in other words, male labour supply is likely to be high except for school-age youths and the elderly, and take-up of this labour will accordingly depend on the general health of the local economy and the relative presence of 'masculine' versus 'feminine' sectors (see also Chant, 1991a; Rodgers, 1989). Second, and related to this, female employment patterns are more likely to be affected by factors operating at the household level. This is due to women's disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities and because of the widely-identified fact that female labour supply is usually determined to a larger degree by household influences than men's (see also Chant, 1991a; de Oliveira, 1990). Finally, historical factors are particularly important in explaining ethnic variations in employment patterns. In general, the development of an ethnically-differentiated labour market reflects how specific ethnic groups have been included or excluded in the evolution of an economy at different historical junctures depending on the needs of capital and the availability of labour of different ethnic origins at particular points in time (see also Miles, 1982, 1989). The interrelatedness of these factors is obvious as an attempt is made in the following sections to isolate the critical determinants of gender and ethnic employment differentiation in Limón.

Male Employment Patterns: Afro-Caribbean and White/mestizo Variations

Reasons for Male Privilege in the Labour Market

In Chapter Four we saw how strong gender divisions in the labour market in Limón weigh heavily in favour of a male workforce. In general terms, reasons for male-oriented segmentation and segregation revolve around the historical evolution and development of contemporary labour market structures, institutional practices and employer decision-making policies. The development of Limón as the apex of an enclave economy based on the banana industry under the auspices of the United Fruit Company led to the creation of distinct branches of employment based on port, railway and related

activities (see Chapter Two). The nature of the economic base has changed little over time with the result that these branches and their privileged position within the local economy have remained broadly constant. Under United Fruit, demand for male labour in predominantly manual occupations (such as cargo handling) was established and has been reinforced in line with the reproduction of the main employment sectors.

This reproduction of male employment in key economic spheres has been compounded by institutional factors such as trade union activity and state legislation. The history of trade union activity within the traditional branches of the labour market has ensured not only that these sectors have remained almost exclusively male domains, but also privileged sectors. This has been guaranteed through the negotiation of various collective bargaining agreements (*Convenciones de Trabajo*) with management on working conditions, wage levels and so on. Corroborating gender-bias still further has been the implementation of state legislation concerning such issues as restrictions on female night work and obligating payment of maternity benefit by employers, which has effectively denied women access to a large number of jobs, thereby perpetuating 'masculinisation' of most branches of employment (see Chapter Four).

Accepting that the evolution of the labour market and institutional factors have laid the groundwork for the creation and maintenance of male-dominated employment segments, further critical reasons for occupational segregation include employer recruitment policies and gender-typing, especially in respect of assumptions about the 'natural' skills and capacities of men and women. For example, since the majority of occupations in key employment sectors in Limón are manual and semi-skilled, and require physical strength, employers tend to be less interested in educational qualifications than physical attributes. Believing men to be stronger than women, a major justification for recruiting males is that women are perceived to be too 'weak' for manual jobs. Although in other parts of the world women are often found in physically demanding work (see for example, Anker and Hein, 1986; Dex, 1989), in Limón, the notion that women are unable to do such work appears to be relatively fixed in the minds of both management and the workforce. This is reinforced further by the social construction of skills whereby men are seen to be inherently more apt at operating machinery (see Chapter Four, note 19). Ideas of men's greater facility to handle technology is most applicable in the case of the capital-intensive manufacturing sector in Limón. Mechanised factories in the city generally prefer male operatives, even if those in charge of recruitment are unable to explain the preference on grounds of education or job experience (see Chapter Four). These various explanations account for

the dominant labour market position of men in general terms, yet are inadequate without discussion of ethnicity.

Reasons for Ethnic Divisions among Men in the Labour Market

The most important factors in explaining ethnic segregation and segmentation among the male workforce in Limón include the historical development of the labour market, ethnic stereotyping and the ethnic composition of the city as a whole and of personnel managers.

The historical development of the city is particularly important in explaining the concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in traditional spheres of local employment. At the end of the nineteenth century it was Afro-Caribbean migrant labour which constructed the railway from San José to the Atlantic coast. With the subsequent development of the banana industry in the area under the auspices of United Fruit, the Afro-Caribbean male population continued to make up the bulk of the workforce in both port and railway employment (see Chapter Two). Therefore, not only was demand for labour exclusively male at this time, but the majority of workers were Afro-Caribbean in origin. As with the reproduction of male labour demand over time, historical tradition has also led to the maintenance of Afro-Caribbean concentration in port-related activities. Male-dominated trade unions were also established by Afro-Caribbeans in the days of United Fruit and this group have continued to control the unions, especially in the port. As a result, Afro-Caribbean interests (as opposed to those of white/*mestizos*) have been promoted within this sector, reinforcing their concentration still further. Moreover, for Afro-Caribbeans themselves, port employment with its high wage levels, has always represented the most attractive occupation in Limón. Indeed, the ability to accumulate capital in port work is often seen as critical for those wishing to migrate to Miami to work on cruise liners, with wharf-work often serving as a 'stepping stone' to international migration.

However, in spite of the relatively high status and remuneration of port employment, Afro-Caribbeans are actually limited in terms of securing jobs in other parts of the labour market, which is where ethnic stereotyping becomes important. Indeed, even though Afro-Caribbeans have been relatively privileged in economic terms through their prevalence in port work, this has led to what might be termed a 'racialisation' of the labour force whereby Afro-Caribbean men are deemed 'suitable' only for manual employment. The important counter-effect of this process has thus been their exclusion from sectors theoretically requiring more skills. In

manufacturing, for example, the tenuous relationship between technology and a male workforce has been extended to embrace the idea that white/*mestizo* male workers are likely to be more adept than their Afro-Caribbean counterparts (see also Fevre, 1984; Phizacklea, 1988, on the United Kingdom). ² Ethnic stereotyping has thus been detrimental for Afro-Caribbeans in terms of restricting their access to capital-intensive manufacturing employment and in limiting their overall ability to move freely within the labour market. ³ Moreover, it does not bode well for their future labour market position, since port employment is becoming increasingly mechanised (see Chapter Four).

Whereas Afro-Caribbean workers are restricted to the traditional areas of Limón's market, white/*mestizos* are employed in significant numbers in all enterprises (including port-related work). This reflects primarily the ethnic composition of Limón in general where a major rationale among employers is the need to redress and maintain the ethnic balance within firms themselves with white/*mestizos* as the majority. In addition, white/*mestizos* are not constrained by the deleterious effects of ethnic stereotyping in that they are not traditionally associated with any one sector, occupation or category of employment. Finally, the predominance of white/*mestizo* personnel managers has helped to promote the interests of this group over those of Afro-Caribbeans (see Chapter Four). Indeed, positions of authority in most firms are held by white/*mestizos* illustrating their greater internal mobility within firms. Having said this however, much depends on the public or private ownership of firms in that the former are not only more likely to employ an Afro-Caribbean labour force in general, but are also more inclined to promote them to managerial and supervisory posts. This basically stems from the fact that the state has tended to nationalise those firms formerly under control of United Fruit, where Afro-Caribbeans traditionally held higher positions and accordingly often have requisite experience. In private firms on the other hand, especially cargo companies, administrative positions are invariably filled by white/*mestizos*, with most black workers employed in manual occupations (see Chapter Four).

Overall, the predominance of men in the key sectors of Limón's labour market can be seen to be the result of the evolution of an urban economy based on transport and manufacturing sectors with high demand for male labour. Male demand for labour has been reinforced over time through institutional factors and gender-typing. The division of the labour market and male workforce by ethnicity may be explained again through recourse to the historical development of Limón as an enclave economy dependent

initially on Afro-Caribbean workers. The 'racialised' niche of Afro-Caribbeans in port and transport has been subject to constant reinforcement, mainly as the result of ethnic stereotyping. White/*mestizo* workers on the other hand, have a more advantageous position in the labour market as members of an ethnic majority who are less constrained by stereotyping and are free to move both between different sectors as well as vertically within them (see below).

Female Employment Patterns: Afro-Caribbean and White/*mestizo* **Variations**

Examination of female employment patterns in Limón is more complex due to variations in rates of labour force participation as well as the concentration of women in particular sectors of the labour market. Reiterating, in brief, the patterns discussed in Chapters Four and Five, women of both ethnic groups are employed in more peripheral branches of the labour market, mainly in service occupations. These include secretarial, clerical, nursing and teaching jobs where Afro-Caribbean women predominate, and commercial occupations such as shop, restaurant and hotel employment where white/*mestizo* women predominate. Outside these 'formal' sector jobs, women are also employed in home-based activities such as dress-making, food-selling and various kinds of small-scale commerce. Although women from both ethnic groups are employed in these latter activities, white/*mestizo* women outnumber Afro-Caribbeans. The second important aspect of female employment patterns relates to economic activity rates where not only are women less likely to be employed than men (37.7% of female heads and spouses as against 81.8% of male heads in full and part-time employment), but white/*mestizo* women are less likely to be employed than Afro-Caribbeans (30.3% of white/*mestizo* women as against 51.3% of Afro-Caribbeans in full and part-time employment) (see Chapter Five). In addition, white/*mestizo* women are more likely to be employed on a part-time basis than Afro-Caribbeans. The most important points to stress in relation to these patterns is that Afro-Caribbean women have high rates of labour force participation and are not found at the bottom level of the labour market, but instead are employed in relatively high status occupations, particularly vis-à-vis their white/*mestizo* counterparts.

The most important factors influencing these patterns are first, those which operate at the level of the labour market, and second, those which operate at the level of the household.

Gender and Ethnic Divisions from the Perspective of the Labour Market

In Chapter Four, discussion of factors relating to labour demand highlighted how women are essentially excluded from the primary sectors of the labour market. Instead, in the 'formal' sector, they are concentrated in 'supportive', low-level administrative jobs, in commerce or in the health and education sectors. Unlike the male workforce which is predominantly employed in manual occupations, women's formal occupations are usually limited to those requiring at least a secondary education; in this way, 'formal' sector jobs are open to men of all educational backgrounds, whereas women face the hurdle of high educational attainment. This is compounded still further by overall low levels of female labour demand in the 'formal' sector compared with high levels of demand for male labour.

The factors accounting for male domination of the labour market as discussed in the previous section, in turn go some way to explaining female exclusion, at least from the perspective of labour demand. Historically, women have had a marginal role in the urban economy as demand for labour has revolved around a male workforce and male employment segments, even if some 'opening up' has occurred over time, particularly in the public sector. The latter has been related to the nationalisation and bureaucratisation of many firms and institutions requiring an administrative staff of female workers in secretarial and clerical positions. The expansion of health and education sectors has also increased demand for female labour as teachers and nurses. Large private sector firms on the other hand, particularly in cargo handling and manufacturing have limited their female workforce to one or two women working as secretaries (see Chapter Four).

As a general rule, however, employment opportunities for women have remained limited, a fact which also ^{reflects} ~~owes to~~ ^{ion of} male-dominated trade unions and employer recruitment practices. For example, as stated above, women's entry into the 'formal' labour market usually depends on a minimum of a secondary education. This obviously applies to all administrative posts and to nursing and teaching where vocational training is required, but is also often extended to lower level jobs, such as cleaning, commerce, restaurant or hotel work. In these instances, 'credentialism' is used as a screening device to choose from the large number of female applicants for one job: competition for a narrow range of female occupations obviously affords employers this luxury, and thereby creates its own form of gender segregation (see Salaff, 1990 on Singapore). Second, in the same way that gender-typing leads to the 'masculinisation' of jobs requiring physical strength, women are consistently associated with occupations related

in some way to their domestic roles. Secretarial, commercial or nursing and teaching jobs are all seen as 'supportive', 'nurturing' or 'caring'. Although the allocation of jobs is strongly influenced by this implicit process of gender-typing, employers will also sometimes explicitly state a preference for a male workforce. This is on grounds not only that it is more 'natural' for men to work in jobs involving heavy labour and women to work in 'lighter' servile positions, but that it is also unprofitable to employ women because of legislative issues such as payment of maternity benefits (see Chapter Four). All these factors combine to produce an extremely constricted set of opportunities for the majority of the female population in Limón. There has never been a significant demand for female labour throughout the history of labour market evolution in Limón, and where opportunities are now available, for the most part they are for a highly qualified few in occupations reflecting women's socially-determined reproductive roles.

In terms of the influence of ethnicity on these patterns, a higher proportion of Afro-Caribbean women are employed in the 'formal' labour market, primarily in administrative posts in large firms and in the health and education sectors. White/*mestizos* on the other hand, are employed in smaller numbers in lower level commercial jobs as shop assistants and cooks in restaurants and hotels. Factors relating to labour demand have limited explanatory value in the case of ethnic differentiation of the female workforce, as the household and individual context is more important (see below). However, a number of points relating to labour demand may be deduced, particularly with regard to the historical experiences of Afro-Caribbean women in the local economy. These women effectively have a longer history of economic activity in Limón than white/*mestizos*. Although the former migrated to Costa Rica as wives and daughters of migrant workers, many found work as domestic servants in the houses of North American employees of United Fruit or as informal fruit and vegetable vendors. In the two decades after the collapse of United Fruit, many women migrated to the United States to work as domestic servants, becoming sole providers for their families through the transfer of remittances. Those who remained in Limón sought survival through education which in turn, was often funded by remittances from relatives abroad. Many trained as teachers and nurses which were the only really stable, well-remunerated jobs available in the city at the time, as indeed they are today (see Chapters Two and Six). Levels of educational attainment continue to remain higher among Afro-Caribbean women compared with white/*mestizos* (see also Chapter Five). This contributes not only to the high proportion of Afro-Caribbean women in 'formal' sector jobs, but also to the smaller proportion of white/*mestizos* employed in occupations such as shop assistants and cooks, with fewer educational prerequisites than administrative posts.

Undermining the relatively high status of Afro-Caribbean women's involvement in the labour market however, is ethnic and gender stereotyping. As with the historical association of their male counterparts with employment in the port sector, Afro-Caribbean women have also become stereotyped in nursing and teaching occupations. The gender-typing applicable to both ethnic groups also takes on a further ethnic significance in this case. While Afro-Caribbean women are employed in higher status jobs than white/*mestizos*, these occupations represent a form of public reproductive work. Indeed, historically, since their initial employment as domestic servants in the homes of United Fruit officials, Afro-Caribbean women's work in Limón has long been associated with their domestic and 'nurturing' roles. Thus, while the status of their employment has improved, the nature of the occupations has remained closely linked with their reproductive roles. The association of public reproductive work with black women in particular has been noted elsewhere stressing the fact that since slave Emancipation this group have had little option but to work. In spite of the fact that these women had previously worked in plantation agriculture, the only available opportunities in post-Emancipation society were in 'feminine' occupations based on skills derived from their domestic activities rather than extra-domestic agricultural experience. Thus, as in the case of Limón, black women in other contexts have been associated initially with jobs in domestic service, which over time, have been replaced by employment in health and education sectors (see for example, Glenn, 1991 on the United States; see also Chapter Four: note 29). Therefore, while Afro-Caribbean women in Limón have made significant strides in securing stable, well-paid jobs in a highly constricted labour market, they have been unable to forge roles which break-out of conventional gender and ethnic moulds. ⁴ However, this point should not be overemphasised as the most significant finding in the present study is that Afro-Caribbean women have achieved a relatively high status within the labour market in comparison with white/*mestizo* women.

