PAN PA’ HOY – HAMBRE PA’ MAÑANA

On processes of change in an agricultural village on Costa del Sol

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about processes of modernization and social change. I focus on some of the motivations and implications of current land management practices among the inhabitants of a coastal village in Andalucia, Spain. These small time land-owners seek economic development through the influx of foreigners from Northern Europe. A characteristic of small-time farmers is their willingness to adopt a variety of strategies in order to provide for the household. The current social and economic situation favours certain manoeuvres. I explore how local values affect and in turn are affected by the choices of action the inhabitants make. There are both intended and unintended consequences of these choices, and I make a connection between micro level acts of individuals and the patterns of society on the macro level.

The second theme of this thesis is that there are ‘boundaries’ between groups of people, and that these are often accentuated when interaction becomes regular, following Barth’s theory on ethnic organization. The presence of ‘the Other’ raises awareness of ‘the Self’. It becomes important to the local people to maintain unchanged certain traditions and local identity. Despite plenty of interaction between the local people and the foreigners in the public sphere, personal bonds are rare. Stereotypes are maintained and continuously re-affirmed. I show how the moral that guides interaction among ‘insiders’ to the village community is different to that which is applied to the relationship between the local inhabitants and the foreign residents. Tying together the economic and the social aspects, I show that an ethnic dichotomization is necessary in order to morally justify making a profit on the foreigners, thereby continuing the positive economic development of the area.
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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Presentation of the thesis

This thesis is about processes of modernization and social change. More specifically I
will focus on some of the motives and implications that shape and are shaped by current
land management practices among the inhabitants of the minifundist village Torrox in
Andalucia, Spain. ‘Minifundist’ means that the land largely belongs to small-time
farmers. These peasant landowners seek economic development through the influx of
foreigners and foreign currency, mainly from Northern Europe. I explore how local
values affect and, in turn, are affected by the choices the inhabitants make. There are both
intended and unintended consequences of these choices. I will show what kinds of
relationships exist between the local inhabitants and the foreign residents, and I will give
an analysis of some of the factors that affect the character of these relationships.

Spain has made a rapid transformation from isolated dictatorship, under General
Francisco Franco Bahamonde (1936-1975), to fully pledged democratic EU-member
today. In 1959 the borders were “opened up” and foreign investment was facilitated by
the government. Certain areas, especially the Costa del Sol, have literally been colonized
(the expression is taken from O’Reilly 2000, Jurdao 1990 and Los Sitiados 1998) by
German, British, American and Scandinavian companies, investors and private persons,
who all want a part of the sun and the beach (see for example Barke, Towner and Newton
1996, Jurdao 1990, O’Reilly 2000, Nogués Pedregal 1996). Land has been the main
resource of the Costa del Sol and the basis for tremendous investment and a continuous
influx of foreign currency. This economic process has affected all aspects of local life.
Moreover, the selling of land over the last thirty to fourty years has had geographical and
social repercussions in many areas of Spain. Andalucians are generally known as
agricultural workers who have always been conscious of the value of land, and therefore
reluctant to sell. However, over this period large parts of the Andalucian coastline, as well
as inland villages, have been sold to foreign investors.
The Spanish have not been passive bystanders in this process. They have actively taken part in this transformation – on both governmental and individual levels – and have welcomed the economic prosperity. However, they may not always have been conscious of possible negative outcomes, of which there is today a stronger awareness. A dilemma for any touristic area that seeks economic profit is to balance excess touristic activity with environmental and social costs (Robinson 1996).

A characteristic of small-time farmers or peasants1 is their multivocality – their ability and willingness to adopt a variety of strategies in order to provide for the household. In addition to subsistence production they take part in other economic activities, and are integrated into a wider economic, political and social system. Small-time landowners of Torrox look to go beyond subsistence production and demonstrate such an adaptation to the agricultural and economic conditions of their area within modern Spain. Although they own land and to an extent still cultivate it, the “supplementary” activities have taken on “more importance, both in terms of labour time and household income, than agriculture itself” (Barfield 1997: 352). The necessary knowledge for small-time landowners of today, in order to provide for their families, goes beyond purely agricultural knowledge. They must navigate within a wider system of factors they do not themselves control.

I approached my field with certain questions in mind: What are the local values tied to land tenure and property? What motivates small time farmers to sell property they have inherited? How do these individual choices affect the community and the social relationships of the village? Who are the new owners, and what do the local inhabitants make of them – are friendships created and do they interact? What does interaction between local inhabitants and the foreigners bring about? How do property sales relate to or affect the local value systems? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the new situation as seen by the local people? This thesis seeks to answer some of these questions.

1 Peasants are small-scale agricultural producers organize into households that rely on family labor in a subsistence-oriented economy that is nevertheless a part of a larger state system that extrancts various forms of rent from the communities it controls (Barfield 1997: 352)
Some definitions

The local inhabitants of Torrox call their village a ‘minifundist’ village. The large majority of cultivated plots in Torrox are between 0,1 and 5 hectares, and nearly all cultivated land is cultivated by its owner (SOPDE 1998). Nearly every family owns land; I did not meet any local inhabitant who does not. This stands in contrast to the rest of Andalucia, which has been dominated by latifundism, that is, areas of large fincas owned by a rich señor(ito), who hires others to work the land for him. Socially and economically, this means that Torrox is rather egalitarian compared to many inland villages that are characterised by strong hierarchies and great economic differences between their inhabitants. Typical of the landscape of Torrox is the division of the land into small plots, which gives it a distinct physical appearance. The owner of each plot decides its use.

Throughout this thesis I use the terms ‘chalet’ and ‘cortijo’. This calls for a short explanation. Cortijo is the traditional Andalucian name for a small, rustic country house where people used to stay while working their land, although they lived in the village. These buildings have thick concrete walls to keep them cool and only a minimum of facilities; generally, no water, no electricity and no bathroom. The foreigners who invest in property along Costa del Sol generally want comfort. This means that although their houses may not be very large and are generally built in the traditional Andalucian style, they always have the aforementioned facilities as well as a terrace and sometimes a swimming pool. These countryside homes are what the Spanish call ‘chalets’. However, many Spanish cortijos have been built over the last years since the influx of foreigners to the Torroxenean countryside, and these follow this new standard. Today, the Spanish cortijo is used not only as a dwelling during agricultural seasons, but also as a leisure home. Even old cortijos are now being renovated to comply with the new standards of modern comfort. This means that in practice there is little difference between the foreigners’ ‘chalets’ and the Spanish ‘cortijos’, and a newcomer passing through the countryside will often not be able to tell whether a certain house belongs to a Spanish or a foreigner. Still, the Spanish themselves always refer to the countryside house of a
foreigner as a chalet, and the Spanish-owned equivalent as a cortijo. Throughout my analysis I maintain this distinction.

The tourist sector is difficult to delimit clearly, because it spills over into many areas of the economy, social life and social organization. Additionally, social scientists often claim that defining a tourist is a difficult matter and use “different definitions depending on what area of tourism they are studying” (Johnsen 1997: 20, my translation). Johnsen sets up the dichotomies work/leisure, toil/pleasure, duty/freedom in combination with her understanding of emic categorization from her experiences in Nepal. This works well for both Johnsen’s and my own study, and it serves to explain the “liminal phase” or “antistructural behaviour” of tourists that Døving (1993) and Johnsen (1997) both analyze. This dichotomization is also relevant in Torrox, where tourists or foreign residents lead a life quite different from the local inhabitants, characterized by leisure and freedom.

For my own purpose of distinguishing ‘insiders’ from ‘outsiders’ in a local context, emic perspectives are fundamental. A theoretical distinction between the ‘tourist’ and the ‘permanent resident foreigner’ is, in my case, useful and can be done by reference to intention or time spent in a place. We may say that a ‘residential foreigner’ is someone who either owns or rents a property on a long-term basis with no plans of, or a fixed date for, returning permanently to his home country. A ‘tourist’ is someone visiting for a fixed amount of time, and often as a limited vacation. As members of this second group only visit for a short period of time, their needs and demands are not the same as those of foreigners who live permanently in their own homes in a foreign country. Traditional tourists seek recreation and experiences that are different from their everyday lives - good beaches and restaurants, sights, hiking tracks and scenery, local authenticity or whatever else makes their holiday pleasant - while a resident foreigner will also look for other things such as good health care, schools or the availability of food from their home country. ‘Permanent resident’ or ‘residential foreigner’ are, however, flexible terms, as even those who consider themselves as living in Spain often spend time, from a few weeks to several months every year, in their original home country, where they may still
own property. In practice the individual foreigner forms part of what, to the local eye, is a more or less homogenous group. Local inhabitants classify all these foreigners by the criteria Pedregal uses: They are outsiders who are “strange to the village cultural environment” (Pedregal 1996: 59). Local inhabitants tend to use the term 
extranjero (foreigner) whether they are talking about someone visiting for two weeks or living permanently in Torrox (I will return to the emic classifications in chapter 6). Northern European visitors are seen as a group that can be stereotyped. The mass of individuals who adopt a “liminal identity” and behave accordingly fall outside the regular environment of local villagers, creating anonymity and dissociation. In accordance with an emic description, I focus on the us-them opposition in the social world of the local people, which is present in most encounters between local inhabitants and outsiders, whether tourists or permanent residents. Although these two groups obviously affect local people in different manners, I will not bring these differences explicitly into my analysis. I am, of course, aware that villages which experience mainly charter tourists may more actively use the term tourist, but this is hardly relevant in my case.

Theoretical background and analytical framework

I have drawn on various theoretical and ethnographical studies. My overall analytical approach is drawn from Fredrik Barth’s process analysis. Ethnographically, I have used literature on tourism, and in particular that carried out in Spain, as well as studies of agricultural change. I have also drawn on written material from the area; local literature, reports and analyses, tourist brochures, newspaper and magazine articles, and informational websites.

Tourism has not traditionally been a field of much interest among anthropologists. Although both foreign and native anthropologists have conducted research in Spain before, during and after Franco’s rule, these have generally focused on local communities, the pueblo, while “outsiders are often ignored or seen as intrusive and modernisation is blamed for the disappearance of local culture” (Waldren 1996: xi). The assumption may have been that not much could be said about a subject that “everybody knows something
about” (O’Reilly 2000), or simply that anthropologists have preferred to study more “exotic” topics than mass tourism. It is only during the last 10-15 years that local reactions and changes due to the influx of tourists have engaged anthropologists.

Boissevain comments that there is little friction between tourists and natives in the Mediterranean in summer, because both are “celebrating their leisure” and enjoying the sun, sea, relaxation and partying (Boissevain 1996: 6). Tension mounts when the local inhabitants return to their regular life, while the outsiders continue in the holiday mode. This also implies that the ways in which foreign residents affect local inhabitants may differ from that of tourists, which I intend to show.

With the growing number of outsiders present within Spanish communities, anthropologists and other scholars have become increasingly aware of and interested in the dynamics of the new social settings. Many recent studies focus on how the meeting with outsiders raises awareness of local culture and identity in the community, and in this way the people find continuity in a situation of drastic changes. Jacqueline Waldren (1996), for example, shows how outsiders are incorporated into village life on many levels, yet excluded from others, such as local politics and the internal social organisation. By creating such a dichotomy between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, local solidarity expresses a renewed awareness of local identity (Waldren 1996). Christian Lindknud (1998) points to the fact that the interests of local inhabitants regarding the direction of local development are often very different from the wishes of the visitors and newcomers. While foreigners seek the romanticism of a traditional lifestyle, local inhabitants generally wish for development and modern facilities (Lindknud 1998). Some researchers focus on the potential tension in the relationship between guests and hosts, which is often due to their unequal economic means and their different views of the encounter: Tourists “can afford to buy the services upon which the local economy depends” (Boissevain 1996: 4). Antonio Nogués Pedregal (1996), in his study of a coastal village in southern Andalucia, quotes local inhabitants’ complaints about how the increased arrival of tourists in the summer obliges the villagers to show them special consideration by acting differently from the rest of the year, by, for example, making less noise at night or by not walking in the middle of the street where visitors want to drive their cars. It is also worth
mentioning that some tourism studies consider issues arising from the fact that part of the experience of travelling is to “escape from established routines...and the behavioural codes that rule their daily lives” (Boissevain 1996:4), which means visitors often behave in ways incomprehensible and unacceptable to local inhabitants. Runar Døving (1993) explores this “liminality” that tourists experience when switching into a “holiday mode” where neither the norms of their home country nor those of the host country need to be followed, thus making room for behaviour not accepted in either society. Karen O’Reilly (2000) argues that this liminality gives many of the British ex-patriots in her study a sense of freedom, which is actually one of the main motives for their settling on Costa del Sol. What becomes clear through all of these studies is that the relationship between guests and hosts is generally a complex and many-faceted affair.

Among the theoretical works that I have chosen to use, a few stand out as having been more important before, during or after my fieldwork. Two works by Davydd J. Greenwood (Greenwood, 1976 and 1972) helped me untangle some of my data upon returning from the field. Greenwood shows how a few changes and investments made agriculture much more profitable in a small village in Pais Vasco, but that the small time farmers were, despite this, abandoning their old way of life for less profitable urban employment (Greenwood 1976). He concludes that no purely quantitative analysis or simple assumptions about market mechanisms can form the basis for governmental planning and policy. Only in-depth cultural and social studies may reveal the complex reasons behind human choice, which in the end is a crucial factor in social change. In order to understand the complexity of human behaviour and the relationship between morality and economics, a cultural analysis is needed, with a focus on change and/or continuity of values. The paradoxes and dilemmas, the contradicting information of my data, became easier to understand while reading Greenwood’s observations and conclusions.

I had assumed that if the local inhabitants felt “invaded” by the large numbers of foreigners, they would naturally choose a course of action that would prevent them from being “swamped”. However, in the case of Torrox people seek economic profit, and this
aim is what guides their course of action, which is quite contrary to what Greenwood concluded in País Vasco in 1976. Greenwood found that the Basques, rather than seeking economic gain, chose the freedom of fewer responsibilities and shorter hours of a modern urban lifestyle because the commercialization of agriculture would otherwise make them “slaves” to market mechanisms. I found that the people of Torrox believe that money buys freedom and they act accordingly – thereby causing the arrival of more foreigners. Greenwood searches for the unchanged values that make people choose differently in a new and changed situation. He argues that the decline in the prestige of agriculture is due to farmers’ loss of independence, which in Basque culture is considered one of the most important factors in a man’s honour and dignity. In his paper on tourism he does, however, note that the economic effects are enormous (Greenwood 1972). Equally relevant is that Greenwood observes that while the number of farms declined, the number of villas increased. He does not conclude that tourism is the direct cause of this development, but we may assume that in combination with other factors, the arrival of outsiders is an important element. It was no longer a source of pride and honour to own a farm in Fuenterrabia in 1969, as it used to be: Young people preferred the freedom and modern identity of urban life, even if it meant economic disadvantages. Greenwood claims that the basques are “pursuing more fundamental goals” when abandoning farming in search of a “more dignified lifestyle” (whether they succeed is a different matter).

Another study of special significance for my own work is Jacqueline Waldren’s Insiders and Outsiders. Paradise and Reality in Mallorca (1996), in which the author shows great love for the village and the people of Deià, who have been a part of her life for thirty-five years. Her own observations, personal experiences and long-term relationships comprise an invaluable knowledge of and authority over her field. They make continuity and change a natural perspective for her analysis of local identity and cultural re-creation. Being a resident ‘outsider’ herself, she is in a position where she may make reflections about both parties in the meeting between foreigners and local inhabitants. Through the emic terms of Deianens, forasters and estrangers (people from Deià, outsiders from other parts of Spain, and foreigners), she describes how people label and group one another in a fluid and complex system of those on the inside of the social system of the
village versus outsiders. I found her classifications useful, and I will make use of the corresponding expressions in Torrox in the manner employed by the local inhabitants.

Waldren shows how the village of Deià has been able to continue as a community with its own symbolic boundaries, not despite but because of the presence of outsiders. The presence of “the Other” raises awareness of “the Self”. Her focus is on the society as a group rather than on individual actions within this system. An important point in her work is that “tradition is not inherited; it is a name given to something constantly being made” (Waldren 1996: xvi). This implies that both the form and content of the opposition between the local inhabitants and the foreigners change over time, but this opposition is constantly present. “Deianencs’ own lives, values, and experiences changed as the inside and the outside influences merged, split, mixed or confronted one another” (Waldren 1996: 247). Deianencs have let the outsiders become part of their everyday life, but they have held on to certain aspects of their own identity. In Torrox there are clear boundaries between the local people and the foreigners despite plenty of interaction in the public sphere. Personal bonds between members of these two groups are rare, and stereotypes are maintained and continuously re-affirmed by new incidents interpreted according to the existing schema.

Waldren does not give detailed empirical examples of interaction, but instead focuses on aspects of the local culture as a unit when analysing continuity and change. I have chosen to use individual informants’ own descriptions of events and experiences in order to give an analysis of how boundaries are maintained. In doing so I am basing my theories on a combination of their own understanding of situations, and the choices that are open to them, and my observations and formal data collected in the field. The merging of these two levels in my analysis contributes to supplying meaning to the patterns that emerge. The people of Deià share with their countrymen of Torrox the wish for modernization and economic development, as well as the ability to re-create their own society in the face of changes brought upon them from the outside world.

In Waldren’s study foreigners are set apart, but they may change status over time. An
important difference between Deià and Torrox is that the foreigners have been a part of the Mallorcan village for over a century, whereas Torrox has a much shorter history of sociability with foreigners. In Torrox *extranjeros*, so far, do not form a part of internal village life, and their “intrusion” to a certain extent creates difficulties. But *Torroxanos* are also merging tradition and modernity, internal values and outside influences, capitalism and nostalgia in a reflective blend, similar to that found by Waldren in Mallorca.

I have used the works of both Greenwood and Waldren as comparative material throughout my thesis.

Karen O’Reilly’s *The British on the Costa del Sol* provided some helpful facts about the geographical area of my research. Owing to her focus on the lives of British residents her work represents an opposite perspective within a similar setting. In my meetings with other Northern Europeans while in the field, I had the opportunity to check for myself many of her comments and arguments from the point of view of these ‘outsiders’. This added useful perspectives to the encounters between the local inhabitants and the foreign residents. Before entering the field I was aware of some of the difficulties and drawbacks I would face as a foreign fieldworker in this setting, and O’Reilly’s work made me even more alert. Similar to O’Reilly’s analysis of the British on Costa del Sol is Kissel’s description of the German colony at Torrox Costa. One of the interesting points in Kissel’s thesis is the Germans’ lack of integration and knowledge of Spanish, despite their permanent or long-term residence in Spain. Because my focus is on local life, seen from the local people’s point of view, I have chosen not to emphasize the foreigners’ perspectives, although my contact with this group gave me a fuller understanding of the meetings between the two groups. The discovering of different ‘worlds’ in the same ‘place’ has provided the theoretical evolution within anthropology with important contributions over the last few decades (Nielsen 1996), and I hope my thesis may add useful insights that complement studies which focus on the lives of immigrants or expatriots in their new homeland.
Individual and system

Spencer introduced the theory that social relations are contracts between individuals, which brought about a theoretical tension between social structure and the individual. Within anthropology, the move towards the study of individual action, away from the analysis of social systems as definite units, has been ongoing since the fifties when scholars such as Leach, Bateson and Barth started to criticise structural functionalism (Hylland Eriksen 1993: 87). A theory that focuses on the individual places its importance on how individuals use the resources within a system to maximize certain values of personal interest (Hylland Eriksen 1993). Barth would say that society is generated by individual actions, and these have the power to change social structures. Such an analysis provides an explanatory link between processes at the micro level, that is, the individual acts, and their social consequences, understood as the macro level.

According to Barth, macro-micro discrepancies are important elements in a process of change. Those factors that predicate acts cannot be assumed to correspond to the aggregate consequences of acts (Barth 1981: 80). Barth suggests that the dichotomy of act versus social system, or micro versus macro, must not be seen as different degrees of reality to be analyzed separately, but rather as different faces of reality; “...acts are conditioned by, and in turn together constitute, the aggregate level” (Barth 1981: 80). Accordingly, the analysis of acts and social systems must be a dialectic process connecting micro and macro levels. Patterns emerge when large groups of individuals carry out similar actions. Individual behaviour tends to fall within the frameworks of existing patterns and in this way reproduce society. However, individuals’ acts affect the aggregate level in ways that are not always easy to foresee. Individuals are always relatively free to choose to act contrary to the patterns, and innovative action entails change. Barth uses the term ‘entrepreneur’ for those innovative individuals who act as agents of change. If an unusual strategy has positive consequences, other actors may find this alternative more useful than the earlier norm and decide to follow this course of action. Through this process a new form or pattern emerges. For example, a particular road is always heavily congested with cars after office hours. One day a person decides to
try an alternative route and cuts out of the queue at a crossroads. The next day a few others follow to see if there is really something to gain. Before you know it, the alternative route is also congested. New patterns shape and affect a society in ways that one single occurrence does not, and they may “spill over” into many areas of a society to affect even those who do not take an active part in the process of change (in this case, for example, those living along the new alternative route, who now experience much more traffic in their neighbourhood). The directions of change are “social and interactional, not only cognitive” (Barth 1994: 87, my translation). They depend on the degree of acceptance they receive. That is, only advantageous and feasible alternative ideas carried out systematically will be institutionalized. An exploration of such alternative ways of action, therefore, may serve to indicate the values people hold. Along the Costa del Sol, over the last thirty years, individual actors (individuals or groups of individuals acting together) have made economic decisions that have proved extremely lucrative. Others, seeing the results, copy the same course of action. This in turn has caused social, environmental and economical changes.

I have found that both my own data and the examples of Greenwood and Waldren may be read with the theories of Fredrik Barth as an underlying analytical framework. Greenwood shows how unexpected changes come about because the young people of Fuenterrabia choose to act contrary to economic logic, and move towards wage work instead of continuing agricultural activity, although the latter is proven as more profitable. Waldren gives examples of local traditions, which are actively held alive in a process of change, through the efforts of individuals. My intention is to show the motivation behind land management; some of its outcomes, individuals’ reactions to these outcomes and their side-effects. I need, therefore, an analytical model that makes room for a dialectic relationship between these elements. Barth’s model for social organization seeks to catch the ongoing processes in society, in which the acts of individuals generate outcomes sometimes intended and sometimes not. These outcomes are, however, always observable rather than deduced or demonstrated as logical results of cultural and social factors. His theories are fruitful as devices for focusing on strategies. Barth uses the term ‘transaction’ to refer to observable events that take place between actors. The idea is that each
individual, through his rational actions, seeks to maximize certain values, and that interaction will be a form of negotiation. Society and its form are seen as the results of strategic actions (Hylland Eriksen 1993). Barth places emphasis on the terms ‘generative’ and ‘process’ (Barth 1981: 76), which are used to reflect the dynamics of such transactions. In Barth’s model, an ‘entrepreneur’ causes change by being innovative, by introducing a new way of doing something, and by imparting ideas that others will follow, within the already existing system. Barth sees this system as an ever-moving process, rather than a definite organism with certain functions and needs as in the manner of the structural functionalists. Barth’s model captures both the social patterns and the individual, and it creates a dynamic model, which makes it possible to explain outcomes not only in terms of certain preconditions. It also shows how these outcomes affect the preconditional factors, and so it explains change. Barth’s rational actor is present in the works of Greenwood, where individuals are shown to make choices that do not necessarily follow a logic that can be deduced from certain preconditions or their assumed outcomes. He is also present in that of Waldren, where individuals select which traditional elements of their culture to change and which to keep.

Those who have criticized the processual analysis of Barth and others, for example Østerberg, claim that the strong focus on the rational actor negotiating to maximize his own values ignores the fact that any individual acts within a system of common rules, conventions and values that already exist; the values he holds are social-cultural creations (Hylland Eriksen, 1993). In my analysis I use Barth’s model as a tool in trying to make the dialectical move between the current social and economic preconditions, individual acts and the consequences of these acts to demonstrate how individual intentions within a set context may create innovative action that brings about a continuous process of change. The aspects of system and actors are mutually connected and are dependent upon each other. I also place acts within the local moral system, and this brings in elements of reciprocal obligations. I will thus try to show how the term ‘transaction’ may be given different nuances, where the degree of maximization varies according to the moral principles for interaction with different groups of people.
Boundaries and contents

The presence of a large number of foreign residents in Torrox is a non-intended outcome of individuals’ real estate sales over the last 20 – 30 years. When large groups of ‘outsiders’ appear, a new situation occurs where interaction between individuals of different backgrounds take place. In his theories on ethnicity, Barth criticized the structural functionalistic focus on the culture-bearing aspects as a classificatory device, as this not only implies an ethnic group’s isolation from other peoples, but also its stable, unchanging traits over time. This would mean that membership depends on the exhibition of these traits, and that changes mean the disintegration of culture. Barth criticizes the assumption that boundaries are maintained by relative isolation from other groups, or that all the members of an ethnic group necessarily share one common culture. This would imply that they must demonstrate common characteristics of this culture in order to belong. Instead of resulting in acculturation, meetings often lead to accentuation of differences. According to his theory, ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification made by the actors themselves. The critical feature in his theory of boundary maintenance is this self-ascription; the claim to certain value orientations and the ascription by others, rather than a non-changing list of descriptive cultural traits. Barth’s perspectives open up for the continuity of dichotomization despite changes in cultural form, and in this way follow his theories on process and change.

As with tradition, identity is also subjected to a dual process of change and continuity. Barth’s perspective implies a shift in focus away from the comparison of the contents of cultures, which had been typical for the structural functionalist school. But although his focus is on the maintenance of boundaries, Barth agrees that declaring allegiance to a certain shared culture means one is willing to be judged by members of the group, which would also entail one demonstrating diacritical features (dress, language, lifestyle etc), as well as value orientations (Barth 1969). More recent studies have focused on globalization and its paradox: In a world where borders and boundaries are erased, travelling and migration are widespread, and individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact continuously in a shared physical space, people often feel a stronger
need to maintain and accentuate their ethnicity, their shared culture and their difference from other groups (Friedman 1990 in Eriksen 1993).

