Teresa Figueroa Sánchez

A FAMILY'S ENDLESS JOURNEY BETWEEN OAXACA, MEXICO, AND CALIFORNIA

Fragmented Spaces, Fragmented Identities

Latinx Studies

Collection Editor
MANUEL CALLAHAN

LIVED PLACES PUBLISHING

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I dedicate this autoethnography to my mother, whose radical love for her children took her to faraway lands for very long seasons. I just hope to do justice to your/my/our stories in love, respect, dignity, and admiration. *Dedico esta autoetnografía a mi mamá cuyo amor radical por sus hijo/as la llevó a tierras lejanas por temporadas muy largas. Solo espero hacerle justicia a su/mis/nuestras historias con amor, respeto, dignidad, y admiración.*

My two young sons and their partners have been instrumental throughout this journey. Without your love, I would have never been able to transcend myself as a woman living in a foreign country. I thank you for your incredible editing skills, patience, and support.

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Abstract

This book discusses the journey from Oaxaca, México, to California, and all of the in-between spaces of community within a context of confrontations with racial patriarchal capitalism that negate my existence as a human being. It focuses on the power of *comunalidad* as it engenders sensibilities, creative practices, and vernacular wisdoms rooted in Putla, Oaxaca, it continues through clashes with neoliberal agribusiness as an immigrant worker in Santa Marta, California, and it converges on the campus of the University of California, *Tres Calmecac*. It argues that *comunalidad* informs how migrants resist neoliberal fragmented identities, and negotiate the forces of racial patriarchal capital from places of origin steeped in *lo común*, across the borderlands, agribusiness, and academe.

Keywords

Comunalidad
Mexican farm workers
Mexican immigration
Decolonial theory
Mexican women
Mexican immigrant education
The US-Mexican border
Racial, patriarchal capital

Contents

Learning objectives

Students will understand major ideas and concepts drawn from decolonial theory in order to analyze the experience of migrant lives in society.

Students will develop the ability to analyze autoethnography as a methodological tool to study major socio-cultural experiences and processes across time and space.

Students will understand the power of *comunalidad* in relation to systems of domination.

Students will learn to map out their *facultad* to foresee social barriers in their professional development.

Trigger warning

This book is based on personal experiences some of which are very painful. Chapters two and four narrate traumatic personal experiences that may trigger post-traumatic reactions. Please be advised.

Introduction

I remember that my father, and his friends, sponsored the feast that brought the community together in the celebration of the carnival event. Because he was a *mayordomo* during the carnival, he purchased three goats to feed dancers and onlookers in the community. In doing this, he complied with his communal obligation, or *cargo*, to share food and drinks with everybody. I felt so happy seeing the carnival dancers wearing their handmade costumes and dancing right in front of my home to honor my father's commitment to the festive event and to the community. I lived in the small town of Putla, in Oaxaca, México, as a child and adolescent where community was present in daily life. Although I eventually moved to México City, and then to California, I drew strength from my sense of self rooted in a community praxis common to Oaxaca and the place I called home.

A Family's Endless Journey weaves ethnography and personal experiences as I reflect on my family's journey as migrants. Upon crossing the United States-Mexican border, I began experiencing racist microaggressions and political rituals of dehumanization; an effort to turn me into an inferior colonized being dwelling in the "zone of nonbeing, [or] an extraordinary sterile and arid region" (Fanon, 1967, p. 10). The systemic racialized attacks worked to strip me of my historical memory while simultaneously turning

me into a low-value, dehumanized, neoliberal subject/worker. In the process of writing critically and reflectively as a cultural anthropologist, I found that my sense of *comunalidad* rebuilt my identity, place, belonging, emotions, and collectiveness across multiple spaces that negated my existence as a whole human being. In fact, my sense of self rooted in practical, longstanding *comunalidad* helped me to challenge systemic regimes of racial-patriarchal, and capitalist violence, which I could not escape as a Green Card holder and naturalized citizen, farm worker, worker in the nonprofit world, and university instructor in California. To be sensitive to my native language and culture, I am using words in the Spanish language whose translations can be found in a Glossary at the end of the manuscript.