Synthesis of these general issues has highlighted the lack of female employment opportunities in Limón: preferential demand for male labour has persisted since the early days of the enclave economy and women have thus had to contend with being marginalised into jobs which are viewed as secondary even when they require higher qualifications and vocational training than 'male' jobs. Gender and ethnic stereotyping play an important role in this process, particularly in the case of Afro-Caribbean women. However, these factors still do not adequately explain the significant differences between Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* women's labour force

involvement: only through examination of factors at the household level is it possible to fully comprehend their varying participation rates and occupational differences.

Gender and Ethnic Divisions from the Perspective of the Household

As noted in Chapter Five, the household acts as a mediator in influencing women's likelihood of taking-up paid employment, and often the type of work they engage in as well (see Arizpe, 1990b; Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991a). In Limón, the substantial ethnic variations between Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* household form and organisation clearly exert some influence on female employment patterns. The most critical structural variation was in terms of proportions of households headed by men compared with those headed by women: among Afro-Caribbeans, female-headed households represented 36.9% of the total, compared with only 19.4% among white/*mestizos*. However, a somewhat ambiguous relationship emerges in relation to differing economic activity rates and household headship among the two ethnic groups. Afro-Caribbean female heads are more likely to work than spouses with a male partner, although employment rates are high for all types of households. Among white/*mestizos* on the other hand, female activity rates are similar in both male and female-headed households, with overall rates being low. Type of employment among white/*mestizos*, however, does tend to vary between female heads and spouses, with heads more likely to be employed in 'formal' work in commerce, restaurants and domestic service, and spouses in home-based activities (there is little variation among Afro-Caribbeans). Overall then, only a general relationship is found between a high incidence of female headship among Afro-Caribbeans and high employment participation rates and a low incidence of female headship among white/*mestizos* and low rates of labour force involvement. While more specifically, this relationship does not entirely hold for white/*mestizos*,⁵ the most important issue to note is that Afro-Caribbean women have higher participation rates than white/*mestizos* regardless of household headship.

Explanations for this ethnic variation in female labour force participation were also sought through examination of other household characteristics such as size, fertility levels, number of resident children and per capita household incomes, and differences in individual factors such as educational attainment, age and migrant status of female heads and spouses (see Chapter Five). Distinct ethnic variations were found in terms of both sets of factors, yet findings showed that the ways in which these determined the rate and nature of labour force involvement among women were fairly inconclusive. The only important finding to emerge is that white/*mestizo* women are more likely to be economically active when household size is larger, there are greater numbers of

resident children and lower per capita household incomes. Also women who are migrants, are more youthful and have higher educational levels, are more likely to enter the labour force. Among Afro-Caribbeans on the other hand, these characteristics have limited effect, even if higher rates of female headship might conceivably put greater pressure on women to work.

Therefore, while there are considerable ethnic differences in the measurable characteristics of households and of female heads and spouses within these households, these have limited explanatory value in accounting for consistently higher rates of labour force participation among Afro-Caribbeans compared with white/*mestizos*. The most influential explanation emerged through the examination of ethnic variations in gender ideologies and domestic divisions of labour. As discussed in Chapter Six, white/*mestizo* women tend to be restricted in taking-up paid employment as the result of very strict delineations between male and female roles, whereas Afro-Caribbean women have greater freedom due to the more flexible nature of patriarchal traditions and the way in which these women have developed various coping mechanisms to deal with their responsibilities of reproductive labour.

More specifically, ethnic differences in gender ideologies are not only manifested within the household through actual and normative domestic divisions of labour, but also through male attitudes to women's work and how women themselves view paid employment. White/*mestizo* women are more likely to identify primarily with the domestic domain, which in cases of male-headed households is exacerbated by male resistance to female employment outside the home. In all types of white/*mestizo* household, domestic responsibilities are perceived by women as a major obstacle to their entering the labour force. As a result, the delegation of housework and child-care to other persons is not considered a priority unless economic necessity is so great that they have little choice. The high proportion of male-headed families in this group also accentuates and perpetuates a strict sexual division of labour. Among white/*mestizo* women therefore, labour force participation is not seen as desirable by the majority, nor is it possible for the large numbers of women who are unable to overcome constraints of housework and child-care. Among Afro-Caribbeans on the other hand, the tradition of economic activity and women-headed households, combined with male marginality has contributed to the formation of a gender ideology based on a more flexible division of labour between men and women. This is reflected in greater female decision-making power within the household as well as freedom from male restrictions to female employment (also undoubtedly corroborated by a high proportion of female-

headed households). In addition to their primary identification with the domestic sphere, Afro-Caribbean women also identify with the productive domain, made possible through the development of coping strategies to deal with domestic responsibilities, grandmothers taking over child-care, for example. Therefore, a context has been developed whereby women view economic activity not only as ^a way to ensure their survival, but also as a symbol of their self-worth and independence, regardless of the type of household to which they belong (see Chapter Six).

On balance, therefore, distinct variations in ideologically-influenced intra-household divisions of labour between ethnic groups is perhaps the single most important factor in determining the disproportionate release of Afro-Caribbean women into the labour market in Limón compared with white/*mestizos*. This affects not only participation rates but also reinforces segregation and segmentation of employment as discussed in the previous section.

Wider Conceptual Implications of Employment Patterns in Limón

Vertical and Horizontal Segmentation and Segregation

Having highlighted specific gender and ethnic employment divisions of individual groups, and the most important factors accounting for these patterns in Limón, it is important to assess how these fit in the context of the labour market as a whole. Looking at the labour market as an interactive unit comprising a series of broad heterogeneous layers, it is possible to differentiate between vertical and horizontal dimensions of segmentation and segregation within which are a number of niches composed of particular gender and/or ethnic groups. ⁶

Conventionally, the identification of a vertical labour market hierarchy which takes gender and ethnicity into consideration, assumes that men from the dominant ethnic group will normally be located at the top of the hierarchy, with members of the minority ethnic group at the bottom, and ethnic minority women in the most subordinate position of all. However, as discussed in the previous sections, this is not the case in Limón. If the labour market in Limón is viewed vertically, white/*mestizo* men may be seen to dominate the upper layers in managerial positions, Afro-Caribbean men and women are found at intermediate levels, and white/*mestizo* women at the bottom, employed in 'informal' home-based activities. From this perspective then, Afro-Caribbeans are concentrated in the middle layers of the hierarchy, rather than at the bottom. The fact that this pattern contradicts what may normally be expected, prompts

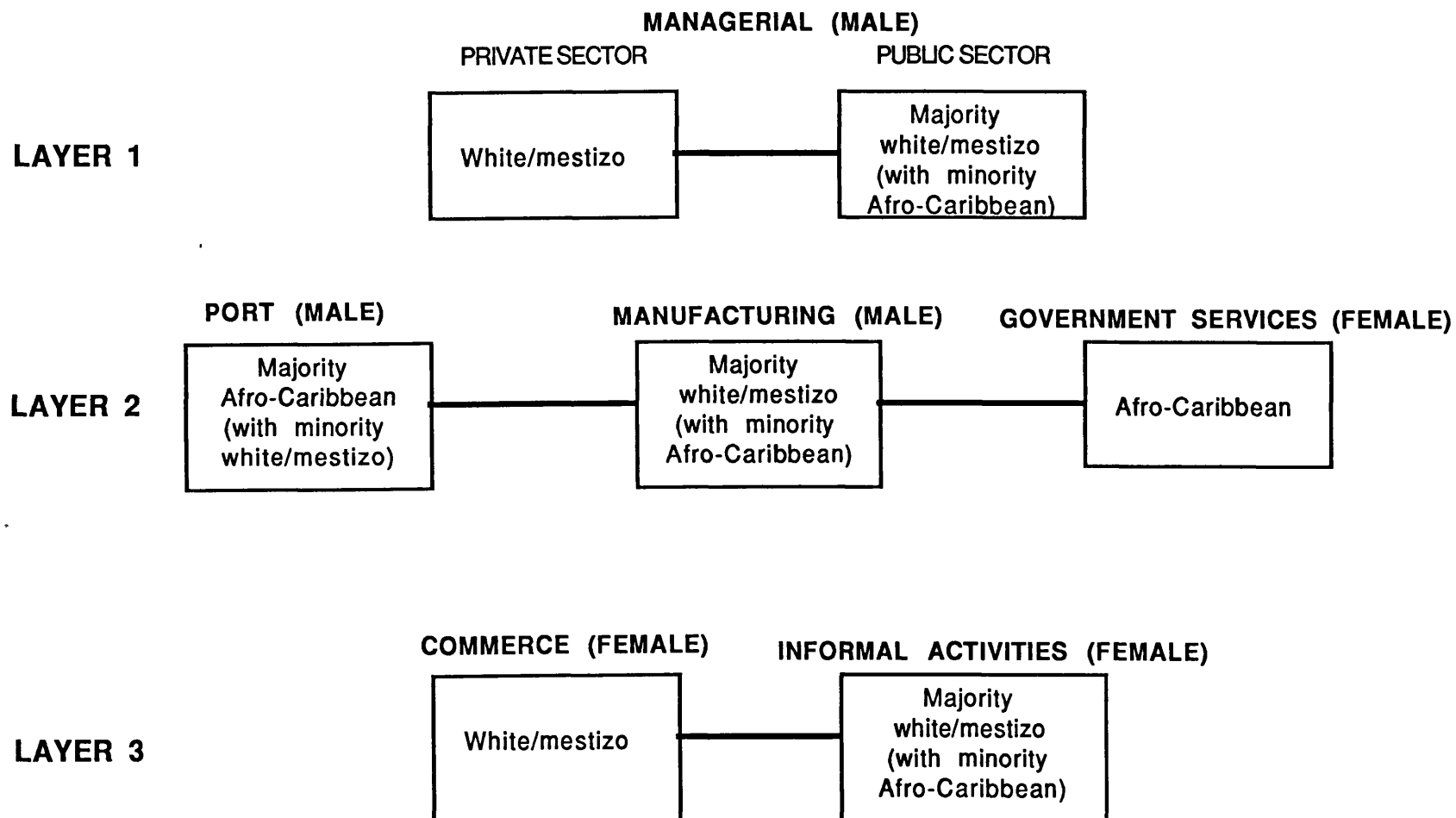
the search for an alternative conceptualisation of the labour market.

A more flexible approach to labour market differentiation involves the simultaneous identification of various patterns of stratification. Within the general context of an employment hierarchy in Limón, the labour market may be divided into three broad layers, within which there is distinct clustering of different ethnic and gender groups into specific niches. Niches are grouped into layers according to roughly comparable income levels (see Figure 7.2), although bearing in mind heterogeneity in occupational status based on category of employment (see Figure 7.3). The significance of these patterns becomes apparent when the underlying dynamics of the labour market are examined with regard to mobility. First however, the nature of stratification in Limón is outlined, highlighting the general characteristics of each layer concentrating on income levels.

The top layer comprises managerial occupations which may be divided into public and private sectors in order to take into account the ethnic composition of management. While this layer is made-up predominantly of white/*mestizo* men, a minority of Afro-Caribbean men are employed in high level positions in state-owned enterprises, representing a small ethnic niche within this upper level (a handful of Afro-Caribbean women are also employed in positions of authority in public sector firms, yet their limited numbers do not warrant their inclusion in this layer [see also note 4]). This layer is thus constituted by high-status, well-paid employment which is further characterised by 'masculinisation' and 'racialisation' insofar as the workforce is largely male and of white/*mestizo* origin (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3).

The intermediate layer is the largest and most heterogeneous of the broad bands in that it consists of three ethnic and gender niches constituted by port work, industrial employment and government services. The port sector employs a predominantly male, Afro-Caribbean workforce involved in manual activities, while manufacturing industry comprises a male, white/*mestizo* labour force employed in semi-skilled work. Government services on the other hand, defined here as health and education sectors, are comprised of white-collar professional or technical jobs, filled primarily by Afro-Caribbean women (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3). When viewed by wage levels, status of work is roughly comparable with port, manufacturing and government services located in equivalent positions (see Figure 7.2). When seen from the perspective of prestige based on categories of employment however, Afro-Caribbean women are found in the highest status jobs, followed by white/*mestizos* and Afro-Caribbean men. The

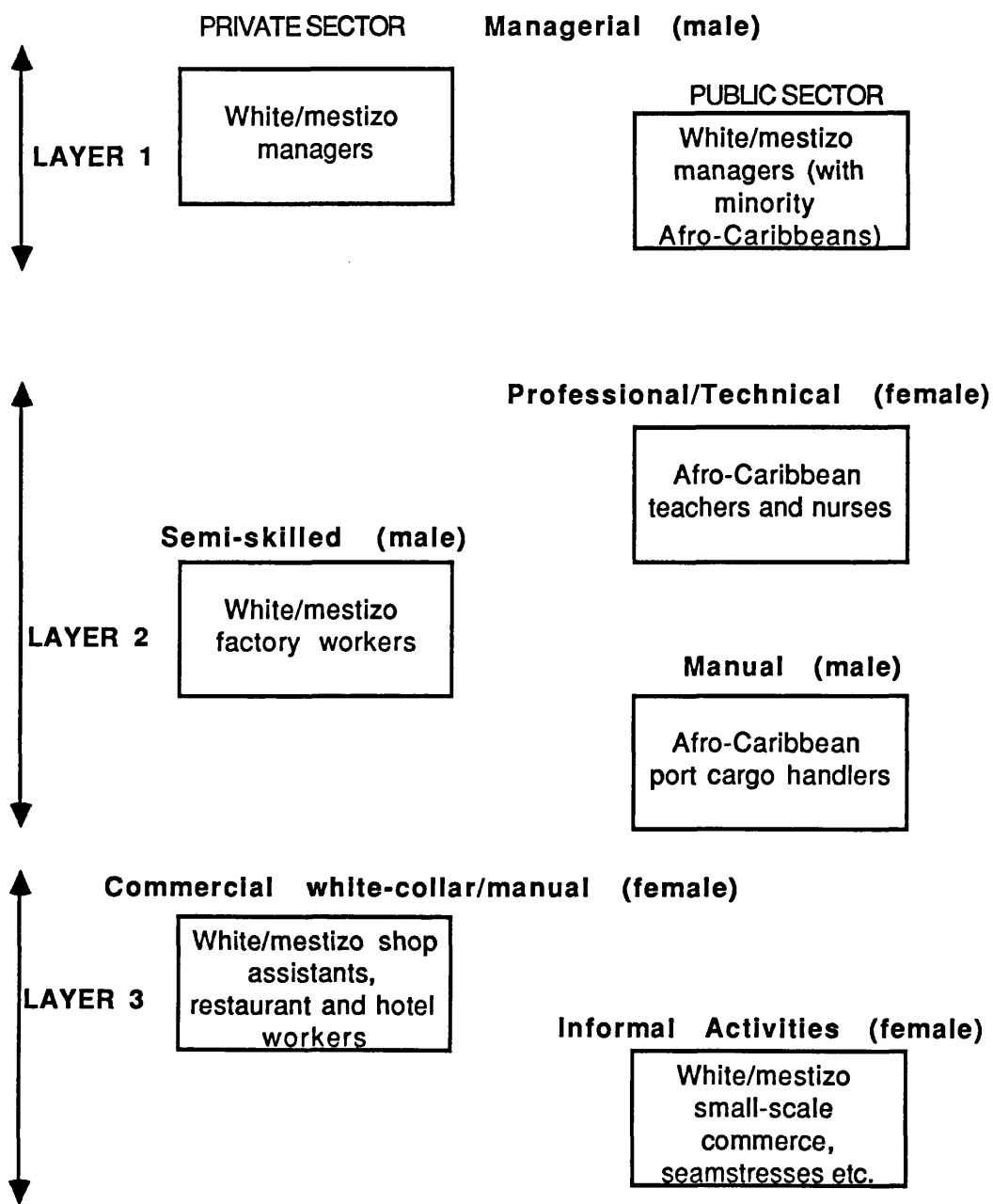
Figure 7.2 Layers and Segments in Limón's Labour Market According to Income Levels



Notes:

Each horizontal layer represents occupations with broadly comparable income levels

Figure 7.3 Layers and Segments in Limón's Labour Market According to 'Prestige' and Category of Employment



heterogeneity of this layer in terms of number of segments and variations in status of work, means that it is difficult to identify a specific gender and racial division of labour for the layer as a whole. Instead, in terms of gender, the port and industrial sectors are 'masculinised' and government services are 'feminised', and in terms of ethnicity, port and government services are 'racialised' reflecting Afro-Caribbean predominance while industry reflects white/*mestizo* predominance. Nonetheless, overall, this layer is characterised by relatively high status occupations which employs a large proportion of Afro-Caribbeans.