Although Waldren does not explicitly mention Barth, hers is an empirical example of how boundaries between categories of people are kept intact despite dynamic processes of change. Deianencs or Torroxenean people may adopt certain customs or values from the northern Europeans amongst them, and vice versa, but the us-them dichotomization remains. This shows how a negotiation between actors from the two groups takes place. ‘Transactions’ between individuals of different groups may take place on a daily basis without the individuals changing status as either ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’. This is possible because the dichotomization rests on ideas rather than descriptive traits. People do not only ascribe to themselves certain characteristics and value orientations. They also hold clear ideas about what ‘the others’ are, in opposition to themselves “[however] dissimilar the members may be in their overt behaviour” (Barth 1969: 256). Stereotyped characteristics sum up the moral constraints and perceived differences that guide ethnic organization. Another element in the maintenance of boundaries is the structuring of interaction in such a way that it is allowed only in certain sectors or domains of activity. Barth says that “inter-ethnic relations presuppose...a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact” in order to maintain cultural differences (Barth 1969: 258). In this thesis I will try to illustrate this by exploring the stereotypes the Torroxenean people have about foreigners, as well as how these stereotypes are continuously reconfirmed. I use reciprocity and local understanding of ‘generosity’ as a boundary marker which both structures interaction and forms a basis for the ascription of certain characteristics to ‘the other’.

In the field

The anthropological method is a procedure by which the fieldworker enters the world of the actors who give him the essential help to transcend his own categories (Barth 1981: 83). Long-term relationships and daily contact with the people in question make it possible to collect a different kind of data than that from quantitative methods. The idea,
introduced by Malinowski, is that through observation and participation the anthropologist internalizes and embodies some of the knowledge and values of the host society, which will give a depth to the analysis that pure observation and quantitative material could not accomplish.

My fieldwork in Torrox was carried out between January and August 2002. I was interested in finding out how the identity and lives of local inhabitants may be affected by their relationships with foreigners from other Western countries as well as with immigrants from Third World countries. I believed that these three groups would be easily distinguished and that I would have the opportunity to observe interaction between them. However, I soon discovered that while contact between local inhabitants and ‘outsiders’ is extensive on a formal level where goods and services are exchanged, personal ties are rare. Foreigners come and go, and although there may exist a slight interest for both parties in establishing friendships this is prevented by; the fluctuant, transient character of the lives of particularly foreign residents from Europe; the differences in lifestyle, moral values and interests; and above all, poor language skills. In the case of the immigrants, many of them are illegal and/or living and working under conditions that made it difficult for me to observe them on a daily basis (prostitutes, illegal labour hidden away by their contractor, and household “slaves” locked up in private homes). The issue of immigrants did not have any place in the lives of most of my informants. During the course of the fieldwork I therefore turned my focus towards land ownership, because I realized that land is the basic resource for both economic and moral processes of change in Torrox, and it is also an issue with direct influence over the lives of individual Torroxeneans.

As I am from Northern Europe, I feared I would be hindered in my search for ‘inside information’ and taken for ‘just another foreigner’. Furthermore, this would prevent me from sufficiently ‘participating’ and establishing relationships of trust that would allow me the ‘informed consent’ of my informants. At the beginning it was difficult for me to just ‘sit back and absorb the atmosphere’, which some fieldworkers have reported as an efficient means of data-gathering (Nielsen 1996). How would I gain access to local
opinions regarding ‘my’ group of people (foreign residents)? I was an outsider with all the characteristics of other outsiders: I would spend six months in Spain without any evidence of wage-earning work, I was blonde and fair-skinned, I would have my midday meal on the terrace instead of inside the house, and at a different hour from my Spanish neighbours, and I was a mother living abroad on my own instead of under the moral and economic protection of my parents or a husband. Access to data may be hindered by many factors. If the anthropologist is automatically classified as belonging to a group opposed to the one under study, people will watch what they say and do in her presence. Her approach may not be appropriate, either.

In his study on poverty and substance abuse in Spanish Harlem (New York), Bourgois (1995) gives an example. After more than two years in the field, Bourgois committed the disastrous error of accidentally humiliating one of his key informants when he, in the midst of a ‘street scene’, brought in his anthropologist self with all its middle class Anglo-American presumptions. His thorough knowledge of the field and his having been accepted by the local inhabitants could not totally erase his background or his reason for being there. Reminding his informants of their relative positions caused a breakdown in communication.

My main asset which set me apart from most other tourists and resident foreigners was my command of the Spanish language. Moreover, the house I rented is owned by a foreigner who had already established a certain relationship with some of the neighbours on the street, and this facilitated my initial contact with them. I managed to create for myself a role of ‘insider-outsider’ or ‘privileged stranger’ (Pelto and Pelto 1970: 189).

From day one I actively sought information and tried to penetrate relevant arenas in areas outside my neighbourhood. I participated in many meetings at the local church and volunteered at an immigrant center nearby. I arranged interviews with school directors and public officials (such as economic counsellors, employees at the town hall, the “Cultural House”, the unemployment office, the tourist information center, the agricultural office) as well as business managers, real estate agents and workers and
volunteers at centres for immigrants or the poor. In this way I gathered factual material on the local use of the campo and on the presence of ‘outsiders’ through interviews in formal settings. During these interviews I also took keen note of values and opinions that were revealed through the statements of the person being interviewed.

My material reflects the areas that were important to my informants at the time. Nevertheless, my examples provide limited information, taking the complexity of changes or processes in the village into consideration. The most important arena for my discussion is ‘el campo’, as this is the basic resource for the processes of change. It sentimentally and economically forms part of every villager’s life, and also set the backdrop for many fruitful conversations with my informants.

Contrary to what I had first believed, much of my data could be gathered simply through informal interaction with and observation of the people who eventually accepted me as as a neighbour and a friend, which included painters and builders, real estate sales persons, farmers, widows, and mothers at the local school where my five-year old son was enrolled. A great deal of my knowledge about local as well as private/family matters has been obtained through the conversations between local inhabitants in my presence, among them my informants, or through interviews and personal conversations. For example, while visiting an informant’s cortijo, I would ask about when it was built, how the land was obtained, whether the family cultivates the land, if they ever hire help to do so, what they do with the produce, whether they would be willing to sell or had ever sold pieces of land, and in such case to whom, etc. My questions very often spurred my informants to tell me more than what I enquired about. Such additional information included whom the neighbouring plots or houses (chalets/cortijos) belong to, the history of their own as well as others’ plots, the hardship of earlier years, their opinion of agricultural work and their feelings regarding their land. I found that many of my informants were not only very willing to give the information I asked for, but even eager to explain things I would not, on my own initiative, have mentioned – such as how they fulfill the minimum requirements or bend the rules in order to collect subsidies or to build a chalet or cortijo.
In an attempt to be hospitable and friendly in order to make the necessary contact for data collection, I opened my doors to all of my neighbours - which no foreigner had ever done, according to them - with the result that I at times felt swamped. I was certainly ‘whoring for data’ (Adler in Nielsen 1996: 156) by allowing my privacy to be invaded to an extent I would never have accepted in my own home environment. However, without, to a certain extent, erasing the border between my private person and the fieldworker, I probably would have remained ‘just another foreigner’ and would not have gained access to, for example, the underlying value system and private opinions regarding foreigners, and my work would have been of a different character. Instead, I was allowed to form part of their regular daily lives, where discussions about foreigners, their personal choices, their land management and economic manoeuvres, as well as other issues of importance to them were natural subjects.

Analytically, the switching between the more formal arenas and the informal has proven useful as it has given me complementary types of information. The different information from the official versus the personal spheres (not to be confused with public and private spheres!) uncovered discrepancies and controversies that have become important points in my analysis. My qualitative material has been complemented by quantitative information, which I obtained from local governmental institutions or elsewhere.

While in the field, the insights I obtained about fraud or corruption made me question my ‘position’. I was peeking into the illegal or semi-legal aspects of local life, which meant I had gained confidence of the people, but I knew I would be using this information in my thesis. Although I had explained my purpose of being there, my neighbours soon began to see my work as what I did when I left the street to talk to other people, while they themselves confided in me in ways that brought me into a moral dilemma. As Beattie notes, this confidence must be respected, but “no hard and fast rules can be laid down...” (Beattie 1965 in Pelto and Pelto 1978: 186). The constant ‘presence of two purposes’ – that of participation and that of observation (Nielsen 1996: 65) – made me at times feel like a spy, preying on people’s confidence.
I have sought away out of this dilemma through anonymization. As the actual village of Torrox is rather small and transparent, and many local inhabitants know where I resided and whom I spent my time with, my informants would be easily recognizable if I were to give accurate descriptions of them. Although I refer to corruption, fraud or informal economy, several times throughout the thesis, as commonplace and accepted – something “everybody knows” about – I do not want to risk this being a document connecting certain individuals to particular acts. I have therefore chosen to anonymize by merging several persons into one character, altering names and tying incidents from one person’s life to another character. Some of my empirical examples are therefore composite extractions. I do not feel that this changes the validity of my examples, as they are presented as I observed them or as they were told to me.

The structure of the thesis

In the next chapter, I set the scene for my observations and analysis through an introduction to the village of Torrox in its historical and geographical context.

In chapter three, I give empirical examples of individual strategies within the framework of the existing system and the current economic situation. Through an outline of the economic opportunities of these small-time farmers today, it will become clear that they are balancing between the insecurity of the labour market and the gold mine of their inherited land. How best to make ends meet in the long-term, becomes a question each family must answer for themselves. Different strategies for pursuing this goal are applied, with varying success. This chapter may be seen as a movement from macro to micro, or, more specifically, I try to explain the individual acts by placing them within today’s economic circumstances.

Chapter four elaborates on the same theme, with a focus on land management. Governmental and individual plans and goals are not always the same, or even compatible. Local people feel they have the right to decide for themselves what to do with their inherited land, and they continually look for the ways that best benefit their families.
Through these two chapters, I will have given a certain insight into the practical aspects of the lives of local landowning inhabitants, as well as the values underpinning their actions.

In chapter five I look at the social relationships within the village. The village community is held together by moral obligations and mutual understandings of what Torroxeños (local inhabitants) are. Kinship and neighbourhood bonding control a major part of these people’s lives, and local inhabitants have their own moral idiom pertaining to the village’s internal relationships. This chapter will serve to further explain the individual choices I have described in the foregoing chapters. At the same time the chapter introduces the local values that people of Torrox mean set them apart from the foreigners amongst them.

Chapter six takes a closer look at some of the side-effects of the individual and household strategies outlined in chapters three and four, through the influx of foreigners. It seeks to explain the us-them dichotomy from the local inhabitants’ perspective. After chapter five’s outline of local values and morality, chapter six is meant to show how foreigners fall outside this system, making personal ties and commitments between local inhabitants and foreigners difficult. The empirical examples are taken from the lives of my informants and are re-told as they were told to me, but adding my reflections to the analysis. Open conflicts between local inhabitants and foreigners are rare, but my examples will show that there are indeed misunderstandings and conflicts of interests that tend to create and maintain stereotyped conceptions.

My conclusions will be drawn in chapter seven, when I tie together social reality with local values and opinions in order to give an analysis of the situation in Torrox today, with its dilemmas and paradoxes. The influx of foreigners through land sales has affected many aspects of the lives of local inhabitants. The change from subsistence oriented agricultural activity to capitalism and speculation has unintended and far-reaching consequences. However, many aspects of local life are kept intact, and foreigners do not enter into these spheres, although their presence in many ways contributes to their continuity.
Chapter 2. **TORROX – MEJOR CLIMA DE EUROPA**

“\La población de Torrox se comone de unas 970 casas de dos o más pisos, con calles irregulares y tortuosas que recuerdan su morisca construcción. Tiene dos plazas con alamedas y bancos de piedra…”

José Bisso (Crónica de la Provincia de Málaga, 1869)

The air is warm without being sticky and there is a slight breeze from the Mediterranean Sea. Sitting in the shade under the bamboo roofing on my terrace, I watch a Range Rover as it climbs slowly along the steep gravel road towards a large chalet with a huge terrace. There is a convertible in the driveway, and the orange trees on the plot form a semi-circle around a swimming pool. Behind my sunglasses, a vague smell of jasmine pleasing my mind, I imagine the view from up there. I let my eyes wander across the landscape. The house is nearly at the top of the hill to my left, which leaves the village lying below in the valley along the River Torrox with the Mediterranean coast right in front. The house faces south - on a clear day they can probably see the coast of Morocco…. I am interrupted in my daydreaming by a motorbike with no silencer shooting up the narrow street below my house, and, shortly after, two women shouting to each other from their roof terraces behind me. The contrast is startling. While the white houses in the village are clustered together along narrow and steep pedestrian streets where neighbours have loud conversations, children laugh and play ball, and dogs bark at strangers passing, the houses in the countryside seem removed from all that. The chalets belong to a different world – they are mostly owned by foreigners who have little or nothing to do with the local inhabitants. They are here to enjoy **el mejor clima de Europa** (Europe’s best climate).

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2 The slogan of the village is “Torrox – mejor clima de Europa” (Torrox – best climate in Europe)
3 The population of Torrox consists of some 970 houses of two floors or more, with irregular, cobbled streets reminiscent of its Moorish construction. It has two town squares with avenues and stone benches…(my translation)
**Geography and climate**

Torrox is situated approximately 45 km east of Málaga city on the Mediterranean coast in the area of Axarquia in Andalucia, the southernmost of the seventeen regions (comunidades autónomas) that today make up Spain. Its territorial size is 51 km², of which 35 km² is cultivated land. It is considered an agricultural town, and ‘everyone’ owns land. The municipality is relatively mountainous, making agriculture difficult throughout large parts, but the views all the more spectacular. There are three rivers running from the mountains of the sierra southward through the flatter areas near the coast towards the 10 km long beach. Torrox counts 2900 hours of sun each year with a comfortable climate between 13°C and 30°C.

Torrox consists of el pueblo (the village), el campo (rural areas) and la playa (seaside/beach). The municipality has 12341 inhabitants (2002), of which nearly a quarter are over the age of 65, and 19 % are under the age of 20. The municipality is divided into several areas which are socially and geographically quite different. Torrox pueblo, the actual village, lies 4 km from the coast, at approximately 120 m above sea level. Apart from being the administrative center where the town hall, the court-house, police station and unemployment office are found, such things as the post office, the local market and several shops are also located here. Its Moorish influence is evident in the white, clustered houses and the narrow streets, often steep and cobbled with steps. Only certain areas may be reached by car; a couple of roads are relatively wide and there is a (supposedly one-way) street leading from the town square to the other end, where it meets up with the carretera de Frigiliana, a mountain road leading to the next village. This part of the municipality houses most of the local inhabitants as well as some foreigners, mainly English and Scandinavians. The foreigners have generally bought old village houses, which they have renovated, and either live there permanently or spend parts of the year there. Few own apartments in any of the new village blocks.

When the local inhabitants speak of Torrox Park, they refer to an area that used to be called el Pino, southeast of the actual village, at ½ - 1 kilometre from the beach, on a little
hill overlooking the sea. However, this is really the name of one particular urbanización (cluster of houses forming a unit through certain shared interests in, for example, a communal swimming pool, gardener, parking lots) in the area. These urbanizaciones were built and sold over the last thirty years by the German entrepreneur Bau Hofman, who in the late sixties and early seventies bought considerable amounts of land in Torrox. There are also other urbanizaciones in the same area, with different names and belonging to different entrepreneurs and estate agents, but kept in the same style. Local inhabitants call this whole area Torrox Park. The 330,000 m² of land upon which Torrox Park is built originally belonged to several local small time farmers, who sold their plots for what they considered a good price. Compared to the village this area is extremely quiet and well organized with signposts to the different streets and urbanizaciones. The buildings are kept in a whitewashed style with the characteristic Andalucian barred windows and terracotta details, but the walls are made to accord with northern European standards including expectations of isolation and noise reduction. There are villas as well as semi-detached houses and apartments, all with trimmed lawns and neat flowerbeds behind little fences. Some villas have their own swimming pool, while other residents have access to one in the community. 70-80% of the properties are owned by Germans, mainly because they have been sold through an agency situated in Germany. Over the last 3-4 years some other nationalities have also been represented among the buyers, and Madrid-registered cars can also be seen parked on the streets (the entrepreneur is German, but the president of the company is from Madrid). Only one third of the owners are permanent residents. The rest spend holidays or the winter in Torrox. The prices are relatively high (for example €160,000 for 82 m² plus a 50m² terrace), which excludes most local families from buying.
Old cortijo with agricultural land to the left, plastic greenhouses at the centre, and apartment blocks under construction near the sea front

Neighbours at Torrox Park: foreign owned chalet with garden and Spanish owned cortijo with plastic greenhouse
In the middle of this well planned and organized nucleos there is, however, a “disturbing” element which does not seem to belong; an area of large plastic greenhouses. These are owned by a farmer who decided not to sell, but still continues with his family’s traditional occupation. The foreign residents do not at all find this amusing or charming, although the glossy brochure promoting their houses and apartments advertises that in TorroxD
“...the old ways still exist with goatherders wandering and oxen ploughing the fields...a unique and fascinating mix of the old and the new” (Urbanización TorroxD
Park, p. 3). “I look the other way when I have to pass it,” says German Uwe. The brochure continues, stating that “...it is a very friendly, international and pleasant neighbourhood...the andalusian way of life focuses on enjoyment and fun first...” (Urbanización TorroxD
Park: 3). There is a small center with a hairdresser, a pizzeria, a dry-cleaner and the local shop. This is where the few Spanish in the area are found – the businesses are run by local inhabitants. However, I could not find any Andalucian who participates in the life of this locality; their opinion tends to be that it looks well-kept and nice, “but I wouldn’t live there, there are only foreigners”. Local inhabitants feel it is an area that has little to do with their own life, and those who have businesses there, do not live there, nor do they spend any of their leisure time there. During the last few years politicians have discussed whether to build a bridge across the valley separating TorroxD
Park from the village, to make access easier than the current route down to the coastal road. This would benefit both Spanish residents of el pueblo who work in TorroxD
Park and the foreign residents living there. (The bridge was inaugurated in 2004).

In the early seventies, the German enterprise Bau Hofman started their construction in TorroxD
by building the twelve-story tower blocks in the area that the local inhabitants call Conejito, but which on official signs have the more internationally appealing name TorroxD
Costa, the beach area. This is where the Roman settlement Caviclum was situated, and where excavations had been made in the 19th century. What must have been a combination of indifference and economic expectations on part of the Spanish and pure speculation on part of the investors, caused the destruction of some of these archeological treasures during the construction process. What is left has today been dedicated a corner at one end of the long maritime promenade, as well as a glass pier built to exhibit the
tombs. Driving along the old road from Málaga to Almería, one finds Torrox Costa situated on a straight five kilometre long stretch of road (the new motorway between Málaga and Nerja was finished a couple of years ago and lies further up between the coast and the village), which leaves a rather messy impression. The area between the road and the beach is quite organized with gardens and tennis courts around the tower blocks, but on the other side of the road there seems to be no plan as to whether the area is commercial, agricultural or urban. In the local shopping centre several units are empty or closed. There are numerous construction sites on both sides of the road, and along them the entrepreneurs set up booths to provide information and process the sales of the properties being built. Old and new buildings, tower blocks and tiny cortijos, supermarkets and plastic greenhouses are thrown together in a jumbled concoction. Roadworks that lasted throughout my six month stay added to the unfinished look. However, there are supermarkets and stripclubs, internet-cafés and potteries, as well as a number of restaurants with menus in German posted outside. During the winter, these restaurants are very quiet, and there might be only a couple of customers having a beer at the bar. Actually, the characteristic feature of this area is the lack of events – the only people seen on the streets are older Germans strolling at their pensioner’s pace. The Spanish working in this area have realized that knowing a bit of German is good for business, as these older residents do not learn any Spanish (a subject I will return to later). The area between the old road in Conejito and the village is quite attractive to the Spanish inhabitants of Torrox, and several urbanizaciones have been built here, forming a modern area at the entrance to the village. Many young couples buy their first home here in the area between the old and the new road, where housing may be bought under especially favourable conditions introduced by the government as part of a subvention plan. The winding road through this area also passes agricultural land where villas have been built. Local inhabitants believe that this area will eventually be fully converted to an urban one, so that the village will join up with the beach area of Conejito.

El Morche lies at the far west of the municipality, along the old road, and has always been a place of transition. This is where today’s legal and illegal immigrants in the municipality reside. The Spanish inhabitants of el Morche and Torrox Costa consider
themselves much more open than the people of the pueblo, and accentuate their differences, explaining that the reason is that the coast has always been influenced by ‘outsiders’. The tendency of claiming difference between inland and coast is quite common, even if the distance is as short as a few kilometers. Eriksen (2001) describes the same phenomenon in Velez-Málaga, where people claim (or admit) they have a closed pueblo-mentality. As my daily life was in the village, I did not have regular informants in el Morche, although some of the people I interviewed in formal settings live in el Morche. The social separation between the people of the two areas is so great that my friendship with local inhabitants of the village did not put me in contact with anyone at all from el Morche. However, I did speak with the headmasters of the schools in the area as well as other officials.

History

In this area archeological remains dating back one million years were discovered in the 18th century (Hernandez 1998). It is believed that there have been human settlements here ever since. The roman settlement Caviclum was situated at what is today called Torrox Costa/Conejito. When the Andalucian coast was invaded by the Moors under the Arab Tariq, from 711 A.D. and onwards, many farmers fled to the inland mountains. Historians deem it likely that the pueblo of Torrox was founded in this way. During the following eight hundred years Andalucia and Torrox were home to both Christians and Muslims; a co-existence far from peaceful. When the Christians took over Velez-Málaga in 1487 their policy was one of distributing plots of land and re-populating the area with their own people (‘Old Christians’) from Alta Andalucia (Córdoba, Jaén, Ubeda, Baeza) while forcing the Muslim population to convert to Christianity (these were then so-called ‘New Christians’) - in reality an ethnic distinction. Although most of the Muslims left over the next few years, the coastal area was not considered safe, the conflict between the Moors and the Christians was ever-present, and few newcomers were willing to settle permanently. The Muslims living in Torrox continued to practice their religion and culture secretly, with some participating in a local guerilla. The Crown’s urgent repopulation of the area in 1505 is mentioned in Libro de Repartimientos de Torrox, the
first written document on local land tenure. In 1509 a reform stated that those who
remained on a plot of land for ten years, would be allotted this land as their own property
(Hernandez 1998.). This is the first sign of the minifundism that sets Torrox apart from
the inland latifundism so typical of Andalucia in general. Torrox was taken over for good
by the Christians in 1570 when it numbered 93 families of ‘Old Christians’ (only heads of
families, or vecinos, used to be registered when census was taken).

The sugar industry had existed in Torrox since the Moorish rule and was this town’s
blessing during the economic depressions that badly affected other parts of Andalucia in
the 17th and 18th centuries. The town prospered by its agricultural activity and fishing, and
in 1773 it numbered 600 vecinos4. With the Constitution of 1812, Torrox became a
municipality with a proper council. In 1854, the Ingenio Bajo, one of the local sugar
factories, was taken over by the Larios, a wealthy family from the Malagenean bourgeois.
Twenty years later this part of the province of Málaga was struck by a phylloxera
epidemic, which, combined with a period of freezing temperautres, caused crops to fail.
Larios then offered loans to smallholders, but many local farmers were unable to pay and
eventually had to give up their land to their creditor. Many were forced to emigrate, but a
large number remained on the land which had once been theirs to now work as peasants
for the señorito Larios. The Larios gained great economic and political power in the
province and ruled a large area as feudal señoritos until the Civil War in the 1930’s,
asisted by the national government through an authoritarian rule under Miguel Primo de
Rivera.

At the turn of the 20th century, Torrox counted over 7000 inhabitants, and the social and
economic gap between the wealthy class and the rest of the village was great. During the
dictatorship, those who lived permanently in el campo were forced to move into town,
often into cramped conditions, with large families in small houses. At sunrise, entire
families would make their way to the plots where they spent the whole day working on
their land, making sure to return to the village before dark, because guards at the village
entrance enforced the regulations. During the Civil War (1936-1939), and the following

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4 The term vecino translates to “neighbour”, but also has a moral element as it connotes rights and
obligations within a closed village community.
Franco years, small-time farmers benefitted from what their land gave them, while those who only owned town houses suffered more. Under Franco’s fascist regime many had to leave agriculture and emigrate to the cities, where industry was beginning to develop, or to other European countries. During this era, a Spanish middle class was established. Owning land was throughout the twentieth century seen as crucial for the survival and well-being of local families, who have in many cases continually tried to expand their holdings by buying plots of land when the opportunity arose. Since the rural conflicts, which started in the 1960’s, many of the original owners have reclaimed their land, often paying a small sum for it (national laws made this easier). Today, most families own plots spread out across the municipality, which is again characterized by its minifundism. Few Torroxenean families live in the campo, however. The practice of going off into the campo to do agricultural work continues, especially at week-ends, however, no longer necessarily on foot. I deal more thoroughly with aspects of land tenure in chapter four.

