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Social Stratification in the Peasant Community: Redfield's Chan Kom Reinterpreted¹

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INTRODUCTION

MUCH of the anthropological activity of Robert Redfield was concerned with describing and conceptualizing the characteristics of the non-primitive village community, variously classified as *folk*, *little*, or *peasant*. Redfield (1930, 1940, 1941, 1947, 1950, 1953, 1956a, 1956b; with Villa 1934) described several examples of this kind of community in Mesoamerica and worked at developing a conceptual model postulating its distinctive characteristics. Redfield's basic view of the nature of social life in this type of community changed little, even in his last works when he discussed a number of studies of village communities elsewhere in the world. This paper offers a reexamination of some of the data Redfield presented in support of his conception of the non-primitive community as homogeneous, and in the process an alternative interpretation is suggested.

Redfield's early conceptual effort has been the object of several notable critiques, mainly directed at the folk-urban concept, e.g., Lewis (1951:427-448), Miner (1952:529-537), Foster (1953:159-173), Mintz (1953:136-143). Lewis, in particular, raised a number of issues in his now well-known difference with Redfield over the interpretation of life in the community of Tepoztlán, which both had studied.

Redfield (1956a:135) made a partial reply to Lewis by denying that the folk-urban conception could have influenced his interpretation of Tepoztlán because the concept was not developed until afterward, presumably in connection with his studies in Yucatan. In most of Redfield's later work (1953, 1956a, 1956b), the Yucatecan Maya village of Chan Kom is discussed repeatedly as an example of the kind of community whose characteristics Redfield is trying to elucidate. There is relatively little mention of Tepoztlán.

The present paper is not intended to repeat any of the analysis occurring in previous considerations of the folk-urban concept. Rather, the concern here is with the classless homogeneity consistently emphasized in all of Redfield's interpretations of the village community: in his conceptualization and, as an empirical characteristic of Chan Kom, his prototype of the little-folk-peasant community.

In our reexamination of the Chan Kom data collected by Redfield and his co-worker Alfonso Villa Rojas, we find considerable evidence of differences in way of life among members of the community. These differences appear to have constituted substantial differences in the lives of the people involved, were often explicitly related to differences in wealth, and would seem to be explained best in terms of a pattern of stratification. This suggests a basic reinterpretation of the nature of social life in the type of community represented by Chan Kom:

significant structural heterogeneity does exist in association with socioeconomic stratification.

Let us consider a few of Redfield's generalizations. In "The Folk Society" (Redfield 1947:297), homogeneity was one of the basic elements in the concept being proposed: "One man's learned way of doing and thinking are the same as another's," "what one person does is what another does." In conceptualizing the *little community*, Redfield (1956a:4) gave great importance to its homogeneity: "Activities and states of mind are much alike for all persons in corresponding sex and age positions. . . ." In a more empirical context, he invited us (Redfield 1956b:33) to "look down on the Mexican countryside" and see a network of local peasant communities in which "each has a more or less homogeneous culture. . . ."

The homogeneity and classlessness of the village of Chan Kom was emphasized in Redfield's two studies of the community. For example, in the first, conducted mainly in 1930-31: "Such differences in status as do exist lie simply between one person and another. There are no social classes. . . . The people of Chan Kom regard their community as racially and socially homogeneous" (Redfield and Villa 1934:101). And in the second study, conducted in 1948, the social life of Chan Kom was said to be characterized by "its homogeneity and its classlessness" (Redfield 1950:38). "The fact to be emphasized is that the people of Chan Kom feel themselves to be all one kind of people. They are not divided into social classes" (Redfield 1950:43).

Redfield recognized the existence of differences among the people of Chan Kom but repeatedly insisted that they were merely individual differences, as though occurring at random, and thus had no structural consequences for the basically homogeneous community.

Differences in status between individuals are considerable. . . . Nevertheless the vertical dimension in social life is not emphasized, and such differences in status as do exist lie simply between one person and another. There are no social classes (Redfield and Villa 1934:100-101).

The increase of wealth has no doubt increased the difference in wealth between the richest man of Chan Kom and the poorest man. But there is no group of the known and self-known poor. With industry and fair luck anyone can still get along in Chan Kom (Redfield 1950:61).

Clearly, Redfield emphatically rejected the idea of stratification providing any significant heterogeneous influence on the homogeneous structure of social life in Chan Kom. As we see in the following excerpt, Redfield supported this interpretation by emphasizing an alleged absence from Chan Kom of *inherited* wealth or privilege, as well as the lack of names, distinctive clothing, or other symbolism for *collective* status groupings. It should be noted also that the basic homogeneity of social life in Chan Kom was said to have persisted with no significant change throughout the entire period of Redfield's knowledge of the community.

Nor has there come about any development of social classes within Chan Kom. The words written about the village in 1931 on this point might stand to describe the situation in 1948: "There are no social classes. . . . Differences in status are not conferred by

birth; some families are more powerful than others because the individuals separately enjoy status and because they cooperate with one another; but social superiority is not conferred by one surname rather than another. Nor are any prerogatives transmitted by inheritance or succession." It is true that the differences between one individual or family and another with regard to either wealth or acquaintance with the city are somewhat greater now than they were in 1931, but now, as then, "there are no terms to describe such differences in costume or occupation that might symbolize such differences in status" (Redfield 1950:76).

Before pursuing this further, let us consider briefly the concept of stratification. Students of the subject now commonly follow Max Weber (1946:180-195) in viewing stratification as occurring in at least three dimensions: economic *class* exists when a number of people share a distinctive economic situation or characteristics with respect to the ownership of property or other opportunities to earn income in relation to a market. A *status group*, or social class, occurs when people share a distinctive "style of life," or subculture, and the social "honor" or prestige that accompanies it. A *party*, or organized interest group, is a group "oriented toward the acquisition of social 'power,' that is to say, toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be."

Although Weber intended these concepts to apply primarily to complex societies, his analytical distinction among economic, status, and political dimensions of stratification is a useful one for general cross-cultural analysis. Empirical recognition of stratification in any of these dimensions means interpreting as significant the differences in the economic, social, or political situations of recognizable strata of a population.

In Redfield's interpretation, the differences noted among the people of Chan Kom were not structurally significant enough to consider the community to have been anything but homogeneous. Furthermore, when he discussed differences, Redfield tended to emphasize the small number involved, rather than the fact that often they constituted a substantial proportion—from 10 to 33 percent—of a small total number of people or families. The remainder of this paper is devoted to a reexamination of the economic, social, and political aspects of life in Chan Kom and a discussion of the evidence that, contrary to Redfield's interpretation, stratification did in fact occur in all three dimensions.