The third and final layer comprises two segments, the first of 'formal' commercial employment in shops, restaurants and hotels, and second 'informal' activities which are mainly home-based. Both segments are made-up of women workers where the former is filled by white/*mestizos* only and the latter by a majority white/*mestizo* workforce, yet with significant Afro-Caribbean women employed as well (see Figure 7.2 and 7.3). While 'informal' employment has very variable wage levels which are for the most part low, levels of pay in commercial work are not substantially higher. Both segments have low prestige in terms of categories of work, although 'formal' sector employment may be viewed as slightly superior. This layer is constituted overall, by low-status, 'feminised' and predominantly white/*mestizo* occupations.

Labour Market Dynamics and Mobility

The detailed examination of the different occupational groups within each layer from what may be termed the horizontal perspective, not only highlights the employment circumstances of Afro-Caribbeans more clearly than a strict vertical conceptualisation, but also raises the question as to how this configuration has come about and how the labour market functions as a whole. Central to this is the issue of mobility and the extent to which the workforce is constrained in its potential for moving through the labour market. More specifically, it prompts discussion of why Afro-Caribbeans are found in the intermediate layer, yet not those layers above or below it. Indeed, evidence from the previous section indicates that upward mobility of Afro-Caribbeans is significantly curtailed at the intermediate level and rather than being able to move freely throughout the labour market, they appear to be restricted to the middle layers. Moreover, it emerges from the following discussion that both intra-horizontal and intra-niche mobility of Afro-Caribbeans is also limited with the result that they are employed in what may be seen as 'bounded niches' or boxes from which it is difficult to move in any direction.

Mobility in the labour market in Limón is contingent upon both gender and ethnicity, with Afro-Caribbeans in particular facing significant barriers. At one level, it seems that Afro-Caribbeans have managed to achieve a certain degree of mobility due to their privileged position within the relatively high status intermediate layer. Yet at another level, they have remained virtually excluded from the upper layer of the labour market. From the historical perspective, it would be reasonable to expect upward mobility among Afro-Caribbeans because they are the longest established ethnic group in the city. Theoretically, this would have ensured them greater knowledge of how the labour market functions and the development of contacts and so on, compounded by their privileged occupational position in the middle tier of United Fruit, above white/*mestizos* (see Chapter Two). However, after the collapse of United Fruit, the prestigious position of Afro-Caribbeans was not translated into further mobility. Although maintenance of the enclave economy after the departure of the Company partly explains this, perhaps more critical was the shift in control from white, North American to white/*mestizo*, Costa Rican state interests. While the former operated purely for profit, the latter was also eager to pursue the needs of political capital manifested in the propagation of Costa Rican national ideals. Also embodied in these ideals was implicit racism which had (and continues to have today), deleterious effects on the Afro-Caribbean population (see Chapter Three). Therefore under these conditions, the ethnic composition of the labour force has changed as white/*mestizos* have enjoyed greater flexibility of movement and promotion through the labour market, particularly in more dynamic sectors such as newly established manufacturing employment, while Afro-Caribbeans have remained in intermediate levels where mobility is severely impeded. In other words, change and mobility of the white/*mestizo* labour force, and inertia and restriction on movement of Afro-Caribbeans, have served to bolster the dominant white/*mestizo* interests in the labour market. These issues are discussed in greater detail below, outlining patterns of mobility of each gender and ethnic group in the local labour market.

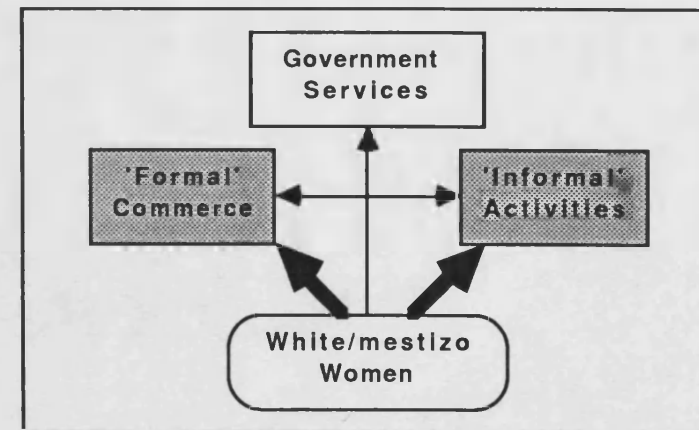
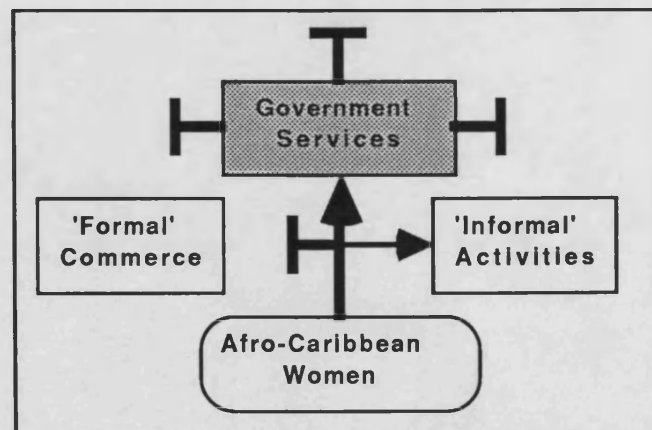
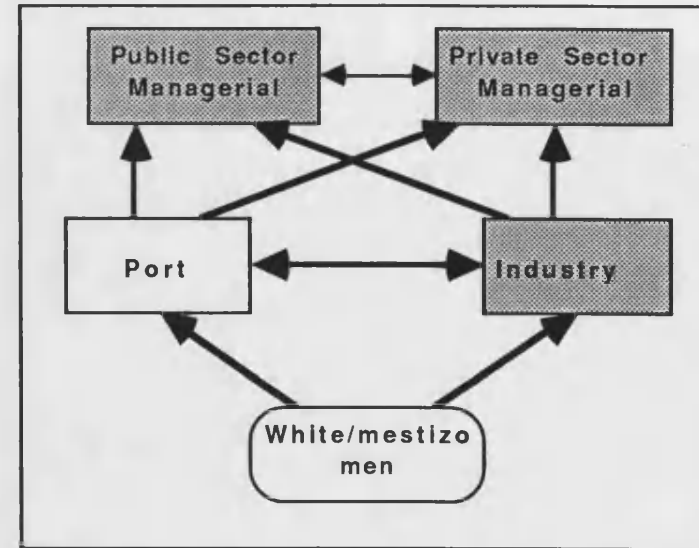
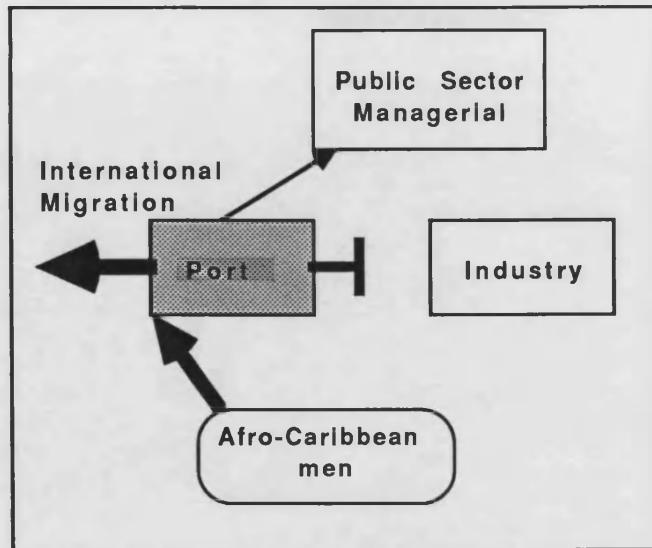
Mobility of Afro-Caribbean Men

Except for the few employed in high positions in JAPDEVA, the highest level which Afro-Caribbean men seem able to attain is in manual, port employment. While this represents lack of vertical mobility beyond a certain level, movement of Afro-Caribbean men is also constrained on an intra-niche basis: within cargo companies there are few career ladders facilitating promotion from manual occupations through to higher level administrative posts. For example, the only potential promotion for a manual cargo handler might be to a position as supervisor of a *cuadrillo* (section of workers) (see

Chapter Four). In addition, movement on an inter-niche basis within the intermediate layer is also limited. As mentioned in the previous section, movement sideways into white/*mestizo*-dominated manufacturing employment is hindered through the process of 'racialisation' and stereotyping. The result of these restrictions is an Afro-Caribbean male labour force essentially barricaded into manual work in one sector of the labour market being unable to move either vertically or horizontally; in other words, they are restricted to a 'bounded niche' (see Figure 7.4). The reasons for the existence of these barriers, may be found in the process of 'buying off' the Afro-Caribbean male labour force in an attempt to preserve both the status quo and the interests of the most powerful group within the labour market. Port employment is perceived in Limón to be relatively high status employment in terms of levels of remuneration, even if it is not the most prestigious when category of employment is taken into account. As such, on economic grounds, the containment of Afro-Caribbean men within this niche does not give cause for any major discontent. Accordingly, Afro-Caribbean men are assured well-paid port work, but in the process are constrained from moving either upwards or sideways into positions which will threaten white/*mestizo* hegemony, namely white-collar or more skilled occupations. Moreover, the apparent continuity of these patterns and processes over time, further reinforces the extent to which mobility has been restricted.

One important aspect, and indeed, symptom of this lack of mobility is the widespread contemporary international labour migration of Afro-Caribbean men. As mentioned in Chapter Two, international migration has historically been a strategy adopted by Afro-Caribbean men and women at various junctures in the development of Limón and more specifically for the former since the late 1970s. There are essentially two sets of reasons which help to explain contemporary (usually short-term) male migration to the United States.⁷ The first concerns the long-standing history of Afro-Caribbeans as an internationally mobile group which has increased their propensity to migrate in a number of ways. In particular, labour migration tends not to be perceived as an overly risky enterprise, but instead as a viable option for improving living standards. This is facilitated by the fact that most Afro-Caribbeans have a number of relatives living in the United States either in New York or working on cruise liners, giving them the advantage of established contacts.⁸ Moreover, the ability to speak English is invariably a prerequisite for overseas employment, especially on cruise liners, thereby placing bilingual Afro-Caribbeans in a particularly advantageous position vis-à-vis white/*mestizos*. Other advantages not necessarily linked with mobility history, include the fact that employment in highly-paid port work allows this

Figure 7.4 Paths of Mobility of Gender and Ethnic Groups in Limón



Notes: a) Arrows represent ease of mobility b) T-bars represent barriers to mobility c) Shaded areas represent concentration of groups

group to accumulate the capital necessary to pay fares and recruitment fees.

The second and most important set of reasons concerns the underlying rationale for Afro-Caribbean men's decisions. Indeed, given restrictions on labour market mobility among this group, international migration may be the only way for Afro-Caribbean men to achieve any social mobility. In other words, Afro-Caribbean men are basically forced to leave the local labour market altogether if they aspire to move out of port employment and into higher status occupations. This has been noted in a more general sense by the Municipalidad de Limón (1992: 130) who note, "*es realmente lamentable que la pobreza extrema y la falta de oportunidades haya forzada a quizás más de 30% de la población de Limón a emigrar*" (it is truly lamentable that extreme poverty and lack of opportunities has forced perhaps more than 30% of the population of Limón to emigrate). Social problems in Limón and the lack of effective solutions are also highlighted as creating a climate whereby Afro-Caribbeans are encouraged and/or are forced to migrate (ibid.).⁹ These may include the lack of infrastructural provision in the city in terms of adequate housing, health and education provision and perhaps most importantly a subtle form of discrimination by the majority white/*mestizo* population. What is also important to point out is that internal migration to other parts of Costa Rica is not favoured by this group. On the one hand, migration to San José for example, would not offer the same economic opportunities in terms of income-earning potential as migration to the United States. On the other hand, they are likely to face greater discrimination in the rest of Costa Rica where they are not the established group and where prejudice is likely to be more intense (see Chapters Two and Three). Effectively this represents yet another barrier to mobility for this group.

The implications of international migration for Afro-Caribbean men are important in terms of permitting them to break out of manual employment and to eschew white/*mestizo* authority in the workplace, as well as to achieve a more privileged social position and/or higher occupational status on their return. First, as a manual labour force under authority of white/*mestizos*, Afro-Caribbean men have little sense of empowerment or of freedom from control of others. International migration thus allows them to have greater control over their own lives and frees them from having to answer as subordinate to white/*mestizo* employers in the local labour market. Indeed, discussions with Afro-Caribbean informants in the semi-structured interviews, revealed that their ultimate goal in migrating to the States was to be able to set up their own business (usually a shop or in one case a furniture workshop) or to build their own houses on returning to Limón. Therefore, international migration releases Afro-

Caribbean men from manual work in a highly restrictive, white/*mestizo*-dominated local labour market, and in the process confers a degree of autonomy hitherto unattainable. Second, hard currency wages earned abroad (mainly in the United States) provides a major boost to personal incomes, even if the occupations through which this income is earned differs little from their previous employment in Limón. ¹⁰ However, the main point is that after their return, the economic power derived from working abroad allows them not only to set up their own business and assume an independent occupational status in self-employment, but also means that they find themselves in a higher social/class position than previously. Therefore, the channels which Afro-Caribbeans must follow to ensure social mobility and an increase in occupational status is through international migration which has essentially come about through the inertia of Afro-Caribbean-dominated segments and niches of employment in Limón. ¹¹

Mobility of White/*mestizo* Men

Notwithstanding that some white/*mestizo* males are found in low-status employment, in general, they are free from the constraints imposed on their Afro-Caribbean counterparts and are more likely to be located in the upper echelons of the labour market than any other group. Movement vertically and horizontally between segments is unrestricted as is mobility within firms (see figure 7.4). Indeed, white/*mestizo* males, especially in the manufacturing sector have greater opportunities for promotion within companies, unlike Afro-Caribbeans in port employment. For example, in cardboard box-making factories it is possible to move from being a manual worker loading paper, to work as a machine operative, to then be promoted to supervisor and finally to become head of department involving some administrative responsibilities and considerable authority (although the latter step also depends on a minimum of a primary education and usually secondary). Thus for white/*mestizos*, improvement in occupational status is possible within the labour market itself. While in many ways this reflects the different internal structure of firms between manufacturing and port sectors, it is important first, that white/*mestizos* are concentrated in the sector with greater potential internal mobility and second, that in either sector, white/*mestizos* are arguably more likely to be promoted to positions of authority as a result of ethnic stereotyping. Having established the advantageous position of white/*mestizo* men, it is also important to point out that those employed in the highest managerial and executive posts are not necessarily natives of Limón. Instead, a number of high-ranking managers who have been promoted in other branches of the firm elsewhere in the country, have been posted in Limón and in two of the firms in the employer survey, the managing directors were North American (see Chapter Four). This reflects the fact that

control over the local economy in Limón has never been completely in the hands of *limonenses* themselves, although it is undoubtedly more likely to be under white/*mestizo* than Afro-Caribbean control. Nevertheless, the white/*mestizo* male labour force is still capable of movement throughout the labour market in every direction without facing any significant barriers, thus making them the most mobile group of all ethnic and gender sub-groups. Overall, this freedom of movement may be seen as a way of reinforcing white/*mestizo* control over the urban economy and as such, of assuring their dominance and social mobility.