**History of tourism development**

Spain is the world’s second largest destination for tourists (World Tourism Organisation 1998), and tourism is the country’s leading economic sector. Today, tourism generates 1.300.000 direct and indirect jobs and in 1998 accounted for 10,57% of the Gross National Product (Ministerio de la Presidencia 2000: 362). However, Spain was not an attractive country at the beginning of the history of tourism; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was not a country much visited by the travelling European elite, despite the fact that this era was one of extensive travel. The infrastructure was poor, and Spanish culture did not appeal to these travellers. The country was considered wild and marginal, qualities that at the end of the eighteenth century actually became more fashionable for leisure travelling (Barke and Towner 1996). Málaga was known as a winter health resort for both foreign and domestic travellers, but the routes across Spain have throughout history largely been limited by the country’s poor accessibility. The Spanish themselves made few investments in the tourist sector, and even in the 1900s both entrepreneurs and workers in the service sector were often other Europeans (Barke and Towner 1996). The urban Spanish middle class, however, often had roots in the
countryside and owned second homes in the *pueblos* or on the coast at which they would spend their leisure time.

The selling of plots for villas is not a new phenomenon introduced by foreigners. Governmental intervention and the promotion of tourism is a feature of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, which places Spain among the pioneering countries in an international context. Newton (1996) points to the achievements towards modernization in infrastructure made during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century; an important factor for the development of a tourism economy. During the Franco years, Spain was largely inaccessible to foreigners, but from 1959, when policy changed, Spain experienced unprecedented economic growth, which raised living standards for the Spanish people. This was the year that the Spanish borders were ‘opened’ by abolishing entry visas and allowing foreign investment and trade. The Spanish government encouraged all kinds of private investment by foreigners – both in large hotels and in private apartments – through various financing programmes, and it is estimated that investment in tourism property counted for 80\% of total property investment in Spain in 1976 (Sinclair and Gómez 1996). In the first year, arrivals increased by 500\% (Barke and Towner 1996). Hardly any other industrialized economy has depended to such a great extent on profits from tourism (Gómez and Sinclair 1996). The centralist government of Franco focused on macroeconomics, thereby paying little attention to local consequences of foreign investment and lack of planning. After Franco’s death in 1975, local politicians all over the country gained more control over village affairs with the ensuing political reform. Today, approximately fifty million foreigners visit Spain each year. More than ninety percent of these visitors come from other European countries; Germany and the U.K. alone account for nearly half of them (Ministerio de la Presidencia 2000).

Foreign tourists and resident Europeans have formed a part of the Torroxenean landscape since the early seventies, but they have been centred in the area of Torrox Costa. Foreigners constituted more than 25\% of the registered population in 2002. Here, to the east of the city of Málaga, the influence of mass tourism has not, however, been as great as along the western parts. Torrox, and with it the rest of the area, is therefore better
preserved environmentally and the countryside is not equally exploited. Propositions for land use aim at taking advantage of the very favourable climate both for touristic purposes and for agriculture. It is suggested that certain areas are assigned to each use in order to reduce or avoid the problematic clash between, for example, untidy plastic greenhouses and neat chalets; a problem that is clearly visible today. This is in order to maximize economic development while preserving the natural environment, which will bring greater profits due to a higher touristic value. During the last few years, construction and sales have exploded, and individual interests are not always compatible with governmental ideals, which is something that leads to fraud, speculation and illegality. The local inhabitants of Torrox wish to reach an economic standard similar to that of their guests, but this means they must accept amongst them a growing number of foreigners, because these outsiders are the actual means of their income and prosperity. This situation is not always simple and free from conflict.
Chapter 3. THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF TORROX
- From dictatorship to E.U. membership

"Trabajo para vivir, no vivo para trabajar"5

Javier

In this chapter, I will provide an outline of some of the general economic conditions of today, in order to explain the motivations behind the use of land among local landowners. I will show how the combination of tax regulations, the lack of governmental control, the insecure job situation of workers, and the dream of personal prosperity in a country undergoing rapid socio-economic change sets the scene for a widespread and widely accepted informal economy, speculation and even corruption. Former agricultural land is rapidly being transformed into urban plots, which may be sold to foreigners at high prices, with only a minimum of governmental control. Landowners base their decisions regarding the use of their land and their labour upon knowledge of the economic landscape. In their individual navigation through this landscape, they demonstrate what Barth calls ‘entrepreneurship’, and the accumulation of these individual acts causes changes that, in turn, affect various parts of their lives.

In studies on the subject of “informal economy” several definitions of the term have been formulated. One that I find accurate for my case is Palenzuela’s, in which “informal economy” is understood as that economic sector which “lacks a formal relationship between capital and work, is not reflected in macro-economic figures, has a semi-legal character, and whose production and commercialization does not operate through formal channels” (Palenzuela 1991: 419, my translation). Illegal or semi-legal transactions in a society make up a vast field worth study in its own right. This thesis is not the place for a detailed elaboration of this field. My focus is on the choices people make regarding land management and some of the consequences of those choices. Informality and fraud are, however, aspects closely knitted together with the management of land, and also form an important part of most individuals’ lives and affect their choices in important ways. It

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5 I work to live, I don’t live to work
would be difficult to discuss the economic parts of people’s lives in Torrox without mentioning this aspect of local economy. This should become clear through my later examples.

The advantage of Barth’s model is its ability to capture the way in which intended or non-intended outcomes on the part of the actors themselves are connected with the preconditions, and either reproduce them or change them (Barth 1981: 77). This chapter is meant to give a necessary outline of the actual conditions under which individual choices are made, as well as examples of individual strategies within this economic setting.

An economic boom

From the 1960’s onwards, when Spain finally opened up to foreign investment, the country experienced an economic boom. Spain made a rapid transformation from an agrarian to a postindustrial society, without really establishing an industrial sector. The huge post-Franco political transformations added to Spain’s vulnerability to international economic crises, making the country’s economy shift rapidly between years of growth and periods of rising public deficits and unemployment rates. The idea of the europeanization of Spain was based on a wish for a modern industrialized and more egalitarian society (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). As Lorenzo and Armangué point out, this combination has proved difficult, because modernizing Spain for its entry into the European Union has meant changing the ways of production, causing thousands to lose their jobs, as well as opting for rather liberal economic politics. This combination has triggered speculation.

During the prosperous years, from the seventies onwards, many turned adventurous due to the possibility of becoming rich overnight through speculative deals. Even the government seemed to ride the wave of an inflated and imaginary economy, which made the country very dependent on international economic fluctuations (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). The apparent wealth of Spain was to a large degree due to foreign investment; but when the beaches and companies are sold to outside enterprises and
entrepreneurs, the Spanish are left with little for their own future. The extreme changes experienced over only a couple of decades from the fall of the Franco regime, to the rise of democracy and Spain’s entry into the E.U., seems to have made the whole population believe that they had “stepped out of the dark ages and into the light of modernity” (see also Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). Despite the turbulence, there is optimism and patience in Spanish society, and through my conversations with my informants, I gained the impression that many feel the new economic prosperity is here to stay. Robinson (1996) claims that the promise of prosperity makes the Spanish blind to the possible consequences of short-termism and the lack of planning and economic direction.

With the country’s inclusion in the European Union new solutions have continuously been sought to stabilize the economy. Over the last few years the Gross National Product has grown while the inflation rate and unemployment has dropped (Ministerio de la Presidencia 2000).

**E.U. and agriculture**

As with the rest of modern Europe, Spain is now dominated by the service sector (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). In Torrox, the two most numerous types of business enterprises in 2001 (apart from what are lumped together as services, *comercio*) were estate agencies and construction companies (UTEDLT). However, when Spain entered the E.U. in 1986, the country had a relatively high proportion of farmers compared to central European countries. Many farms were run in a simple fashion on a family basis, which meant the farmers did not have the means to follow the rapid mechanization required by the E.U. This was the case for the small-time farmers of Torrox. The new methods of production favour farmers with large amounts of land, while the small-time farmers are pushed out of the market. Only large *fincas* could make the necessary investment in machinery. But this in turn has often caused an overproduction of agricultural products, which has prompted the E.U. to introduce quotas and subsidies (which in 1996 made up 80% of the E.U. budget, according to Lorenzo and Armangué 1996), and farmers have even been paid to destroy their harvest rather than put it on the
market. Not only does this have economic and social consequences, it also affects farmers morally, especially minifundists. “Why should I break my back every week-end working the land to get a good harvest, when I get the same by picking a few kilos of olives and collecting my subsidies?” exclaimed one of my informants.

In latifundist Andalucia as many as 82% of the inhabitants of certain villages were poor day workers at the mercy of seasons and agrarian fluctuations and with few alternative incomes (Bernal 1991). Spain, and especially Andalucia, entered late – not until the 60’s - into the mechanization and intense capitalism that characterizes modern agriculture. Over the next few decades the demand for manual day workers declined continually; the number of agricultural workers in Spain dropped by nearly 750 000 during the twelve-year period from 1976 to 1988 (Palenzuela 1991: 416). In 1955, over 50% of the population was employed in agricultural activities, compared with 10% for 1993. In agricultural areas like Andalucia, where there have traditionally been few other labour opportunities, the number of unemployed exploded. In fact, ever since the fall of Franco Spain has had the highest unemployment rate in Europe (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). After the mechanization of agriculture an estimated one and a half million people have, over a period of 25 years, had to emigrate in order to make ends meet. Construction and tourism have, to some extent, complemented the agrarian cycle for minifundists and dayworkers, but the high unemployment rates make national and E.U. benefits and agricultural subsidies still necessary in agrarian areas. In his study of agricultural dayworkers in Lebrija, Sevilla, in the mid-eighties, Palenzuela shows how the solution for families who every year experience periods of no formal income, has been to enter the sector of informal economy (Palenzuela 1991). In this new mechanized society there is a gap between the qualifications required for the new types of jobs and the type and level of education of the majority of the Spanish population. Inland villages in Andalucia have higher unemployment and fewer opportunities than a coastal village like Torrox. With the enormous building activity, many former agricultural workers have taken jobs in construction, where no formal education is required. However, in 2001 Torrox registered a 21,3% unemployment rate. In 1991 as many as 37% of the total population in Torrox above the age of 10 years had either not gone to school or were illiterate, while 30% had
finished primary school only (SOPDE 1998). Torrox does, however, form part of a region of great economic advantages. The village’s situation on the sea-front opens up for tourism and foreign investment. The very favourable climate makes it possible to produce exotic fruits like mango and avocado, which are highly competitive products that yield a high profit from a relatively low input of capital and effort. As much as 69% of the municipality’s land is cultivated (in 2000, UTEDLT), and there is no industry in the area.

**Subsidies**

There are both national and E.U. subsidies and quotas aimed at farmers, according to varying rules. As nearly every family in Torrox owns land, they may claim these subsidies as long as they meet the required conditions, which often require a minimum of effort, and in some cases even encourage passivity or the dumping of produce. A few years ago, the government encouraged the removal of vines and the destruction of potential output, and paid accordingly. This was in order to maintain a decent price for grapes in the market. Many people made large profits by collecting the subsidies for clearing their land, upon which they later planted avocados or other fruits, which secure a much higher profit. The subsidies have left the small-time farmer with more free time to work elsewhere, while still defining him as an agricultural worker since he is still a landowner. *Torroxeños* benefit from various funds that correspond to different groups, because they have the privilege of redefining themselves according to different situations and requirements.

Knowledge in agricultural circles today is not only about the amount of water or type of pesticide needed for a good crop, it is equally important to know how the system of benefits works. This forms part of peasant adaptation in modern Europe. “Some landowners leave the harvesting to someone else, who in return get to keep the money they make from it, as long as the receipt is given to the landowner so he can collect the subsidies,” José explains, referring to the subsidies for olive-owners. Although a lot of plots change hands in Torrox, few families are willing to sell all of their land - one factor in this decision is that as long as one is a landowner, one may claim subsidies. The
The paradox of the system is that while former agrarian plots are now used for constructing holiday homes, leaving less land to cultivate, the public funds aimed at farmers have made it possible for many local inhabitants to leave the hard and unstable agrarian work for better paid jobs in construction or the service sector, while still defining themselves as small-time farmers.

**The introduction of the Euro**

The Euro was born on the first of January 1999. Eleven European countries joined the monetary union, including Spain. That year the official number of private houses built in the municipality of Torrox exploded – from 201 the previous year to 1425 in 1999. The same year the number of small companies made a noticeable decline, and this trend continued throughout the years 2000 and 2001. Although the nature of the informal economy makes it difficult to give accurate numbers, it is common knowledge among local people that the informal economy makes up a large part of the local economy. Moreover, millions of pesetas were laundered before the introduction of the euro, much of it through investment in real estate. Many workers and managers of small businesses were busy in “undetectable negotiations” during those years.

After the Euro came into circulation in January 2002, many businesses took advantage of the situation by raising their prices and/or consistently using a wrong exchange rate when converting from prices in pesetas to euros. It was a common complaint among my informants that they had been cheated without realizing until later. On several occasions I was charged over fifty percent extra, and in evident cases where the old pesetas price was still on the item, my complaints would sometimes be heard (with a complementing excuse like: “Oh, I’m sorry, I got confused with the exchange rate”). But obviously, there were more subtle ways of doing it, and my informants complained that even at some of the local shops where they had done their shopping for a lifetime, they were now paying disproportionately high prices. The introduction was seen as a golden opportunity for businesses to make an extra profit.
A lack of social security

Spain has always been a country of great economic differences between the wealthy and powerful few and the less fortunate classes. The state has not had a policy directed at changing these inequalities; even the strong state intervention under Franco favoured the rich patrons. The isolation and protectionism after the Civil War (1936-39) hindered the country’s development, and many suffered as they struggled for survival. During the dictatorship a social security system based on workers’ status evolved, and later welfare ideology has continued to be closely tied to employment rather than to citizenship (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). The socialist idea was that the worker was committed to certain unnegotiable conditions, often not very favourable, but in return he was guaranteed work and social protection, literally throughout his lifetime. This idea has been maintained in modern democratic Spain, and this system leaves a large number of individuals outside the social security system. The very high compensation a worker must be given if made redundant while on a permanent contract has made a liberal market economy difficult for companies; business managers are reluctant to offer anything other than short-term contracts, if any written contract at all. This makes it difficult to find secure work, as few companies are willing to take the risks of having too many employees during periods of less activity. In the opinion of potential entrepreneurs, the conditions set by the state do not encourage people to invest in companies that could create jobs. Lorenzo and Armangué refer to a landowning business manager with several companies who expresses his frustration that it is much easier to buy a piece of land, and build houses for sale on it, than it is to run a business with all its responsibilities and worries (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996).

The state’s lack of responsibility towards the poor, as well as its lack of initiative to remedy the grave unemployment rate of the country, which at times forces large numbers of workers to emigrate to other European countries, explains the characteristic lack of faith felt by the ordinary Spanish towards the state (see also Lorenzo and Armangué 1996). The fact that the social security system is financed through the worker’s own monthly payments to the state, plus his employer’s fees, has created a sense that these are
funds the worker himself “saves up for rainy days”, rather than a governmental social welfare. The ordinary Spanish citizen has little knowledge of where the tax funds are applied and in what way he or she may benefit from them, and so will often try to evade paying. Companies avoid taxes by offering only temporary and/or off-the-books jobs.

Old age pensions are proportional to contributions, while the state provides health care for everyone and minimum pensions for those who have not contributed. Disability coverage, both temporary and permanent, is based on average contributions over a certain amount of time, combined with age, as well as a medical and laboral evaluation. Another requirement for a person to be entitled to sickness benefits or an old age pension is that the person “lacks relatives under the obligation to support a...person by reason of consanguinity” (Ministerio de la Presidencia, 2000: 228). The amounts are generally low – a yearly amount of around 531.000 pts (€ 3187) for non-contributory pensions in 1999 (Ministerio de la Presidencia, 2000: 231) – and the contributory benefits are also in many cases difficult to obtain. This is partially a result of the widespread black labour market, as unregistered workers who do not contribute are left with fewer rights. Many types of assistance have historically been so low that they do not in practice fill their function. A quarter of the population in Torrox over the age of sixteen are receiving some kind of pension, either for a disability or as a senior citizen. Of the total population registered in the 2002 census (12341), 23 % are over the age of 65.

Since the seventies, several reforms in the social security system have been introduced in order to balance the budget of contributions / assistance, to make it more universal, and to assure correct use (rather than undue use or the use of social security mechanisms to solve unrelated problems, as noted in the eighties) (Ministerio de la Presidencia, 2000). However, its functioning in practice is still rather irregular, due both to the scarcity of the services and to people’s distrust.
The Rural Employment Plan (PER)

In 1984 the PER (Rural Employment Plan) was introduced as a special unemployment benefit aimed at agrarian dayworkers in Andalucia and Extremadura, the two latifundist regions of Spain. These dayworkers had few alternative ways of making a living when the ways of production changed dramatically. The requirement for collecting the benefit is having worked within agriculture 60 days a year, confirmed by signatures from the contractors. This arrangement has lead to extensive fraud, of which I will give an example later, and a number of cases have been disclosed. In inland latifundist areas of Andalucia, even the required sixty days have been nearly impossible to fill, simply because there was no work at all. These day-workers became dependent on the PER in order to make ends meet. While landless farmers are therefore still without the power of self sufficiency despite their ingenuity in exploiting the system through lies and fraud, this same system gives the small landowners of villages like Torrox the opportunity to thrive, since, in the case of a landowner in a coastal village it represents an extra income without effort invested, as I will explain below.

On the Costa del Sol, the need for the PER has not been as precarious as in the interior of Andalucia, as construction and tourism offers seasonal, or in some parts even continual, income for landowners and agricultural workers. In Torrox, owners of larger quantities of land therefore often “sell” their signatures to individuals who claim the PER as if they were unemployed agricultural workers. Knowing that the person will be able to claim a certain amount from the government, the landowner charges 30% for making the PER accessible through his signature. Women who have never worked outside of the home, have signed up at the Unemployment Office (INEM) as dayworkers and claim this benefit throughout most of the year, although they have no intention of ever working in agriculture. In 2002, 105 men were receiving the PER, whereas 220 women claimed the benefit (http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/institutodeestadistica/sima ). Since Torrox is a small town, even if it is not a subject that is normally discussed openly, “everybody” knows that “everybody else” takes advantage of the system, and several informants of mine willingly admitted they were cheating in order to receive the PER.
Unemployment benefit

A person must work and pay social security fees for a whole year before he may claim four months of unemployment benefit, but no matter how long he has been paying the fees, he may never receive benefit for more than two years (Ministerio de la Presidencia, 2000). Many workers wish to take advantage of this system by paying the fees for a year and then claiming the benefit for four months while working off the books without paying fees. While it is seen as a favour towards the worker that the company registers him on an official contract (which means the company must pay employers fees), it is also in the contractors’ interests to always have some registered workers, in order to meet the estimated costs of a certain project at the time of tax declaration. The worker must look for an employer who is willing to sign one-year contracts paying social security – an extra cost for the company - and later make him officially redundant during four months. The solution in many local cases is that a company has a stock of say twenty workers, of which only three or four each year are registered workers, on an alternating basis from year to year. Contractors within construction often sign temporary contracts that automatically end when a project is finished, so that they have no legal obligations towards the workers.

People receiving unemployment benefits must not only sign on at the INEM, they are also obliged to take any job which the INEM offers, or they may lose the unemployment benefit. This is obviously a problem for those who are not really available for work. In a small village like Torrox, the people working at the INEM often know the actual whereabouts of the “unemployed” and may deliberately call them in order to expose and prevent fraud. Or, they may close their eyes to it as a “favour” (I return to the attitude and system of favours in chapter 5).  

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Corruption and speculation

Spanish bureaucracy is known to be tremendously complicated with a “multiplicity of overlapping bodies and organisations, seriously hindering any kind of rational management and crippling the efficiency of public service and mechanisms” (Ministerio de la Presidencia, 2000: 213). Any affair takes a long time to resolve, and people often have only a vague idea of where to turn for various matters, while a very clear notion that there is little governmental control. It helps to know the right people, and so have an enchufe6 (literally an “electric plug”) to “plug you in” if you want a favour done, some special treatment, or to obtain anything. This kind of relationship in a small, transparent village is quite evident, but also accepted, as it introduces the possibility for anyone to take advantage of it through personal relationships. In fact, the term ‘corruption’ is never used, since this phenomenon is not locally seen as such. The lack of governmental control of construction has led to speculation all across Spain. Money has been laundered and a large number of local dwellings are luxurious holiday homes or flats for tourists, while at the same time there is a shortage of ordinary housing at reasonable prices (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996).

Planning permission should be obtained before beginning a project, and it will only be given if the project does not contravene the regulatory programmes for environmental protection (I return to this in chapter four). The random character of control, however, makes it possible to “get around the rules” without being caught. One common way for a private person to do so is to apply for permission to set up a small shed (apero de labranza) on a piece of land they are farming, under the excuse of needing a place to keep tools. Whether the unit built actually complies with the permission given is only sometimes checked by officials. Across the hills of Torrox, the cortijos and chalets by far outnumber the sheds, but few make any mention of the fact that in official registers a large number of foreigners own these “sheds”.

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6 A system that Melhuus has also described from her work in Mexico, but then the term palanca or crowbar in the sense of leverage is used (Melhuus 1992).
Informal economy

At the beginning of this chapter, I defined ‘informal economy’ as an unofficial aspect of economy. The following examples will work as further comments on the issue.

Some of the activities within the informal sector are easy to imagine: hunting, fishing, street sales and handicraft. Owning land gives people the opportunity to produce for their own consumption, and many Torroxeños only produce for their own benefit or for petty sales on street corners. Living in such a favourable climate also means that there are wild foodstuffs that anyone may pick, such as asparagus or onions. Some people go hunting or fishing; small birds, wild boar, rabbit, fish and octopus, which, if not consumed by the family, may be sold to restaurants. This system is widespread in Spain. For example, by selling privately to a restaurant both the seller and the restaurant benefit, as they evade the IVA (Impuesto al Valor Añadido, added sales tax). This restaurant might cater for a bus load of tourists from another part of the country. If the travel company is not declaring the tour, they do not want to pay the extra cost of the IVA when taking the group to eat in the restaurant. If the restaurant owner has payed IVA when buying the fish, he obviously wants to cover his costs. If, however, he buys the fish from a local fisherman who does not charge IVA, he may sell a meal “which has never existed” (the example is taken from Lorenzo y Armangué 1996: 286). The practices related to the informal economy are so commonplace that even in contracted office jobs with set wages, the workers may receive a part of their salary “off the books”. In such an environment, everyone is used to looking for ways of arranging situations so that as much money as possible can be brought home pa’ llenar la olla de cada día (to feed the family every day), and everyone is aware that informal practices pervade the community. Waldren mentions contraband and the black market as a means of bettering ones economic situation in Mallorca: “Everyone who might make problems was included” (Waldren 1996: 102). She also claims that participation was a source of power, not only for the ones who could make large investments and thereby receive the greatest proceeds, but for all the participants, as any worker’s identity was enhanced by demonstrating this kind of entrepreneurial activity. The system thus has a social element reminiscent of the enchufe I mentioned earlier. I will
deal with the issue of favours within social networks in chapter five as well.

**Individual strategies**

It should have become clear throughout the above outline of local economy that the Torroxeños manoeuvre in a complex economic landscape. Their long tradition as small time farmers has taught the local people to always look for ways of making some extra money, since small time farming generally has an element of insecurity to it (due to climate, pests, market fluctuations). The way the land is managed, and the extra-agricultural activities in which these farmers take part, may vary over time. There are often ‘entrepreneurs’ who introduce ideas for new economic activities which others eventually follow. In the following, I will illustrate ways of moving in today’s economic terrain through some empirical examples of individual strategies.

**The Ruiz family**

José Ruiz owns a piece of land that he inherited from his parents. There is a relatively large number of olive trees on it, and even if he only picks a few kilos to sell to the cooperative (which negotiates with the market on behalf of the local farmers), he may claim subsidies simply for having proved agricultural activity on his own land. This is a subsidy based on the number of trees his plot has rather than on the amount of olives he produces. José works collecting his olives mainly on the week-ends from October through March, in the olive season. In early spring José is also registered as a day-worker with a landowner who cultivates a larger amount of land and who requires his help. On week-ends, while trimming the avocado trees on this farmers land, he not only takes the opportunity to take home with him several boxes of avocados, he also loads his truck with the tree branches, which he later sells as firewood to foreigners. After collecting the required signatures from the farmer, he may then claim the *PER* as an unemployed agricultural worker. However, his main occupation is in construction, where he works eleven-hour shifts Monday to Friday all year round on temporary contracts, off the books.
José’s wife Pepa works three hours a day cleaning a local shop while her children are at school. She has worked in the same place for several years, and Pepa and her employer have a good relationship. Her employer pays the monthly fees towards her social security during one year, and then officially makes her redundant. Naturally, she continues in her job, but off the books, since she is now entitled to four months of unemployment benefit, during which her employer will not have to pay any fees either – the arrangement is profitable for both parties.

Once a week Pepa cleans a private house owned by some foreign residents in her neighbourhood. This takes approximately three hours. She and her husband have also made an arrangement with another foreigner who owns a house nearby, and are in a sense his caretakers. If his house needs any repair or painting, they take care of it while the owner is in his home country, and then charge him upon his return. Whenever he announces a new visit to his holiday home, which he does several times each year, Pepa makes sure the place is clean, that he has gas for cooking and hot water, she prepares the beds, and also cleans after he has left. This is an arrangement that works very well for both the Ruiz family and the foreigner. The money he pays them for their work and their expenses is never registered in any official papers.

The couple has also rented a plot of land with fruit trees. During two months, at the beginning of summer, she brings her children to the terraces two or three afternoons a week to pick the ripe fruit, which they sell to a local wholesaler. This is another extra income for the family.

In 1999, the family bought a small plot of land and were given permission to build a 25m² shed on it. The basic concrete construction that forms the basement was built almost immediately, measuring approximately 40m². The plan was that they would expand the house little by little and then sell the finished house to a foreigner within five or six years. However, while I was conducting my field research, the family was fined. Construction came to a halt, both because the fine was an extra cost they had not accounted for, and because they felt they were being watched by the Ayuntamiento. I will return to this, as
well as another of their projects, in chapter four.