ECONOMIC STRATIFICATION

Land ownership: In the first study of Chan Kom (Redfield and Villa 1934:64) only brief mention was made of any land being privately owned, and economic stratification based on differential land ownership does not appear to have been significant. The community of 251 persons owned collectively some 2,400 hectares of *ejido* land in which "individual agriculturalists have equal rights to find their milpa sites." But because little of this *ejido* land was suitable for cultivation, most of the corn fields (*milpas*) were cultivated outside the *ejido*, on land legally belonging to the Mexican federal government. Population pressure was producing conflicts between villages over the use of government lands (Redfield and Villa 1934:64-65).

By the time of the second study seventeen years later, when the population of Chan Kom had increased to about 445 (Redfield 1950:68), differential pri-

vate land ownership had become more important. A new law provided for the giving of exclusive rights of land use to individual members of the ejidos (Redfield 1950:57). And, "much of the land outside the *ejidos* is now recognized as owned by individuals . . ." (Redfield 1950:59). Further details (Redfield 1950:57-58) follow:

In recent years a number of the wealthier men of Chan Kom have bought land outside the *ejidos*. One has bought a tract including three thousand *mecates* [120 hectares]; he will have the title registered. It is his plan to divide this land among his sons, so each will be provided for.

As yet this acquisition of large private estates in land is confined to a few men. Others, however, are developing limited private land within the *ejidos*. . . . The right is not ownership, for the *ejidatario* may not sell the land. He may, however, transmit the right to his son. . . .

Four or five of the men have begun the development of such small tracts. . . . The tracts so far developed are from four hundred to six hundred *mecates* [16 to 24 hectares] in size. When these enterprising men first began these developments—before, indeed, the law was made known—they were opposed by some in the village who felt that these rural developers would somehow come to own the tracts outright and sell them, thus profiting from communal lands at the expense of other holders of rights therein.

Redfield explained that such a sale of ejido land for private profit could not occur because it was prohibited by the new laws regulating such matters. But he did not suggest another possible reason why some may well have opposed the establishment of exclusive private rights to land use by a few men and their heirs: this reduced the amount of land freely available to everyone else.

It should be noted that even the smallest of the "small tracts"—16 hectares—if completely cultivated under the conditions described for 1948, would have produced between six and nine times the annual corn needs of an "average family of two adults and two or three children" (Redfield and Villa 1934:56; Redfield 1950:55, 171). Average productivity on the relatively scarce land suitable for corn cultivation reportedly declined by one-third to one-half in the 17 years between the two studies. The rapidly growing population had produced a "disappearance of the open frontier." In this situation it is not surprising that a number of men would begin to assert what amounted to effective private ownership rights over substantial parts of the communal holdings, and that others would protest.

Land use: Weber's conception that economic classes exist when a number of people share distinctive characteristics with respect to opportunities to earn income under market conditions does not require that this income must be earned from owned property. Data available in the first study of Chan Kom suggest an economic stratification in terms of significant differences in the size of the milpas not owned but cultivated, and thus the quantity of corn which could be sold for profit. Reportedly, no men so lacked the opportunity to cultivate their own corn fields that they had to rely on laboring for a wage (Redfield and Villa 1934:61; Redfield 1950:61-62). But there did seem to exist a class of the relatively wealthy, with comparatively large amounts of corn cultivated for sale, in contrast to the ordinary villager concerned almost entirely with subsistence needs.

According to data presented (Redfield and Villa 1934:52-56) on average

milpa size, productivity, and family consumption, an average family of four or five consumed 1,092 kilograms of corn annually. With average productivity at 840 kilograms per hectare, such a family would have had to harvest a milpa of 1.3 hectares to satisfy its annual consumption needs in corn. However, it would have had to cultivate 2.6 hectares to maintain a moderately comfortable level of living, because "twice as much maize must be grown as the population will consume; half is converted, in the towns, into other goods" (Redfield and Villa 1934:51). Table I presents a revised analysis of the data regarding the milpas cultivated in 1930.

TABLE I. NUMBER AND AREA OF MILPA HOLDINGS
CULTIVATED IN CHAN KOM, 1930*

Size of Holding (hectares)	Number of Holdings	Area (hectares)	Average Area (hectares)
28	1	28.0	28.0
4 to 8.0	8	47.2	5.9
2 to 3.9	20	53.4	2.7
0 to 1.9	17	22.1	1.3
Total	46	150.7	3.3

* Data revised from Redfield and Villa (1939:53).

From Table I it can be seen that of the total of 46 milpa holdings, the 17 smallest averaged 1.3 hectares, just enough to supply the annual corn consumption needs of an average family. Another 20 holdings averaged 2.7 hectares, or enough to produce about twice such a family's consumption needs in corn and thus sufficient to obtain enough other goods to provide an average, moderately comfortable level of living. But eight other holdings averaged over twice this latter size of milpa, and one other far more. These nine holdings constituted 20 percent of the total number, about 50 percent of the total cultivated area, and clearly were able to earn considerably more income from the sale of corn than the others.

Furthermore, four or five men harvested so much in 1930 that they did not have to cultivate at all in 1931: "Four of the men who did not plant at all lived on their accumulated stores of maize; and one man hired himself out to his neighbors" (Redfield and Villa 1934:52).

This reduction by about ten percent in the number of milpa holdings gives a rather different impression of the economic life of the community than a number of Redfield's characterizations of a Chan Kom in which "every man makes milpa, hunts, and builds houses much as any other" (Redfield 1950:46). "All men grow maize; to abandon one's milpa is to forsake the very roots of life; tradition and religion conspire with economic necessity to make agriculture inevitable" (Redfield and Villa 1934:51). "From the dependence upon maize there is in Chan Kom no escape. To live is to 'make milpa'; there is no other way. . . .

Agricultural toil is arduous, but so inevitable and little questioned that there is small bitterness in its ardors. . . ." (Redfield and Villa 1934:32-33).

There are other indications that at least some members of the wealthiest and most "important" families—about which more later—were not quite so devoted to the cultivation of corn. Their names appear in the following entry from Villa's (1934:248) field diary:

Asunción told me that he did not plant his milpa this year, because he is thinking of learning the tailor's trade. He is going to sell his horse in order to buy a sewing machine. Like Asunción, there are others who are beginning to find working a milpa a bit too arduous, and who are looking for easier occupations. Many (Don Nas, Don Eus, Don Fano, etc.) have begun to plant tobacco and castor-oil bush, which are more productive and less laborious.

Also, Villa (1934:271) noted that, just as the harvesting of corn *began* in November 1930, a group of young men with "prominent" family names visited the town of Valladolid, at least two of the group seeking employment there: "They have aspirations, they tell me, to become functionaries in some store in that city." One succeeded in this aim, at least temporarily.