Mobility of Afro-Caribbean Women

The labour market experience of Afro-Caribbean women in Limón is similar to their male counterparts. This group has also achieved a significant degree of mobility in the local labour market through nursing and teaching professions. They too are located in the central horizontal layer in an ethnic 'bounded niche' from which it is difficult to ascend upwards or sideways (see Figure 7.4). However, while Afro-Caribbean men are restricted from moving freely within the labour market due to the 'racialisation' of the labour force in both port and industrial employment, Afro-Caribbean women have limited mobility due to the 'masculinisation' and 'racialisation' of the other segments within the central and upper layers. Moreover, within their specific niche, vertical movement is limited in that most positions of authority in the health and education sectors are held by white/*mestizo* men (see note 4). Having said this, Afro-Caribbean women's employment is relatively privileged in that they earn roughly equivalent wages as in 'male' sectors and certainly substantially more than in any other form of female employment in the city, and are employed as professional and technical workers at a higher level than all other 'feminised' and most 'masculinised' sectors. However, because of white/*mestizo* male predominance in the highest echelons of the labour market as a result of gender and ethnic stereotyping, Afro-Caribbean women pose little threat to white/*mestizo* hegemony. Indeed, the process of 'buying off' or of dampening potential dissent, as noted earlier in the case of Afro-Caribbean men, is perhaps even more applicable to the Afro-Caribbean female labour force because of their more privileged occupational status.

However, while this accounts for how the contemporary labour market functions, it does not explain how Afro-Caribbean women have come to be located in the middle layers in the first place. While this question was addressed in the previous section, it must be examined in a more general sense with regard to the nature of labour market dynamics. The main difference between the labour market experience of Afro-

Caribbean men and women is that the latter have already achieved a significant degree of mobility reflected in their employment in professional and technical occupations, albeit not in positions of authority. The pursuit of (and constraints on) mobility among black women have been similar in some ways to that of their male counterparts in that international migration has played an important historical role in ensuring the raising of occupational status and social/class position. As noted previously, migration of this group occurred mainly during the 1950s and 1960s as one of the two options open to Afro-Caribbean women in the wake of the collapse of United Fruit and the lack of any employment opportunities beyond domestic service. The other alternative was education which was itself facilitated through remittances from relatives abroad. Therefore in the past, social mobility was attainable for Afro-Caribbean women directly through leaving the local labour market altogether in the same way as men today, or indirectly through funding education in vocational courses which would guarantee stable employment in an otherwise highly constricted labour market.

However, while lack of opportunities and limited potential for mobility in the labour market in the 1950s and 1960s led Afro-Caribbean women to seek alternative channels of mobility, the important question is why Afro-Caribbean women have been concerned with being personally mobile when white/*mestizo* women have tended to rely on occupational mobility of partners (see below). Explanations can be found at the household level and more specifically in the high incidence of women-headed households among Afro-Caribbeans together with the structural instability of male residence, as well as in the nature of gender ideologies both within the family and in wider society. As noted previously, Afro-Caribbean women in Limón have a history of household headship which is strongly related to high rates of economic activity. Without reiterating this relationship (see earlier and also Chapters Five and Six), the main point is that Afro-Caribbean women have been unable to depend on male partners to ensure survival for themselves or their families. In the past this was largely due to inability of men to secure employment after the collapse of United Fruit, although this was (and has continued to be) compounded by the fact that a considerable number of women head their own households and hence enter the labour market through necessity. In addition, among those living with male partners, the threat of male irresponsibility and withdrawal of economic support has meant that economic independence has been desired by most women regardless of the type of household to which they belong. Over time this has created and reinforced Afro-Caribbean gender ideologies which are not only flexible, but also reflect female autonomy and control in that economic activity has become an integral part of women's status (see Chapter Six). In this way therefore, Afro-

Caribbean women have consistently sought their own independent means of support and of social mobility through international migration and through training as teachers and nurses. The latter ensures that these women are assured of stable, well-paid employment in a labour market where female labour demand is limited.

The main rationale for pursuing social mobility among Afro-Caribbean women has thus been the need for independent and autonomous economic income-generation in the light of male unreliability, which sharply contrasts to Afro-Caribbean men, whose primary rationale has been the desire to break-out of manual employment and subordination to white/*mestizo* control. This all points to the fact that Afro-Caribbean women have essentially manipulated their social/class position as a means of overcoming gender constraints and inequalities at the household level. In addition, armed with vocational qualifications in nursing and teaching professions, Afro-Caribbean women have been able to overcome the type of ethnic prejudice which continues to prevail in the case of Afro-Caribbean men's association with manual employment. Therefore, class mobility and the raising of occupational status may be viewed as a strategy devised by Afro-Caribbean women to protect themselves from gender conflict and inequality as well as ethnic prejudice. As we have seen earlier however, this strategy has only been partially successful in that nursing and teaching remain gender- and ethnically-stereotyped occupations, and that within these professions, Afro-Caribbean women rarely ascend to decision-making positions. Nonetheless, this group have made significant inroads in terms of social and occupational mobility within a context of overall limited demand for female labour and a labour market essentially functioning in the interests of the white/*mestizo* majority. This is highlighted further when viewed in comparison with their white/*mestizo* counterparts.

Mobility of White/*mestizo* Women

While initially it may be assumed that Afro-Caribbean women are an anomaly in the labour market in Limón because they are found in middle-level positions, it is also important to assess the concentration of white/*mestizo* women in the bottom layer as this too contradicts what might be normally expected. At first glance, white/*mestizo* women appear to be restricted to the lower layer of the labour market employed in predominantly low status occupations. However, this is not the result of ethnic prejudice and the process of containment in certain niches as in the case of Afro-Caribbeans, but instead is partly due to the 'masculinisation' of the key economic sectors and the fact that most female opportunities in Limón require secondary educational attainment. In effect, this means that white/*mestizo* women are able to move upwards

in the labour market into 'female' segments such as health and education for example, if they have the requisite educational qualifications (see figure 7.4).

However, white/*mestizo* women rarely take advantage of this potential for upward mobility due to a number of factors related to the household. Restrictions such as male resistance to female employment and domestic responsibilities within the household may prevent women from working altogether or lead to their prevalence in home-based income-generation for example (see Chapter Six). In addition, a critically important point relates to their relative indifference to personal occupational mobility. Unlike Afro-Caribbean women, white/*mestizos* identify primarily with the domestic sphere and usually only enter the labour market when economic necessity demands. Therefore, social legitimacy is not derived from economic activity but rather from their roles as wives and mothers. As such, occupational status and labour force participation have little meaning for a group whose status in the eyes of the wider white/*mestizo* community is validated by remaining in the home rather than taking-up low-status employment. Here, socio-economic mobility is overwhelmingly achieved through their male partners, and the higher occupational position and efforts of their partners. In light of this, it is hardly surprising that white/*mestizo* women are found in the bottom layer of the labour market.

Another important point before concluding, is the issue of social position and class mobility. In Chapter Five, it was stressed that both ethnic groups analysed in the research have roughly equivalent social positions due to their residence in low-income areas, similar income levels, educational attainment and so on, notwithstanding that there is a some heterogeneity within and between ethnic groups, with Afro-Caribbeans being placed in a marginally higher position than white/*mestizos*. The preceding discussion highlights another aspect of this heterogeneity based on varying degrees of mobility between different groups. One point is that the way in which mobility is achieved is probably, if not more important as the level of social mobility reached. For example, Afro-Caribbeans face much greater barriers to upward and sideways mobility than their white/*mestizo* counterparts. Having said this, once mobility is achieved (in the case of Afro-Caribbean men, after their return from working abroad and for women, once they have trained as teachers and nurses), their social position is probably slightly higher than white/*mestizos*. For white/*mestizos*, men achieve occupational and social mobility through vertical movement in the labour market, while women usually depend on their male partners for social mobility, deriving their status from being able to remain in the home. Therefore, improvement of social position is more incremental for

this group given that it usually rests entirely on men as breadwinners.

Another related point is that the construction of class identity may be ethnically differentiated, especially when it comes to women. Class position is achieved through the labour market for men from both ethnic groups and Afro-Caribbean women, whereas among white/*mestizo* women, social/class validation is attained through male partners and the fulfilment of domestic roles as wives and mothers. An interesting point with regard to Afro-Caribbeans, is that women are often more successful in their drives for mobility than men. This may create a situation at the household level whereby conjugal families consist of men with low educational attainment employed as manual workers, living with highly educated women with professional status, although income levels are likely to be broadly similar. While in some ways this questions the convention that class position is homogenous^e within households (see also Collins, 1991), the flexibility of defining social status must be stressed when viewing male-headed Afro-Caribbean households. In other words, these families cannot be seen as mixed class households in a strict sense because earnings are usually equal, yet neither is class position entirely homogenous due to differences in occupational status. Among white/*mestizo* households on the other hand, class identity is relatively uniform because of the way in which women derive not only their female status but also their class status from the domestic sphere and from male partners.

These ethnically differentiated class identities in turn affect inter-generational social mobility. Differences emerge as the result of the variations in labour market experiences of each group, differing attitudes to improving the lives of their children and the nature of gender ideologies. In general, it can be suggested that upward social mobility is more likely among Afro-Caribbean children than white/*mestizos* for a number of reasons. First, is that the rationale and motives behind mobility and improving their standard of living among Afro-Caribbeans has invariably been to ensure a 'good education' for their children, which moreover, was a major motive for migrating to Costa Rica in the first place (see Chapter Five, note 10). Implicit in this is the desire for their children to achieve a better social position. Among Afro-Caribbean female parents in particular, this has been a primary motive underlying their economic independence and pursuit of careers in the health and education sectors (see Chapter Six). Among Afro-Caribbean men who migrate to the United States, the ability to provide for their children as well as achieve personal social mobility is a major concern. Therefore, for Afro-Caribbean children, the groundwork for social mobility has been laid in that they invariably have sufficient access to resources to allow them to

pursue higher education or migration abroad, as well as strong precedents from their parents which serve as examples of how improvement of social position can be achieved. For white/*mestizos* on the other hand, while ensuring a better life for their children is certainly important, there are fewer role models (especially for girls) which might encourage social mobility. Indeed, girls are usually urged to seek upward mobility through marriage rather than entering the labour market, whereas boys are more likely to follow conventional channels of vertical promotion through the labour market in the same way as their fathers. These patterns illustrate distinct ethnic differences and suggest that existing paths of mobility within each group will be reinforced in the future, a fact corroborated by the relatively inert nature of the labour market itself and the entrenchment of ethnically differentiated gender ideologies. Moreover, while Afro-Caribbeans may be better placed in some ways to achieve social mobility, the structural constraints on this group as outlined above, are likely to suppress potential mobility on an inter-generational basis.

Finally, class mobility of Afro-Caribbeans in Limón is also linked with cultural assimilation. In Chapter Two, it was shown how this group have become gradually acculturated since their initial arrival in Costa Rica and particularly since the transfer of control to the Costa Rican state after 1950 and the introduction of the state education system (see also Olien, 1977). In contemporary Limón, the Afro-Caribbean lifestyle appears to have been subsumed under the dominant Hispanic culture and has taken on folkloric significance. While some Afro-Caribbean traditions are still preserved, the most long-standing are those related to the pursuit of mobility in some way. For example, many Afro-Caribbeans send their children both to state schools and to private schools where tuition is in English mainly because bilingualism places this group in an advantageous position to improve their class standing (see above). Indeed, it has been noted elsewhere that Afro-Caribbeans in Limón eschew their cultural heritage if it acts as a barrier to upward mobility. Trevor Purcell (1985: 9) points out that the tendency among upwardly mobile Afro-Caribbeans is "to assume that there is graded acceptance for Blacks according to their closeness to Hispanic Costa Rican ideals". Having said this however, one area where cultural patterns have been preserved is at the household level, where household organisation, headship and the divisions of labour within families, strongly resembles those found in the Caribbean. While the perpetuation of these is also associated with material circumstances in general, more specifically, they create an environment which is conducive to personal social mobility among women. For example, as we saw earlier, Afro-Caribbean women have manipulated their class position largely due to ethnically-specific gender inequalities

with the result that they have significantly improved their social status.

Conclusion

The above discussion of labour market dynamics in Limón highlights not only the need to adopt a flexible approach when examining labour markets which are differentiated by both gender and ethnicity, but also the need to assess the role of mobility of the labour force and the existence of barriers to movement both over time and across/through space. In Limón, it was found that white/*mestizos* have general freedom of movement throughout the labour market, especially the male labour force, while Afro-Caribbeans are restricted not only to the middle layer, but also to specific 'bounded niches'. In other contexts, the process whereby women and ethnic groups achieve a significant degree of mobility yet are still excluded from upper levels of the labour market, has been referred to as "hitting the glass ceiling" because there is no obvious reason why upward movement has been impeded (in terms of human capital for example) (Amott and Matthaei, 1991: 343 on the United States). However in Limón, these barriers are not necessarily 'ceilings' beneath which all Afro-Caribbeans are located, but rather 'glass boxes'. This proposed concept of 'glass boxes' reflects the idea of 'bounded niches' or segments where mobility in any direction is hampered for Afro-Caribbeans with little reason other than stereotyping and the need to maintain white/*mestizo* hegemony. The location of these 'glass boxes' in relatively high levels of the labour market indicates that it is not the existence of hierarchies per se which are necessarily important, but rather the identification of inequalities in terms of horizontal and vertical mobility potential. This is corroborated by the fact that Afro-Caribbeans have been concentrated in these niches over time. ¹²

In conclusion, one of the most critical issues to emerge from this chapter, is that gender and ethnic differentiation is embedded in the labour market. Gender and ethnicity are not extraneous factors, but are firmly entrenched in the way the labour market is structured and the manner in which the labour force is inserted into various employment sectors (see Scott, 1990; 1991 on gender). Furthermore, gender and ethnic relations are embodied in wider prevailing attitudes and ideologies and within the household, which in turn influence the functioning of the labour market and reaffirm the embeddedness of gender and ethnicity throughout society. This point is developed further in the next and final chapter which looks more generally at concepts of gender and ethnicity in the labour market and offers suggestions for methodological and conceptual frameworks that, with due recognition of historical, geographical and cultural differences, may be used to guide research on employment differentiation in a

range of contexts beyond Limón itself.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1) As noted in Chapter One, there is often confusion surrounding use of the terms 'segregation' and 'segmentation'. Segmentation essentially refers to the differentiation of the labour market into distinct branches and types of employment, and segregation to the concentration of the labour force into these particular branches or sectors (Walby, 1988b: 17-18). However, both forms of differentiation usually overlap, often causing ambiguity over terms, especially when examining gender and ethnicity. The example of port work in Limón illustrates this point. Within the labour market as a whole, port employment represents a particular segment which is filled by a segregated labour force of predominantly Afro-Caribbean men. However, within this segment are various types of employment such as cargo handling, managerial and clerical positions; therefore there is further segmentation of employment within the larger sector. In addition, each of these smaller segments is filled by a different workforce, segregated on a gender and ethnic basis. For example, manual workers in cargo handling are usually Afro-Caribbean men, managerial positions are usually filled by white/*mestizo* men, and Afro-Caribbean women are usually employed as secretaries or clerical workers. Thus overall, it is possible to say that there is segmentation and segregation both within and between labour market sectors. For the reason that both usually operate simultaneously, the terms tend to be used interdependently.