Most of the income of the Ruiz family is undeclared, unofficial, _dinero negro_ (black money). Although there is continuity, and nothing to indicate that any of the arrangements will come to an end in the near future, there is in fact little security in this arrangement. When I enquired about their holidays, Pepa laughed: “Holidays is for _extranjeros_! We don’t have holidays, we have to work every day, all year, every year.” In regard to pensions, she says that her house and her children are her main sources of any security for old age.

**The Medina brothers**

Fabian, Fernando and Felipe Medina took over their parents’ land while their parents were still living, which is a common practice when the parents are too old to do agricultural work. Each of them was to receive approximately 14 000 m² spread over three different areas of Torrox. Where the old _cortijo_ is there are nearly 20 000 m² in one plot, easily accessible from the road and connected to the irrigation system of Torrox and with spectacular views of the village and the Mediterranean. While Fernando took over the old building and made a few additions to it to accommodate his family, Felipe plans to build his own _cortijo_ adjacent to the old one. Fabian, the eldest brother, has married out of town. He has a secure family economy in the city and only visits Torrox for holidays with his wife and children. He has no plans of returning to the village permanently, and has left his piece of land in the care of the two younger brothers. Although he has made it clear that he trusts their decisions as to whether to build on his plot for future sales (in which case he would of course receive his share of the money), they respect that a certain part of the land is his and have not touched it. On the top of the hill behind their own _cortijo_, the two remaining brothers have set off a piece of land of about 1500 m², upon which they have built a chalet of high standard with a pool. Fernando carried out the actual work, since he worked in construction and had access to both workers and materials, while Felipe, as an estate agent, took care of both the sales and all the paperwork. The chalet was registered as a shed connected to the brothers’ agricultural land, and was sold at a
decent profit in the early nineties to a foreign couple.

Felipe does not want to sell any more of his land. He has children and wants the remaining plots to eventually be split between them. “I made some money on that project with Fernando...as long as my business runs well, as long as I keep working...I don’t think it’ll get to the point where I have to sell,” he says, content with his family’s economy and with a certain nostalgia for the campo. Fernando, however, decided to invest most of his share in buying more land adjacent to another one of his plots, upon which he has constructed two more chalets. Apart from the immediate profit from the sales, he also has established bonds with the foreign buyers through helping them with practical things such as cleaning their pool and minding the house while they are away, which secures a certain continuous income. Fernando’s business of constructing and selling has proved so profitable that both he and his son now dedicate their time to this kind of activity, sometimes on their own projects, sometimes contracted by larger companies building whole urbanizaciones. His younger brother’s contacts at public offices, as well as his extensive dealings with foreigners through his job, facilitate Fernando’s speculation in real estate. He now contracts younger family members for his projects, and what started as one investment on his own land has become a family business.

The individuals working for Fernando and his son make arrangements to pay the monthly fees towards their social security based on an income lower than that which they are actually paid. When a year has passed they are, on paper, made redundant for a while. Upon enquiry, both Felipe and Fernando confirm that within construction nearly all legal contracts are based on numbers lower than the actual wage paid. “It’s impossible to run a business legally – you pay so much in taxes that you are left with nothing!” Felipe exclaims. His frustration is shared by several other business managers or former business managers I spoke to. The same problem is expressed by managers interviewed by Lorenzo and Armangué (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996: 219 and 285).
Antonio

Antonio (32), like most of his peers, started working at the age of fifteen when he left school. He married at twenty and has two children. Antonio tried out different trades before settling as a painter, a trade which he dedicated himself to for twelve years, until 2001. He was contracted by several private businesses, after having gained a reputation as a good workman and he worked his way up to the “journeyman” (oficial de primera) title. The company where he was employed for the previous six years (“Decor de Sur”) made a special arrangement for him. They paid him on an official contract for an amount of time, during which he would become entitled, upon being made redundant, to special social welfare assistance for 18 months, owing to his family responsibilities. During four of these months he could even claim unemployment benefit. He would, however, continue working his regular hours at the company. When the eighteen months had passed, he would again be contracted formally and thereby pay taxes, although always receiving a wage higher than the one he and the company officially declared, which saved both him and the company tax expenses. In the evenings he sometimes did odd jobs, which were payed “black”. He tells me that he was once phoned up by the INEM (Unemployment office) because he was signing on as unemployed. “I used to just wash and change into clean clothes when I had to go and sign on...if they ever saw any paint stains on my hands I would just say I was painting my own house... But then they phoned one day to get me to work for this other company – Pintura Mil-Colores...”. When receiving unemployment benefit, one is obliged to accept a job within one’s trade if offered. “...And I know them: I’ve worked with them before, so I said ‘Please don’t do this to me. You know I’m working with Decor de Sur,’ but of course they had already spoken to the INEM...so I told them [Mil-Colores] I wasn’t going to work for 5000 pesetas a day. I wanted a decent contract with the boots, the security equipment, the social security contributions and all that the law really requires.” This apparently made Pintura-Mil-Colores prefer someone else for the job, because the INEM phoned Antonio the next day, saying the job had now been taken. Consequently, Antonio still figured on the INEM list of unemployed. “Good for me. I could continue where I was, and the INEM didn’t cut my unemployment benefit.”
On week-ends, Antonio used to go diving for fish and squid with two of his friends. Some of the catch was for private consumption, while some was for selling to local restaurants; another extra, informal income.

Antonio’s parents originally grew grapevines on a piece of land. When the subsidy for destroying vines was introduced, Antonio’s father took the opportunity, since none of his children showed any interest in continuing to help out with the harvesting of the grapes. Later, on a different plot, he set up a small green-house where they cultivated tomatoes. Antonio’s wife, Carmen, used to sometimes help her in-laws in their green-house in the mornings, but she finds the work quite unpleasant and would often find other important errands that had to be done precisely when her in-laws went down to their plot. In the summer, Carmen has a stall at the market near the beach promenade, where she sells hand-made jewellery and the like. Her children spend the afternoon with her there, while their father is working. Carmen pays the Ayuntamiento for a permit to sell at the market, plus a fixed tax.

When his parents died suddenly a year ago, Antonio was left with a plot of land in an urbanized area near the beach, while his sister inherited the one with the green-house. His plot is not in a protected part of the municipality (this issue will be dealt with in next chapter), so Antonio obtained a building permission for a large construction on half of his land, while he sold the other half. With the money he made from the sales, he is constructing a small building block consisting of eight apartments with a view over the Mediterranean and only a few minutes’ walk from the beach. He has left his job as a painter, and as he puts it: “I’ve been lucky. I’m set for life, really.”
Conclusions

The meanings of acts are found by placing those acts in their contexts. I have tried to give a description of the economic reality in which the Torroxenos find themselves, along with a few examples, as illustration of household strategies. My argument is that local inhabitants of Torrox manoeuvre in a complex landscape of limited economic security within legal frames, combined with great opportunities when moving into the more informal sectors. It should be clear that land ownership plays an important role in a family’s economy. It is a many-faceted phenomenon which motivates various forms of management, but it seems that the promise of economic profit is what guides individual actions. Small-scale agricultural producers adapt their strategies to the current market, and economic and political systems, using their land as one means of providing for their family. When the Medina brothers first built a house in order to sell it, this could be seen as an entrepreneurial activity. The success prompted one of the brothers to continue in this kind of business. In the case of Antonio, he already knows from the examples of others how to make the maximum profit out of the piece of land he inherited; he is in this sense making use of the new patterns, the new system, which has developed through the actions of many before him. His choice of setting up an apartment block is not only a move away from the agricultural tradition of his family, but it also affects the socio-geographic topography of his village. As for the Ruiz family, they are involved in many different economic activities, which not only shows great ingenuity, entrepreneurship and knowledge of the economic system, but also has the pragmatic advantage of guaranteeing them several sources of income in case one or more of them fail.

In his monograph from Fuenterrabia, Greenwood grapples with understanding why the younger generations were not acting according to capitalist logics. He explains this by admitting new forms in an old pattern. By uncovering a continuity in certain values within a society in a process of change, materially, he is able to overcome the ”problem” of ”illogical” choice. In this way, he shows a dialectical mediation between the changing cultural patterns and the individual. This analysis is reminiscent of the perspectives outlined by Barth. In Pais Vasco, the younger generations were abandoning agriculture
altogether. In Torrox, the circumstances are different; continued agricultural activity along with governmental funding actually opens for other opportunities. The crucial difference between the two cases may be in the system of inheritance; while in Pais Vasco one sibling used to inherit the entire farm, in Andalucia, the land is generally split between all the siblings. This means each sibling gets a smaller piece of land upon which continued farming will ultimately not secure a decent income for a whole family. This system does, however, encourage versatile use of the land; for example, agricultural activity on one small plot and the selling of another. When deciding to sell real estate, the economic considerations weigh heavily.

Local economy to a great extent depends on the influx of foreign currency. Many foreigners in Spain contribute to the informal economy by taking advantage of and participating in it, especially when buying real estate. Foreigners living in Spain are known to actively escape bureaucracy, by, for example, refusing to register at the local Ayuntamiento. Owing to this, local municipalities have to cater to large groups of foreigners who make no contribution through taxes. Jurdao (1990) points out what he considers an even more serious problem: Foreigners are buying large amounts of land in Andalucia through companies registered in states exempt from taxation, like Gibraltar or Liechtenstein, causing the Spanish to lose control of large parts of their land and depriving the country of taxes – he calls this ‘modern colonization’. In the next chapter I will elaborate further on some of the aspects of land sales.
Chapter 4. PAN PA’ HOY – HAMBRE PA’ MAÑANA
(Bread today – hunger tomorrow)

“...cuando se acaben las cuatro perras que nos dan por la tierra y por las casas, nos habrán colonizado a la manera moderna...”

Los Sitiados, aptdo 36 Torrox

In spite of her age and limited health, widowed Maria (63) rises with the sun to go al campo several days a week. There is always work to be done for a small proprietor. Most of her plots are about a half an hour’s walk from her village house, but in different directions. She grows beans, grapes, fruit and vegetables for own consumption and petty sales on the street corner. This summer morning, I’ve decided to go with her. She owns part of an old cortijo on a parcel of land that has been divided between herself and her siblings in an area east of the village overlooking the valley, the river and the beach. Each of her siblings has their own entrance to a small part of the cortijo. Her part is the only one in its original condition, while all the others have been expanded by adding an extra floor or some new construction in the rear. After a bit of weeding, Maria makes coffee and tortillitas, and shows me her part of the complex, which is situated in the middle. It is a damp, three meter wide and five meter long cellarlike room with an entrance at the front. There are barrels of her homemade wine in the rear (these are sold to local bars), where the floor is damp and the ceiling low, and at the front she keeps kitchen utensils for cooking while she is there. She tells me that in summer she sometimes stays over night since there is work to be done on the land, and she shows me a ladder leading up to a relatively clean loft with wooden floors and a low, sloping ceiling. Maria’s three children are all married and do not contribute to the farm work. She has already divided her plots between them, and we walk around the land while she shows me the different plots

7 “…when we’ve spent the lousy peanuts they pay us for our land and our houses, they’ll have colonized us the modern way…” (my translation)
8 Los sitiados is an anarchically inclined group of people dedicated to criticizing the local development influenced by foreigners
9 Biscuitlike sweets made from a flour- and water-based dough fried in oil and served with honey
explaining that one daughter wants to build a cortijo here, the other one there. The views are amazing, and I note that being nearly at the top of the hill, these plots have sun all day. I ask Maria if she would not sell parts of this land to a foreigner (there would still be plenty left for her children’s cortijos). “No.” The answer is short and abrupt, and for a moment I fear she might have understood my question as an enquiry out of own interest in buying. So I continue: “This is a wonderful place. I’m sure some rich foreigner would give you a very good price...” I let my comment linger. “Pan pa’hoy, hambre pa’ mañana,” Maria answers, this time smiling at me. It is an expression I have heard several times. ‘Bread today, hunger tomorrow’ – local landowners understand land as a security for the future. A person who sells his land, will be wealthy today, but tomorrow all his money may be spent, and he will have nothing.

In this chapter, I take a closer look at current land use in Torrox. Land constitutes the main economic resource for local people, the context for change and the basis for my analysis. I will show that the official public ideology on the issue of construction does not coincide with individual interests. Both national and local governments try to steer the development through laws and sanctions. However, as I mentioned in the last chapter, many people choose to ignore the law when constructing in el campo. This results in over-exploitation, leading in turn to a tightening of the restrictions on construction. These are side-effects that most people close their eyes to at the moment of making decisions that will positively affect their family economy. People allocate their time and resources where they believe they will have the greatest benefit, based on their own experiences or the observed experiences of others. When weighing the alternatives for action within the present economical situation, individual decisions are often based on short term considerations. In what follows, I delineate macro level processes and give some empirical examples of individual or household strategies for land management.

**The value of land – comparisons and considerations**

The authorities of Castilla y León (Junta de Castilla y León) carried out a land reform in Puente de la Luna, which according to Selvik (2001) did not cause any disagreements
among the local inhabitants. They all owned small pieces of land spread over the area, just as in Torrox, and the aim of the reform was to interchange the pieces in order to gather each family’s share in one place. This meant that land which had passed through generations in the same family might end up belonging to a neighbour, or that a good piece was exchanged for a less fertile one. Selvik concludes that the reason there was no uproar is that tourism had taken over as the main source of income replacing agriculture. Hers is one example that economic considerations play an important role in people’s lives, and that the emotional ties to a plot of land may be broken if the advantages are strong enough or the disadvantages trivial. Such a reform would not take place in Torrox, but were one to hypothesize, I imagine it would cause quite an outrage because the type of tourism in the two villages is very different. Puente de la Luna is a place of transit where tourists only visit. Selvik does not make any mention of the market value of land, which I take to be rather irrelevant in her case. Torrox, on the other hand, is a place where foreigners make a long-term investment and come to stay. Torrox has had a colony of foreigners for the last 25-30 years, and new people are continuously moving in. The quality and value of the land is not judged merely by its fertility and agricultural value, but perhaps even more so by its market value, which is based on the view it affords, access to communications and water, hours of sun etc.

In Torrox, the practice of inheritance is such that land is normally distributed evenly among siblings, and often while at least one of the parents is still alive (Spanish law imposes equal division of inheritance). As generations pass, larger plots are subdivided into smaller units, which is how minifundism is created and maintained. This practice is quite different from that of larger fincas (farms), where the farm buildings and all of the land belong together and are not separated, but passed on as a unit to one heir. Even smaller farms may follow this practice, as in the way Daugstad (1999) describes it for Norway, where small-time farmers put great importance on keeping the whole of the farm within the family. These different practices obviously have differing consequences and also tend to place different meanings and importance on the moral issues of land management. On following the ideology of family continuity as tied to one inseparable unit, moral ties to land emphasize that the landscape was moulded by a family’s ancestors
(Daugstad 1999), and it is in this way personified. In Torrox, the importance seems rather to lie in the potential economic security in the land, and this value may be transformed into values of a different nature— one present day example being the selling of a plot in order to pay for children’s education. The ancestors’ “blood, sweat and tears” also play a part in the meaning and morality tied to land management in Torrox, in the sense that many landowners feel that they are really only temporary keepers of the land they have been handed down. However, the selling of plots may more easily be morally justified than in the case of farm units. Daugstad (1999) gives examples of how farms in her village, Vintervik, have been sold “out of the family” in times of economic hardship, and that modern times have brought changes which make agriculture less attractive to new generations who choose to move to larger towns. The land is then laid fallow as the parents get old, or it may be rented out or sold to outsiders, while the houses are kept within the family – the unit is this way broken up. This may then be interpreted as a necessary evil of modern times, and nearly “the death” of a farm in its original form.

A couple in Torrox will bring into the marital unit plots from four parents. Each plot may be quite small, and each person’s holdings are generally spread out in different areas. This makes farming the land more time consuming simply because one has to move around from one place to another in order to get the work done. Selling a plot in one area in order to expand one’s holdings in another area falls within an economic logic and is morally acceptable. Siblings may buy each other’s plots or swap them. Today, there is the risk that a part of one’s father’s land is sold by the brother who inherited it, so that the land one worked on as an adolescent now houses an English holiday home.

Greenwood (1976) explores the paradox that the commercialization of farming, with resulting high profits, eventually caused an agricultural collapse in the Basque town of Fuenterrabia. Profitable farms were being abandoned and the recruitment of young people to take over proved a difficult matter. In Greenwood’s analysis, the contrast between traditional agriculture and agricultural capitalism lies in the flexibility of the old system. The farms’ viability used to be secured through the alternatives in access to factors of production (marriage, inheritance, purchase, rental, reciprocal arrangements, production
and appropriation). In 1969 Greenwood found that heirs and their spouses could not be convinced to stay on the farms, agricultural day labour was difficult to find, and there was little interest in looking for cheaper land. In spite of the profitability he outlines for the new way of farming, young people were choosing a different lifestyle.

País Vasco is different from Costa del Sol in many ways, and Greenwood’s work is relevant to mine mainly on an analytical level. “Modernity” may have drawn the young people of Fuenterrabia away from their village in the early seventies, but the Torroxeños of today feel proud of living in an area that other Europeans consider attractive, and they generally see few disadvantages in being landowners. As I will show in what follows, the choices that Torroxeños face seem less drastic, as local values and outside influences may be woven together into new patterns where the local inhabitants demonstrate great ingenuity in balancing the best of both worlds. This is demonstrated above all in their dealings with their land. In these dealings, there are elements of both change and continuity, illustrated by the style of their new cortijos, as well as by the importance they assign to not selling all of their land. Torroxeños are indeed still tied emotionally to their land, as I will show. They do feel pride and privilege in being landowners, and being a landowner forms part of their identity. However, at the same time, they prove to be brilliant navigators in the changing economy, which brings new opportunities and more freedom today than existed thirty years ago. They may now choose among different methods of cultivation that yield a greater profit (change harvest or techniques). They may continue farming as more of a “hobby” while holding paid work, or they may abandon agricultural work altogether and either sell their land or not. They do not need to leave their village in order to find alternative ways of life – the outside world arrives on their doorstep with new opportunities. The construction of their own, modern cortijos proves not only a love for their land, but also that they are adopting leisure elements from the foreigners, as well as securing their share of the “sun and the beach”.

In her study of the Mallorcan village of Deià, Waldren also concludes that the people of the village “learned to gain full advantage from the economic opportunities...without losing the fabric of social relations, the meanings and values of their culture” (Waldren
1996). She is not blind to the fact that agricultural life is affected, and comments: “By the
time democracy was introduced, the formerly well-kept and productive land...(once the
source of local pride and identity) were in various stages of neglect...Pride and identity
had to be derived from other aspects of life.” (Waldren: xv). Neither does she ignore
negative effects of the development, such as the fact that the prices on housing rose to a
point where “from 1975 onwards...it became difficult for local Deianencs to buy a house
in their own village because the prices were out of their reach...” (Waldren 1996: 180).
Waldren emphasizes the local inhabitants’ active part in and their benefits of the
development, while at the same time questioning what the future will bring; whether
progress and paradise (the image that outsiders have of Deià) are compatible notions. I
believe that individual Torroxéños, through securing their own economy and constructing
their own cortijos, are taking their own measures to try to combine these notions of
progress and paradise, and in this way they demonstrate that their cultural inheritance
forms a natural part of their identity as modern Europeans. In the midst of the ambiguity
and paradoxes that arise, this is the logic that explicates the individual choices and actions
I present in this chapter.

Plastic landscapes and concrete jungles

Torrox is situated between Almería in the East and the famous Costa del Sol resorts in the
West. Until year 2000 there was only a regular, winding road leading from Málaga
eastwards along the beach, while there have for many years been highways between
Málaga airport and Marbella. This has contributed to the east side remaining less
touristically exploited, and Almeria is still mainly an agricultural province. Travelling
along this coast, one notices the gradual change from the very touristic Marbella or
Fuengirola with their palm tree roundabouts, sparkly clubs and high-rise hotels; through
the more messy, under-construction, half agricultural villages on the other side of Málaga;
to the huge fields of plastic green-houses further east. The real estate speculation along
Costa del Sol is differentiated from concrete hotels for package-holidays, to exclusive
urbanizations attracting residential tourists over the age of fifty. While the apartment
blocks at Torrox Costa were constructed in the seventies, over the last 5-10 years Torrox
has seen a boom in the construction of private second homes\textsuperscript{10}, which today actually outnumber regular family homes (4611 to 3617 at the end of 2001, UTEDLT, 2001). Nearly 20\% of all residences in the municipality were registered as uninhabited, which in theory means they are available for rent. However, the \textit{Torroxeños} themselves rarely rent their dwellings, as nearly 90\% of families live in homes they own (SOPDE 1998). The large number of second homes does not only demonstrate the municipality’s attractiveness to foreigners who reside temporarily either in a second home (an apartment, a village house or a \textit{cortijo}) or in rented accommodation owned by other foreigners or Spanish. It also reflects the importance given by the local inhabitants over the last few years to constructing for themselves a modern \textit{cortijo in el campo}. This development implies the transformation of more agricultural land into urbanized sites.

In 1998 a group of politically diversified local inhabitants representing many sectors of the community set up a ”Strategic Plan for local Development in Torrox” (Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo Local de Torrox). An analysis was made upon which certain suggestions for future measures and plans were based. The overall idea was to balance agricultural activity on the one hand and tourism or construction on the other. \textit{Torroxeños} describe the villages on the western side of the Costa del Sol as “destroyed” and “horrible”. As early as the beginning of the nineteen seventies, Spanish residents in the western parts of the coast had taken legal action against foreign resorts. Barke and France (1996) provide an example from Torremolinos, where in 1971, due to a complaint, the Supreme Court in Madrid specified that seven of the 26 tower blocks in one resort should be demolished, as the project had been constructed without the proper planning permission and it constituted an “overdevelopment” of the site (Barke and France 1996). Interestingly, the demolition decision was later rescinded and the local residents in question were economically compensated. \textit{Torroxeños} are well aware of the directions the rapid changes may take, and realize their responsibility in the continuing development. However, when I ask for opinions on the urbanization of the \textit{campo}, most people shrug their shoulders and say it is ok, it is a choice the local people themselves make, that it simply proves they know how to take advantage of today’s situation. The \textit{Torroxeños}

\textsuperscript{10} A dwelling that has the facilities of a normal home, but whose owner officially resides somewhere else
consider that they are free to make their own choices, and that each person’s strategies are based on rational decisions on part of that individual. They are navigating in a larger universe where outside factors are intertwined with local ones, but personal success is considered based on one’s own decisions. The opportunity for bettering the family economy, and the value placed on a modern lifestyle, motivate individual strategies. Both agricultural activity and construction depend on the availability of land. In Torrox, the power to make decisions regarding land use, to a great extent, lies in the hands of the each landowner.
Latifundism in inland Andalucia (and my five-year old Mathias posing in foreground)

Minifundism combined with tourism and real estate sales in coastal Andalucia
Torrox – a “green village”

Local politicians seem worried about the environmental effects of the accelerated real estate sales. They are quite aware that the law is often broken. At the beginning of 2002, Torrox entered a project aimed at impelling “quality tourism with respect for the environment” (the project is called “Municipio Turistico Sostenible”). This means the village will go through a certain programme of evaluation and receive the necessary technical support in order to meet certain European requirements (EMAS 761/01) regarding preservation and improvement of the environment. Urban space is calculated at 4 % of the total of the municipality. The initial evaluation concludes and comments: “....Information regarding the land use of non-urban areas has not been presented. No regular control or surveillance of the state of non-urban areas, nor of activities carried out in these areas, are performed (only the local police make rounds)...” (http://www.spain.info/mts/descripcion_proyecto.htm, my translation). One of the immediate goals of this project is to rectify this lack of control through stricter surveillance and law enforcement in the area of construction on rural plots. A long-term goal will be to attract tourists, as this contributes to maintaining the standard of living through the influx of currency, while doing so in an environmentally healthy way.

The Prodintur scheme in Andalucia seeks to promote tourism while integrating it in a larger scheme so that it complements economic development while at the same time protecting and conserving the environment and the cultural heritage (Robinson 1996). Planning permission must be applied for at the Ayuntamiento. More than 90 % of the municipality’s ground is, by the province of Málaga (la Junta), included in some kind of programme for the protection of the scenic and agricultural value of the area (SOPDE 1998). There are however loop-holes: The object is to limit construction and environmental changes, and exceptions are made for buildings strictly necessary for the exploitation of the natural resources. This in practice means, for example, that a large number of foreigners officially own sheds in the countryside of Torrox. A closer examination, however, will reveal that these buildings are chalets built following the traditional, rural Spanish style, but with modern facilities, beautiful views and swimming
pools. The authorities generally do not tear down houses that have been constructed illegally; they just fine the owner. If no complaints are forthcoming on a particular structure within five years after its registration at the local *Catastro* (cadaster/land registration office), then it is considered officially legal. Many houses have outstanding fines at the moment of conveyance: Privately built houses are sometimes fined even before they are finished; and people generally calculate the cost of a planned *cortijo* to include the fines that will be given if there is an inspection.

A legally built house is more expensive than one that may be fined, but difficult to find. Felipe, a real estate agent, really pleased exclaims one day when I meet him at the plaza: “Yesterday we sold a house that was almost legal! The owner got a really good price.”