Commercial activities: Redfield's interpretation of Chan Kom as homogeneous emphasized that *all* men at some time cultivated milpa, and de-emphasized the importance of the heterogeneous consequences of *some* men engaging in additional, relatively lucrative commercial activities, especially at the time of the second study.

At the time of the first study (Redfield and Villa 1934:71-76), there was relatively little occupational specialization, only one store, a few part-time artisans, and only about "two score" head of cattle, owned by "about a dozen men" (Redfield and Villa 1934:54, 58). However, the cattle were raised less for immediate profit than "partly as a means to store and multiply wealth, and partly because to own cattle is to gain prestige; a man's wealth is thus made manifest. . . ." (Redfield and Villa 1934:58).

By the time of the second study, the number of artisans and stores had so increased that Chan Kom "now depends little for such services on the towns and . . . indeed, the smaller settlements in its territory have come to depend for them upon it" (Redfield 1950:46-47). And a number of men had become much less concerned with the cultivation of corn than with commercial or handicraft activities, and thus, "are often encountered in their stores and houses" (Redfield 1950:50).

The most widely distributed of the strictly commercial activities was the buying, raising, and selling of hogs and cattle, cattle in Chan Kom having increased by at least ten times from 1931 to 1948 (Redfield 1950:51-52).

Now hog-raising is a principal business of Chan Kom, and cattle-raising is a yet bigger business. One man in 1947 sold cattle to the value of twelve hundred pesos. Also he sold corn to the value of three thousand pesos. Some of the cattle and corn he raised himself, though some of it he had bought for resale. Many of the more enterprising and experienced men of the village carry on a great deal of this buying and selling.

Redfield noted that many trips were made with horses for the purchase and transport of hogs, cattle, and corn. And there had developed some sophistication

regarding market conditions: "They hold what they have bought for a favorable market, and one or two of them read newspapers for market information. Men who seventeen years ago would have been working only in their milpas today, instead, are busy making these trips or receiving corn as it comes in small quantities to their houses or stores" (Redfield 1950:52).

Although "more and more of the time and efforts of the men go into raising livestock, into buying and selling, and a little manufacturing" (Redfield 1950:56), most of the men engaged in these activities "in a casual and irregular way" compared to the smaller number of the very wealthiest:

But nine or ten of the men of Chan Kom are in the full sense commercial men, for they steadily and regularly devote themselves to buying and selling, and they buy and sell in large quantities. The principal business of these men is in hogs, with cattle and corn secondary. They make much more extended trips, going into the remoter hinterlands to find livestock; they have arrangements with truck owners to meet them at Chichen and from there to transport their purchases to Merida. . . . These men have assumed all the functions which were performed in 1917 only by men from the towns. . . . (Redfield 1950:53).

The increased earnings from commercial activities led to the greater wealth of those most devoting themselves to these activities (Redfield 1950:61). "The wealth of Chan Kom, so greatly increased in these seventeen years, is chiefly kept in liquid capital. It is put into cattle, hogs, maize, and the gold chains that women wear with their fine hupils and that are traditionally forms of storage of wealth. Probably the wealthier men keep hundreds of pesos, or even a thousand or more in the form of cash" (Redfield 1950:56).

Redfield (1950:62) noted that the increase in commercial activity "has surely provided new sources of conflict within Chan Kom" as well as "aggravate old ones." He explained this as a result of the development of competition for commercial trade among the "patrilineal great families":

Under the influence of drink (an uncommon influence in Chan Kom), the bitterness that this situation engendered burst forth one day. It burst forth out of a rancor that simmers from time to time in the buying and selling of hogs and cattle at quick profit, out of the mills that by their noise announce the business they take in on opposite sides of the plaza, out of the four stores, out of the maize that used to be chiefly food and the fruit of labor and piety and that is now also something to amass and hold for a favorable market (Redfield 1950:63).

Redfield (1950:53-55) also explained the development of commercial activities as a necessity for Chan Kom, given "the pressures of population on limited resources in land." With the population growing rapidly, especially with Chan Kom's development as a successful *pueblo*, it became "increasingly difficult for the people to sustain themselves on the land," which was declining in fertility. "So Chan Kom may and must supplement its agriculture with other means of support." It is noteworthy that the increasing dedication to commercial herding occurred despite an increasing frequency of livestock breaking through fencing and destroying milpas in Chan Kom and neighboring communities (Villa 1934:296, 299; Redfield 1950:60).

Despite the data provided on the development of commercial activities, Redfield (1950:55-56) preferred to emphasize that "we could find no one who

has given up the making of milpa altogether." For Redfield (1950:86-87) Chan Kom could be characterized as follows: "It is still a community of one kind of people: rural, Maya toilers in the milpa; these people have added cattle-raising, business, and government to their activities. . . . All these people, old and new, think of themselves as Indians and as a people belonging to the bush, the milpa, and the settlement around the cenote."

And in one of the later works, referring to the Maya of present-day Yucatan (Redfield 1956b:63-65): "In Yucatan commerce became something of a game and venture to the later peasantry but never came to have anything like the importance and seriousness of agriculture." These people were said to have "the idea that agricultural work is good and commerce not so good; and an emphasis on productive industry as a prime virtue." They were said to have "a satisfaction in working long and hard in the fields, a disinclination to adventure or speculate." These statements do not appear to do full justice to the behavior of the people of Chan Kom.²

STATUS STRATIFICATION

The concept of status group or social class differences usually involves two aspects of social life: a distinctive style of life and a particular prestige evaluation by others in the society. However, in considering empirical reality it is not always feasible to treat these separately, nor even the conceptually distinct economic, status, and political dimensions of stratification. It therefore becomes necessary to discuss together a number of analytically distinct aspects of social life.

Family prestige: The same Chan Kom families appear to have shared the highest positions with respect to economic wealth, style of life, prestige, and community leadership. However, the data supporting this view are consistently interpreted by Redfield as representing not differences in the stratification structure of the community but merely individual differences in "personal qualities":

Differences in status between individuals are considerable. At public gatherings there is never any question as to who is to take the lead and assume the positions of prominence; the leaders take the center of the stage and make the arrangements, and the lowly and the inconsequential fill in the background. There are perhaps a dozen men who, it is recognized, are qualified to fill the important offices; the others are out of the question. It is, in large part, the personal qualities of character and leadership that make a man looked up to by his fellows. Wealth is connected with these qualities also; to own cattle, to have a fine house and a wife who wears several heavy gold chains is to be admired (Redfield and Villa 1934:100-101).

There are numerous references, especially in the second study, to the advantageous position of people variously referred to as "the leading founding families" (Redfield 1950:31), "the leading citizens" (Redfield 1950:55), "the three or four most influential and wealthy families" (Redfield 1950:78), and the "great families" which were "particularly cohesive and prominent in village affairs" (Redfield 1950:82).