2) The term 'racialisation' may be used in a general sense to refer to the process whereby human beings are identified as members of a particular 'race' (Miles, 1989: 76). However, Miles (1989: 126-127) also points out how racialisation may structure the nature of employer recruitment decisions and thus determine the position of workers of different ethnic groups in the labour market. With reference to Asian and Afro-Caribbean ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom, he points out that the process of racialisation is usually based on exclusionary practices which have some objective basis, but more frequently rely on the use of racial stereotypes. In the first instance, he notes how the majority of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans may have considered themselves skilled in their countries of origin, yet in the context of an industrial capitalist economy where their skills have little relevance, they are likely to be excluded from skilled or non-manual employment. This is reinforced further by negatively evaluated character traits associated with these groups, where for example, Asians are seen as 'slow to learn' and Afro-Caribbeans as 'lazy' and hence are excluded from the most dynamic sectors of the economy (ibid: 126; see also Jenkins, 1986). Ralph Fèvre (1984) has noted similar findings in the textile industry in England where jobs involving the use of new technologies are filled mainly by white workers rather than Asian and Afro-Caribbeans who are not deemed to have sufficient mental capacity to deal with machinery. Phizacklea (1988: 49) takes this further noting how not only are ethnic minority groups excluded, but also women. She states that "the introduction of new technology reproduces and extends existing racial division of labour and the traditional sexual division as well". The labour market in Limón bears striking resemblance to patterns found in Britain where the process of racialisation has resulted in a racial division of labour of both labour market segments and of the workforce. However, one main difference is that employers in the Limón survey refrained from explicitly referring to Afro-Caribbean workers in any negative way even when the underlying sentiment was that this group was 'incapable' of working in any employment outside port work, for example (see Chapter Four). Perhaps the powerful rhetoric constantly propagated in Costa Rica about 'racial democracy' has contributed to this reluctance on behalf of employers to admit openly to prejudice (see Chapter Three).

3) The issue of ethnic stereotyping has rarely been addressed with reference to Afro-Caribbeans in Limón (or indeed in Latin America in general). However, one interesting exception is Lorein Powell's research on racist stereotyping in literature dealing with the province of Limón (see also Chapter One). Powell (1987; 1988) cites various examples from two novels on the area *Costa Atlántica* by Roberto Rivera Mena (1980) and *Puerto Limón* by Joaquín Gutiérrez Mangel (1973) which reflect negative ethnic stereotyping of the Afro-Caribbean population. With regard to the present issue of associating Afro-Caribbean men with manual employment in the city, Powell (1988: 107) notes how Gutiérrez constantly identifies Afro-Caribbeans as "*una especie de bestia, sub-especie humana, físicamente equipada para*

hacer frente a las obras más rudas" (a species of animal, a human sub-species, physically equipped to carry out the roughest jobs) and whose historical circumstances have created in them a servile disposition, "*históricamente equipado y determinado para servir*" (historically equipped and destined to serve). Rivera also projects similar negative views of Afro-Caribbeans describing them as "*amodorrado*" (sleepy), "*lento*" (slow) and "*perezoso*" (lazy) (Powell, 1987: 6). Powell argues that while these views are expressed under the guise of fictitious novels, they essentially reflect the implicit racist attitudes prevalent throughout Costa Rica and more specifically in Limón.

4) There are a number of exceptions to this pattern where a handful of Afro-Caribbean women are employed in positions of authority in public sector firms such as JAPDEVA and RECOPE (see Chapter Four). However, the bulk of Afro-Caribbean women are found in occupations reflecting traditional gender and ethnic roles and at a secondary level. Significantly, in nursing and teaching sectors for example, it is invariably white/*mestizo* men who hold most of the managerial posts as school directors or doctors or hospital managers.

5) Perhaps one of the main reasons why there is little difference in white/*mestizo* women's economic activity between male and female-headed households is the result of small sample sizes from which it is difficult to infer accurate relationships. Although chi-square analysis found a statistical relationship between women's participation and headship, only 36 out of 153 white/*mestizo* households were women-headed (only 7 were single-parent units), which when combined with low participation rates (47 out of 153 women), reduces the sample size considerably. Therefore, rather than concentrating on the nature of specific relationships within the white/*mestizo* group, the main point to emphasise is that white/*mestizo* women are less likely to work than their Afro-Caribbean counterparts and less likely to reside in female-headed families.

6) Vertical and horizontal employment divisions include segmentation and segregation of labour market segments and of the workforce. In terms of segmentation, horizontal division refers to the separation of different types of employment or production processes into one layer where all labour has some common characteristic, and vertical segmentation to the hierarchical division of types of employment in one production process using labour from different layers or segments (Rodgers, 1989: 8). Horizontal segregation thus refers to occupations grouped together at a similar level yet involving different types of employment, whereas vertical segregation involves the location of some groups at higher and lower levels of the occupational hierarchy (Walby, 1988a: 2-3) (see also Chapter One). These individual definitions invariably merge when examining the labour market as a whole. In the same way that patterns of segmentation and segregation interrelate, vertical and horizontal divisions also tend to co-exist. For example, returning to the case of port employment in Limón, this sector may be located within one broad horizontal layer along with other sectors such as industrial employment and government services which all have similar status in terms of wage levels. However, within port employment, there is also vertical segregation and segmentation where manual cargo handlers are found at the bottom of an internal hierarchy with white-collar administrative and managerial staff located at the top. As Gerry Rodgers (1989: 8-9) points out,

"the distinction may break down at the economy-wide level, in that apparently horizontally segmented markets may in fact form part of an aggregative interdependent system; but for examining the detail of labour market functioning it remains useful".

In the case of Limón, patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation and segmentation refer to the overall configuration of the labour market, while still accepting that there may be internal divisions within layers or niches.

7) The bulk of labour migration is temporary, where men leave for 6-8 months at a time, and return for around 3 months. Ultimately, the majority return when they have accumulated enough capital to fulfill a specific goal such as building their own house or starting a business. However, their likelihood of returning depends on their marital status in that men with families to support are more likely to come back than young, single men with fewer responsibilities.

8) In relation to migration to the United States, there is a common adage among Afro-Caribbeans in Limón, that "*no hay un limonense auténtico que no tenga un familiar allá*" (there is no authentic *limonense* who does not have a relative there) (Municipalidad de Limón, 1992: 130).

9) The whole passage reads "*esta emigración se da porque en Limón los problemas sociales seguían sin solucionarse y no se veía la forma de darles solución. Fue una emigración de jóvenes y padres de familia que se fueron buscando la superación personal y la mantención de las familias que aquí dejaron*" (this emigration has occurred because the social problems in Limón continue without being resolved and with no prospect of resolution. It was migration of young men and fathers who were looking for personal betterment and the maintenance of the families they left behind here) (Municipalidad de Limón, 1992: 131).

10) In terms of occupational status, the majority of migrant workers are employed in low-status, menial jobs at the bottom end of the U.S labour market, at a lower level than in Limón. However, wages are considerably higher than in Costa Rica, thereby allowing Afro-Caribbeans to raise their status on return to Limón.

11) In relation to Limón, Trevor Purcell (1985: 11) noted that international migration of Afro-Caribbeans may be seen as 'strategies of adjustment' and points out that "in Limón, people chose whatever means their environment and their subjective being afforded, to achieve advancement". Purcell stresses that these strategies by blacks are choices made within structural constraints rather than necessities. While this is valid to an extent, Purcell's focus on choice is perhaps overemphasised in that he does not consider the extent of restrictions within the labour market.

12) With reference to the United States, Amott and Matthaei (1991: 341) point out a similar process whereby "racial-ethnic and gender hierarchies have been reproduced and maintained at the same time as they have been broken down".

CHAPTER EIGHT - CONCLUSION

Accepting that this research has demonstrated that the labour market in Limón is highly segmented and segregated along lines of gender and ethnicity, the present and final chapter focuses on the most critical findings and places them in the context of the original objectives and rationales, and current debates. Given the paucity of in-depth empirical studies on gender and ethnic employment differentiation not only in Latin America, but in most areas of the world, the chapter goes on to outline possible approaches for future research. In addition, pointers to other areas of enquiry not examined in the present study are indicated.

Critical Findings of the Research

The primary objective of the research was to identify employment differentiation on grounds of gender and ethnicity based on the proposition that ethnic minority women would be found at the lower end of the labour market on account of their double oppression. On establishing the high degree of concentration of gender and ethnic groups in Limón, one major and unanticipated finding was that Afro-Caribbean women were located in intermediate, fairly high status levels of employment rather than in the lowest echelons of the labour market. While this in itself is interesting insofar as it contradicts the initial proposition, further investigation revealed the danger of accepting this pattern at face value; in other words, while not immediately apparent, this concentration of Afro-Caribbean women in high status jobs, belies a certain degree of occupational entrenchment which in turn results from both gender and ethnic discrimination and disadvantage. Afro-Caribbean women's involvement in nursing and teaching professions, tends to reinforce ethnic and gender stereotyping, and the fact that these women are unable to break out of this concentration either vertically or horizontally indicates barriers to occupational (and social) mobility.

This leads to the second main conclusion of the research which is that when examining gender and ethnic differentiation in employment, it is not where groups are concentrated which is important, but whether they are able to move out of gender- and ethnically-assigned niches. This idea was ^msummed-up in terms of the concept of 'bounded niches' or 'glass boxes' within which Afro-Caribbeans in particular, are confined. The utility of this concept is that it overcomes dependence on the use of hierarchies to describe inequality and stresses how disadvantage may prevail at any level of the labour market as a result of limited mobility potential. This links with the

third and related finding being the importance of determining how mobility is achieved in addition to assessing the degree to which it is possible. It is essential to differentiate between seeking mobility through the labour market itself or through other channels, and the form which alternative paths take for particular gender and ethnic groups. As the research showed, for many Afro-Caribbeans, international migration has often been the only option for those aspiring to higher social and economic status.

Underlying the above factors is the importance of assessing how different groups come to be concentrated in certain employment segments in the first place. This is where a holistic and flexible approach in explaining labour market divisions comes into play, involving examination of various levels of analysis ranging from historical perspectives, to labour market conditions, employer recruitment practices and institutional factors, and finally to influences emanating from the household level. Aside from the need to examine all these dimensions to fully comprehend how people enter the labour market and in which capacity, two critically important factors emerge. The first is the ways in which the evolution and persistence of gender and ethnic stereotyping over time are fundamental in the channelling of different groups into particular areas of the labour market. These processes not only create and maintain strong employment divisions in the first place, but once they have laid the groundwork for these patterns, have a powerful influence on subsequent forms of discrimination and recruitment. In the context of Limón, white/*mestizo* males for example, have had the least to lose from such labour market processes, and this position of privilege has been reproduced on a fairly consistent basis since the 1950s.

When it comes to women, labour market factors have to be considered in conjunction with those operating in the arena of the household, particularly ideological norms of domestic divisions of labour and family organisation. In other words, while particular aspects of the household such as composition, headship, stage in the life cycle and so on, obviously affect female economic activity, the overall economic, cultural and ideological context of family organisation is probably more important in shaping women's perceptions regarding whether and why they should enter the labour force. Such ideologies vary between ethnic groups, and help to explain for example, why labour force participation rates are considerably higher for Afro-Caribbeans compared with white/*mestizos* regardless of the type of household in which they live. In short, ethnically differentiated domestic ideologies operate in a broad rather than specific sense in influencing perceptions of and the rationales for labour market involvement of women of different ethnic groups.

The other general objective of the research was to analyse the conceptual nature of the interrelationship between gender and ethnicity. A hypothesis was constructed whereby gender inequality and discrimination was conceived of in terms of patriarchy, and ethnic inequality and discrimination in terms of racism. It was tentatively proposed that patriarchy would probably emerge as more influential than racism in influencing employment patterns. This was based on the premise that the former would be more likely to operate both in the workplace and within the household, whereas racism would tend to occur only at the level of the labour market and rarely between individual members of families. Although it was recognised at the outset that the hypothesis had fundamental flaws, some interesting results emerge, some of which seem to point to a certain degree of support for these ideas. For example, within the workplace, employers in Limón were more likely to discriminate openly on grounds of gender and patriarchy than on ethnicity and racism, justifying the former with recourse to assumptions about the 'naturalness' of gender attributes. In addition, all women were viewed in the same light by employers regardless of their ethnicity; both Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* women represented an economic liability as a result of maternity benefit payments for example, and both were deemed to be primarily homemakers in the eyes of mainly white/*mestizo* male employers. Turning to the household level, patriarchal forces affect the nature of gender relations within households, albeit with ethnic variations, whereas racism between individual family members is virtually absent, notwithstanding that certain ethnic stereotypes conditioned a minority of people's decision of an inter-racial union.

On the other hand however, the hypothesis that gender is more important than ethnicity is far too categorical to account for the complex interaction between the two factors. In reality, both concepts are highly variable, both in themselves and on account of their intersection with one another, such that gender ideologies vary ethnically, and racism and ethnic relations also vary according to gender, and not in any systematic way. There is no simple index by which to measure patriarchal forces and racial discrimination; each are interdependent processes which differ according to the specificities of particular situations. Moreover, the kinds of assumptions which have emerged from this rigid sort of analysis, often proves to be untenable in practice. For example, while it is often argued that Afro-Caribbeans perceive the family to be a bulwark of resistance against racism in wider society with the corollary that gender relations are more equitable (see for example, Carby, 1982; Hooks, 1984), in reality, gender conflict appears to be widespread within male-headed Afro-Caribbean

households, at least for the case of Limón. At another level, it is not necessarily the case that white/*mestizo* male employers will discriminate against Afro-Caribbean women more than white/*mestizo* women, or that Afro-Caribbean employers will necessarily employ women of their own race. As such, rigid independent categories lead to empty stereotypes which are of limited utility when examining gender and ethnic inequalities, and perhaps particularly in relation to employment.