Even officials working at the *Ayuntamiento* or at the *Catastro* are known to have built houses either for themselves or to sell that do not comply with the law. Such illegalities are difficult to conceal in a rather small village, where “everybody” knows about “everybody else”, and there is a silent acceptance that forms part of the mentality of doing favours for each other (see also chapters 3 and 5). When I asked my informants how they would obtain permission to build, when I knew their project was obviously way beyond the limits of legality, the answer I received would often be along the lines of, “I’ll have a chat with Fulanito (employed at the *Ayuntamiento*), his house is far from legal either” or “Ah, that’s no problem. I’ll do it little by little while paying my *contribución* (real estate tax) – in a few years it’ll automatically be legal.” In the first type of response, corruption is insinuated; in the second, the person is well informed on how to take advantage of the loop-holes in the bureaucracy of legalising real estate.
The short-termism of Spain

Drawing on empirical examples from the village of Mijas on the Costa del Sol, Jurdao (1990) supplies a thorough long-term analysis of the development of foreign urbanization, investment and tourism in the area. Jurdao is critical of the effects on Spain and its native inhabitants. In his opinion, they are the losers in the situation, while foreigners are colonizing Spain and taking advantage of a system with little governmental control. He blames the politicians and the Government, who act “suicidal” by not taking proper measures to protect the long-term interests of Spain as a nation. Instead, he says, they are blinded by a false image of prosperity created by the arrival of foreign currency and new jobs within construction. Jurdao claims that the central government is a passive bystander with little understanding of the destruction of the Mediterranean coastline, and that the legislation combined with bureaucratic apathy and corruption make possible the white-washing of black money from all over Europe. On top of this, the investors and the foreign population are evading taxes and thus contribute little towards the welfare of the villages they occupy.

Jurdao argues that the native people of the Andalucian villages are mainly farmers, who in their ignorance of ecological and urban matters only see today’s work opportunities within construction; they do not understand how the accelerated speculation will affect their future. “[City councils] are committing all sorts of barbarities, ecological as well as cultural, towards the native population and their environment.” (Jurdao 1990: 436, my translation). The natives even fight for the right to contribute to this destruction, Jurdao writes. His stance is that Spain is a Third World country in Europe, which other Europeans may exploit (Jurdao 1990: 449). He outlines two dichotomies; that between the local people and the central government, and that of the Spanish versus outside forces. Both Los Sitiados (1998) and Jurdao (1990) call the development “modern colonization”, justifying this claim with the fact that the Spanish are losing control of large parts of their land. Whether the Spanish are ignorant victims of the development is a question I will leave unanswered, since even the local inhabitants I spoke to do not agree on this issue. Their own contribution to this development is obvious; foreigners are making
investments within a system of fraud, corruption, tax evasion and illegalities that the Spanish themselves create.

Certain features of Spanish culture strongly affect people’s attitudes and actions. Robinson (1996) points to the “short termism” in business practice, “where forecasting and planning are underdeveloped (...) and regarded as a waste of time” (Robinson 1996: 421). As an example, he mentions that housing units are often paid for prior to the end of construction, making possible further land purchase and construction, completely ignoring environmental consequences. He agrees with Jurdao that the lack of governmental control in many areas has lead to excessive exploitation, and claims further that studies on ecological impacts that are carried out in Spain are largely due to E.U. requirements rather than a strong political consciousness on the subject. Financial considerations generally weigh heavier in political as well as private decisions, according to Robinson. These opinions are echoed by others: “Short-term private gains have prevailed over longer-term social interests” (Gómez and Sinclair 1996: 85). Gómez and Sinclair suggest how local and national government can change the trend by stricter regulations and control, and by encouraging more variation in the supply of tourist attractions. There may be a trend towards larger governmental control, due partly to EU directives and partly to self-interest. However, as long as local individuals – including government officials – co-operate in finding ways around the law, the Costa del Sol will continue to be over-exploited.

Jurdao and Robinson both point out important elements that I found present in local landowners’ land management. One of these is their short-termism. Local inhabitants ignore negative outcomes and the accumulated effects of certain acts carried out on a large scale in order to secure private interests. The other is the effect of the lack of governmental control. In chapter three I mentioned the overall impression among the Spanish that the state will not care adequately for people in times of need. These three factors combined create a mentality in which breaking the law or contributing to over-exploitation is not regarded morally improper. Most individuals regard their own needs as more important and more urgent than those of the environment or the community as a
whole. Restrictions imposed by the government are considered nothing but annoying impediments. This mentality makes it more likely that the aggregate result will be the outcomes of individuals’ acts motivated by personal interests, rather than of a conscious policy carried out by local government.

Local land use

The most fertile land in Torrox stretches from a wide, coastal plain in the southern part of the municipality, into a terraced and gradually rising and narrowing valley leading up to the abrupt mountains in the northern part, following the river Torrox. This fertile area is where, for centuries, sugar cane was grown, which provided the village with its famous sugar industry. As this is no longer a profitable business, sugar cane has been replaced by vegetables and fruit, which today constitute a large part of the municipality’s economy. The main crops are tomatoes and beans, apples, oranges and avocados. 69% of the municipality’s territory is cultivated. There are two forms of cultivation, more or less corresponding to two types of terrain: secano and regadío. Secano means “dry” farmland in mountainous areas where farmers traditionally had grapevines or olive trees which did not need irrigation. This land amounts to 3915 hectares. Regadio is irrigated land in the vicinity of the rivers (there are two more rivers in the municipality, apart from the river Torrox). There are 1087 hectares of irrigated land in Torrox. Regadio allows for different crops that demand more water. Today, in secano areas, there are various large wells owned by private persons or companies, from whom local farmers may buy water for irrigation. This in practice means that even in secano farming, water supplies may be bought, or that in former secano areas, one may cultivate certain produce which requires some irrigation. Of the cultivated territory 839 hectares are used for herbs/vegetables (herbáceos) and 1560 for trees, of which avocados are the principal irrigated plant (165 hectares). Grapevines (viñedo) take up 840 hectares, but most of this land is now left fallow, and it has little importance economically. The produce from irrigated agriculture is one of the main sources of income in Torrox (all the numbers are taken from SOPDE 1998).
The climate is a particularly favourable factor for the agriculture in this part of the province of Málaga. However, the municipality of Torrox faces two problems for its further development. One is the combination of erosion and abandoning of land in the mountainous areas, due to the low profitability and very tedious work of vines and olives; the traditional crops for this area. This is causing a degradation of the land, rendering it useless for agricultural purposes. Moreover, with poor access and no trees, it has little touristic value. The second problem is connected to the first in that the remaining areas (flatter and more fertile) have to compensate for the “lost” areas, which means touristic and urban developments are cramped together with agriculture in the areas that are most desirable for both purposes (SOPDE 1998). The clash this brings about is a prominent characteristic of Torrox – plastic greenhouses next to luxury chalets with swimming pools and neat gardens.

Torrox is a minifundist municipality: The large majority (91.46% in 1996) of cultivated plots in Torrox are between 0.1 and 5 hectares, and more than 98% of all agrarian exploitation is done by its owner (SOPDE 1998). Only two percent of registered cultivation is done on leased land. While 1079 persons claimed their only economic activity was as self-employed farmers on their own land, 580 said they are in agricultural business on their own land only as a secondary activity (IEA.SIMA, numbers for 1999). From 1989 to 1999, the number of cultivated plots larger than five hectares went down, while that of plots between 0.1 and 5 hectares rose. This may indicate several things. Some of these larger plots have probably been split between siblings as their parents have gotten older or passed away, while some may have been split simply for the purpose of construction and sales. Or a combination of these reasons for land splitting may have occurred. As mentioned before, one may build a shed on a plot that is being farmed. The consequence is that if a larger plot is split between several siblings, each of them may seek permission to set up a “shed” on his plot, taken that the shed and the plot officially meet the set requirements. Such permission may be refused if the land is abandoned. Paco, who is not very fond of agricultural work, said while looking out across a relatively barren part of his land: “The Ayuntamiento won’t let me build on that plot unless I’m farming it. So I planted a couple of trees.” He has the intention of building a chalet to sell
when he receives the permission to set up a shed.

**Ambiguous land**

Earlier in this chapter, I have mentioned both the sentimental/nostalgic value of land and its economical value. The local inhabitants’ feelings connected to agricultural land are loaded with ambiguities. Farming is considered hard, but it has its charm (“es bonito, pero duro”). Carried out on one’s own land, it gives a sense of freedom, satisfaction and pride. Being one’s own boss and being free from regular hours is highly valued. Staying in *el campo* week-ends or during the summer gives a liberty not found in *el pueblo*, where social life is much more intense and demanding. The produce one grows may bring a little extra income if sold locally on street corners, and local inhabitants appreciate this access to healthy, homegrown foodstuffs. When sharing their fruits and vegetables with me, *Torroxenos* would proudly comment: “This is good oil, all natural, nothing in it,” or “what you buy in the shops doesn’t compare to these vegetables; these are pure, no additives, just real sun.”

A modern lifestyle is both accessible and more attractive. Many young people, and even older, prefer working in construction or other wage earning jobs rather than do agricultural work. This is reminiscent of the observations Greenwood made in Pais Vasco thirty years ago. Among the young, these other kinds of occupations may hold more prestige, form part of a modern lifestyle, give a more secure or regular income, and make room for set leisure time. Many older men expressed a hope that their sons will not have to do agricultural work. However, there is an idea of security tied to owning land, which was something particularly mentioned by the older generation when talking about history and changes. They have lived through famine and the rations of the dictatorship, and owning land not only offers the possibility of self-sufficiency but it may also serve as a guarantee for future loans. As recently as the mid-nineties Torrox experienced a recession with high unemployment. There is work to be found today, and optimism prevails. However, even the young appreciate the security that land gives. The people of Torrox demonstrated the same contradictory notions of security that Freeman (1970) points out
among subsistence farmers in the north of Spain; there is a psychological security tied to owning land, but at the same time a conviction that a full-time farmer is “under constant threat of famine from natural causes and (...) is sometimes better off salaried” (Freeman 1970: 67). It would seem the Torroxenños have found ways of balancing the two life-styles by, for example, working wage jobs during the week and carrying out their agricultural work at week-ends, like the example of Jose Ruiz in chapter three.

Another aspect of land ownership is the continuity it represents. While anyone has the choice of selling land and thereby greatly improving their economic situation and securing their future financially, land is often inherited and thereby connected with the ancestors, which gives a sense of continuity and emotional security, as well as a feeling of moral obligation. Land left fallow is a disgrace for the family that own it; when the young are dedicated to wage labour, they often do not have time to do agricultural work. But again, even this is an ambiguous issue. Waldren (1996) found that in Deià, the younger generation did not sanction as strongly as the older one on many matters. Norms were continuously being expanded and negotiated through social performance, and she comments: ”Activites are classed in accord with the existing value system which is morally justified by the home community. But when traditions are ‘bricolage’, made to fit the present needs of the society, there are bound to be differences in interpretations...a different experience of morality for men and women of different ages” (Waldren 1996: 113). The parental generations of Torrox not only (in general) demonstrate understanding for the choices their sons and daughters make regarding work, they even appreciate the economic benefits the new wage working lifestyle brings to the family. Most families do not entirely abandon agricultural work, anyway. They continue to cultivate and harvest, but only on a smaller scale. The sons continue the valued tradition of being a buen trabajador (hard-working man) by working at waged jobs during the week and taking their turn on the land during week-ends. Women also participate to a great extent in agricultural work. The combination of salaried work and agriculture has become the new way to demonstrate that Torroxenños are hard-working buena gente (good people). We may say that the Torroxenean identity of today is one in which a modern lifestyle goes hand in hand with the appreciation for their land and their traditions. They manage the
land in a modern way by selling parts of it, and they hold on to tradition by continuing to cultivate it.

In chapter three, I gave examples of how people secure their income within the local economic conditions. The following empirical examples will illustrate more specifically the strategies of land management.

**Returning to the Ruiz family**

Let me start by returning to the Ruiz family I mentioned in chapter three. They live in the actual village, but own two plots of land in *el campo*. One was bought a few years ago with the intention of building a chalet to sell to foreigners; an investment the couple thought would yield a good profit in a few years, but which has so far not had the success they hoped for (see also page 55). The plot only measured 400 m², while the so-called shed they were to build was much larger than the law permits, and they were consequently given a €3000 fine. However, Jose and Pepa know that the neighbouring plot, owned by a foreigner, is even smaller. They assume that he will want to build on it. “When he starts building his house, we’ll continue ours,” they say, and explain how this is possible: “The fine was given by the *Ayuntamiento*. They never tear down a structure; they just fine it and then keep an eye on you. When the building has been there for five years, it is automatically legal through the process of you paying your yearly taxes on it and the *Ayuntamiento* accepting these taxes, and we may then do changes on a so-called existing structure. If, however, a neighbour had objected to a construction we had made, he could take the case to court, and if we lose the case, the building would be torn down. In our case, the neighbour will not object, because he has the same interest as us in maintaining peace so he can construct as well!”

The other plot was inherited from Jose’s parents, and it is where his family originally worked the land, making an income from their olives. On this plot, further from the village and in a more mountainous terrain with a brilliant view to the Mediterranean, there is an old *cortijo* with thick concrete walls and a well beside it. A couple of years ago, they
planted lemon and orange trees, and then this year avocado trees. The family has elaborated the patio area, which is now a huge stone terrace with a fireplace for cooking and a beautiful enramada; a metal construction covered with crawling vines creating a natural roof as protection from the sun. Although they have no intention of moving away from the village, they have just started expanding the old cortijo, adding a bathroom and a couple of extra bedrooms. “It’s nice to have a place where we can bring the family at week-ends,” Pepa comments. “This place will always be ours; we’ll never sell it.” Constructing a new chalet of this size on this plot would not be legal, but Jose explains that this is very different from the one that they were fined for. “This is an old cortijo. I suppose we should have applied for permission to expand it...I will, I suppose...apply. To be on the safe side. But they really wouldn’t check it anyway, because it’s old. What we’re doing is pretty small, anyway. We’re not going to construct anything big, just a little place for the family, where the children can bring their friends when they get older. And we’re not selling it.”

The way they speak about the two plots and their buildings is different. As opposed to the plot the family bought a few years ago with the intention of making a profit from its future sales, the second plot is inherited. They wish to keep it in the family; perhaps because of emotional ties. The fact that there is already a building on it makes it easier to do changes without soliciting permission. The old cortijo is being turned into a more modern second home. They are continuing the family’s commitment to agriculture through cultivation in a way they consider pleasing and leisurely, while enjoying el campo in a way similar to that of the foreigners.

**Widowed Maria**

Maria (63) has several separate plots of land spread over a large area; some were inherited from her parents and some from her husband who died while their children were young. She says about her land: “It’s always been in our family; maybe it was originally bought from los señoritos11. People used to starve (pasar hambre) to be able to increase their

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11 Wealthy landowner, a patron who owns too much land to work it himself and so has others to do the job for him.
property; they definitely wouldn’t sell. Never has as much land been sold as nowadays (nunca se ha vendido tanto como ahora).”

Maria has worked on and off since her husband died. He had worked hard and cared well for his family, leaving them with a big house. But a widow’s pension is petty in Spain, and when Maria was left with hardly any income, she had to look for work, which she found, cleaning the local school a few days each week. Her teenage daughters soon started dating, and when they decided to marry, they asked for no less than what tradition demands: that the bride’s family pays for the furnishings of the couple’s new house. “I haven’t had any luxury. I’ve watched all my neighbours with new things, while my own house was falling apart little by little. But my daughters cried and said “Mom, we’ll starve if we have to!” What could I do? I had my girls, I had to go hungry in order to get them married well,” Maria tells through tears. Yet she says selling land is out of the question. Considering the economic hardship she has suffered over the years, the hard work involved in farming and the splendid views from a couple of her plots, her strong stand surprised me. Other landowners I spoke to admitted having sold or considered selling in connection with investment such as a child’s education or their new home when he or she got married.

Maria was brought up during the Franco years and knows what it means not to have access to enough food. She believes strongly not only in modesty, self sacrifice and taking good care of what she has inherited herself, but also in passing on to her children as much as possible. The fact that times have changed and her children are today getting on quite well makes no difference to her feelings of moral obligation. Land is part of her identity and gives a sense of meaning and continuity to her acts; she is farming her family’s land, and she is respecting what her hard-working husband has left her and will pass it on to their children. Selling would mean giving in, as well as losing face. By holding on to her land, continuing to cultivate and weed it, and passing it on to her children, she proves that she is a strong, modest and generous person caring for her family – important characteristics in local context. We may call her a representative of the traditional ways as one of those individuals who has to face changes in her environment
due to the acts of others rather than her own.

**Javier**

The strong moral obligation tied to inherited land is not a characteristic only of the older generations. Javier (27) says: “I can sell the sun, but I won’t sell my land”, meaning that he may build a house on a plot he owns and rent it to foreigners, but he wants the property to remain his. He is the youngest of three brothers, and the only one still living in the village. The family owns plots in three different parts of Torrox, about 40.000 m² in total. His father died several years ago and his mother decided to split the land between her sons by drawing lots, which is a common way of doing it. The oldest brother lives in the city, and suggested selling his part, upon which Javier offered to take care of it for the sake of his brother’s children, the future inheritants. The middle brother lives in another village and works full-time in construction, as does Javier. Between the two of them, they take care of the olive trees and grapevines they own, but the second brother has a family and is eager to sell, so that he can pay off the mortgage on the apartment he is living in and in that way better secure his family’s future. He also complains that he works too much during the week to be spending the week-ends in *el campo*, always leaving his wife and children on their own. His wife does not participate in the agricultural work, nor does she come with him to *el campo*, whereas his mother often does.

The issue of selling has come up several times, as the two elder brothers have no interest in agriculture, but their mother is too old to be doing it herself and too proud to leave her land fallow. The only plot that has ever been sold was, according to Javier, a “useless *secano* corner with no trees and hardly any sun,” but he adds with an annoyed voice that they sold it much too cheaply. Whenever such conversations have come up, he “vetos” any suggestions. “I’m good at buying things, but parting with something is harder,” he explains. He is planning on building a house for living permanently in *el campo*, but none of his plots have the required meterage to do so legally. “If I can get water and road access done, I’ll build a terrace and a small shed first (meaning the size will comply more or less with the law, but the standard must be attractive for foreigners). This can be let out
for a while and will pay my expenses until I can afford to set up the rest. Anyway, as soon as there is a finished construction on the plot, the Ayuntamiento won’t touch it”. He says he does not know a single case where the local government has torn down an illegally built house, and when I ask him why, he answers laughingly: “Because even people in the Ayuntamiento hold their lives dear – they wouldn’t dare tear down a house that a village neighbour (vecino) has sweated over and put his life savings into!”

Although Javier has a modern lifestyle based on salaried work, he feels nostalgia for el campo. He admits that cultivating olives and grapes is strenuous, but every year he claims the subsidies for harvesting, and he believes that his landownership in the future will be quite different and only pleasureable. When his dream house is finished, there will only be a few trees– lemon, orange, avocado – for his own consumption on his plot; simply for the beauty and pleasure of it. “If I didn’t have my land, I wouldn’t miss the obligation of having to work it, but I would definitely miss the possibility.”

Javier knows he can make money by selling parts of his land. If he chooses not to, it may be because he feels that these plots and agricultural life form an important part of him – the fact that he wants to live permanently in el campo, one day, should be an indicator of this. It might also be a commitment he feels towards his father, who died relatively young. The fact that he is taking care of his brother’s land for the sake of his brother’s children also indicates that he feels obligations to maintain a line of continuity within the family. Of course, his stance may also be a question of economy; Javier does not yet have a family. Perhaps, when he does, he will reconsider his options and agree with his brothers, and sell in order to take care of a wife and children, or maybe he will build in order to rent to foreigners. He has so far not “fallen into the temptation” of contributing to the new pattern that has emerged as many have imitated the innovative individuals that decided to make quick money by selling plots.

The case of the Castros

Pepe Castro (71) took over his parents’ land directly from his father while his father was
still alive. “I was the only one out of eight siblings with any interest in agriculture, so I paid the others off with the same price that they’d been offered by another farmer,” he says. Later on, his younger brother Paco changed his mind and bought half of the farm from him. The land originally belonged to their two sets of grandparents, but since their parents grew up as neighbours, the two estates were joined in one large secano finca when they married. They have built a well, and Pepe has planted orange and lemon trees, while Paco hangs onto the old vines and olives (except for a few trees he planted as part of a plan for selling, as mentioned earlier in this chapter). Pepe tells me he used to spend the summers in the old cortijo with his grandparents and has good memories from his childhood. He has already divided his part of the land between his four children, but since they are all in full-time jobs, he comes up from the village a few days each week to take care of the land himself. One of his sons is building a large cortijo at the highest point of the land, and Pepe says his children are free to use their inheritance the way they wish, but he hopes it will always remain in the family. “This belonged to my grandfather and my father, it’s been passed on to me, and it’s a shame if the chain is broken. I understand that everyone must make a living, so I suppose it’s ok to sell off a small piece if there’s a need...But I would never sell. I have my children. Those who sell normally don’t have children to pass it on to. Or they have too much land to be able to take care of it themselves – like my brother. He has sold a piece, but still has a lot left.” Pepe and Paco share the original cortijo, which has been divided between the two of them and separated by a wall inside the building. Paco used to be a dayworker in agriculture, but has been employed intermittently in construction for many years. He does not want his children to struggle the way he has; he considers both construction and rural work hard, especially the traditional olives and grapes, which give a relatively low profit. A year ago, he sold a 5000 m² plot for ten million pesetas, and has now solicited permission to build on another plot further down the valley. “But there’s so much paperwork,” he complains. “I’d like to sell more plots. Up here, I can split the land into plots of 5000 m² and make good money, but down there I’ve had some problems...you see, I prefer selling small plots, but you’re not allowed to sell any less than 25 000 m² in that area, it has to be regadero (have water suppliance) and it has to have trees. I planted those trees, see? But only a few though, in order to comply with the requirements. Stupid rules made by the village council (tonterías
que ponen el Ayuntamiento)!” he says while shaking his head, and then explains: ”They want more campo and not urbanizaciones”.

The two brothers represent the two opposite poles, that of traditional values and lifestyle versus modern development and opportunities. While one has taken over the inherited land out of nostalgia and interest for rural life, the other has seen it as an investment that can yield a profit through sales. Pepe sees the beauty of the campo, but Paco sees the hard agricultural work. The elder brother wishes to pass on what he has inherited, and the younger prefers handing down money and freedom from agrarian obligations. Paco is in Barth’s sense acting more as an entrepreneur and finding new ways of handling the material resources he has his hands on. Or we may say, that with so many individuals having acted in this way before him, he is merely following the new pattern which has emerged, despite the fact that he belongs to an older generation where more traditional values are still prevalent.

The Robles family

A few years ago the government encouraged the removal of vines and destruction of potential output, and paid accordingly. One of the families that became entrepreneurs during this period is that of Antonio Robles and his wife Nieves, both now in their forties. They own 35 000 m² in one plot in the secano hills north of the pueblo, as well as a small plot of only 2000 m² on the regadio plain near the coast. Instead of selling the regadio plot or building a cortijo on it to take advantage of its vicinity to the beach like many others have since then done, the couple set up a green-house. “I considered tomatoes in a green-house clean work (trabajo más limpio). Anyway, my parents were still alive when we set it up, and they wouldn’t have liked to see foreigners on that plot.” The green-house has become a family enterprise where the couple work together, while their two children join in when they have time. However, their really profitable investment was made when they decided to tear up the vineyard and collect the subsidies. The following year they planted avocado trees on this secano plot. These trees are irrigated with water they buy from a nearby private well. Antonio tells me: “I have always liked el campo, but the
secano is mule’s work. We used to walk up there when the sun rose; it’s a seven kilometer walk. And while my parents cut the bunches of grapes, my brother and I would carry the cases up to the road.” He goes on, describing the scorching sun, and the way he used a rolled up t-shirt on top of his shoulder where one case after the other would be lugged, with the grape-juice dripping down his neck, and flies and wasps gathering for a feast. “Up and down that hill until your back feels broken and your neck is numb...and then walk home again at night...” Today, this family of four makes a comfortable living purely from agricultural work. Antonio is pleased: “We could have got a good price for that plot because of the views from up there. But it would have been a shame. There’s a long tradition of farming in my family; I’m really just following progress.” The way he sees it, he has taken tradition with him into a modern and profitable way of farming. He holds many of the same values as his parents, and considers that he has only changed superficial elements. While respecting ancestors, inheritance and tradition, he is living a modern lifestyle. Now Antonio drives his four-wheel driven Jeep to the avocado plot, and then loads the cases onto a small hand-driven truck, which takes them to the road where a truck from the wholesaler picks them up.

Antonio Robles has demonstrated innovation both when setting up the green-house and when investing in avocado trees. His motivation has been – apart from the obvious element of profit – to continue in line with his family’s tradition, instead of “selling out”. He has managed to do so in a modern way, unlike those who leave large parts of their land fallow and sell parts of their plots for a quick profit. He has created a modern agricultural lifestyle for his family, and is proud to have done so with a success that allows him to send both his children to university. Whether they later decide to work the land and the green-house themselves, or pay others to do it, is not a question that concerns Antonio. He has made the necessary investments for his children to continue making money on their ancestral land even when he himself is gone, and so he believes they will not be tempted to sell. Antonio’s course of action has inspired others, and avocado has become an important crop in the village economy. It is even in line with the government’s wish of maintaining cultivated land within the municipality.
Concluding remarks

According to Barth’s view, micro and macro levels of society are paired in a dialectical relationship where individual actors perform events that are both conditioned by, and which together constitute, the aggregate, macro level (Barth 1997: 80). I have tried to follow Barth’s idea of not separating the two levels for distinctive analytical treatment, but rather prove their interdependence within a single framework (Barth 1997: 81). By giving examples of how people act within certain set preconditions, I hope to have shown the dynamics of parts of the process of change in which Torrox finds itself, and the way individual choices create new patterns in a society.

My empirical examples may be summed up in the following way. Widowed Maria and Javier both represent traditional values with a certain nostalgia for agricultural activity and a focus on keeping inherited land within the family, although they belong to different generations. In accordance with this, they are opposed to selling their plots to foreigners. However, they are also affected by the changes around them. Javier lives a modern lifestyle with wage work, and wants to build a house in the campo for himself, in the way he has seen foreigners do. Maria has watched her neighbours making money by participating in the development, while she has kept her strong stance. The modern lifestyle of her children means they do not help her with agricultural work. She may be called a victim caught in the dilemma between her traditionally based moral values and her economic restrictions within modern economy.