But even in the first study there are references to: advantages in the location of housing obtained by "village leaders" (Redfield and Villa 1934:66), "the

largest and most influential families" (Redfield and Villa 1934:27), two married men "occupying intermediate positions of wealth and social prominence" (Redfield and Villa 1934:80), and how, in seeking a wife, "if the girl's family are well-to-do, so much the better" (Redfield and Villa 1934:96).

At the time of the first study, there were two multihousehold extended domestic families: "It is noteworthy that the two men who maintain these large families are the two most prominent of the older men in the village, pioneers in the founding of the community and distinguished by wealth, property, and moral character" (Redfield and Villa 1934:91).

And there were also "two principal great-family groups," each sharing a particular family name, and respectively consisting of 13 and four households: "The older people in these two great families were among the pioneers in Chan Kom and are persons of consequence in the village. A third surname is borne by kinsmen in ten small families, but these relatives have little or no cohesiveness and are humbler folk" (Redfield and Villa 1934:92).

Thus, 17 out of a total of 45 households were in the two main, prominent family lines. In 1948 it was noted that the "solidarity of the patrilineal great families" was as strong as ever, and these groupings "are no less significant than they were in 1931 and are more conspicuous than they were then" (Redfield 1950:81-82).

Social origins: Redfield viewed the socioeconomic homogeneity of Chan Kom as having existed from the very beginning of its settlement:

One or two men have accumulated sufficient capital to enable them to hire field laborers and grow corn on a larger scale. But it is probable that these men began at no economic advantage over their neighbors. This community is, in many respects, one of pioneers; industry and perseverance, not inherited wealth or privilege, are the outstanding advantages (Redfield and Villa 1934:58).

In the bush village every man started more or less even with any other and went out into a land of open resources to make his living. His success followed from his industry (and his piety, the people would say) (Redfield 1950:62).

Redfield seems to have assumed that all individuals began their lives in Chan Kom with practically identical sociocultural and stratification characteristics. He viewed them as having entered an environment where all had equal opportunities to advance their fortunes. Any man could achieve as much wealth, prestige, and political power as his personal, idiosyncratic qualities permitted. Since all had the same objective possibilities, and the same values and goals, whatever heterogeneity resulted must have come from individual differences in ability rather than from any sociocultural or stratification differences.

Two main objections to this interpretation are offered, one conceptual and one empirical. Redfield's conceptual position implicitly makes the recognition of stratification dependent upon the social structure containing barriers which objectively restrict opportunities and thus prevent some persons from achieving the higher ranks of wealth, prestige, and leadership. But the existence of such structural restrictions is not essential for the recognition of stratification, if criteria are specified in terms of *actual* rather than *potential* differences in economic, social, and political behavior. The fact that the social structure of

Chan Kom may have permitted many people to behave differently than they did, so that they might have obtained high prestige, is not more important than the fact that in practice they did not so behave and therefore actually had relatively little prestige. That differences in style of life empirically did exist is at least as significant as the apparent absence of structural restrictions which could be inferred to have caused such differences.

But, if there were no structural restrictions to prevent anyone from achieving the status characteristics of those with highest prestige in Chan Kom, why did a large number fail to do so? The explanation seems to be that, contrary to Redfield's interpretation, basic differences in values and goals, deriving from important differences in social origin, did occur among those who settled the community.

During the early period of settlement, approximately 1880-1910, there seem to have been two main distinct types of settler (Redfield and Villa 1934: 24-25; Redfield 1950:1-3, 17). One type consisted of those who had worked as peons on the haciendas of Yucatan during the Diaz regime (Tozzer 1907:27-28; Redfield 1950:8). Some of these men had escaped illegally from haciendas and settled in Chan Kom to avoid recapture; others came after being freed from servitude by the 1910 revolution. The other type consisted of free men, independent cultivators, mainly from the older village of Ebtun. Significantly, at least some of these men had been prominent in the affairs of that village: "About one-third of the present families of Chan Kom have come from Ebtun, but these are the largest and the most influential families; leadership in Chan Kom has always resided with the Ebtun colonists. The men who held the first public offices in Chan Kom had previously held offices in Ebtun; there was a schism in Ebtun while Chan Kom was still an unimportant *rancheria*. But now as the new settlement grew, one Ebtun faction, with its cornfields at Chan Kom, returned less and less often to Ebtun" (Redfield and Villa 1934:27).

Reportedly, the very earliest settlers had been three men from Ebtun, but by 1917, "the leadership of the community had passed from the first three settlers to the heads of three more recently arrived families: the Cemes, the Pats, and the Tamays. All three families had come from Ebtun, and they were linked in kinship" (Redfield 1950:3).

These are the family names encountered most often in references to the prominent men and families, and we shall meet them again.

Don Eustaquio Ceme was Redfield's main informant: "More than any other man he made his village what it is today . . . he is an admirable man and a notable leader" (Redfield 1950:viii). Ceme's father had been a *comisario*, the governmental executive of a rural village, before coming to Chan Kom (Redfield and Villa 1934:24, 102; Redfield 1950:18). According to Ceme's account (Redfield and Villa 1934:214-230), the post of *comisario* in Chan Kom was almost always filled by Ceme himself or a relative. When the new *municipio* of Chan Kom was created in 1935 (Redfield 1950:19): "The first municipal president was Eustaquio Ceme, the second was another Ceme, and the third was a Tamay."

It should be noted that Redfield explicitly rejected the idea of any significant social heterogeneity among the settlers of Chan Kom. In reviewing their origins, Redfield (1950:69-70) found that independent villages and towns had been the previous residence of 63 out of a total of "approximately one hundred family heads (husbands and wives)" in 1931, information not having been obtained about the others. Redfield then concluded: "Additional information as to the remaining two-score family heads would not much change this view of the uniformity of the population, as to cultural antecedents, in 1931."

Nevertheless, it is suggested that a significant sociocultural division was present in the population settling Chan Kom. One group had its origins in the lowest strata of the hacienda community, was concerned primarily with satisfying subsistence needs, wished to maintain the more traditional rural culture, and desired a minimum of hierarchical control. The other group, originating in the highest strata of the independent village community, was ambitious for all the characteristics appropriate to high status in this type of community, wished to establish and maintain control of a formal hierarchy, and was highly susceptible to the attractions of the "progress" involved in imitating urban patterns. More evidence in support of this interpretation is presented in what follows.

House type and location: Two main types of house were constructed in Chan Kom (Redfield and Villa 1934:33-34). The masonry, stone house was "an innovation and a luxury for the progressive and the ambitious," which followed "the Spanish pattern common all over Mexico." The masonry house required several times as much labor to build as the more common, Maya style "house of poles, mud and thatch" which "is found all over Yucatan" (Redfield and Villa 1934:54-55).