The Utility of Existing Theoretical Approaches to the Labour Market

As mentioned in Chapters One and Four, the majority of existing theories explaining labour market patterns have limited utility because of their failure to take gender and ethnicity into account in any fundamental way. This is particularly true in the case of neo-classical approaches which tend to disregard the gender and ethnic dimensions of labour force recruitment, and to work with the rather andro- and ethno-centric assumptions that the majority of the labour force will be white men (see also Feiner and Roberts, 1990). Similar criticisms may be levelled at other approaches such as labour market segmentation theories and their various offshoots, particularly dual labour market theories (see Nash, 1988). While these are more effective in addressing gender and ethnic differentiation (see Beechey, 1988; Game and Pringle, 1984), gender and ethnicity tend to be viewed in a dichotomous manner in terms of white, male workers concentrated in the primary sector and the female, ethnic minority work force in the secondary sector. Only the radical labour market segmentation theories, especially Gordon's (1972) conspiracy theory, have any significance when examining gender and ethnicity. Gordon argues that a highly gender- and ethnically-differentiated labour market divided into privileged and disadvantaged sectors serves to reduce worker solidarity and the development of class consciousness, and in turn to keep wages low and labour unrest to a minimum. This approach is useful in terms of highlighting how privilege may be used to 'buy off' otherwise disadvantaged workers so that they are not employed in the lowest levels of the labour market, and to stress how this ultimately serves to preserve white, male hegemony (as in the case of Limón). However, a major flaw of this approach is that it treats gender and ethnicity as largely exogenous variables and in so doing, overemphasises the strength of class in affecting the functioning of the labour market rather than stressing the interconnection of all three elements. Yet perhaps the greatest failing, and indeed one which may be applied to all existing labour market theories, is the neglect of the domestic sphere (Nash, 1988).

The neglect of reproductive relations in conventional approaches and the need to stress the interconnection between the household and the labour market when examining

female employment has been long-established within feminist research (see Beechey, 1987; Chant, 1991a; Chant and Radcliffe, 1992; Radcliffe, 1992 on this and related cases such as migration). Although empirical studies illustrating these links are less common, a number of important issues have been highlighted relating to the embeddedness of gender in all social relations spanning both the labour market and the family. These have emphasised that gender is not merely functional to employment differentiation, but rather an integral part of productive and reproductive relations to such an extent that these relations are themselves gendered (see Beechey, 1988; Chant, 1991a; Stichter, 1990; Scott, 1986a, 1988, 1990). However, at the same time, the question of ethnicity has been largely neglected in this research. The present study illustrates the need to consider ethnic variations in reproductive relations as these have been shown to have important consequences for female labour force participation and patterns of segregation and segmentation among different ethnic groups. Therefore, the evidence presented here suggests not only that ethnically-differentiated household forms, organisation and overall 'familial' context be taken into account, but also that ethnicity be considered as a fundamental axis of social differentiation along with class and gender. In other words, taking a lead from feminist research on the fact that gender is anchored within all social relations, the proposition here is to stress how ethnicity is also intrinsically interwoven in all aspects of the family and labour market, to such an extent that relations of production and reproduction are 'racialised' as well as gendered.

One final point in relation to theoretical developments is the most recent advent of post-modernist or post-structural perspectives. Without entering into a debate on the major philosophical underpinnings of this approach it ^{is} important to note the emphasis on 'difference' and 'discourse' as opposed to 'structure' and 'metanarrative' (Barrett and Phillips, 1992; Nicholson, 1990). In the present type of research, post-modern perspectives are undoubtedly useful in examining gender and ethnicity while also bearing in mind that little specific research has been carried out in direct relation to employment differentiation. Its importance here is in terms of the way in which many post-modern feminists have taken on board the need to examine the interrelation of concepts of gender and ethnicity, and the way in which these must be deconstructed in order to recognise ethnic differentiation within the category of 'women' for example, and the dangers of conceiving of ethnicity in blanket terms (although also recognising that these points have been made outside this particular theoretical framework). ¹ In addition, a post-modern 'gaze' is useful in overcoming dependence on functionalist, mechanistic interpretations of social reality and represents an important shift away from universalising, ahistorical tendencies within the social sciences (Barrett and

Phillips, 1992; Walby, 1992). As a result, the main utility here is in the emphasis on diversity and flexibility when dealing with social categories, stressing the importance of historical circumstance and locally-specific factors. However, one of the most important criticisms lies in the danger of emphasising difference at the expense of identifying any causal factors, which is echoed by Sylvia Walby (1992: 48) who states that the consequence of this may be to "conceptualize power in highly dispersed rather than concentrated in identifiable places or groups". Obviously in the present case, the idea of power resting with specific groups is fundamental to analysis of employment differentiation, as is the identification of critical factors influenced by underlying social structures. ² Therefore, a post-modern framework is useful here mainly in a general sense to provide a context from which to pursue flexible approaches to examining gender and ethnicity as interacting concepts and in assessing employment differentiation.

Methodological and Conceptual Suggestions for Future Research

Accepting that the case of Limón represents a specific historical, geographical and cultural context, what has resonated throughout the research are the general similarities to other situations where ethnic diversity exists. Points of similarity include the nature of household organisation, especially the high incidence of female headship and the flexible nature of gender divisions of labour within the family among both Afro-Caribbean populations in the Caribbean itself (Massiah, 1986, 1988, 1990) and in the developed world (Bruegel, 1989; Chandler, 1991; Phoenix, 1990 on the United Kingdom, Glenn, 1991; Swerdlow and Lessinger, 1983 on the United States) as well as among West African populations (Afonja, 1990; Brydon, 1992; Goody, 1975). In addition, the predominance of nuclear households among white/*mestizos* broadly corresponds with patterns found elsewhere in Latin America (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1985a; 1991a; 1991b; Moser, 1989; Selby *et al.*, 1990). Moreover, the labour market experiences of Afro-Caribbean women concentrated in 'caring' professions has also been noted in other contexts (Amott and Matthaei, 1991; Boyd-Franklin, 1983; Phoenix, 1990; Wilson, 1987). In addition, parallels to Limón in terms of the overall context of economic and social relations whereby a particular group displays certain common characteristics in response to structural change have been noted in a number of cases, as Scott (1990: 214) points out in relation to the nature of patriarchy in Peru that, "a class that has experienced dramatic social changes, involving migration between radically different cultures, may exhibit a variety of patterns of patriarchy that diverge from the hegemonic one" (see also Arizpe, 1982 on the greater likelihood of Afro-Caribbean and indigenous Indian groups in Latin America having more equitable gender relations as a result of divergence from prevailing ideologies based on

machismo). While there are also divergences, especially in the nature of explanations for these patterns which are usually specific to particular labour markets and local labour demand, and historical and cultural development, there are sufficient similarities to venture a number of wider methodological and conceptual suggestions which may be applicable to research on gender and ethnic employment differentiation beyond Limón itself.

These draw heavily on the main conclusions of the present research. The first is to recognise the need to eschew preconceived and fixed assumptions about categories of gender and ethnicity and the expected configuration of these groups in the labour market. The most useful starting point when identifying labour market differentiation is to assume a random distribution of gender and ethnic groups based on what is essentially a 'null hypothesis' - that there is no gender and ethnic discrimination. Following this, concentrations of particular groups in certain sectors or segments can be easily identified without necessarily assuming that there will be obvious vertical or hierarchical differences.

Once patterns have been established, the reasons for these can be addressed using similarly flexible and diverse perspectives. An historical approach centred on changes in the economy and the development of the state is obviously essential, particularly with regard to ethnicity, as this highlights the reasons for ethnic diversity in the first place and is usually related to the needs of capital at a given time and the availability of particular ethnic groups to fulfill these needs. This has been shown to be important not only in Limón, but also in other contexts such as Britain where Afro-Caribbeans were recruited by the state to work in the national health service and public transport in the 1950s (see Miles, 1982; 1989; Momsen 1992). Indeed, this also illustrates the need to distinguish between ethnic groups who were originally migrant labourers (which is most commonly the case) or those who are natives to an area. Moreover, it is also important to identify how the ethnic composition has changed over time, as it may be the case for example, that a previous minority group has gradually become the majority as the result of natural population increase or further in-migration to a particular area. Such a shift is likely to have fundamental significance for the nature of ethnic relations and, in turn, for the way in which ethnic discrimination operates in the labour market. Finally, an historical viewpoint helps to assess how gender relations may have altered in response to changing modes of production, for example, or as the result of changes in the attitudes and policies of the state (which also influences ethnic relations as well).

As noted earlier, analysis of contemporary factors must take into consideration those operating at the level of households and individuals as well as at the labour market itself. Not only is it important to analyse each level independently, but also to assess how they interconnect with and influence one other. Underlying this is the need to take into consideration the way in which ethnicity and cultural factors interact with economic conditions to influence both ethnic and gender relations in the workplace and the home. In addition, the identification of sources and dimensions of inequality at both levels is important, bearing in mind that at the household level for example, autonomy and high rates of labour force participation among women does not necessarily imply equality, and in the workplace, location in what appear to be high status positions does not always bring freedom from discrimination. In the case of the latter, this can be measured largely by the degree of potential mobility of gender and ethnic groups (see earlier). Indeed, the concept of actual and potential mobility within the labour market which draws on a synthesis of all factors, has proven to be the key to understanding employment differentiation and dynamics in the present study and is also likely to be pertinent to other research.

Finally at the conceptual level, it is important to stress the complex interrelation of gender and ethnicity and to steer clear of treating them as unitary phenomena which exist and operate in parallel (see earlier). Accepting that there are many similarities in the way in which the two concepts may be interpreted (for example, both are social constructs, social discrimination usually rests on either the gender or ethnicity of the subject and so on), each operate under specific circumstances while at the same time, are mediated by one another. This also points to the need to recognise the way in which both gender and ethnicity are deeply embedded in the fabric of all social relations.

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, and indeed, a number of other areas would benefit from further enquiry. Most important perhaps, would be the examination of class and its relationship with gender and ethnicity. Although class has been dealt with as far as possible within the constraints of the present study and is recognised throughout as having particular consonance in terms of mobility, middle- and upper-income groups were not examined specifically. Although the general picture of class relationships within the labour market was deduced from the employer survey, future research should address the issue of class at the household level. It would be especially interesting to examine the extent to which the strength of gender discrimination and ethnic prejudice are heightened or weakened according to class

position. Another important area of future investigation is the examination of age differences among gender and ethnic groups, as the present research concentrated only on married women and/or mothers and married men. A focus on single men and women or on daughters or sons would identify more clearly some of the inter-generational aspects of gender and ethnic employment differentiation, and in turn highlight whether patterns are likely to be reinforced over time, as well as the extent to which acculturation takes place among different groups as in the case of inter-racial marriage for example. Indeed, the latter is itself another fruitful area of enquiry especially in examining the intersection between gender and ethnicity at the domestic level.

Finally, the need to conduct further comparative research in different areas emerges as important. The rationale mentioned in the introduction concerning the need for more empirical investigation of the interrelationships between gender, ethnicity and class as a means of greater ~~elaborate~~ theoretical development, still holds. The suggestions above are merely guidelines, and it is important to extend research to other countries and areas of ethnic diversity in order to corroborate findings outlined in the present study and to create more sophisticated frameworks based on a wider range of empirical studies. While this should include developed and developing countries, perhaps most interesting in relation to the present research is further investigation in Latin America and more specifically in areas of Afro-Caribbean concentration, which have as yet received little attention.³ Moreover, the examination of gender and ethnic employment differentiation in other Atlantic coast areas of Central American countries such as Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize, which have similar historical backgrounds as Limón in relation to enclave development based on monoculture, would be especially informative in building-up a more solid base for comparative work. Finally, notwithstanding the emphasis here on Afro-Caribbeans as opposed to indigenous Indian populations, existing research on the latter (see for example Buenaventura-Posso and Brown, 1987; Radcliffe, 1990), could provide important insights for future research along the lines identified above.

Redressing Inequalities: Policy Implications

The employment concentration of gender and ethnic groups in Limón's labour market reflects deep-seated inequalities which, while not necessarily based on unequal hierarchies, nonetheless prevent women and Afro-Caribbeans from sharing certain privileges accorded to their white/*mestizo* male counterparts. Any attempt to redress these inequalities would involve a monumental restructuring of Costa Rican society in terms of attitudes towards and practical outcomes of racism and sexism, no matter how

subtle these might appear on first acquaintance. While action on the part of the state may be the most obvious channel through which to try and ameliorate inequality, this is not always be the most effective route, first, because legislation may not be implemented or enforced on the ground (a problem often cited in Costa Rica given its history of formulating far-reaching legislation which has little practical efficacy outside the statute books - see Chapter Three). Second, effectiveness is further undermined by the fact that ^{the} state itself invariably represents particular interests, which in the case of Costa Rica are usually those of white/*mestizo* men (see also Alvarez, 1990; Bourque, 1989; Charlton et al., 1989). Indeed, in Limón itself, it is this fact which continues to present the greatest obstacle to reducing inequality (see Chapter Seven). Accepting that the Costa Rican state certainly has a more progressive stance regarding the promotion of gender and ethnic equality than in many other countries, the evidence from Limón suggests that existing legislative attempts to overcome inequality have often been meagre in their aims, as well as their achievements. The recent passing of the 'Law Promoting the Social Equality for Women' represents an important departure from existing legislation not only in the fact that it attempts to address fundamental causes of women's oppression, but has also provided for the setting up of various bodies to monitor its implementation (Chant, 1991b; Facio, 1989b). Having said this, it does not take ethnic groups into consideration in spite of the fact that they are most likely to suffer from oppression. For example, the alternative family forms prevalent among Afro-Caribbeans are not taken into account as the Family Code continues to be premised on the male-headed nuclear family. Moreover, high rates of labour force participation among Afro-Caribbean women means that discrimination embodied in the Labour Code also affects them to a greater extent than their white/*mestizo* counterparts whose economic activity is not as widespread. While some solutions may be brought about by promoting not only 'gender-aware', but also 'ethnically-aware' approaches to legislation and policy-making, the inequalities faced by Afro-Caribbeans and women in Limón are most likely to be achieved through their own efforts. Indeed, it has been at the personal level, that the majority of Afro-Caribbeans have overcome the disadvantage they face in the local labour market through international migration among men and education among women. Indeed, it is perhaps the precedents set by Afro-Caribbean women in particular in terms of resourcefulness and fighting against odds to achieve a reasonable standard of living which will serve as role models for women of all ethnic groups in the future. Even then, the most they can usually hope to achieve is a modest resource-base from which to nurture their personal efforts and aspirations. Only through radical change in the fabric of social relations will they be assured of any real success.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1) These issues have not been the specific domain of post-modern feminists (see also Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Brittan and Maynard, 1984; Ramazanagly, 1989; Scott, 1988; 1990), yet increasingly they are most commonly articulated within this perspective. Indeed, many authors writing within a post-modern viewpoint, base their empirical examples on research unrelated in theoretical content to this perspective.

2) Sylvia Walby (1992: 48-9) also agrees with the importance of not losing sight of underlying structures and emphasises, "we do not need to abandon the notion of causality in the face of the complexity of the social world. We do not have to move from the analysis of structure to that of discourse to catch that complexity; neither do we have to resort to capitalism as the sole determinant in order to have a macro-social theory".

3) Important exceptions here include Peter Wade's (1988) on the Chocó region and Anne Rubbo's (1975) work on the Cauca Valley, both on Colombia, and Norman Whitten (1965) on Ecuador.

APPENDIX ONE - HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Appendix One outlines the household survey in detail, looking at the questionnaire survey and the sub-sample of semi-structured interviews. The overall objective of the household survey was to gather information on the socio-economic situation of low-income communities in Limón. More specifically, it tried to identify the main points of ethnic difference between Afro-Caribbean and white/*mestizo* groups, focusing on employment and household organisation. The information gathered in the survey forms the basis of Chapters Five and Six. Before going on to describe the methodology in greater detail, it is important to outline the analysis of households and the classifications of household structures, as well as the identification of the ethnic composition of the sample population.