Both the Ruiz family and the Robles have shown entrepreneurship in their economic activities. In the case of the Robles, they have been pioneers whom others have followed successfully. Their choice of planting avocados was a step towards modern agriculture, contributing to the development and changed patterns in the village of Torrox. The economic activities of the Ruiz family, if we sum up those mentioned in chapter three as well as this chapter, have many elements of illegality or semi-legality. The Robles, however, have managed to make a good living without crossing this line. While the Ruiz family are acting contrary to governmental interest in constructing illegally, the Robles
have taken actions encouraged by the government when abandoning the cultivation of grapes. Both of these economic strategies – construction on one’s own land for sales or modernizing cultivation on one’s own land – are acts that initially were carried out by innovative individuals, but which have become commonplace and now form part of the new patterns of this society.

Land ownership is a key resource in Torrox. Although many plots are changing hands, there is a reluctance to sell, which is based on “traditional values” in the sense that most Torroxeños see land ownership as a part of their identity. They are also aware of the treasures they hold; foreigners’ appreciation for el campo as a place for leisure has become part of the local inhabitants’ new way of seeing el campo. They know how to take advantage of the system, and a paradox arises that while there is now less land to be farmed, the governmental assistance has made it possible for many to continue calling themselves rural workers while actually leaving the hard and unstable agrarian work for better paid jobs in construction or services. The truth is that governmental funds are, in reality, financing some landowners’ luxurious cortijos, while these same landowners claim to be preserving local resources and traditional values, and in this manner they even gain local recognition. Individual interests and choices are rarely in tune with governmental plans and goals, and when the totality of individual acts create new patterns of behaviour, the unintended outcomes of these acts have side-effects that are sometimes difficult to deal with, like the crowding of el campo. The desire for economic betterment makes people sell their property, both in the village and in el campo. The effect of this is that neighbourhoods are broken up, and that local inhabitants have to accept the presence of a large, unmanageable group strangers in their midst, and the effects of their presence. I now make a move towards a discussion of this issue.
Chapter 5. SOMOS BUENA GENTE….WE’RE GOOD PEOPLE

“Viva el pueblo de Torrox, que esto es una maravilla.

Cacho cielo como éste no hay ni lo habrá”

From old poem (La reunion Zaragatera)

Over the previous chapters, I have shown how Torroxeños adapt to the changing labour situation and take advantage of the new economic opportunities. I have focused on the way individuals maximize their own possibilities for profit and gain within the parameters of the system. However, it is not only the system of subsidies, the governmental funds and the capitalistic development that create these opportunities. A mentality of mutual favours makes certain manoeuvres possible. Friendships, people’s network and their dependence upon each other are basic elements that produce not only emotional support, but also economic advantages. Belonging to a community shapes identity and assures each person a position in society, “which not even his own bad conduct can take away from him” (Brenan 1963:13). The informal economy, the bending of laws and the undermining of the social security system to a great extent become possible through the social dynamics of the village. Among small-time farmers collaboration within the family and with neighbours has always been a part of life (Freeman 1970). Friendship and neighbourhood spirit is continually reinforced; being a vecino in the full sense of the term means fulfilling certain expectations.

In what follows, I explore a set of values that tie together moral and reciprocity. Solidarity and union are created through exchanges that do not have economic gain as their sole objective. Torroxeños define themselves as ‘good people’ (buena gente), and certain characteristics are particularly emphasized as typical for them; for example “we are generous, easy-going and family focused”. As a member of this community, one is expected to express these characteristics through acts. In this chapter, I will give examples of how this is done. I will particularly focus on the concept of ‘generosity’. Generosity is demonstrated in many ways and in many settings in local life. It may take the explicit
form of gifts, but is also expressed in more subtle ways through the acts and mentality of a “good person” who for example makes personal sacrifices for the well-being of others.

**Reciprocity as a cultural guideline**

The economic aspects of patron-client relationships have played an important part in many of the anthropological studies of Spain, bringing attention to the hierarchical structure of Andalucian villages (see Pitt-Rivers 1954, Peristiany 1966, Brandes 1975, Davis 1977, Gilmore 1977 and 1980). Where the relationship is characterized by imbalance of resources, leadership and authority is created through the economic dependence of the followers upon their benefactor. Such has been the case in latifundist Andalucia. In my thesis, economy, reciprocity and social esteem between people in a more egalitarian community are woven together in indirect ways that have not been discussed much in traditional studies of status and wealth in Andalucia. The mutual exchange of goods between individuals or groups is a sign of friendly relations, and it creates and reconfirms moral and emotional ties (Mauss 1995). Not only material things are exchanged. Mauss states that even such things as hospitality, parties or the exchange of women in marriage fall within a system of exchange where people are committed to each other. Sharing may in theory be a voluntary act. However, in practice it is a social phenomenon involving obligations of both giving and receiving (Mauss 1995). Individuals (or groups) have the right to refuse to accept such a “contract”, thereby remaining outside the system, and it is the awareness of this right that “gives the circulation of goods an aspect of generosity” (Mauss 1995: 203, my translation). Sahlins (1972) states that one of the “rules” for socially integrating gifts is that there is a certain delay in reciprocating, creating bonds over time; “…the counter[obligation] is not stipulated by time, quantity, or quality: the expectation of reciprocity is indefinite” (Sahlins 1972: 194). In Torrox, there is a continuous flow of presents between households that are connected through friendship, kin or neighbourhood. Particularly births, Christenings, first communions and weddings are occasions for reconfirming bonds. For example, when Maria’s grand-daughter was born, the baby received an enormous number of presents from Maria’s friends, and I made an astonished comment. Maria then looked
me in the eyes and said: “But I will pay for this, believe me”, which means she will in turn have to buy presents for the grand-children of her friends.

Generosity and hospitality are basic emic concepts that local inhabitants use to judge themselves and others. The Torroxeños themselves present these values as inherent characteristics of each individual. Generosity is considered a fundamental characteristic in a good person; you are expected to share. By tying together material and ideology, ethics and economy, a community knits a structure that seems justified by the natural order. The obligation to participate in the reciprocal system makes certain demands on, and in some cases even strains, personal economy. The system itself is, however, never questioned, as this would imply that a person is not generous – an unthinkable situation. “We always find a way. There’s no such thing as not being able to.” People may borrow money from family members or friends in order to fulfill their obligations. There is an extensive and complex web of “unsettled business” and “debts”, which ties the community together and confirms existing relationships. Today, collaboration and reciprocity need not function as economic insurances, as families are more self-sufficient. The system rather confirms belonging and membership in the community.

Greenwood (1976) noted that although people in Fuenterrabia were seeking modernization and urban life, their fundamental values did not change. People selectively maintain traditions and local identity while incorporating change. Waldren (1996) shows how certain traditional practices are handed down from one generation to the next and reinterpreted to create a sense of continuity in a constantly changing society. In her analysis Waldren focuses on the practice of naming houses, as well as the preservation of material symbols such as architecture. “Tradition is not inherited; it is a name given to something constantly being made” (Waldren 1996: xvi). As with tradition, identity is also subjected to a dual process of change and continuity.

I will delineate aspects of local life and some of the local values in order to show how Torroxeños maintain those aspects of their culture that they feel constitute their identity. The village community does not consist simply of its inhabitants, but it refers to the
relationship between them with their shared past and present, lifestyle and norms, their traditions and the current changes. The following is an analysis of some of the social dynamics of the village, which will also illustrate how the local inhabitants understand themselves as opposed to the foreigners amongst them. There are differences in the values of the two groups, at least as seen by the local people. Waldren notes: "The threat from these other cultural values [of foreigners] within the village has been confronted by creating a local sense of collective identity based on the values of marriage, family, a household, and relations with kin who share common experiences in Deià” (Waldren 1996: 248).

**Family values and the importance of kin**

Francisca (52) is considered a good mother and a good wife, a generous person dedicated to her family and friendly to everyone. She has done all the correct things according to local norms and enjoys respect and status. Sitting on the steps outside her house one afternoon in summer, Francisca crochets while telling about herself and her family. She has two children, who are both married and living with their spouses in a building a five minute walk from their parents. The building is owned by Francisca and her husband, who have invested heavily in it to convert it to two separate apartments for their children. The house is considered modern with expensive details. Her daughter, a housewife with one small child, brings her family over to her mother’s house every day for lunch.

“Spanish parents care for their children, even after they’ve become independent. We help them...we want to give them as much as possible,” Francisca tells me. “We’ve paid for our son’s education. He has a very good job. I tried to get my daughter to study, too, but she didn’t want to. Since we got married, my husband and I don’t do anything. We never go on holidays, we never travel anywhere. We don’t go to restaurants. I don’t even go to the beach. I’ve taken care of both of my own parents when they got old, and now I’m taking care of my mother-in-law. I’ve got a clear conscience. My husband works a lot (es un buen trabajador). That’s how we can afford to set up homes for our children.”

Francisca also has a very clear idea about foreigners: “Foreigners generally aren’t very
interested in their children. When they’re eighteen, the parents want them to move out, they’re busy leading their own lives. Foreigners are much more selfish than the Spanish.”

More than 85% of the Spanish say that the family is the most important element in their lives (Lorenzo y Armangué 1996). Quite in accord with many other studies carried out in Andalucia, I found that the main focus for people in general is their nuclear family. However, in Spain, a person’s natal home is never forgotten. Ties to parents and siblings are actively maintained, and the extended family forms a major part of most people’s lives. It is not unusual for a young, married, couple to live with the parents of one for quite some time, or to eat at their parents’ house several times a week. Many years after starting to earn one’s own salary, a son or daughter may still be living at home if he or she is not married. Only severe problems within the family, like alcoholism or physical abuse – a source of shame to the outside world – will make young adults move away from home.

Ana’s son is over thirty years old and bought an apartment of his own several years ago. He pays a monthly sum on his mortgage, but the place is left uninhabited while he continues to live with his parents. The sparsely furnished flat is used for parties with his friends; he goes there to watch films on his own and sometimes stays over night. However, he always eats at home, takes his showers at home and all his clothes are still there. He says keeping his car is expensive and he likes being able to spend his money on other things than “water and electricity”.

Sometimes young people wish to gain more independence, but their consideration for their parent’s feelings prevent them from doing so. They claim their parents would not understand their choice and would wonder whether they were not happy at home.

Andrea (27) has a university degree and has landed a good job. For several years she has dreamed of moving out of her parents’ house. When they built a cortijo for her, it made the wish even stronger as she now sees the possibility of staying close to home, but enjoying a bit more freedom. She says she is happy at home, but that her parents are very
protective and that she would like to have more freedom. However, her mother is convinced that if the daughter has to live on her own she will be lonely, she will not be able to take proper care of herself, and she will not eat well. She may also be protecting her moral conduct – Andrea’s sister became pregnant and consequently had to marry when a teenager. When Andrea went to Madrid for two months as part of her new job, her mother continually complained to the neighbours that her poor daughter had to cook for herself after long days at work, that she could not find the ingredients her mother uses for her usual meals, and that she had no-one to help her wash her clothes. The young woman returned with sparkling eyes and was eagerly explaining to me the adventures of her stay in the capital when her mother walked into the street and interrupted our conversation by saying: “Look at her, poor thing – she’s so skinny!” She wanted me to understand that the daughter had suffered while being away from her mother’s loving care, and although Andrea obviously did not agree, she made no objections, but just glanced at me with a resigned look on her face.

However, young people living with their parents do still enjoy an enormous amount of freedom. They have no other obligation than going to work, if they have work, or studying, if that is what they choose to do. They pay no bills (although they may contribute to household economy), the mother generally makes all the meals and does the washing and cleaning, and yet they come and go as they please. Most young people see no point in changing this carefree life for a lonely apartment where one has to do everything for oneself as well as pay one’s own way. Living with their parents leaves them more freedom and more money, as well as greater safety and emotional support. As for the parents’ interference with their sexual relationships, I was told “there’s always a cortijo.”

“Becoming independent” in Torrox refers to the act of moving out of the natal home. In many western countries young adults are considered (and wish to be) financially independent upon starting work, and at that time generally choose to move away from their parents and set up their own home, if they have not already done so in order to study. The tradition in Spain is different. The reasons may be many, but I count among them the poor
social security system, the high unemployment rate and the insecure labour market. Waldren claims that the most desirable women are mature (as opposed to inexperienced and vulnerable), but still living with their family, needing a bit of persuasion to “fall” (Waldren 1996), which makes quite a contrast to northern European values, where a thirty year old living at home is rather undesirable as it shows lack of both independence and the capability of taking care of oneself. The independence and individualism of northern Europeans is interpreted by the Spanish as arrogance, indifference or even neglect. The family unity outlined is unique to Spain compared to other European countries and has both economic and emotional causes and consequences (Lorenzo and Armangué 1996).

Traditionally, upon getting married it was expected that the husband, with help from his family, finance the couple’s new home, while the wife’s family were to supply the furnishings and household equipment. The new home could consist of simply setting off a separate part of the groom’s parents’ house with its own kitchen, bedroom and bath facilities. The girl, upon reaching a certain age, would start saving up towels, embroidered table-cloths and the like. She would receive household objects as presents. The tradition is still to a certain extent practiced, but today a young couple may decide to buy an apartment together and start paying a mortgage some years before actually getting married and moving in. Together with their parents they buy things piecemeal until the wedding, at which time everything is ready – even the fridge is often filled (!). Being able to “marry your children well” is a source of great pride to parents even today. It proves they are ‘good people’ according to local norms.

As parents get older, it is expected that their daughters and daughters-in-law take care of them. Francisca moved in with her parents-in-law upon getting married some thirty years ago. Her husband set off a part of his parents’ house, built a separate kitchen for the newly-weds and separated the two homes by making an entrance for his own family at the back of the house. His mother remains living in her part of the house, and his wife now takes care of the senile and bedridden old woman every three days, as his two sisters also take their turn. This type of shift-like care work is quite common; if the old person can remain in their home, one female family member will visit every day to cook, clean and
care. In addition to Francisca’s household, two more households on the street where I lived consist of three generations, with the house belonging to the oldest generation. In one case, the son has remained living at home after getting married, and his wife and daughters are now sharing household chores with his mother, who is still quite healthy. In the other case the owner of the house, who is more than seventy years old, was widowed a few years ago. Her daughter had originally married out of town, but decided to return to her mother’s house bringing her husband and teenaged children with her. In this household they also alternate with a brother’s family in caring for the great grandmother, for a week or two at a time, which means that certain periods of each month there are four generations living together. Nevertheless, when a son or daughter decides to live with an old parent, the situation may often be strained, as it means that several people are cramped into what is often a small space. However, this arrangement has obvious economic benefits. Taking on a parent means the old person’s pension goes towards the household; if the house belongs to the older person, there is generally no mortgage tied to it, which means very low living expenses; and if a parent is taken into the new home of a married couple, it often means the parents’ home can be sold or rented out, which is another means of expanding one’s assets.

**Apodos - family nicknames**

In Torrox, there is a tradition of giving nicknames (*apodos*) based on incidents, occupations or characteristics. A person may have an individual, newer nickname used among peers, but the local *apodo* is often an older one, derived from parents or grandparents and known to a much larger group of local inhabitants. Each name carries connotations of characteristics that belonged to someone in that family, a characteristic which may or may not be inherited. The *apodo* continues to be used as a means of differentiating persons with the same name from each other, or for referring to a family as a whole, a familiar characteristic of one particular person, or for placing each individual within the local context. When Daugstad (1999), writing from Norway, points to the importance of “where you are from” (meaning which farm) in Vintervik, and Waldren (1996) explores the tradition of House names in Deià, their purposes are the same as the
*apodo* in Torrox: they are metaphors for social relations connecting everyone in the village to other people past and present (Waldren 1996). Naming is a complex matter in Torrox. A person whose Christian name is José Antonio Ruiz Rodriguez may be called Pepe Ruiz, since Pepe is a form of José and the first surname is generally given more importance than the second. In addition, he may be called Pepe *el Jarruco* after his grandfather. This *apodo* came into use after an incident where his grandfather was working in *el campo* with friends who discovered that his water-bottle (*jarrucho*) was filled with wine while everyone else was drinking water. It has followed the family ever since, they are known throughout the village as the *Jarruchos*. The use of *apodo* is similar to that of House names in Deià, the village Waldren studied. Waldren shows how the “continuation of a House name is ‘symbolic capital’, which each family is capable of maintaining or accumulating through the generations (Bourdieu 1984)” (Waldren 1996: 146). She argues that this is one way in which villagers ensure continuity in their changing world. In Waldren’s Deià, foreigners who bought and restored named houses were soon included and given a fictive kinship status, which meant acceptance by the community. As the nicknames in Torrox refer to families rather than buildings, foreigners have no way of entering this sphere (although, if married to a local, his/her offspring may).

**Neighbourhood bonding**

Andalucian *pueblos* are generally known to have strong hierachies where dayworkers and small time farmers depended economically upon their señor (landlord). Torrox, however, is rather egalitarian in comparison to the inland villages. An egalitarian village structure based on religious observances and strong social sanctions which make a community function corporately is, according to Freeman, a phenomenon found all over Spain (Freeman 1970). While large proprietors have been able to secure a living for their family through the income from their land alone, small time farmers have always had to resort to other solutions (Jurdao 1990). “We used to do exchanges – someone would help us with the olives, and I’d paint his house in return. We still do, but nowadays people might hire someone they know and pay a set wage for a days work,” Javier tells me. People’s own
network creates a base for labour and economic activity outside the formal channels. These activities may not always imply monetary transactions, nor are they always considered work. What people do for their family, friends or neighbours as a reciprocal arrangement is often considered leisure, and may take the form of a social event. Pepa’s daughter Estrella regularly babysat for me, and in return I helped the family harvest, an arrangement which was much more useful for my fieldwork than simply paying the teenager in cash.
Family week-end outing *al campo*

Neighbours on mid-week afternoon outing *al campo*
While much of the anthropological literature has centered on social relations in hierarchic societies, Greenwood (1976) analyzes the reciprocity of labour between small time farmers in a village in País Vasco. According to him, work teams have been a popular means of increasing the labour force, because the obligations are mutual and thereby do not create superiority. “When most farmers were poor, the labour reciprocities were a vital component in the success of any farm” (Greenwood 1976:119). The extent and form of the collaboration varies with time, place and context, as does the strictness or “looseness” of the social contract. Freeman (1970) also explores the egalitarian coexistence and collaboration of families in a small village in Castilla-La Mancha; a village she considers representative of a general neighbourhood attitude found on the Iberian peninsula. Taking turns and sharing responsibility is “the rule of life in these small villages” she says (Freeman 1970:32). The term vecino (neighbour) not only refers to place of residence, but also connotes various rights and obligations within a community.

In Torrox, a person’s network is often formed of people living on the same street or in the same area; alliances are also made through kinship, as well as through ritual ties such as godparents, or through economic contacts. Patronizing business acquaintances over years forms part of a traditional social structure in which the client receives special consideration for his loyalty. The whole society is made up of a web of contacts which form a base for favours. Friendships and labour reciprocity are closely related; social bonding has emotional as well as practical purposes.

**Echando una mano – giving a helping hand**

I’ve arranged with Pepa to pick medlars\(^\text{12}\) in the afternoon. We drive my car along the dirt road into el campo, the two of us and our children. She tells me they’ve rented this piece of land for a few years; the fruit trees were already there. Our boys are delighted to explore the terraced landscape, and her daughter Estrella sings “...yo tengo celoo’ a quien te miraaa...” with flamenco vibrating voice while climbing the branches to pick the ripest fruits, carefully, without touching the light dusty layer which covers and protects

\[^{12}\text{Medlar} = \text{nispero, an exotic fruit which has become a popular agricultural product in Torrox over the last few years}\]
them. The work takes about three hours, and we carry the filled buckets up to the dirt road where Pepa’s husband meets us to load them onto his truck after work finishes at seven o’clock. Back at the village, we carry the fruit into Pepa’s garage at the bottom of our street. Estrella runs up the steps shouting “A la cochera! Han venido lo’ nispero’!” (To the garage! The medlars are here!) upon which women pour out of their homes and rush down. It is a social event. Some of the women have brought their own garden scissors for cutting the fruit from their little stems, and work is distributed without any instructions. Some cut and sort according to size, while others lay the fruit nicely in layers in their boxes, and Pepa’s husband and her father organize the wooden boxes on the floor for delivery to the wholesaler. The garage is situated on a curve along a road that runs through the village from one end to the other. Anyone passing this part of the village, on foot or by vehicle, notices the commotion. Many people stop, and a few decide to stay, leaning against a wall or sitting on a box, joining in the loud jocular small-talk. While working, they stop now and then to try a fruit, spitting the stones on the floor.

**My street**

The street I lived on is a narrow pedestrian street with twelve Spanish households, numbering a total of twenty-seven persons, whose recent history is tied to this particular street. There are foreign neighbours in those houses that have been sold over the last twenty years: an elderly couple who do not interact with the other inhabitants; a quiet woman who rents out parts of her enormous house (which used to be four village houses) to other countrymen and admits having little interest in her Spanish neighbours; a middle-aged couple who do make attempts at communicating with the local inhabitants in limited Spanish, but who are not accepted as part of the neighbourhood “clan”, although friendly smiles and phrases are exchanged. The house I rented is also owned by a foreigner. Those who have grown up on this street and are now between 20 and 40, have either moved out on marrying or have plans to do so. One of the vecinas on the street grew up there, married out of town, but later returned to her mother’s home with her husband and children. The youngest mother, 32 year old Pepa, has lived there since she married fifteen years ago. The rest of my informants from this street have been there the last thirty to
fourty years, their houses either being transferred from parents-in-law or bought by their husbands at their time of marrying. A couple of the homes house three generations, while some consist of only a widow.

It is in the women’s lives that the neighbourhood bonding is most easily observed. The bonding may be stronger among these women than among many other neighbours in Torrox. It nevertheless illustrates a general point about belonging, identity and the generating of groups and networks, which is certainly a part of local life, although the form or purpose of this may be undergoing change. Women hold together networks by making sure that reciprocal obligations are at all times fulfilled; that visits are made when someone is sick, that presents are delivered, that small-talk flows. These women have shared each other’s delights and consoled each other on their bereavements. They have helped each other in childbirth and they are godmothers to the children who have grown up together moving freely between the houses. Ana (64) tells me that her two children have been delivered in her own bed with the help of her neighbour Maria. “And when Maria’s son was little he spent a lot of time with me; he would even come and sleep in my bed – between me and my husband,” Ana laughs. “He was a real screamer, he cried all the time, but in my house he always behaved very well.” Maria adds: “I didn’t know what to do, he wouldn’t sleep in his own bed; he was always just screaming!” “When he got older and started working,” Ana recalls, “he said he would buy me a pair of shoes, because the ones I had at the time were worn out. And he did. He was only eight or nine years old, and the cute thing bought me a pair of shoes with his first wage!” Of my female informants on my street, only Pepa is today working in a salaried job, but they all have more or less the same schedule for their daily chores around the house.

The organizing of their day makes plenty of room for contact with each other. Around eight o’clock in the morning the women start cleaning the house, hanging clothes out to dry or preparing the midday meal (even the widows living alone tend to follow the same schedule). Around ten, the scene is set for the first meeting of the day, a time of plenty of movement and social contact. If someone is missing, the neighbours might shout for her to come out, using either her name or comadre (literally: co-mother, meaning one is the
godmother of the other’s child, or that they are affines). Nearly everyone has some errand at the local shops, and although Pepa is working, she is not left out from the social happenings of the morning hustle and bustle, as she works in a shop just down the road, where they all stop by to get the ingredients for today’s midday meal. The streets and the markets are the most common social arenas for women – shopping can take all morning as it is also an occasion for catching up on news and gossip, and one must under no circumstance refrain from stopping to chat, as this is considered an unfriendly demonstration of wanting to set oneself apart.