In 1931 there were nine completed masonry houses, all located on the plaza (Redfield 1950:26-27). By 1948:

Every building that now stood on the plaza was of masonry; on two sides these buildings presented, almost, the continuous low plastered facade of the Spanish town. A church and a school had been added to the public structures on the east side of the plaza. Upon the plaza, now almost entirely cleared of trees, was erected an outdoor theater; later a second was added; a baseball diamond was laid out. Twenty-two of the seventy-three families now occupied masonry houses, and some stone houses were to be found in every quarter of the community. The settlement around the plaza had come to take on the rectilinearity and the flat, sun-reflecting opaqueness of the Spanish-American street (Redfield 1950:27).

The masonry house seems to have been associated with a whole series of other distinctive material conditions not encountered in the more common thatched house. Redfield (1950:31) suggested that "masonry houses call for new furniture," and referred to such things as chairs and tables, locks and doorknobs, windows and window screening, painted decorations on walls, and greater cleanliness. And he pointed out that not all had adopted the more modern traits of the masonry house complex: "The stone houses, china plates, musical instruments, and gasoline or carbide lamps are enjoyed by a minority of families. More than half of the people live in houses and with equipment different in very few particulars from what prevailed a generation ago" (Redfield 1950:44).

And who lived in these more expensive masonry houses on the plaza, and with what effect on their style of life and prestige?

If one considers the probable effects of attainment of the Spanish-American form of town upon the social organization of Chan Kom itself, one sees the emphasis thereby given to the families whose lots front the plaza. In a bush settlement one house is much like another, and the advantage enjoyed by the owner of a house near the trail that passes through the settlement is not much. But the citizens who own and occupy the houses on the plaza of a pueblo have conspicuous advantage. There is first the relative prestige of their location on the main square. There is the commercial advantage: the plaza is the place to open a store and the place to meet traders. There is the greater frequency of contacts to be experienced by him who lives where visitors and citizens come most frequently. It was of course the Tamays, Cemes, and Pats who claimed and obtained house sites on the plaza. No newcomer lives there. Several of the families that have come to Chan Kom since 1931 have at least as much experience with city ways as have the heads of these older families, and they are not poor; but they have had to build their masonry houses on other streets; they are not commonly among those who receive visits and business from the travelers and traders who come to Chan Kom. With the new town plan has come about a corresponding spatial arrangement of the people and of the activities of the town: dominant center and subordinate margins. Also the continuity of prestige and influence of the leading founding families has been favored (Redfield 1950:30-31).

As mentioned previously, Redfield (1950:81-82) found that a few "patrilineal great families" were at least as dominant in community affairs in 1948 as in 1931. At the time of the second study, in 26 of the 73 households, "the head of the family is a Tamay, a Pat, a Ceme, an Ek, or a Dzul. Four of these groups are particularly cohesive and prominent in village affairs." Houses were located so that "the grouping of houses occupied by patrilineal relatives is very marked" (Redfield 1950:82-83):

One side of the plaza is "where the Pats live"; the Tamays occupy an adjacent corner; the Cemes occupy half of a second side and a part of a third side. Each of these groups has its own oven and store and a well from which to draw water—or the nearby cenote [in the plaza].³ The women in each group do their washing and other work in walled yards each of which is a sort of family compound—the Ceme family, more spread out than the others, includes several such. The clusters of men who sit together in the plaza outside the houses in the evening are clusters of Pats, Tamays, or Cemes, with occasional additions from other families or from one of the other clusters. The Ek family, newcomers, form the nucleus of the "colony" or "suburb" west of the plaza and constitute a fourth conspicuous neighborhood group.

Spoken language: Regarding the language spoken in Chan Kom at the time of the second study, Redfield (1950:139-140) noted the following: "Maya is, then, still the overwhelmingly common speech, the language of domestic and informal affairs. In almost every family, when old and young are together, talking, Maya alone is used. When the children leave the schoolroom, they drop at once into Maya for their play."

Furthermore, "a leader will make an address to all the people in Maya, for only in this language can he reach them all and only in Maya is he likely to be fluent." Even by 1948, less than half the Chan Kom population could "carry on a conversation in understandable Spanish."

Who constituted this Spanish-speaking minority? Precise data are not provided, but at the time of the first study "the ability to speak and to read Span-

ish" was associated with high status and prestige (Redfield and Villa 1934:101) And Villa (1934:261) observed the following:

It is really surprising, the contempt in which the Maya hold their language. Parents use every means possible to make their children speak only in Spanish. If this attitude with regard to language is not exactly common, it is certainly not rare, especially among the "principal people" (the Ceme and Pat families). As a result, some of the children are beginning to talk some Spanish. . . . Edilberto Ceme, my neighbor, who knows plenty of Spanish, energetically punishes his three-year-old son when, through forgetfulness, he speaks in Maya. If outsiders who come here speak the language, from that moment on they are not regarded as persons of culture.

Thus, the ability to converse in Spanish, shared by less than half the population as late as 1948, seems to have been part of a style of life which especially the "principal people" were concerned to impart to their children.

Religious worship: For Redfield (1947:306-308), participation in common religious ceremonial and sacred understandings is an important aspect of the integration of the homogeneous folk society. With respect to Chan Kom (Redfield and Villa 1934:107):

A man's moods and his needs are objectified in a variety of spirits, and the expression of his relationships to these spirits is institutionalized in ritual. Moreover, the ritual is communal as well as individual; the homogeneity of the community is such as to maintain collective religious activity; public festival is still largely worship.

Everyone in the village has the same gods. All draw on the same sources of supernatural power. Personal experience or personal choice has little to do with determining to which spirit, or to which *santo*, an individual is bound . . . one man has the same gods as his neighbor.

Before presenting the evidence for a contrary interpretation, it should be noted that the residents of Chan Kom gave great religious importance to the effigies themselves: "The *santo* is closely identified with its image. It is doubtful if the saints are thought of apart from their effigies, and it is probable that two effigies of the same name are regarded as two distinct supernatural personages. . . . Differences in spiritual potency are often thought of as existing between effigies, rather than between saints thought of as apart from these effigies" (Redfield and Villa 1934:108).

The data attesting to significant structural differences in worship appear in the midst of the very same discussion in which religious activity is interpreted as having been collective and functionally related to the homogeneity of the community. Redfield seemed to recognize a certain inconsistency in his treatment of this subject. But for him this apparently did not imply any need to reconsider his interpretation of the homogeneity of the community. He simply began the presentation of the data contradicting his own previous characterization of religious worship as follows:

The foregoing statement requires some modification. Some men—seven or eight—own individual *santos*. Most of these are heirlooms; a few were recently purchased. The ownership of an image brings with it the special tutelage of that *santo* and also involves the obligation to care for the image and to recite prayers before it on the name-day of the *santo*. . . . Most homes are without such domestic images and have, at most, a rude wooden cross. When a man who owns a private image is in trouble or when he wishes to express gratitude, he burns a candle to the domestic *santo*. But he also burns a candle to the patron, San Diego (Redfield and Villa 1934:107).