Background to the Household Survey

Definitions of Households

As identified in Chapter One, households are defined here as "a residential unit whose members share 'domestic' functions and activities - a group of people who 'eat out of the same pot'" (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 9). In other words, definitions are based on shared residence and activities such as cooking and finance. A family, on the other hand, is defined largely in terms of kin relationships (by consanguineal or blood and affinal or marriage ties) rather than common residence, although these often overlap. As a result, while the terms 'family' and 'household' are not coterminous, they are often used interchangeably (see Brydon and Chant, 1989: 8-10). For purposes of analysis however, households were the main focus of study.

Household structure refers to the composition of a residential unit in terms of its constituent members and headship of the household based on sex. Looking first at household headship, if there is a resident male living with an adult woman, then the former is generally designated the head. Usually the head is defined by household members themselves, but may also be chosen by the state in censuses for example. In general, only in situations where a woman has no resident partner (through desertion, widowhood and divorce) is she defined as the head. There are also two basic types of female heads defined by Youssef and Hetler (1982: 232) who distinguish between de jure and de facto. The former refers to women with no resident male partner on a permanent basis as the result of death, desertion and so on, while the latter refers to cases where the male partner is temporarily absent, usually through labour migration.

However, definitions of headship in general are subject to much debate, especially within feminist research, and there is little overall consensus as to which criteria are the most suitable. For example, headship may be seen to be shared between couples, or defined as the primary breadwinner or major decision-maker regardless of sex (see Chant, 1991a: 232). In the present case, male headship was usually designated to the resident male partner of conjugal unions, except in unusual circumstances, if for example, he was mentally ill or confined to bed.

In terms of composition, the major distinction between household types is usually whether a household unit consists of parent(s) and children only, or whether other relatives or friends are also resident. Through a combination of both headship and composition, Chant (1991b, 1991c) in her work on Guanacaste, Costa Rica has developed a typology initially based on earlier work in Mexico (see for example, Chant, 1985a; 1985b; 1987; 1991a; see also Brydon and Chant, 1989: 135-137). This classification, based on the following categories, serves as the basis for defining households in the present research:

- i) Nuclear household which is male-headed and consists of a parental couple and their children.
- ii) Women-headed/one-parent household where a mother living alone with her children.
- iii) Extended household which may be male or female-headed which comprises a core nuclear or one-parent unit residing with other relatives who share household production and consumption.
- iv) Nuclear compound where two or more households share a plot of land, yet do not share domestic activities such as cooking and finance (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 135-9; Chant, 1991b: 65-6).

While these are the most common forms found in Costa Rica and in Latin America in general, the presence of an Afro-Caribbean population in Limón, makes it important to identify other household types associated with the Caribbean region. The most important include:

- i) Grandmother-headed household where a female head lives with her grandchildren with no intermediate generation.
 - ii) Grandfather-headed household which is a male-headed and consists of conjugal union and grandchildren with no intermediate generation (Brydon and Chant, 1989: 135-9).
- Other households identified in Limón included couple units where a man and woman live alone with no children, and single women households where a woman lives by herself.

Ethnic Composition

In terms of the ethnic composition of informants, the author based classification of Afro-Caribbean, white/*mestizo* and so on, mainly around observation of skin colour, language, housing style etc. In addition, a section in the questionnaire on the place of birth of parent, grandparents and great-grandparents attempted to elicit ethnic origin more precisely without directly asking the question (see below). There are obvious difficulties involved in this classification as was noted in the 1950 census of Costa Rica which was the last to include the ethnicity of the population: "*hacer una clasificación científica de los habitantes de un país según su color o raza, en el momento de levantar un censo, es sumamente difícil, pues para ello se requeriría que cada enumerador tuviera conocimientos etnográficos para poder determinar a que raza pertenecen los individuos por él enumerado*" (the scientific classification of the inhabitants of a country on the basis of colour or race, at the time of the census, is extremely difficult, therefore it requires that every enumerator should have ethnographic knowledge to be able to determine the race of the individuals enumerated). Notwithstanding some subjectivity, the author was able in the most part, to define the ethnic origin of informants fairly easily, and problems only arose in cases of mulattos and ethnically mixed households which were a small minority of the total.

Household Survey: Application and Content

Household Questionnaire Survey

As mentioned in Chapter One, the settlements were selected largely on the basis of the ethnic composition of the areas, with Envaco and Limoncito having a majority white/*mestizo* population and Barrio Roosevelt, an Afro-Caribbean majority. The questionnaire was applied to 250 households (90 in Envaco and 80 in Limoncito and Barrio Roosevelt respectively) between April and August, 1990. After initial selection of the settlements, each community was roughly mapped in order to determine the overall size and approximate number of households, after which a random sample was chosen (on the basis of every third household). Both men and women were interviewed because of the emphasis in the study on ethnicity and gender, as well as on men and women. More specifically, the author asked to speak to the head of the household or female partner in male-headed units. Because of the greater likelihood of women being at home during the day, 76.8% (191) of the respondents were female, with only 23.2% (58) male informants. Indeed, it was generally more difficult to interview male informants who were either more reluctant to answer questions than women, or who were 'over zealous' in wanting to ask and answer questions, often unrelated to the questionnaire survey itself, possibly due to influences of *machismo*. Other problems

included men entering the house during the interview with his wife, and insisting that he continue answering questions. In order to ensure continuity in these cases, it was usually stressed that the questionnaire dealt with women's issues. In terms of ethnic groups, 64% (160) of the total were white/*mestizo*, 33.6% (84) were Afro-Caribbean, and the rest were indigenous Indian, Chinese, mulatto or mixed households. The author carried out all the interviews in order to achieve as much uniformity as possible, as well as to be able build rapport and relationships with informants. This was important in terms of follow-up interviews, and in order to gain some insight to the daily lives of *limonenses*. The questions from the questionnaire were read out to respondents and replies written down on. The questionnaire was divided into four main sections (a copy in Spanish and English is included at the end of the appendix - see Figure A1.1), and this forms the basis of Chapter Five.

a) Migration

In this section information was gathered on the birthplace and previous residence of the informant. If the respondent was a migrant, then the year of arrival in the city, the total number of places lived, reasons for moving, and who accompanied them on arrival, was determined. The final question related to the the birthplace of their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents in order to discover the exact ethnic origin of the informant, and to ascertain in the case of Afro-Caribbeans whether they were second or third generation migrants to Costa Rica and from which part of the Caribbean their descendants had originally come from. This section on migration was then repeated for the partner of the informant, to determine first, if (s)he was present in the household, and if not, where (s)he was and what sort of employment (s)he had elsewhere.

b) Household Structure

Here information was elicited on basic characteristics of households and their constituent members in terms of family size, sex, number of resident children, main employment, educational levels and so on. In addition, data on marital status, age at first union, number of partners, and fertility (live births, miscarriages etc) was gathered, followed by aⁿ assessment of changes in household structure in the six years previously. This section was particularly important in terms of building up a picture of household types and socio-economic patterns.

c) Employment

The third section concentrated on household members who were working (identified in the previous section). It examined type of employment in greater detail including the size of the firm in which they worked, number of days worked, salaries, contracts and social security payments. This section also detailed labour histories of both informant and partner, asking how many jobs had been held in total, for how long, and average

wages in each job, including part-time employment. If informants were not working, then it was asked when they last had a job, and why they were no longer working (or in the case of many women, why they had never worked). Information on the nature of employment opportunities in the city in general was elicited, including a question on the racial composition of the informants workplace (if working). Finally, details on whether children worked and types of employment were asked, and whether the household received any other forms of income apart from the wages of household members who were working, such as transfer payments, remittances, part-time/odd jobs, rent or financial support from other relatives.

d) Family Budgets

The final section dealt with family budgets and housekeeping, concentrating on who was in charge of administering finances, the contributions of household members to the family budget, and the major expenditures of the household on a weekly basis. The aim here was to determine the nature of decision-making in the family, and who was the major breadwinner.

After completion, the interviews were coded on to computer forms in the field (within 48 hours) so that any problems could be dealt with immediately. Data was later analysed using the MINITAB package.

Semi-Structured Interviews

A sub-sample of 45 households were selected from the questionnaire survey, identifying those which emerged as most interesting in the original interview in terms of types of employment, household structure and so on. It was also tried to keep this as representative as possible, to reflect the overall patterns found in the larger survey. Of the 45 households interviewed, 25 were white/*mestizo*, and 20 were Afro-Caribbean, of which 25 were women and ⁴⁵15 were men. The semi-structured interviews were based on in-depth, open-ended discussions around a range of broad topics identified by the author, and reflecting some key aspects of the research. These included the nature of gender relations and ideologies, domestic divisions of labour, decision-making and authority patterns, attitudes to household structure, and attitudes to work and racial discrimination. In all cases, the aim was to identify the main differences between ethnic groups, and how this may have influenced labour force participation.

Semi-structured interviewing usually took place on one occasion (taking between 2-4 hours), although in cases where the author knew the informants better, interviews

would be carried out over a range of visits which usually included taking part in the daily lives of informants (such as Sunday dinner, visits to the local church etc). Initially the interviews were recorded on a dictaphone, but this was eventually abandoned due to problems of continuity and interference from background noises. The most common method used was jotting down notes which were later transcribed in full. The information gathered in the in-depth interviews was content-analysed and used as the basis of Chapter Six, which was also illustrated with case studies of informants. There were four main topics in the semi-structured interviews:

a) Gender roles and relations

Here information was gathered on relationships between men and women. Attention was paid to age at marriage, number of partners, present type of union, reasons for unions or marriage and attitudes towards single-parent mothers. Questions were also asked relating to gender divisions of labour within the home, focusing on who carries out the bulk of domestic chores, which jobs men will and won't do, whether children helped and if so was this differentiated by gender. In addition, if women were working, it was asked who takes responsibility for housework and child-care. Women and men were also to describe a typical day in their life, including what time they got up, when they went to work or started doing housework etc. Informants were also asked to describe what they thought *machismo* meant and to give examples of '*machista*' behaviour (both men and women were asked). The issue of domestic violence was also raised in most cases, looking at why men were violent and whether women ever fought back and what ways. Informants were also asked about their aspirations for their children and whether they had different hopes for male or female children.

b) Household Structure

Informants were asked which type of family they preferred to live in and why; whether it was male-or female-headed or extended for example. The ideal family size was also discussed, as well as advantages or disadvantages of small or larger families. Family planning was also examined in this section, mainly with female respondents, looking at types available and male attitudes towards contraception. As far as possible, information on sexual attitudes was also elicited.

c) Employment

Male and female informants were asked about the nature of employment opportunities in Limón and whether they considered it difficult or easy to find jobs, and what qualifications were usually required. This section also explored women's and men's perceptions towards work and reasons why women in particular, entered the labour force and if they met any resistance from male partners. International migration (in the case of Afro-Caribbeans) was examined here, to discover the reasons for migrating,

whether it was permanent or temporary and what migrants planned to do on their return. The number of relatives living and working abroad was discussed, as well as the nature of employment, earnings, remittances (amounts sent, frequency and uses).

d) Racial Attitudes

The final section dealt with attitudes towards other ethnic groups, evidence of discrimination in Limón and in what form. Informants were also asked whether they would object to one of their children marrying someone from another racial group.

Additional Interviews and Participant Observation

In addition to the formal household survey (and employer survey), a number of interviews were carried out with important members of local society such as a headmistress of a local school, local historians and so on. A number of grassroots women's groups were also visited, in addition to other community and church activities in the study settlements. A number of close friendships also developed with some informants in the communities which added valuable insights into *limonense* life.

Figure A1.1 Household Questionnaire

BARRIO.....
^D
SEX OF RESPONENT MALE..... FEMALE.....
^A
FAMILY STRUCTURE.....
ETHNIC GROUP.....
NAME & ADDRESS OF RESPONDENT.....
.....
.....
.....
DATE OF INTERVIEW.....

CONTENTS

- Section A: Respondent's migration
- Section B: Partner's Migration, Location of Partner
- Section C: Household Structure
- Section D: Work, Labour Histories
- Section E: Family Budgets

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS MIGRATION

MALE/ FEMALE

A1. Are you from Limón?

¿Usted es Limonense? Yes/Sí..... No.....

A2. Where were you born? Here in Limón

¿Dónde nació usted? Aquí en Limón..... **GO TO A8**

Province/Provincia.....

Canton/Cantón.....

District/Distrito.....

A3. What year did you arrive in the city?

¿En qué año llegó usted a vivir aquí? 19.....

A4. What age were you when you arrived here?

¿Qué edad tenía usted cuando llegó a vivir aquí?.....años

A5. Why did you decide to come to Limón?

¿Por qué usted decidió venir a esta ciudad?

.....
.....
.....
.....

A6. Did you come alone or with someone else?

¿Usted vino solo/a o acompañada? Alone/ Solo/a

Accompanied:

Acompañada:

by your parents

por sus padres.....

by your partner and children

por su compañero e hijos.....

by your children

por sus hijos nada más.....

by other relatives

por otros parientes: Especifique.....

by a friend(s)

por un amigo/a(s).....

A7. Have you other relatives in the city?

¿Tiene usted otros parientes en la ciudad? No.....

Yes/Sí..... Did they arrive before or after you?

¿Llegaron antes o después de usted?.....

A8. Have you lived anywhere else, apart from here and your place of birth?

¿Ha vivido usted en otros lugares más aparte de aquí, y su lugar de nacimiento

No..... **GO TO A9**

Yes/Sí.....

How many?

¿Cuántos?.....

What have been the last two places in which you have lived outside here?

¿Cuáles han sido los dos últimos lugares en que usted a vivido fuera de este?

¿último? Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

¿penultimo? Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

A9. Who were you living with in your last place of residence?

¿Con qué personas estaba vivienda usted en su último lugar de residencia?

If have only lived in Limón go to **A12**

with parents

con sus padres.....

with parents-in-law

con sus suegros.....

with your partner and children

con su compañero/a e hijos.....

with children

con sus hijos nada más.....

with other relatives

con otros parientes: Especifique.....

with a friend(s)

con un amigo/a(s).....

A10. What did you make a living from? What type of work/farm?

¿De qué vivían ustedes? ¿Qué tipo de trabajo/finca?

Urban employment/empleo urbano.....**GO TO A12**

Rural employment/empleo rural.....

Small farm/own farm

Propia finca/pequeña propiedad.....

Large farm

Finca grande.....

Other

Otra cosa: Especifique.....

A11. What was grown on the farm (mainly) or were there cattle?

¿Qué cultivaba en la finca (principalmente) o tenía ganado?

banana/platano.....

sugar-cane/caña.....

rice/arroz.....

maize/maíz.....

coffee/café.....

beans/frijoles.....

cattle/ganado.....

a mixture/una mezcla - ¿cuáles?.....

others/otras cosas: Especifique.....

A12. Where were your parents born

¿Dónde nacieron sus padres?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

Where were your grandparents born

¿Dónde nacieron sus abuelos?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

Where were your great-grandparents born?

¿Dónde nacieron sus bisabuelos?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

SECTION B: PARTNER'S MIGRATION. LOCATION OF PARTNER

B1. Is your spouse or partner here with you at the moment or are they working in another place?

¿Su esposo/a o compañero/a está aquí con usted en esta ciudad. o está trabajando en otro lado?

Yes, in this city

Sí, en esta ciudad.....**GO TO B5**

No, in another place

No, en otro lado.....

B2. Do you know where he/she is?

¿Usted sabe donde está?