Each woman carefully minds her household duties, never neglecting her family, and the work of each household is kept separate. At two o’clock most men have an hour off work, and this lunch-hour is sacred. No one calls or enters a neighbours house at this time. As soon as the men have left for their afternoon shift, the same group of women one by one take to the street again. The cleaning of floors always ends outside the doorstep, where the soapy water is poured onto the concrete pavement, which is also washed; this often coincides with the others bringing chairs and their crochet work to meet on the steps, usually Francisca’s. Even Pepa, who is much younger than the “veterans” on the street, has adopted the same hobbies and joins in. The children run about playing, and the teenage girls also form part of the scene. On these steps, Pepa’s daughter Estrella helped Ana tint her hair and demonstrated the efficiency of a new ladyshaver on one after the other. This is also where I first tried the sweet tortillitas that Maria makes and where I introduced my own homemade treats with Estrella as my assistant chef. On some afternoons the group of vecinas go al campo, which may mean only a walk along the road picking wild vegetables such as fennel and spring onions, but sometimes takes in even a little weeding, followed by a coffee at someone’s cortijo. At any social event, from funeral mass to carnival celebration, these women are seen strolling together through the village, each wearing their best dress. If there is a wedding or a christening in the family of any one of these vecinas, then all her neighbours are invited, sometimes even to the frustration of their sons- or daughters-in-law (who often have to pay for the celebration).
Fiestas

Public fiestas often have an element of colourful parading, singing and dancing, where the participants are all Spanish. Foreigners gather to watch, and they might timidly join in by clapping their hands, or even dare to dance around. They do not, however, actively form part of the group of participants, nor are they generally accompanied by any Spanish individuals. Spanish festivals and local celebrations are often tied to religious ceremonies, but the local people as well as foreigners, give more importance to the leisure aspect of the fiesta. Barke and Towner (1996) claim that “music, singing, dancing and poetry...[are] ways of expressing national, regional and local identity and continuity” (Barke and Towner 1996: 23). The local feria (municipal festival) in their theory is understood as an “important reaffirmation of the pueblo” (Barke and Towner 1996: 23). Waldren also points to the “celebrat[ion] of shared beliefs and values that identified them as a community” (Waldren 1996: 216). Although the foreigners rarely appreciate the meaning behind many of the spectacles, the fiestas are occasions for adorning their “life in Spain”, and the Spanish proudly believe that the outsiders “watch the traditional Easter processions with admiration and great respect” (Málaga Rural, my translation). Catholic rituals and local celebrations may in Torrox be considered ceremonial expressions of their common identity, whether they are communal or of a private nature.
Private *fiesta* amongst neighbours

Public *fiesta* in the streets (carnaval)
When I was invited to private fiestas by Spanish friends, I generally found that I was the only foreigner. I then had the pleasure of participating in, as well as observing, the singing and dancing among friends and family, the joking and poetry citing, the traditional meals and the relaxed (but loud and excited!) interaction in a private sphere, usually closed to foreigners. At fiestas with religious elements, such as weddings or communions, many people are invited, and any guest might bring with him several family members or friends. Although in theory a family occasion, these fiestas are extravagant celebrations where local bonds are re-confirmed throughout the village. The hosts generally have only a vague idea of how many persons will attend, and the restaurant where the fiesta is held may have to hurriedly arrange extra tables and more food after the guests have arrived. Rather than this being frustrating for the hosts, it gives them status to have so many people wishing to celebrate with them. It is not unusual that 180 guests participate in a first communion celebration, or 500 at a wedding. Obviously, this is an expensive affair for the family hosting the party. Although the hosts in theory pay for the fiesta, there are traditional arrangements in place for gathering contributions to meet this cost. For example, most guests will give money as a wedding present, and during the party the groom’s tie may be cut into small pieces, which are “sold” as souvenirs at the tables along with the bride’s garters, which she wears many of. This, however, does not affect the impression of generosity the hosts of a large fiesta leave.

**Money and morality**

Generosity necessarily demands a certain material sacrifice, and as it is extremely important not to “lose face” in public situations due to financial restraints, the discrepancy between economical means and “musts” must be covered up by exhibiting an impeccable public image. Generosity may even be a status indicator as it demonstrates excess wealth (whether this is the case or not). Sometimes when one of the neighbours has picked larger quantities of fruit or vegetables, some good pieces are brought back to the street for distribution among friends on the steps in the evening. This may be understood as a sign of friendship, as a way of complying with local expectations of being a good person, and as a means of securing goodwill and enhancing ones image. Maria, whose economy has
been strained ever since she was widowed with three children, many years ago, does not have large quantities of vegetables to hand out, as some do. Her produce is for her own consumption or for selling on the street corner. However, she participates in the reciprocal obligation by occasionally treating the neighbours to sweet tortillitas. When I brought Maria with us on a Saturday trip, the money she spent was on ice-cream for the children that came with us and sweets to share with her neighbours upon her return. She expresses a concern for maintaining a decent image to the village community: “I prefer to eat potatoes and have a new dress for Easter. There’s no need for the whole village to see what goes on in my house.” Before her grandchild celebrated her first communion, Maria put aside money little by little for several months in order to buy the child a present which would not bring “shame” upon her. Yet upon finding out what the other grandmother had bought, Maria burst into tears because she could not match it.

Apart from the obvious fact that a better family economy raises living standards and opens future possibilities for its members (for example profitable investments or education for the children), it may even facilitate the fulfillment of moral expectations among Torroxeños and thereby raise an individual’s or a family’s public esteem. The most valued characteristics in a man from Torrox are that he is hard working (un buen trabajador) and takes good care of his family. This is demonstrated publically through a combination of his family’s good physical appearance and his relationship with the people around him. A man gains respect by making decisions that benefit his family economically without losing sight of his friends and neighbours. That is, he cares for his family while remaining respectful, generous and buena gente (a good person) to others. This is how a man demonstrates personal honour and a strong character. It then seems obvious that it is easier to gain respect if one has the economic means to behave according to these local norms. In practice, this means that setting up a chalet on a plot of land and selling it at a high price to a foreigner may enable a local inhabitant to set up his own cortijo, dress up his family, spend money on his contacts, and thereby gain respect and public esteem. Money and morality are connected in ways that makes the profit made on foreigners strengthen the local valuational system, by making it easier to fulfill expectations which demand material sacrifice. The synthesis of the issues of money and
morality thus serves to give a deeper understanding of possible motivations behind local individuals’ choice of action.

The relationship between economic prestation and social integration outlined above throws light upon the local ideology. It shows how certain aspects have not changed, although there may today be a greater emphasis on individuality than was the case thirty years ago. Laws and norms may change over time, and with economic growth, individual profits and wealth have made a more consumer oriented lifestyle possible and desirable, and the need for unity less pressing. But although economically independent, the individual still finds himself depending emotionally on the goodwill of family, neighbours and allies, and is therefore better served by conforming to certain norms (see also Freeman 1970 and Greenwood 1976). Finding the right balance between generous acts and the accumulation of wealth for oneself is therefore, in many families, a challenge.

What local inhabitants take for granted, what makes up their identity as a people (as a pueblo) is what sets their cultural universe apart from that of the foreigners amongst them. Black (1996) argues that the “‘finished’, marked and recognisable pieces of culture” (Black 1996:139) that tourists require are not equal to the cultural landscape that local inhabitants move within, and that many aspects of local culture and way of life remain untouched by tourism. The lifestyle and the every-day elements that make up the fabric of local current culture are not presented as such for tourist consumption. However, the Torroxeño’s identity as generous and hospitable people forms an important part of the image they wish to convey to outsiders, and as part of this village’s atmosphere. I will return to this in chapter seven. In the next chapter, I examine the Torroxenean view of foreigners in the village.
A couple of months into my fieldwork, I was complimented by friends and neighbours on being “very Spanish”, or I would overhear them describe me as “just like us”. I had obviously found the key to a certain social acceptance and a necessary confidence, and when enquiring as to why I was treated thus, I was told that they consider foreigners in general to be arrogant and selfish, but that I had proven to be friendly and generous like themselves. A common proverb applied to the mentality of foreigners was “what’s mine is mine, what’s yours we share!” (lo mio es mio, lo tuyo pa’ los dos!), and everyone I asked had experienced something they meant proved their opinion right.

In this chapter, I will examine an unintended social consequence of the economic manoeuvres people carry out, namely the increased number of foreign residents in the village, and relate it to my observations in chapter 5. The perceived differences between foreigners and Torroxenos, as well as practical problems such as language difficulties, cause an ethnic dichotomization. Interaction is simply restricted to “sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest” (Barth 1994:15). Most interaction runs smoothly and within a frame of impersonal, formal settings, such as buying/selling, but any encounter between locals and foreigners may contribute to the maintenance of the us-them dichotomy. Although few local inhabitants experience recurring conflicts with visitors or the new residents, existing stereotypes are confirmed by new singular incidents interpreted through the existing scheme. The differing values and lifestyles of the two groups create misunderstandings, conflict of interests, and accentuate social distance.

The ‘us-them’ dichotomy becomes activated through contact with ‘the other’. In what follows, I will give empirical examples mainly through the words of my informants, in which their reactions towards and views of the new inhabitants amongst them are
expressed. These often take the form of stereotypes. The stereotypes are not only emic categorizations of the foreigners, emphasizing what they are versus what we are, but these descriptions also serve to explain why boundaries are maintained. It should become clear that local views are not only caused or created by conflicts that have occurred, but in turn also prevent personal relationships between Torroxeños and foreigners. This makes it a dialectic process where stereotypes are reinforced. Torroxeños take note of what residential foreigners do, and they discuss them and make judgements about them. Following the theory of Barth, I suggest that this is a way of confirming one’s own identity by continually discussing one’s own values versus outside influences. Barth says: "The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement..." (Barth 1994:15).

Integration is not hindered only by cognitive ideas such as stereotypes; there are also practical problems such as language. These two elements combined create a setting where the worlds of local inhabitants and of the foreigners remain separate. By creating and maintaining ideological barriers, it actually becomes practically difficult to develop anything but shallow relationships, as members of the two groups feel they have little in common and therefore do not make great efforts to communicate.

According to CIS surveys carried out between 1994 and 1999 among the Spanish population, other Europeans are considered more intelligent, enterprising, responsible and cultivated than the Spanish themselves, but also serious, cold and less cheerful, open and generous (Ministerio de la Presidencia 2000). Only nineteen per cent of those polled considered other Europeans to be ‘good people’. 29% of the Spaniards say that there are too many foreigners in Spain, whereas 47% think that there are quite a lot but not too many (Ministerio de la Presidencia 2000). In the conclusion of the text, the authors sum up “if something can be firmly stated about Spanish people’s opinions as regards foreigners, it is their ambivalence...while they almost unanimously state that they do not object to foreigners living in their neighbourhood...when it comes to living at closer, more personal quarters...then unanimity disintegrates with the discrepancy of but a few” (Spain 2000: 499-500).
**Differentiating terms**

In local terminology the inhabitants of Torrox are differentiated by the concepts

*Torroxeño* (local), *extranjero/guiri* (foreigner, usually from Northern Europe, *guiri* being a disparaging term), *forastero* (outsider from another part of Spain), and *inmigrante* (economic immigrant, usually from Third World countries). These concepts mirror those that Waldren (1996) found in Deià on Mallorca (bar the terms *guiri* and *inmigrante*).

Waldren claims that this way of categorizing is a way of expressing solidarity between and political power of the local inhabitants versus outsiders. However, she observes that the terms are situational and may change over time, if, for example, a *forastero* marries a local and participates in village life for years, and thereby becoming “one of us”. Then it is rather a question of “degrees of insideness” (Waldren 1996: xvii). In Torrox, I did not observe such a flexibility of the concepts; the origin of forasteros or extranjeros who had married local inhabitants or had participated actively in the development of the village was frequently brought up, and they were in fact mentioned to me in such terms. I understand the terms as morally differentiating devices in a socially changing landscape, following Barth’s suggestion that “each category can...be associated with a separate range of value standards” (Barth 1994: 18).

The differentiating terms that the *Torroxeños* used to classify people not only indicate place of origin - that is place of birth *combined* with the origin of ones parents - but also a set of norms and a way of life. In determining the terms used for foreigners, I found that both the situational context and the relationship between the local inhabitant and the foreign person in question are determining factors. Foreign individuals are often just referred to as *el extranjero*, denying any personal identity or even differentiation between different nationalities. In such cases the difference between *us* and *them* is accentuated. A foreign resident who has a larger degree of contact with their Spanish neighbours may be named if he or she comes up in conversation with others who know him. But in general, *el extranjero/la extranjera* is used, and marks dissociation. When groups of young people are talking about their disagreements or unpleasant episodes with foreigners, the term *guiri* can come up repeatedly, along with words of an insulting nature.
In Valdemora, the Castillian village that Freeman studied, the *us-them* dichotomy was created through the presence of a *forastero* group of railroad workers (Freeman 1970). This population of outsiders had lived side by side with the local population for more than a century without being granted any personal role in the lives of the villagers. Freeman gives examples of how the local inhabitants stand together in conflicts with these outsiders, and thereby accentuate their common interests. Unpleasant incidents are explained by reference to the “barbarity of foreigners” (Freeman 1970: 121). In cases of conflict the local inhabitants are never at fault, but the outsiders are the ones that are mistaken. Although outsiders do not observe village practices and norms, and sometimes make great use of local facilities while evading taxes or commitments to the community, the villagers feel they must accept these faults. Knowing that the two groups must share physical space as well as have a certain degree of interaction, emphasis is placed on keeping the peace since this is in everyone’s best interest. In Torrox, the general opinion among local inhabitants is that any unpleasant experience or difficulty a foreigner may have with the Spanish population is due to the foreigner’s character, values, lifestyle and way of thinking. The surface impression is that all runs smoothly, but there are certain conflicts created by the foreigners’ presence.
Foreign influence on the local landscape; towerblocks and chalets in the midst of farmland

“Guiri go home”. Reaction to foreign influence…
The character of foreigners

*Torroxeños* consider that foreigners “come from disintegrated families”. Maria comments on an elderly foreign couple that have lived for several years in *el campo* next to her *cortijo*. “The wife is very ill in hospital, but her daughter has never come to visit them,” she says one day. Later in the summer the old woman dies. The case is brought up again amongst the neighbours, who are now even better informed: “It turns out they weren’t married, and the man is not the daughter’s father. Now, the daughter has come to claim her inheritance from her mother, and it seems the old man has to move out of the house because he has no rights; the house belonged to the woman. What’s he going to do? Where’s he going to go? This was his home for the last seven or eight years!” Maria exclaims, stunned by the inconsideration on part of the daughter. Another neighbour goes on: “I know an elderly German couple who both had children when they met. They bought a house out here, but when the man died, his partner sold the house without giving anything to any of the children. She rented a smaller place and spent all the money on a carefree life.” It is most likely that these are the *Torroxeños*’ own interpretations of the cases, rather than pure facts. Sometimes, I had the opportunity to check their stories and I found them only partially true.

However, it is not the truth of the stories that interests me. Rather, it is the fact that *Torroxeños* talk about foreigners, as well as what they say about them, despite the fact that there is little interaction in their private spheres. The local inhabitants are indeed not indifferent to the foreigners living amongst them. They grant them a sort of inclusion in which their being different contributes to emphasizing local values and culture.

*Sofía* (34) has foreign friends or acquaintances whom she has met through her job in a foreign-owned restaurant. “They pretend to be your friends, but really it only lasts while you are useful to them,” she says bitterly. “Last year I spent 10.000 pesetas on a birthday present for my boss. When *my* birthday came around, she phoned me to say she had something for me – but then never gave me anything. Sometimes *extranjeros* even think they are generous if they give me things they no longer use – but really I’m doing them a
favour by taking something they just want to get rid of.” She says she has offered to help in different situations, but that foreigners do not seem to trust her, even when she considers they have a good friendship. “My friend was cheated on several million pesetas because she wouldn’t listen to my advice when buying a house from someone from her own country. Later, when she realized, she apologized to me.” When this friend accidentally drives into a parked car during my stay in Torrox, Sofia helps her with the insurance papers and accompanies her to meetings with the insurance agent since she speaks a little English, and then later complains to me, “It was her fault! Now she’s trying to get away without paying for the damage. Guiris are always trying to get out of paying!” Again, foreigners are considered selfish and inconsiderate compared to local inhabitants.

Although alcohol definitely forms part of Spanish life, and many Torroxeños make and enjoy their own moscatel wine, foreigners are considered heavier consumers. Their dealings with alcohol were ridiculed and held as a characteristic that marked them apart from the Torroxeños. “Last night la extranjera came staggering up the stairs like this...”, Ana swings an imaginary bottle, crosses her eyes and staggers around, and then bursts out laughing with the rest of the women on the street. “...She was singing...la-la-la [loud incomprehensive out-of-tune singing and yet more laughter]”. These are observations that concur with Waldren. As she points out, “boasting and joking are important social expressions that make light of shared values” (Waldren 1996:96). The Spanish consider that such behaviour demonstrates a lack of protective kin, and in other words that the perpetrator is an “incomplete” person (Waldren 1996). Foreign women especially are victims of judgemental remarks: Drinking makes them irresponsible mothers and unattractive wives, who embarrass their husbands and themselves. Several foreign women were said to have been “pretty when she moved out here, but now she drinks a lot and looks ugly”.

Foreigners visiting “lands of leisure” often abandon the usual norms of their home country and behave in ways they would not normally do. They enter an “antistructural” mode (see Døving 1993, Johnsen 1997, O’Reilly 2000). Northern Europeans often either
spend parts of the year in Spain on vacation from their regular working life, or they settle there with a pension or other assets from their home country. They are there to enjoy life, and a higher alcohol consumption is part of the experience. For many foreigners, living in Spain means escaping the control and restrictions of life in their home countries and entering into a permanent holiday mode, which allows for a “liminal” behaviour on many issues.

By claiming that foreigners are different from themselves in crucial ways, local people not only justify their negative reactions and the poor integration of foreigners by blaming conflicts on the personality and lifestyle of foreigners, but they also maintain an image of themselves as “good people” in contrast to the “intruders”.

**Language barriers**

Javier tells me about an incident that took place while he was working on one of the high-rise apartment blocks in **Conejito/Torrox Costa**. Together with a colleague, he started very early in the mornings as they had been promised a bonus if they finished their work within a certain number of days. As no other shops were open at that hour, they entered a German bakery on the ground floor to buy some breakfast, and were given yesterday’s buns for free. “We thanked him, and decided to return the next day to buy some, to show our appreciation. But he insisted he didn’t want any money. At this point we figured he probably wanted something from us.” Javier and his colleague were acting according to the local norm for establishing a relationship of loyalty towards a particular bakery. The baker had given them something for free, and in return they would bring more business to his establishment. However, when they were not allowed to reciprocate, what they had originally understood as an invitation to establish a relationship, tipped out of balance and the German’s generosity took on a different meaning. Their assumption was proven correct according to Javier: “Then later on, he came out and asked if we could paint the bakery for him. We explained that we had to finish the block first, that this work was urgent, but that we could do it the following week. He either didn’t understand, or wasn’t pleased with the answer, because he got upset, and after that... We had tied plastic around
the blinds of his shop so as not to soil them with paint. It was a very windy day, as is normal in November, and of course the plastic blew away and we spilled paint - not a lot, but a few drops...Suddenly there’s a police car at the bottom of the scaffolding, my mate looked at me – “that’s for us, I’m sure,” he said, and they turned the lights on to signal for us to come down. The whole thing just exploded. We tried to explain that it was windy; there was this fat German shouting...(imitating deep, abrupt German voice)...in the end we were going ’you fucking guiri!’: It turned into a war.” I ask Javier if this could have happened with a Spanish shopowner, “No,” he says, “for one, a Spaniard never would have given us anything for free and then asked us to paint his shop. And with a Spaniard, we wouldn’t have had any communication problems”

The misunderstandings and disagreements arose because of language difficulties as well as cultural differences, which resulted in the participants not understanding each other’s intentions. However, it is not clear that Javier’s interpretation of what happened is a neutral account of the facts of the event. To him, the German must have misunderstood what they were saying about finishing the contracted work, and that his calling the police was an act of “revenge”. He is, to this day, certain that they did not misunderstand what the German originally meant. Had they spoken the same language the two parties may have been able to come to an agreement that benefitted them all.

**Conflicting views in el campo**

Ernesto owns more than 40,000 m² in one large plot. He spends time every day on his land, although he lives in a house in the village. Over the last few years he has restored the old cortijo that belonged to his parents, and he has added a large terrace with splendid views from a hilltop above the village. Every inch of the land seems to be farmed; in addition to the crops that were already there when he took over the land, he has added more terraces and planted more trees, and is very proud of the well-kept state of his farm. “I would move up here, but my wife and children prefer the village,” he says. He likes hunting, too, and has several dogs secured behind a fenced-in area. “These dogs are new, I’ve only had them a few years. I used to have more dogs, but they were poisoned by the
neighbours,” he tells me. I am intrigued and he goes on: “There is a foreign couple (extranjeros) living in a chalet just up there. They complained that the dogs barked too much. Obviously, when small animals move around at night, the dogs bark,” he says raising his shoulders and waving his arms, meaning anyone must understand this. “Then one day, I found them all dead inside the cage.” I express my sympathy and then he continues with an upset voice: “But this is agricultural land! If they don’t like it they can move down to the coast with the Germans, or to the village. This is agriculture!” Ernesto is quiet for a while, and then his face changes with a smirk. “But the extranjero had two dogs as well, and one day I saw them running loose up on that hill. I shot them...now we’re at peace.”

The cause of this conflict is the fundamental difference in how the parties involved understand el campo. Foreigners often see the countryside as a place for peace and tranquility away from the hustle and bustle of the village or the seaside. The local landowners, on the other hand, see it as a place of agricultural work and family get-togethers, a means of income and a place where each man is free to do as he pleases.

El campo is an arena where foreigners’ arrogance and lack of generosity become particularly evident in the eyes of the local people. “The land belongs to all of us,” the Torroxenos say, referring to the rights and obligations of any landowner, and the mutuality between them as small-time farmers. No one finds it strange to pick a couple of fruits off someone else’s tree if they pass by it, but few would dream of taking advantage of this unspoken rule of liberty and mutual generosity. “I can pick an orange from anyone’s tree, but foreigners come down to the village with big bags full of fruit [read: which they must have taken from someone’s land]! And they never want to share anything. Only foreigners set up fences...I don’t understand why they are so afraid of anyone stepping on their land.” There used to be tracks everywhere, and anyone would take the easiest way to get their plots, even if it meant crossing someone else’s land. Local farmers can no longer move freely in order to get to their plots. Their work has often been made much more difficult because they have to make longer journeys around foreign-owned areas, instead of being able to carry their harvest by the shortest route...
along the old paths to the road, where the fruit is loaded onto cars or motorbikes. There is no longer the easy access there was before. The frustration is evident when speaking to the local inhabitants, but there is an element of resignation as well: “It is our fault, I suppose, because we sell our plots, knowing that they will set up fences”.

Boundaries between plots are often known to the owners as “that olive tree” or any other natural feature in the terrain, but in some cases mojones have been laid out. This local term refers to white painted stones laid out in the landscape to mark a border between the plots of neighbours. It is, however, loaded with meaning, as the word literally means “shit”. This indicates the local opinion that the need to mark off such boundaries is something “ugly”. The term carries connotations of something uncomfortable which the presence of local boundaries may create; both social and geographical boundaries. Although the Torroxeños feel they have to accept the fences and walls the foreigners set up around the plots they have bought, they shake their heads at the inconsideration and selfishness on part of the foreigners, and laugh at their paranoic enclosures.

On an outing in el campo with a group of local women, we walked up a steep path near a secluded foreign-owned house with a marvellous view of the valley. We sat down for a snack about thirty meters from the house, and the noise level was probably high, as is usual when a group of ten local women and their children are joking and laughing. A door was quietly opened up and a German Shepherd started pacing the terrace while following our moves. Eventually, a foreign woman appeared on the terrace, accompanying the dog in its quiet staring at us. This caused quite a bit of amusement amongst the Spanish women, who in the end packed all their biscuits, fruits and drinks into their baskets and left the area with comments like “all alone in that big house” and “she looks like she has no friends” (tiene cara de pocos amigos), indicating that her attitude was unfriendly and arrogant; behaviour that in a local context would create loneliness. Torroxeños consider themselves more closely bound and more committed to their family, friends and neighbours; the individualism and wish for seclusion that they witness in foreigners is seen as arrogance. In a place where even a small, painted stone is an ugly sign of separation, the concrete walls around foreign chalets in el campo become visual
monstrosities demonstrating the differences and separation between the two groups.

Vienen y se van – foreigners are a transient group

The Ayuntamiento of Torrox has, over the years, in collaboration with the INEM (National Institute for Employment) and the Junta de Andalucia offered various courses aimed at giving the unemployed the necessary training to meet current demands in the labour market. Many of the courses have been within tourism, and German is a recurring subject that is taught (Torrox has Spain’s largest colony of Germans). It is common knowledge in Torrox that tourists and foreign residents do not speak much Spanish, and in order to cater for the large group of German inhabitants, many Torroxeños learn some German, either in school, where the subject has been taught for the last twenty years as a second language, or by taking a course, or simply by learning the most useful phrases from colleagues at work. “Torrox Costa has specialized in catering for (albergar) Germans...without them having to integrate,” says the councillor of youth and local development (Consejero de Juventud y Desarrollo Local)” (Kissel 2001: 113). Some of the Germans have lived in Torrox for 25 years without learning Spanish; some know enough to do their shopping, visit restaurants or exchange a few friendly phrases with locals. Of the Germans living at Torrox Costa only 2,6 % feel they can communicate well in Spanish, and as many 80% of the residents only relate to other Germans and feel no need for any further contact with the Spanish (Kissel 2001). When entering German owned businesses on the coast I was consistently welcomed in German, and upon asking whether they could please speak Spanish, the answer was usually that they do not know the language. Quite a few Spanish find it annoying and arrogant that foreigners refuse to speak Spanish – “They could at least show the courtesy of trying!”

The Ayuntamiento has also arranged random Spanish courses for foreigners, but these have little integrating effect if the foreigners themselves are not taking advantage of the offer. The local councillor of welfare (Consejala de Bienestar) says politicians are doing little to further integration –“because so far there are few problems with the foreigners, they just don’t participate”. In the year 2000 the Ayuntamiento, in cooperation with an
NGO working for immigrants in Spain, opened an office for immigrants (CAIR = Centro de Atención a Inmigrantes), giving free legal advice and Spanish classes. Its focus, however, is on economic immigrants who have problems and enquiries quite different from those of legal European migrants, who do not form part of its clientele.