With this we see that nearly 20 percent of the families at the time of the first study were reported to have had their own private domestic saints.

The three main community saints, including the patron San Diego, were located in the *oratorio*, or public chapel (Redfield and Villa 1934:108): "Three *santos* represent the village at large and are housed in the *oratorio*: San Diego, the Holy Cross, and the *Niño Dios*. If the village is threatened by drought or disease, the inhabitants turn first to San Diego, and then to the Holy Cross; but never to another *santo*. If an individual is in trouble, he will seek the aid of the same *santo*."

Redfield (1934:109) emphasized an interpretation of the community saint as "a guardian of the village, of whom any member of the community may ask aid, and to whom are addressed many of the petitions arising from communal need." He de-emphasized the significance of the fact that even the most important of these saints were owned by particular individuals:

The actual images in the *oratorio* belong to particular individuals. San Diego belongs to the son of one of the founders of the village. The little figure of the *Niño Dios* belongs to another. A third man owns the chromolithograph of the Three Kings. The *Santa Cruz* is the property of a fourth [the son of an "early settler"]. . . . If the village should be broken up and abandoned, each of these owners would claim his property. Nevertheless San Diego, and to a lesser extent the other *santos*, are thought of as representing not their individual owners or their families, but the entire village (Redfield and Villa 1934:109.)

Only two of the families owning the important *oratorio* effigies were identified (Redfield 1950:93): Tamay and Pat. It is difficult to believe that some measure of religious prestige did not accrue to the recognized owners of these important community saints, which could be claimed as the private property of their particular individual owners.

Villa (1934:314) noted one advantage shared by those who owned domestic household saints: "At night, besides the novena held in the *oratorio*, there was another in Don Trano's house, in gratitude to the Señor Dios for the good condition of his milpas. These private novenas express the desire to obtain from the Lord better favors than one's neighbors."

It must be recognized that the lack of complete information provided about the families owning domestic and *oratorio* saints weakens the support for the contention that social class differences were involved in the stratification of religious worship in Chan Kom. Nevertheless, it does seem highly likely that differential ownership of the *oratorio* and domestic saints, and the differential worship of the latter, did constitute significant differences in religious practice among the members of the community. But it is certain only in two cases that these saints belonged to members of the same families already noted as "distinguished by wealth, property, and moral character" (Redfield and Villa 1934: 91).⁴

Food consumption: A similar reservation regarding the certainty of knowing what families are involved must be stated regarding the differential food consumption noted in the first study:

Low as is this standard of living, there is within it room for very marked variation

as one family is compared to another. Some people have sugar in their maize gruel every day and eat bread and drink chocolate several mornings in each week; while others know sugar, bread and chocolate as rare luxuries. Some enjoy a diet varied with beans and starchy root crops; while others subsist for days on tortillas alone (Redfield and Villa 1934:57).

Instead of otherwise identifying the families concerned, Redfield offered his usual type of interpretation: "It is difficult not to attribute most of these differences to corresponding individual differences in ability and initiative." However, it seems ever more difficult to believe that the advantages in food consumption were not enjoyed mainly by the same families who shared the other advantages already noted.

But there is no problem in identifying the four men considered important enough to attend the banquet given as part of the festivities in honor of Redfield on one of his visits to Chan Kom in 1931: "Only four people (Don Eus, Don Nas, Don Fano, and Don Tino) received the privilege, in honor of their deserts and virtues, of eating supper with this noted personage . . ." (Villa 1934:279). The family names of the gentlemen mentioned were, respectively, Ceme, Batun, Ceme, and Pat. Ignacio Batun (Don Nas) was described (Redfield and Villa 1934:212) as one of the three main village leaders, along with Don Fano and Don Eus.

POLITICAL STRATIFICATION

The leadership hierarchy: Redfield (1950:165) discussed the political life of Chan Kom as follows:

While men are to have equal opportunities, they are not to participate equally in political life. Chan Kom conceives of a hierarchy of power and responsibility, in which each man does the duty assigned him. Government, to them, is not a meeting of men who look each other levelly in the eye and in which each voice and vote counts as every other. Government is a fatherly discharge of responsibility by the powerful and the able for the benefit of all but with lesser men taking lesser places. . . . Obedience, without discussion of whys and wherefores, is a duty.

One of the village leaders is quoted (Redfield 1950:167) as having said: "I do not know that it is good to give the responsibility of running the village to all the people. I doubt that it is. There aren't enough people who are really able to manage public affairs. Chan Kom grew in the middle of the woods."

It seems quite evident from much of the preceding that the "most influential and wealthy" families of highest status, originally from the village of Ebtun, all but monopolized the official and unofficial positions of leadership: "The same great families, on the whole, that prevailed seventeen years ago, today provide the leadership" (Redfield 1950:87). The association between leadership and economic wealth is indicated in the following: "Men do respect and put confidence in those who have cattle and other wealth. These are the men to whom money may be safely lent, and these are the men who ought to maintain control of the public affairs of the village" (Redfield 1950:77).

But let us examine, as closely as the data permit, examples of the group of leading families realizing the goal of, in Weber's terms, "influencing a communal action."

Decision-making for "progress": The title of the second study, *A Village That Chose Progress*, refers to a series of events in which the actual choices were made by the village leaders:

Its leaders have determined upon a program of improvement and progress and have manifested a strong disposition to take advantage of the missionary educational efforts of the government and of the advice and assistance of the occasional American or Yucatecan visitor. No considerable opposition to this leadership has appeared; the inhabitants have, on the whole, supported the reform policy. The reforms have not been imposed upon the community from the outside; they have arisen out of the conviction of the village leaders and have been put into effect by the efforts of the people themselves (Redfield and Villa 1934:4-6).

One reason for the reported absence of any "considerable opposition to this leadership" seems to be that many of those who opposed it migrated. Redfield (1950:70) obtained data in 1948 "as to forty-two of the fifty families of 1931." Sixteen of these forty-two "had moved away" (as probably had at least some of the other eight about which no information was obtained). Further information appears in the following (Redfield 1950:68-69):

The national census in 1930 was made in the village by Villa, then schoolteacher; it showed 251 inhabitants. In 1935 Steggerda counted 244. The decrease was probably real: this was the period in which severely arduous collective labor was required by the village authorities of all citizens in accomplishing public works, and on this account several families left the village. . . .