Don't know

No sabe.....

Yes, where?

Sí, ¿dónde?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

B3. What is he/she doing exactly? What type of job?

¿Qué está haciendo exactamente? Qué tipo de trabajo tiene?

.....
.....
.....

B4. When was the last time you saw your partner? How often do they return?

¿Cuándo vio a su compañero/a por última vez? Con qué frecuencia se ven?

.....
.....

B5. Where was your partner born?

¿Dónde nació su compañero/a?

Limón.....

Elsewhere

En otro lugar

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

B6. Has he/she lived anywhere else, apart from here and his/her place of birth?

¿Ha vivido ello/a en otros lugares más aparte de aquí y su lugar de nacimiento?

Yes/Sí.....

No..... **GO TO B7.**

How many?

¿Cuántos?.....

What have been the last two places in which he/she has lived outside here?

¿Cuáles han sido los dos últimos lugares en que ello/a ha vivido fuera de este?

¿último?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

¿penultimo?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

B7. Who were they living with in their last place of residence?

¿Con qué personas estaba vivienda éllo/a en su último lugar de residencia?

If have only lived in Limón go to B10

with parents

con sus padres.....

with your partner and children

con su compañero/a.....

with children

con sus hijos nada más.....

with other relatives

con otros parientes: Especifique.....

with a friend(s)

con un amigo/a(s).....

with parents-in-law

con sus suegros.....

B8. What did he/she make a living from in his/her most recent place of residence (including place of birth)? What type of job/farm?

¿De que vivía ello/a en el último lugar de residencia(incluyendo lugar de nacimiento? Qué tipo de trabajo/finca?

Urban employment/empleo urbano.....**GO TO B10**

Rural employment/empleo rural.....

Small farm/own farm

Propia finca/pequeña propiedad.....

Large farm

Finca grande.....

Other

Otra cosa: Especifique.....

B9. What was grown on the farm(mainly) or were there cattle?¿

Qué cultivaba en la finca (principalmente) o tenía ganado?

.....

.....

.....

B10. Where were his/her parents born?

¿Dónde nacieron sus padres?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

Where were his/her grandparents born?

¿Dónde nacieron sus abuelos?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

Where were his/her great-grandparents born?

Dónde nacieron sus bisabuelos?

Provincia.....

Cantón.....

Distrito.....

SECTION C: HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

C1. How many people(including yourself) live in this home at present?

¿Cuántas personas(incluyendolo a usted) viven en esta lugar en esta momento?

.....personas

C2. Do you live together as a family? or rather, do you cook and eat together etc.?

¿Ustedes viven todos como una familia? o sea, cocinan y comen juntos etcetera?

Yes/Sí.....**GO TO C8**

No.....**END INTERVIEW FOR NUCLEAR-COMPOUND FAMILIES**

C3. Can you tell me something briefly about the ages, education levels etc. of the members of your family? Starting with you?

¿Me puede decirme algo breve sobre los edades, niveles de estudios etcetera de los miembros de su familia? ¿Empezamos con usted?

<u>Nombre</u>	<u>Relación con informante</u>	<u>Edad</u>	<u>Nivel de educación</u>	<u>Ocupación actual</u>

C4. What is your civil status? Eg. married, single.

¿Cuál es su estado civil? Pe. Casado/a, soltero/a.....

C5. At what age did you marry/ begin to live with your partner?

¿A qué edad se casó usted/ empezó a vivir con su compañero/a?.....años

C6. What age was your partner?

¿Cuántos años tenía su compañero?.....años

C7. How many partners have you lived with?

¿Con cuántos compañeros/as ha vivido usted?.....

C8. What age were you when you(or your partner) when you had your first child?

¿Cuántos años tenía usted(o su compañera) al nacer su primer hijo/a?.....años

C9. How many children do you have in total(including those who don't here)?

¿Cuántos hijos tiene usted(incluyendo los que no viven aquí)?.....

C10. Have any of your children died? How many?

¿Han muerto algunos de sus hijos? Cuántos?.....

Before birth/Antes de nacer.....

After birth/después de nacer.....

How many more did you have/Cuántos más tenían.....

C11. How many children have left home? or rather how many do not live with you any more?

¿Cuántos hijos ya se han ido...o sea cuántos no viven con ustedes? A qué edades se fueron, en qué año y por qué se fueron?

Nombre

Edad

Año

Razón

C12. Of the people who are living with you at the moment, who has arrived to live with you in the last six years?

¿De las personas que están viviendo con usted ¿quién ha llegado a vivir con ustedes en los últimos seis años?

No one/Nadie.....

<u>Nombre</u>	<u>Relación con informante</u>	<u>En qué año llegó?</u>	<u>Por qué vino alojarse con ustedes?</u>
---------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------	---

C12. Has anyone else lived with you in the last six years who no longer live here?

¿Ha vivido alguna otra persona co ustedes durante los últimos seis años que ya no vive aquí?

<u>Nombre</u>	<u>Relación con informante</u>	<u>¿Cuánto tiempo vivió con ustedes</u>	<u>Desde 19..... a 19.....</u>	<u>Por qué se mudaron?</u>
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SECTION D: WORK

D1. Can you tell me a little more about the work of the members of your family?

¿Puede decirme algo más sobre los ocupaciones de los miembros de su familia?

Nombre

Nombre

Nombre

Nombre

OCUPACION

Rama de actividad

Categoría de actividad

¿Cuántas otras personas
trabajan en el mismo
lugar/empresa?

0

< 5

6 - 10

> 20

¿Cuántas días por semana
trabaja?

¿Le pagan por semana
por mes
por quincena

¿Generalmente cuánto gana?
sueldo fijo/semana
promedio/semana

¿Tiene seguro social?
por estado?
se lo descuentan de su
salario?

¿Tiene contrato?

LABOUR HISTORIES

FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

D2. If female respondent:- What type of employment have you had since you first started to work?

¿Qué tipo de trabajo ha tenido usted desde empezó trabajar?

If male respondent:- What type of employment has your partner had since she first started to work?

¿Qué tipo de trabajo ha tenido su compañero desde empezó trabajar?

No trabaja nunca.....

No ha trabajado en los últimos seis años.....

<u>Ocupación</u>	<u>Duración del empleo</u> <u>Entre 19...y 19.....</u>	<u>Sueldo/promedio</u> <u>semanal</u>
-------------------------	---	--

D3. If female respondent:- Why have you never/in the last six months worked?

¿Por qué usted no ha trabajado nunca/durante los últimos seis años?

If male respondent:- Why has your partner never/in the last six months worked?

¿Por qué su compañero no ha trabajado nunca/durante los últimos seis años?

.....
.....
.....
.....

MALE EMPLOYMENT

D4. If female respondent:- What type of employment has your partner had since he first started to work?

¿Qué tipo de trabajo ha tenido su compañero desde empezó trabajar?

If male respondent:- What type of employment have you had since you first started to work?

¿Qué tipo de trabajo ha tenido usted desde empezó trabajar?

No trabajo nunca.....

No ha trabajado en los últimos seis años.....

<u>Ocupación</u>	<u>Duración del empleo</u> <u>Entre 19....y 19.....</u>	<u>Sueldo/promedio</u> <u>semana</u>
------------------	--	---

D5. If female respondent:- Why has your partner never/in the last six months worked?

¿Por qué su compañero no ha trabajado nunca/durante los últimos seis años?

If male respondent:- Why have you never/in the last six months worked?

¿Por qué usted no ha trabajado nunca/durante los últimos seis años?

.....
.....
.....
.....

D6. Do you think it is more difficult for a woman to find work here in this city than a man?

¿Cree usted que es más difícil que una mujer encuentre trabajo aquí en esta ciudad que un hombre?

Sí.....

No.....

¿Por qué?.....

.....

.....

.....

D6a. What are the three most common jobs that women/men in your position get?

¿Cuales tres empleos son lo más comun para mujeres/hombres como usted?

.....

.....

.....

D7. Are the majority of the people in your workplace black/white/asian?

¿Son la mayoría de sus compañeros en su trabajo negro/blanco/chino?.....

Children's work/Trabajo de los niños

D8. Do any of your children have a job to help with their studies or the family budget?

¿Algunas de sus hijos tienen un trabajito para ayudar con sus estudios o a gasto? Ninguna.....

Sí..... ¿Cuales?

Nombre

Tipo de trabajo

Cuánto tiempo
dedican ellos
a este trabajo?

Sueldo/promedio
semanal

Other sources of income

D9. Do you receive any benefits or pensions? What type?

¿Recibe usted algunas pensiones? ¿Qué tipo?

Tipo de pensión

Cuánto por mes

D10. Do you have any other sources of income apart from the jobs of the members of your family? For example from other relatives who don't live in your home, other odd jobs?

¿Tiene usted otras fuentes de ingreso aparte de los trabajos de los miembros de la familia? Por ejemplo de parientes que no vive in your home, otros trabajitos?

No.....

Sí.....

Fuente

Cuánto a la semana

Reg/irregular?

6.

SECTION E: FAMILY BUDGETS

E1. What is included in your family budget?

¿Qué está incluido en su gasto semanal?

Food/Comida

Clothes/Ropa

School expenses/Gastos de escuela

Transport/Transporte

Gas, electricidad, agua

Rent/Renta vivienda

Otra cosa

E2. Who is in charge of the family budget?

¿Quién es encargado del gasto?

Informante.....

Esposo/a.....

Los dos.....

Hijo/a(s).....

Madre/suegra.....

Otro: especifique.....

E3. From whom do you receive money for the budget and how much(per week)?

¿De quien obtiene usted dinero para el gasto y cuanto (promedio semanal)?

Colones

De su propio trabajo

De su esposo/a

De su hijo(s)

De su hija(s)

De otros parientes que viven aquí

De algun(os) parientes que no viven aquí

TOTAL

E4. How much money do you spend per week on food for your family?

¿Cuanto dinero gastan usted a la semana para comprar la comida necesario para su familia?

.....Colones

E5. Are you the landlord of this house or do you pay rent?

¿Usted es dueño/a de esta casa o paga renta?.....

SECTION F: FUTURE PLANS

F1. Have you ever considered settling in another part of Costa Rica(outside Limón)?

¿Nunca ha considerado vivir en otro parte de Costa Rica(fuera de Limón)?

Yes/Sí.....

Where and why? ¿Dónde y por

qué?.....

.....
.....
.....

No.....

Why not? ¿Por qué no?

.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX TWO: EMPLOYER SURVEY

An employer survey was carried out with 17 enterprises in the city with the aim of building up a profile of the main sectors of the local economy and the ethnic and gender composition of the workforce within these firms. It gathered information on the types of jobs, wage levels, and internal structure of firms, as well as on various issues relating to recruitment practices, attitudes of employers to gender and ethnically differentiated workers and institutional factors. The information gathered in the survey is analysed and discussed in Chapter Four.

The employer survey was conducted after the household survey in order to identify the main sectors of employment from the household interviewees. In addition, consultation with the Ministry of Work helped to pinpoint the most important enterprises to be included in the survey. Initially it was proposed to carry out a random sample of firms in the city, but it emerged from the household survey that the local economy was dominated by a number of large firms and state institutions. It was therefore decided to interview all the main employers, and a random sample of medium- and small-scale enterprises. Interviews were conducted with personnel managers in the larger firms and the owners or general managers of the smaller businesses. In the case of large firms and state institutions, appointments were made through the Ministry of Work as managers were often more co-operative if they knew the survey had been endorsed by the Ministry. All interviews were conducted by the author, and the same questions were asked on the basis of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into seven main sections:

a) Firm/Enterprise Description

This section identified the type of firm, nature of product or activity, management structure, age of the firm and total number of employees. Managers were asked to give a break-down of each department, types of occupations found there and number of workers within each division. Most importantly, information on the proportions of gender and ethnic groups and their distribution within the firm and various departments was requested. In the case of gender, exact numbers were usually provided, yet only estimates of the ethnic break-down of workers was given (see section g). In addition, questions on the stability of the workforce were asked, such as whether temporary or casual workers were employed and in which occupations.

b) Recruitment Practices

This section looked at the nature of recruitment policies, focusing on types of advertising used to fill posts, entry requirements for jobs such as levels of education, previous experience etc. It was also asked whether different policies were applied to men and women and different ethnic groups, and if so, the reasons why. Not only was information on the actual policies elicited, but also the attitudes of managers to different groups of workers. For example, if women were excluded from certain sectors, then managers were asked to explain the reasons for this. Questions in this section also related to selection procedures such as interviewing, references, trial periods, tests and so on. Through this, it was established whether procedures were formal or informal: in other words whether recruitment took place through personal recommendations of other workers or through formal channels.

c) Labour Stability and Turnover

The question of labour force stability was examined in greater detail in this section, concentrating on how often employers recruited workers and the frequency of resignations. In particular, it was asked whether workers were more likely to leave voluntarily or whether they were dismissed. The most common grounds for dismissal were discussed and whether this occurred among women more than men for example, or within certain ethnic groups.

d) Occupational Mobility

Here the various career 'ladders' within firms were examined, looking at ways in which occupational mobility was achieved. For example, whether promotion of workers was encouraged and which groups were most likely to be promoted, as well as the provision of training courses and so on. The main criteria for promotion was examined such as personal characteristics, educational attainment or experience and whether certain groups tended to have greater prospects for promotion than others.

e) Salaries, Legislation and Benefits

This section focused on the forms and levels of payment within different jobs, as well as provision of various benefits, required both legally in accordance with the Labour Code and fringe benefits provided on a discretionary basis. Average wages of different workers were examined and whether this was weekly, monthly or hourly for example. In addition, questions were asked relating to additional payments such as bonuses, sickness benefits, paid holidays and especially maternity benefits. Social security payments were discussed, as well as savings, loans and pensions schemes and which

workers were most likely to join such schemes. The provision of amenities such as crèches, rest areas, canteens and sports clubs were also investigated. In terms of fringe benefits, it was established whether firms provided housing funds or housed workers themselves, and whether provisions were made for emergency funds, educational schemes for children of employees, travel grants and so on.

f) Trade Unions and Solidarity Associations

This section looked at the types of workers associations within enterprises and whether these were trade unions and solidarity associations or both. Membership was established, focusing on the gender and ethnic composition of unions and associations. The various collective bargaining agreements (*Convenciones de Trabajo*) were investigated, exploring the major features and issues addressed within them. In additions, the general attitudes of managers towards unions and associations were examined, asking which types of activities were preferred both by management and by workers themselves.

g) General Comments: Attitudes to Gender and Ethnicity

Although the question of gender and ethnicity was addressed throughout the previous sections, managers and employers were asked at the end of the interview for some general comments on the recruitment of women and Afro-Caribbeans, and how they perceived each group in terms of reliability, productivity and so on. It was enquired why concentration and segregation of certain gender and ethnic groups existed within firms (if this was the case), and whether this was the result of deliberate company policy or of legal restrictions etc. While it was not expected that employers would openly admit to discriminatory practices, this section was aimed at determining whether more subtle forms of discrimination were apparent.

In general, there were no problems in obtaining information in any of the sections. Having said this, employers were fairly reluctant to discuss the ethnicity of the workforce, which may be partly due to lack of records on ethnic composition, and also a fear of appearing prejudiced. However, this did not prevent employers from openly discussing reasons why women were unsuitable for many types of employment such as their physical 'weakness' and the fact that it was 'better' for them to stay at home. This is perhaps indicative of the entrenchment of patriarchal norms at all levels of society.

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