It is difficult to incorporate or relate to a transient or unstable group of people. This creates not only social difficulties, but also political. The 2002 census of Torrox was carried out at the beginning of the year, and only a few days after the door knocking was terminated, I was able to speak to a couple of the statisticians who had been carrying out interviews. The number of registered foreign inhabitants was 3169 (total population 12341). The actual number, however, is higher. Not only are there a number of unregistered illegal immigrants, but many of the foreign Europeans living permanently within the municipality refuse to register. This is only one method by which many foreigners in Spain actively escape bureaucracy. O’Reilly (O’Reilly 2000) claims that their “liminality” is a major aspect of their choice to live in Spain; they seek to take advantage of and participate in the informal economy, and their foreign funds or incomes go a long way in a poorer country, while the lack of bureaucratic control in Spain allows them to live a life enjoying “the best of both worlds” (O’Reilly 2000:156-157). As governmental and European Communion fundings are generally based on a municipality’s number of inhabitants, it is clearly a disadvantage that resident foreigners – who also make use of roads, medical care, school and various free services – do not want to contribute towards the welfare of the community as a whole. This lack of commitment adds to the local people’s view of foreigners as arrogant and selfish. The transient character makes co-operation and friendships between foreigners and local inhabitants more sporadic, and most Torroxeños (as well as foreigners) see few incentives. The case of the Ruiz family’s bonds with the foreigner mentioned in chapter four, is not extraordinary, but neither does it seem a widespread arrangement upon which close friendships evolve.
"The setting in Torrox is one of coexistence...but we don’t mix”

In a free newspaper presenting the cultural program for Easter in each of the villages of Málaga (Málaga Rural 2002), Torrox prides itself on the German Masses held there throughout the year. These, according to the author, demonstrate the successful integration of the foreign colony, who are said to watch the traditional Easter processions with admiration and great respect. No other village represented in this paper mentions any such accommodations made or the affairs of foreigners within the municipality, even though some have an even larger number of foreign residents or visitors and certainly also cater for them. The co-existence with foreigners is a source of pride in Torrox, and the local people wish to present a picture of successful co-existence, as this will demonstrate their hospitality, generosity and uniquely open character. However, although many repeated that there is a mutual acceptance, they admit there is little social mingling (hay un ambiente de convivencia, pero no se mezclan). Foreigners like to participate in, or at least attend the local fiestas, but few take an active part in village life or have close friends among the locals.

The separation between the groups is evident at the Plaza (main town square) in the mornings, outside of the tourist season. While a cluster of 15 – 30 elderly Spanish men occupy their usual seats on the benches outside the market at the eastern side of the Plaza from around nine o’clock, where they may remain seated for several hours, a group of foreigners, both residents and visiting tourists, sit under the orange trees at the bars’ street tables for their breakfast and/or lunch. On certain days, a large number of German pensioners pour in around eleven o’clock when the local bus arrives from Torrox Costa, and these also take to the cafés. The cafés and bars constitute a public arena where there is definitely an opportunity for contact between locals, foreign residents and visiting tourists, as these are in a sense a neutral place. But even when both locals and foreigners are present, they rarely interact in any personal way; the relationship is purely one of customer/barman.

Through my meetings with foreigners living in Torrox, their choice of exclusion was
confirmed several times. A foreign woman has been living permanently on my street for more than seven years, and has owned her house there much longer as a holiday home. Over the years she has made further investments, and now she owns what used to be four adjacent village homes. She speaks very little Spanish but expressed a desire to learn more. I suggested she could practice with her neighbours, but she admitted having little interest in talking with them, since “they only talk about what they’ve seen on TV or what they have made for dinner.” Another example is a young couple with children at school. They had only been in Torrox for about a year, but their plan was to settle there permanently. They found it difficult to make local friends and felt that their poor command of the language was an obstacle. To begin with, they rented a house in the actual village, but after a while they moved into el campo only a few minutes by car from the village nucleus. When I enquired as to whether they were happier there, one of the things they mentioned as positive about moving was that “now we don’t have to stop to chat with all the neighbours all the time”. As a local anthropologist puts it: these are not third world immigrants who stick together in a host society that considers them low class, these are voluntary immigrants who set themselves apart as culturally superior to their hosts – they exclude themselves through their ethnocentric prejudice (Medina Baena 2002:52, my translation).

According to my informants, the first tourists that came to Torrox were met with curiosity and an open, friendly attitude. “I remember before Bau Hofman and the Paseo Maritimo (boardwalk along the beach at Torrox Costa),” Pepa (32) recalls. “The beach was full of Torroxéños and extranjeros, and I always wanted to get to know the foreign children...they had toys that I’d never seen and they were friendly...But then it all changed. They became more of a separate group; they no longer wanted anything to do with us. I still greet foreigners, but if they don’t return it, why should I continue?” The marked change came with the construction of areas meant to meet the demands of the outsiders – high-rise apartment blocks and the long boardwalk with restaurants. These gave rise to the German colony and tourism merely as commerce.

All over Spain, an increase in the number of outsiders is reported to have led to the
breakdown in adaption, communication and reciprocal friendships. The first newcomers in Spain experienced hospitality, respect and servility, and also needed the friendship of their Spanish neighbours. When Gerald Brennan moved to a small village in the Alpujarras in 1920, he was “easily taken for granted” (Brenan 1963: 27) and he recalls: “…presents… would be brought to my house, and before long I was being invited to weddings and baptisms and other family occasions” (Brenan 1963: 27). Developing such friendships is more complicated today. The foreigners that arrive as tourists or permanent residents easily enter into an already existing universe of foreigners; a “parallel world” to that of the Spanish people. They can perfectly well lead a comfortable life without knowing any Spanish; either quite secluded in their chalet in el campo or in an apartment among “equals” who make up a network of friendly support. Their lifestyle and their values are so different from that of the Spanish that it is difficult to find any “mutual ground” on which to base friendships.
Chapter 7. GENEROSITY, CAPITALISM AND MARKET

In the spring of 2002, billboards all along the coastal roads of Málaga announced ‘El gordo tocó aquí!’ This is originally a phrase that the national lottery would post on the wall of an establishment announcing that right here, someone bought the ticket that won the biggest prize. The appeal on the public billboards and in local newspapers was posted by the National Tourism Board (Patronato de Turismo) with the text under the headline informing the local inhabitants that the millions of Euros that the Costa del Sol’s tourists leave every year is transformed into local prosperity. It urges the Spanish to always show tourists ‘your best side’ (tu mejor cara), so as to keep up the wealth and development. The Spanish themselves claim to be naturally hospitable and generous. Why then, is it necessary to remind them to be friendly?

Reciprocity and social integration

Theories of reciprocity may apply not only to the exchange of gifts, but also to “...borrowing things, of getting help, of accepting an obligation, or of assuming responsibilities for each other” (Malinowski 1915: 532 cited in Sahlins 1972: 197). Sahlins (1972), elaborating on the ideas of Mauss, says reciprocity may take different forms. He sets up a continuum with gifts implying altruism, solidarity and integration, at one extreme (‘generalized reciprocity’) and impersonal meetings where each participant maximizes his own advantage at the other’s expense, at the other (‘negative reciprocity’). The mid-point is ‘balanced reciprocity’. This is where reciprocation takes place without any delay and with material equivalents being exchanged, which prevents bonds from being created and any one-way flow from being permitted. Sahlins suggests further that the type of reciprocity is closely related to kinship or community distance. By this he means that “close kin tend to share, to enter into generalized exchanges” (Sahlins 1972: 196) while “‘non-kin’ connotes the negation of community...the synonym for ‘enemy’ or ‘stranger’” (Sahlins 1972: 197). The theory relates the aspects of integration or social
Más de 7.580 millones de euros han dejado los más de 8 millones y medio de turistas que visitaron la Costa del Sol en el pasado año. Lo que se traduce en más riqueza y prosperidad para todos. AHORA TE TOCA A TÍ.

Porque de ti depende que esto se mantenga. De tu trato con el turismo, siempre con tu mejor cara. Porque el turismo es nuestra mayor riqueza.

CON EL TURISMO GANAMOS TODOS
distance and reciprocity through an idea of morality. What it means to be a good person is relative and situational; stealing from a stranger may be accepted (and even admired), whereas it is a sin within the family or the community. However, as Mauss states, “Two groups of men who meet, have three choices: they can part immediately, they can mark distrust and start fighting, or they can treat each other well” (Mauss 1995: 215, my translation). His idea is that through exchange, through reciprocal contracts, “people can replace war, isolation and stagnation with alliances, gifts and trade” (Mauss 1995: 216, my translation), thus creating relationships between groups. Where there is a mutual interest in contact, for example between trade alliances, a hospitable and generous attitude encourages further meetings and may create a “peaceful symbiosis” (Sahlins 1972: 200).

Anthropologists have explained the friendly and respectful attitude of the Spanish people towards the first foreigners by referring to the traditional social structure in Spain. Under Spain’s strong hierarchy during several centuries, tenants had to depend on their señoritos for their livelihood. The traditional patron-client relationship was a reciprocal one, with different expectations on the two parts. Economic and social security was provided for the loyal and servient client, but the patron in return depended on his clients for political power. The respect the common villager showed their local Spanish patron was, in the beginning, projected onto the few rich foreigners that visited or settled in their villages (see Waldren 1996, Barke and Towner 1996, Brennan 1963). Barke and Towner (1996) describe encounters between local Spanish and foreign visitors in informal settings during the years after the war as dominated by spontaneity and generosity. This attitude towards foreigners may also be understood as a way of creating friendship and peace with an outsider one knows little about, and thereby reducing the risk of conflict.

As discussed in chapter five, ‘generosity’ forms an important part of local identity. The ideology and practice of ‘generalized reciprocity’ ties the community together through the mutual exchange of material things as well as favours and invitations. Not giving, not inviting, or refusing to accept a gift is understood as a “declaration of war”; it means one refuses to make alliances or be included in a community (Mauss 1995: 30). Mauss also suggests that a gift carries a force that leaves its receiver in debt while the giver has the
“upper hand”. Until the gift is reciprocated, the giver has a certain power over the receiver who has accepted the gift. By refusing to enter into this kind of contract, a person demonstrates dissociation.

In a context where generosity is an ideal, and the boundaries between foreigners and local inhabitants are maintained through stereotypes, local inhabitants’ relationship with foreigners becomes problematic. It is expected that the Torroxeños are friendly towards the foreigners. As long as they (the Torroxeños) are at the giving end, the situation may be defined within existing stereotypes. Receiving is more problematic, as this would imply entering into a more personal relationship and creating bonds of obligations over time. In order to maintain their image of self, their identity as a people more generous than the ‘outsiders’, it is important for them to remain on the right side of the balance and not to have any outstanding obligations to a foreigner.

**Discrepancies between ideal and actual behaviour?**

Los Sitiados, mentioned at the beginning of chapter four, publish leaflets and articles in which they urge local inhabitants not to forget who they are and that declare local values to be incompatible with the pure capitalism associated with foreigners – “hospitality and compassion are important to us” (Los Sitiados 1998: 14, my translation). However, over time, I uncovered certain discrepancies between people’s ideals and their actual behaviour. Whether an individual actually followed the locally prescribed definition of morally good behaviour when interacting with a foreigner was dependent upon the situation; if a Torroxeño simply does not feel like it, and has nothing to gain, or no other Torroxeño may judge him, he might act differently. On several other occasions I overheard ‘generous benefactors’ telling friends and neighbours about what they had given, or about giving without receiving (like the example with Sofía in chapter five). I then realized the importance of publicly displaying generous acts. Waldren points out that “generosity is seldom seen [among local inhabitants] as altruistic and people are quick to point out the benefits accrued through what is presented as self-sacrifice” (Waldren 1996:75). The norms for being ‘buena gente’ apply amongst Torroxeños, when other
Torroxénos will judge. The lack of generosity and good behaviour on the part of the foreigners (as seen by the local inhabitants), justifies their not being taken into the community of the local inhabitants – “No son como nosotros...” (They’re not like us...).

‘Generosity’ is a socially integrating trait within the community. Following Sahlins, this ideal attitude applies to relationships of little social distance, while foreigners and strangers fall outside. Local identity and ideology stress that ‘generosity’ marks Torroxénos off from the selfish extranjeros. Incidents are thereby not only interpreted with these stereotypes as an underlying scheme, but the stories people tell are those which may make room for such interpretations in order to confirm the already existing scheme. However, Torroxénos believe that foreigners come to their village because of the climate and the friendly, generous people.

Maria tells me a story she considers reveals the character of foreigners: “My neighbours [foreigners] moved here about a year ago. Then the wife fell ill and the husband had no job. They had a really difficult time, but all the neighbours helped them with food and supported them. Once, their roof caved in during heavy rains, and we all rushed out to help them cover it with big pieces of plastic...”. She shows me a photo of the two foreigners and all the neighbours posing with smiles under the plastic. “Now he’s got a job and is getting on well. He’s forgotten all the people that helped him; he doesn’t even stop to talk!” Through my conversations with these foreign neighbours, I realized that Maria had only told me parts of the story. She did not mention that this couple has tried reciprocating in various ways, that on several occasions they have invited the whole street to barbecue parties at their house, but that the Spanish neighbours nod and smile, without later showing up. So in order to show their gratitude for the incident with the roof, the foreigners decided to bring a basket of fruit to each household instead...

**Breakdown of bonds, drawing of boundaries**

At the time when there were few, rich foreigners, they depended upon the local inhabitants of the Spanish villages, and friendly relationships of mutual interest could be established. Times have changed. The respect and integration foreigners enjoyed to begin
with have in many ways been lost as their numbers increased. The number of foreigners is now so large, the group so unstable and the social and economical situation so dramatically changed, that this type of relationship is rare. New residents are quickly taken into the community of foreigners, and few foreigners feel any need for a social network among the Spanish. The foreigners prefer paying the Spanish for their service rather than depending upon their loyalty. And the Torroxeños of today tend to see foreigners mainly as a means of improving their own economic situation. The fact that foreigners have poured in in large numbers without demonstrating much interest in the people that welcomed them makes many Torroxeños consider the foreigners a nuisance. Local inhabitants have little to gain other than economic benefits, as foreigners – however rich they may be - generally do not speak the language and have little knowledge of or influence upon the Spanish system. Boundaries between the groups are reinforced over time, and emotional and practical ties tend to be created between people of the same origin, or even between foreigners of different nationalities rather than with the natives. By creating and maintaining social barriers, it actually becomes practically difficult to develop anything but shallow relationships, as members of the two groups feel they have little in common. Although Torroxeños and foreigners are in daily contact, the personal element has largely given way to impersonal economic transactions with no delayed reciprocal ties. This encourages a new type of relationship where the Spanish may exploit the foreigners economically without making any personal investments, and a new type of economy; the cold, impersonal market economy where each individual is the master of his own fate.

The incompatibility of capitalism and generosity

A paradox arises. Mauss writes, “The purpose [of the exchange of gifts] is mainly moral; the gift is meant to create a friendly connection between giver and receiver, and if the operation did not have this effect, it would be quite pointless” (Mauss 1995: 52, my translation). Throughout the village of Torrox, ‘generalized reciprocity’ used to be, and still is, implicit in social relations. Personal relationships consist of moral obligations as well as gifts. However, these are local values, belonging to a closed sphere of local
inhabitants. Los Sitiados fear that the local attitude is changing. As regards the relationships between local inhabitants and foreigners, they are right; capitalism is indeed incompatible with altruistic generosity and hospitality. The different value systems cannot, in practice, function together. This is why it is necessary to remind the local people to be friendly towards foreigners. While ‘generalized reciprocity’ implies solidarity, friendship and altruism, ‘balanced reciprocity’ means following market logic, which prevents personal bonds. The perceived differences between extranjeros and Torroxeños prevent personal reciprocal connections from being created. Foreigners prefer paying for Spanish services, and so they do not need to enter into friendly relationships of mutual obligations. The large number of foreigners within the area of the municipality, and their disinterest in the Spanish people and their culture, combined with a lack of language skills create a clear dichotomization. The transient life-style and the perceived character of foreigners makes any generous act a possible “loss” for the Torroxeño, as no mutual bonds are created over time. The breakdown of reciprocity is inevitable. Sahlins notes that “...[for generalized reciprocities]...the material flow is sustained by prevailing social relations; whereas, for the main run of balanced exchange, social relations hinge on the material flow” (Sahlins 1972: 195). It would not feel morally correct for Torroxeños to take economic advantage of foreigners if they formed part of the internal village life. In order to make a profit and continue the positive economic development, foreigners must remain separate from the local community.

The Torroxeños, however, try to keep alive their traditional values of generosity and hospitality within this expanded economic system. ‘Generosity’ is now marketed as part of a tourist product, making it explicit in the interaction between local inhabitants and foreigners. It thereby loses its force as an integrating agent, having itself become a commodity susceptible to market forces. Generous acts towards foreigners may then be interpreted as the acting out of one’s own identity, or as tactical moves in order to keep alive the economically fruitful co-existence in the manner encouraged by the National Tourism Board, rather than initiative towards friendship. In the local people’s dealings with foreigners, ‘generosity’ has taken on a new meaning.
Combining theories of reciprocity with Barth’s theories of ethnic dichotomization gives a variation to Barth’s ‘transaction’ term. Barth used the term to refer to observable events between actors. However, such ‘transactions’ may include varying degrees of exchange of courtesy, favours, invitations or gifts between actors. The moral norms guiding interaction are situational and depend on social distance, and such principles may thus vary. I have shown how ‘transactions’ may take place without breaking down boundaries, by following the logics of ‘balanced reciprocity’, or a controlled one-way generosity, thereby maintaining and re-confirming stereotypes and dissociation.

**Continuity and change**

The theme of this thesis has been the economic manoeuvres of small landowners in an ongoing process of change, and the social relations of their village. I have applied Barth’s process analysis to the issue of land management among the local inhabitants in order to give an analysis of macro and micro levels, which gives a deeper understanding of how change comes about. Individual actors act under the influence of preconditional factors and generally within an existing framework. On the other hand, the patterns on the macro level are aggregate results of individual acts. There is thus a dialectical movement between the acts of individuals and the patterns of society. The structures and patterns may change when an entrepreneurial idea is adopted by many individuals. In the case of Torrox, new forms emerge as individuals navigate in the present economic landscape, where lack of governmental control allows for over-exploitation of the land. I have shown how the economic preconditions favour and accommodate certain choices. Land has gone from being purely agricultural to being a resource that may be used for a new type of profitable agricultural production (greenhouse or exotic fruits), for collecting agricultural subsidies, or for construction.

The entrepreneurial ideas of local landowners are sometimes contrary to the law, and although they have positive effects on a micro level - that is, for the economy of a particular family - the effects on, for example, the environment when many carry out similar actions, may be negative. Governmental incentives in the 1960’s and 70’s greatly
contributed to the direction of the local development. Today, this uncontrolled exploitation is taken into account through new regulations and a plan for more stringent control in order to limit the negative consequences. Local government is thus moving in the opposite direction. I have shown how, on one hand, the government tries to halt and rectify the development through laws and regulations, and, on the other hand, how this is in some cases thwarted by contrasting interests that create changes through the acts of individuals. Whether new laws and stricter control will have the desired effect by steering individual acts and thus future development, or whether local inhabitants will look for new ways around the law, remains to be seen.

I have also brought up the issue of an influx of foreign permanent residents as one of the unintended outcomes of these choices. This particular outcome has an effect on the daily lives of local inhabitants. However, the Torroxeño sees his individual actions as a personal choice to better his family’s economy, and not as a contribution to cultural or social changes.

The arrival of large numbers of immigrants will necessarily imply changes and new social adaptation for local people. When foreigners buy houses or rent with the intention of staying long-term, neighbourhoods are affected. Old social patterns and norms are shaken, while new choices are created. An influx of foreigners to a traditional neighbourhood may affect both the local inhabitants and the newcomers themselves. In many cases, people are spurred to unite characteristics of these “two worlds”, by, for example, combining modern building techniques with traditional style. However, the two groups tend to do this in different ways; while the local inhabitants use the new conditions to modernise their lives, the foreigners often seek to maintain the ‘paradise’ the way they found it, as this is a major motive for their being there (see Waldren 1996, O’Reilly 2000, Lindknud 1998). While the foreigners’ view of Torrox as a pleasant place adds to local pride and optimism in the attainability of the good life, their mere presence provokes changes.

The outside influences may be traced in various settings. With the influx of foreign
supplies, the local inhabitants change some of their customs. Often the adoption of certain practices from the outside contributes to the feeling of being modern, different and open-minded, a feeling generally valued by the younger generations. Continuity and change are blended, especially in the lives of young people. They often express a wish to combine some of their parents’ values with a modern lifestyle. Boissevain (1992) notes that the seventies brought a new awareness: “the traditional community-centred rural way of life, abandoned in the quest for modernisation, began to be rediscovered and idealised” (Boissevain 1992: 10). Waldren (1996) also shows how certain traditional practices are handed down from one generation to the next and reinterpreted to create a sense of continuity in a constantly changing society. In Torrox, a young couple decorating their home today is more inclined to do so in the traditional Andalucian style (but with modern facilities) than were their parents. The cortijos people build or restore today are modern in every sense, but for the use of traditional Andalucian materials and colours.

Men and women, old and young, are aware that there are alternative lifestyles elsewhere. Many of my informants said they would like to live like foreigners, and that the life of los extranjeros is a comfortable one. But no Torroxeño I spoke to believed that life is better abroad – it is the life of the foreigners living in Spain the local inhabitants might desire. Pepa puts on a posh voice and a lazy body language and says: “I would get up in the morning, have breakfast on my terrace and pick a few leaves off my plants, then drink some champagne and go back to sleep.” Then she breaks out laughing. “No, I couldn’t drink champagne in the morning!” Torroxeños wish to have what foreigners are believed to have (money, freedom, a carefree life with no work), but they do not want to be what they consider foreigners to be (immoral, arrogant semi-alcoholics with little consideration for their families).

The case of Torrox and many other parts of Spain (or Europe) show that boundaries are drawn not only between immigrants from Third World countries and European hosts, which has been the focus of many immigration studies. Even within Europe, social bonding across culturally vague borders may be difficult. With the large number of foreigners present, the creation of long-term friendships has broken down. The perceived
differences in character and life-style, as well as language difficulties, create a dichotomy of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ or Torroxeño versus extranjero. The local inhabitants maintain these boundaries by actively applying stereotypes and acting out identity traits considered typical for Torroxeños. I have given examples of how the people of Torrox still maintain certain traditional values and practices despite the drastic changes they are experiencing.

Local effects, local evaluations

I have tried to capture village life and local changes at a particular moment in time. Although one may focus on the negative effects of over-crowding or over-exploitation due to tourism and foreign influx, I found that the comments of Torroxeños are ambiguous on the issue. They tend to realize that certain consequences are the inevitable flip-side of this brilliant coin. Foreigners bring desirable modern elements to a traditional village. Their appreciation of the climate and the beautiful nature makes local inhabitants conscious and proud of some of the things they have and of what they are. Local values and social life are maintained. Greenwood (1976) noted that although people in Fuenterrabia were seeking modernization and urban life, their fundamental values did not change. Nogués Pedregal (1996) and Waldren (1996) both show the same phenomenon; people selectively maintain traditions and local identity while incorporating change. As I have shown, Torroxeños adapt to the changing labour requirements and take advantage of the new economic opportunities while maintaining, unchanged, those aspects of their culture which they feel constitute their identity. The ancestors of local landowners put great importance on owning land; their descendants today adapt this value to the present-day situation by building pleasant cortijos designed for the modern use of their inherited campo, after having made the economic manoeuvres that allow them to do so. The individual Torroxeño is woven into the fabric of social relations that constitute security and identity as well as moral obligations.

Los Sitiados claim that local culture and identity are changing as the Spanish are adopting foreigners’ attitudes, and they fear that in the future the foreign ‘invasion’ will have
destroyed not only the physical environment of the municipality, but also the mentality of
the local people. My observations during my fieldwork are that generosity continues to
form part of life within the circle of ‘insiders’, but that the reciprocal relationship with
‘outsiders’ is characterized by impersonal market relations; that is, ‘balanced reciprocity’
in Sahlins’ model. The Torroxeños’ step into capitalism creates a type of relationship
where the foreigners are mainly an economic resource that must remain outside their
personal network. They do this in order to justify the impersonal reciprocal balance where
profit is the objective. Whether internal relationships will in the future also be affected by
this mentality the way Los Sitíados claim, only time can tell. What is obvious at this
point, is that people use their land differently. This opens for greater social differentiation
within the community, as some families are more economically oriented than others.
Reciprocity demands material sacrifice, and it would seem that each person must find a
way of balancing generosity with personal accumulation and investment, in order to make
a profit. Individual notions of morality affect what path each chooses. Los sitiados are
warning local people that the existing tension between traditional values and capitalism
will eventually break down the fabric of the village community.

While both the natural and the social landscape of the municipality are certainly affected
by the influx of foreigners, so are the pockets of the Torroxeños. This plays an important
part in not only their personal choices, but also their evaluation of the current situation.
To the regular land-owning Torroxeño, the “overcrowding” of the campo is not only a
side-effect of the influx of foreigners, it is also a visual sign of local prosperity and
modernization, and is therefore not a matter of great concern. Despite local government’s
decisions and ambitions, the demands, wishes and financial resources of outsiders are
decisive for many of the choices that local inhabitants make; they are willing to break the
law in their striving for a living standard similar to that of the foreigners in their midst.
But one question still lingers between the clustered houses of the village: Does the sale of
land represent a mortal threat to the future of this particular pueblo? Or, as the Torroxeños
put it: is the bread of today the hunger of tomorrow?
Vocabulary

Ayuntamiento  Municipal government
Campo  Countryside
Catastro  Cadaster / land registration office
Convivencia  Living together
Cortijo  Originally a small, rural house of a very basic standard on a plot of cultivated land. New cortijos often match the standard of foreigners’ luxury chalets.
Extranjero  Foreigner
Fiesta  Party or celebration, also holiday
Finca  Farm
Guiri  Disparaging term for foreigner
Inmigrante  Person immigrated to Spain, originally from a Third World Country in Africa, South America or Asia
Latifundismo  Agriculture at farms with great amounts of land belonging to one person or family
Minifundista  Small time landowner
Pueblo  Village nucleos and/or its people
Señor/Señorito  Latifundist landowner, landlord at large farm
Sierra  Mountain-chain
Torroxeño  Person born and raised in Torrox. At least one parent is also from Torrox
Tortillitas  Sweets made from water- and flourbased dough fried in oil and served with honey.
Urbanización  Conjunction of houses joined in a community with certain communal arrangements, such as gardeners, swimmingpools etc
Vecino  Neighbour, but the term also has a moral element as it connotes rights and obligations within a closed village community
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