The departure of certain families in the years from 1930 to 1935 increased the homogeneity. At that time the leaders insisted with zeal and firmness on the building of schools and roads, and those citizens who had little taste for making progress at such a cost withdrew to other settlements.

But perhaps "little taste for making progress at such a cost" represents the legitimate value position of the "humbler folk" of low status (Redfield and Villa 1934:92). And their migration might be interpreted as a political response to the program of communal action being urged on the community by a leadership representing the values and interests of the high status families.

A closer look at the issues in dispute indicates that they were related to some of the sociocultural differences already noted. The following events occurred in the period 1917-1926 (Redfield and Villa 1934:25-30; Redfield 1950:1-13). A group of the village leaders, members of the families which had been prominent in the village of Ebtun, went to the city of Merida to the revolutionary governor of Yucatan, Felipe Carrillo Puerto, "to ask him to provide furniture for their little school. He told them that there was furniture only in the pueblos and that, if his visitors would turn their settlement into a pueblo, he would see that they got their furniture. They told Carrillo Puerto that they did not want to do this" (Redfield 1950:7).

They soon changed their position and decided to accept the conditions necessary to make Chan Kom a pueblo. But why had these conditions led them to hesitate in the first place?

Carrillo, and his successors, were concerned with improving both the condition of the rural Indian population and the organization of their own political party, the Socialist Party of Yucatan. Both of these interests were represented in

the three main conditions they insisted on for the recognition of Chan Kom as a pueblo:

1. the acceptance by the village of ejido lands, thus demonstrating the implementation of a program of agrarian reform.

2. the establishment of a local chapter of the Socialist Party, or *Liga Local*, to support the program of this revolutionary party in Yucatan.

3. the reconstruction of the village in the form of a Spanish-American town, with the construction of "pretty stone houses" and a public building (*cuartel*) relocated around a central plaza and grid system of streets, thus aiding the advance of progress into a remote Indian village.

But, from another point of view, this constituted an expansion of urban controls and cultural influence into the rural village culture represented by Chan Kom. Redfield (1950:6) pointed out that the acceptance of a governmentally established ejido, with "formal recognition of their rights to certain communal lands" carried "the implication that other lands also convenient for the making of milpa were not available to Chan Kom and with the prospects of extending regulation of the affairs of the settlement by outside authority." And, as noted previously, the ejido land was so poor that most of the cultivation had to be done outside it.

About the local chapter of the Socialist Party, we have the following:

The *Liga* . . . discharges few functions of interest or value to the villagers. It exists, along with hundreds of other local *Ligas*, for the benefit of the political organization which controls the State of Yucatan. . . . The functions of the Chan Kom *Liga* are, therefore, in large part perfunctory, so far as the real interests of the villagers are concerned. The villagers would not be without their *Liga*, if they could, because it is a symbol of their status as a pueblo—recognized by "las autoridades." And it does give them a claim upon the aid of these "autoridades." At the same time, it is something of a burden (Redfield and Villa 1934:105-106).

Furthermore, party dues had to be collected in the village and turned in at meetings of the party in Merida (Redfield 1950:9).

Remaking a bush village into a pueblo of Spanish appearance involved considerable work:

They cut down trees from the land around the cenote and used the dynamite given them to blast away the rocky hills. Here they would make a plaza. Streets were sketched out in the uneven and stony bush; some of the inhabitants moved their thatched huts down to face upon the streets; the one man in the village who knew something about the mason's art began to build the first houses of stone and mortar upon the clearing that would be the plaza (Redfield 1950:12).

In short (Redfield 1950:1), to become a pueblo "meant to adopt many of the ways and political forms and ambitions of townspeople." It meant accepting "the tools, leadership, and conceptions of progress" then being promulgated by the new governmental officials in Merida. So it is hardly surprising that the people of the bush village of Chan Kom hesitated to embark upon this new course of action and change in way of life. "The hesitation of these settlers to accept the proposal of the revolutionary leaders that Chan Kom become a pueblo probably arose from their fear of losing the independence they had won on the frontier. The new community was disposed to turn its attention to the

land of old meanings and new resources. The people wanted chiefly to be let alone" (Redfield 1950:6).

Then why was the decision finally made to leave the traditional way of life of the bush village in favor of becoming a pueblo? Redfield (1950:7) did not seem to be fully satisfied that he understood the complete explanation: "What has been told me of the making of the decision is not enough to show just how and why the ultimate decision was made." At one point he even modified his usual emphasis on the uniqueness of the event:

The resentment of the people of Ebtun against the disobedient and thriving daughter-settlement was correspondingly strong. Sooner or later nearly every settlement containing a score or more of houses in this part of Yucatan became a pueblo, or tried to, under leadership provided from the city and under the stimulus of ambition and desire for material advantage. What is notable is the unusual zeal with which the Chan Kom people, above all others in the neighborhood, worked to attain their objective and the outstanding success they achieved (Redfield 1950:22).

But certain considerations do seem to have favored the course of action which was finally adopted.

It will be recalled that Chan Kom settlers originally from the village of Ebtun had been prominent in the affairs of that community. Then (Redfield and Villa 1934:27, 213), "there was a schism in Ebtun while Chan Kom was still an unimportant *ranchería*," and "one Ebtun faction, with its cornfields at Chan Kom" took over the leadership of the latter community. One element in the factional dispute was the resentment of those with corn fields in Chan Kom at being ordered to return to Ebtun, nearly 30 miles away, to perform *jagina*, a contribution of labor to the community, such as working on public works or being a policeman.

If Chan Kom should be recognized by the new government of Yucatan as a pueblo, it would have its own governmental officer, its *comisario*, and could then compel public service in Chan Kom itself under its own officers. Then its men would no longer have to carry their dried tortillas nine leagues through the bush to Ebtun to labor on public works in that now half-hostile community. . . . To accept the proposals of the state authorities would be to assume new obligations, but it would make them free of Ebtun (Redfield 1950:8).

After the new pueblo of Chan Kom was presented with its own ejido lands in 1926, this mark of its successful bid for independence was greeted by increased hostility from Ebtun (Redfield and Villa 1934:29). Attempts to kill Chan Kom cattle and destroy its corn fields were reported. In 1928 "men from Ebtun lay in the bush around Chan Kom; for a week Chan Kom was in a state of siege." But all was said to have ended amicably.

Thus, the main immediate advantage in making Chan Kom a pueblo appears to have been to obtain its independence from Ebtun. The violent response to this achievement by the faction remaining in control of Ebtun suggests that the independence of Chan Kom may well have been interpreted as another reciprocal act of hostility in the factional dispute already well under way. The reference in the previous quotation to Chan Kom as "disobedient" implies that those in Chan Kom may not have been complying fully with the

orders to contribute labor to Ebtun. This disobedience may in turn have been a response to unreasonable demands: we learn (Redfield and Villa 1934:79-80) that the political head of a pueblo may impose extra tasks on certain individuals as punishment for previous reluctance to contribute labor, or only because he becomes suspicious of their attitude and wishes to test their willingness to cooperate. The authorities remaining in control of Ebtun may have ordered members of the opposing faction in Chan Kom to contribute labor to Ebtun excessively often. It appears quite possible that the Ebtun authorities would have had relatively little interest in, or even knowledge of, the Chan Kom settlers originally from other villages or haciendas.

In any case, it does seem likely that the leading families of Chan Kom, which constituted the dissident Ebtun faction, would have been much more oriented toward events in Ebtun and desirous of independence than those who had never lived there. Having lost control of the sociopolitical hierarchy of Ebtun, they could now look forward to the establishment and control of a similar hierarchy in a Chan Kom given the political status of a pueblo. The fact that they were successful would seem to demonstrate the kind of social "power" oriented toward "influencing a communal action" which, following Weber, constitutes an example of an interest group operating within a context of political stratification. It does seem doubtful that everyone in a "village of primitive agriculturalists . . . carrying on their lives according to tradition" (Redfield 1950:23) would have supported the course of action which was finally adopted.

At any rate, everyone in the community was not always invited to discuss the plans being prepared for them. Villa (1934:286) noted the following: "In the evening, having been notified previously by Don Eus, ten of the principal citizens of the place met at Don Eus's house in order to hold a 'secret conference' upon various matters of general interest, such as the building of a school house and opening up a road to connect this village with Chichen Itza."

Villa (1934:317-323) also described one case in which three brothers, each head of a household, protested to governmental officials of higher rank than any in Chan Kom, that, in the words one of these addressed to a meeting in Chan Kom: "I have heard that you cannot tend your milpas as you ought because the *comisario* is always wanting to make public improvements, without considering that you have families and children to feed." According to the account, the visiting official seems to have been shouted down by members of the leading families of Chan Kom.

We are not given many details of the opposition to the previously discussed development of *de facto* private ownership of ejido lands by a number of the wealthiest families. Nor are we told how this opposition to destroying a tradition which protected such important rights was overcome. But this would appear to have been another example of a general pattern: Important decisions influencing the general life of the community were determined by, and decided in the interests of, the minority of families in the top ranks of the economic, status, and political dimensions of the social stratification system of the community.

Needless to repeat, this interpretation differs from that of Redfield, who

preferred to emphasize the united action of a homogeneous community, led by a few gifted individuals. Here is a view provided by Redfield (1956a:101-102) from the perspective of one of his last works:

This . . . is the story of how these villagers, leaders and followers, made up their minds to do something and then did it. The unity of the history lies in the central fact of the conspicuous collective effort of these people to make their community the progressive chief community of their region. . . . It seems to me that from the first of my acquaintance with these people I saw this purpose and its uncertain outcome to be the axis of interest in the community that any persistent observer would have. The villagers I associated with most closely were the men most committed to this effort. But then they were the leaders of the community, and I found them the most interesting men.

CONCLUSION

The reexamination of the data on Chan Kom offered here suggests a basic reinterpretation of the social life of that community. Instead of the classless homogeneity emphasized by Redfield, we find a heterogeneity significant for the lives of the people of the community and associated with the type of economic, status, and political stratification conceptualized by Weber.

It is noteworthy that this reinterpretation suggested for the social life of Chan Kom is similar in important respects with that offered by Lewis for Tepoztlán. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of Lewis's findings. But the fact that he noted a similar tendency on Redfield's part to overemphasize "evidence of homogeneity rather than heterogeneity" (Lewis 1951:432) is additional support for the contention that this overemphasis was a persistent characteristic of Redfield's view of the village community.

A clue to one possible reason for this apparent bias in Redfield's viewpoint may be inferred from the following. Lewis (1951:421) discussed a difference between Redfield and himself regarding the conceptualization of culture. Lewis preferred to define the concept of culture to include behavior, while Redfield tended to give behavior less importance, defining culture primarily in terms of "conventional understandings" (Redfield 1941:132). Also, Redfield (1953:x-xi) noted the influence on his thinking of Whitehead: "His treatment of some great historic changes in the ways men have come to use their minds has contributed to the organization of my thought its idealistic, rather than materialist, emphasis." And this emphasis may be seen in the characterization of a homogeneous society as one in which "the organized mental life of any individual tends to coincide at many points with the organized mental life of other individuals" (Redfield 1941:16). Perhaps Redfield's overemphasis on homogeneity in the life of the village community derived from a concern to find a coincidence of "conventional understandings" in the mental life of the villagers, accompanied by a de-emphasis on the significance of heterogeneity in material conditions and social organization.

It is not being suggested that a village community could exist without some coincidence of conventional understanding, nor that Redfield completely ignored differences in material and social conditions. Indeed, the evidence for the exist-

tence of these differences in Chan Kom was provided by Redfield himself. But what is at issue here is the emphasis which should be given to these differences in the interpretation of the social life of the village community.

Redfield's works have been very influential in disseminating the idea that homogeneity and classlessness are typical, or even omnipresent, characteristics of the non-primitive village community. The analysis presented here suggests that this is empirically problematical and should be investigated as such. There are indications of stratification in other such villages, e.g., the Andersons' (1962) analysis of village studies in some eleven European countries. Perhaps it is not classless homogeneity but rather some degree of structural heterogeneity deriving from the social stratification system which should be postulated as a basic characteristic of this type of community.

NOTES

¹Thanks are due to Arthur J. O. Anderson and George H. Weightman for helpful comments on this paper.

²Redfield (1956b:68) modified his usual depiction of Maya satisfaction with hard physical labor in a statement in one of his last works: "My report of Maya attitudes is on the whole an account of values these peasants see in agriculture; it does not report—something which is also a fact—that leisure is also desirable and that hard work is, if possible, to be escaped."

³The only other Chan Kom store (Redfield 1950:62–63) was "organized under the law which provides for co-operative retail stores" and thus was the only store exempt from paying taxes. The law required that "at least ten persons sign the papers of organization and constitute the co-operative." In this case, however, "all ten were found among the members of one of the principal families. It is not surprising that it is not fully regarded as a community enterprise."

⁴After these lines were written, a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research made possible a trip to Chan Kom during the summer of 1964. There it was learned that the four images in the oratorio belonged respectively to the Cemes, Pats, Tamays, and Ignacio Batun, another of the prominent leaders of Chan Kom. Contrary to Redfield's report (1950:93), the patron San Diego was owned not by the Tamays but by the Cemes, except for the period of about three years in the early 1930's when the Cemes were Protestant.

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