A Family's Endless Journey attempts to provide a window to reflect on four key moments of my life in a world dominated by the violence of racial-patriarchal capitalism that orders the world using various technologies of exclusion. Chapter one is about growing up in Putla, Oaxaca, rooted in *communalidad* where I had a place and an identity steeped in community, *barrio*, family, and Blue House. I became a communal subject learning the power of cultural identity tied to emotions, resilience, friendship, and sharing as well as political awareness acutely aware of persecution, justice, and anti-imperialist stances of an unjust world. Chapter two examines my grandparents', my parents', and my own painful and emotional experiences crossing the United States-Mexican border and the in-between places that attempted to turn me into an inferior or fragmented racialized/colonized "Other", living in the zone of nonbeing. Chapter three discusses my insertion as a neoliberal farm worker in California's rich agricultural fields, and

the fierce fight to survive brutal exploitation in the agro-industry. I examine this experience from the perspective of ethics to show that Mexican migrant laborers find dignity and strength in their living labor to resist the domination of agrarian capital. Chapter four discusses my education or *facultad*, which I built by learning English as a Second Language, attending the public university, and becoming an adjunct professor at the University of California at *Tres Calmecac* (UCTC). Although I was part of Chicana/o historical struggles, the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department and white educational institutions almost destroyed my *facultad*. In short, my deep and extended sense of rootedness, based on *comunalidad*, sustained and nurtured me as I negotiated how racial patriarchal capitalism attempted to racialize me as a migrant, farm worker, nonprofit worker, and adjunct faculty. Pseudonyms are used throughout the book to protect personal identities.

1
Through a child's eyes

I was approximately ten years old when my siblings and I went with a group of friends to *Las Peñitas*, one of the rivers making up the border of our town. It was the day following a heavy rainstorm, but we were unbothered by the increased flow of the river or the warnings from town elders. Suddenly, dozens of snakes erupted from one of the newly fallen trees and began to swarm the river. The older children immediately ran out of the raging waters, but my eight-year-old sister, Margot, did not see the snakes. We desperately screamed at her to come out of the water, but she could not hear us. The snakes swam past her toward the other bank of the river and she was unharmed. That day, I nearly died of *¡susto!* I also learned the power of community and caring for each other in the face of danger. In this chapter, I reflect on my memories of growing up as a child and adolescent living in the small town of Putla, Oaxaca, and my eventual move to México City. I found that my identity was rooted in many Mesoamerican cultural practices, sensibilities, and emotions steeped in a sense of place, and *comunalidad*, that nurtured me as a whole being belonging to a community located in a semi-tropical territory in Oaxaca.

Some Indigenous Oaxaqueño thinkers say that *los pueblos Indígenas* live in *comunalidad*, which they define as a lifestyle and a specific structure of social organization in the community (Maldonado, 2015). Still other Indigenous scholars conceptualize *comunalidad* as a way of life and as a lived experience. In this context, living *comunalidad* is appreciating *saberse naturaleza* (knowing that we are part of the environment), living with respect as part of the world (Martínez Luna, 2022). They insist that *comunalidad* "is not only an epistemic concept, it is also the cultural matrix of Mesoamerican civilizations" (Sánchez-Antonio, 2021, p. 699). Today, scholars who are the children of Indigenous Oaxaqueños generally identify with the *comunalidad* claimed and maintained by their parents, although they live in other parts of the world (Nicolas, 2021). The social reproduction of *comunalidad* exists outside of physical and geographical Indigenous territories found in the state of Oaxaca. The debate about what is or what constitutes *comunalidad* is clearly far from settled. As a child and adolescent living in Putla, Oaxaca, I developed an identity based on Mesoamerican *comunalidad*, or communal praxis, that engendered cultural sensibilities, social commitments, and political awareness.

Community praxis

My Putleca identity is deeply rooted in the *comunalidad*, and in the community I claim, and it includes memories of living in my neighborhood, Blue House, semi-tropical territory, its foodways, markets and pre-Hispanic *tianguis*. In the 1960s, Putla Villa de Guerrero was a relatively small town located in the cradle of Mesoamerican white, red, and blue corn. Putla is enclosed by the

breathtaking Sierra Madre mountain range in the southern state of Oaxaca, México. An Indigenous word meaning place of mist, Putla is known for its mantle of heavy mist that hovers over the valley until it dissipates with the sunrise. For some people, Putla is part of the Mixtec region populated by ethnic groups such as the Amuzgos, Tacuates, Mixtecs, and Triqui. For others, Putla belongs to the Costa Chica because of its shared border with the state of Guerrero in the north. According to Grimes (1998), la Mixteca Alta, la Mixteca Baja, and la Mixteca de la Costa converge in the Valley of Putla. Putla is a very important *cabecera de distrito* with juridical responsibilities over small towns, many of which are Indigenous communities with a unique traditional dress, *usos y costumbres*, languages, and dialects. It rains six months of the year, giving Putla a semi-tropical climate. The town is located in a lush valley with four main rivers: *La Cuchara*, Yuteé or *las Peñitas, Copala, y la Purificación*. Putla is located 5 hours away from the state capital of Oaxaca and 12 hours from México City by bus. When I was growing up, Putla was a beautiful, and a small town.

My paternal grandfather purchased a plot of land and he sold to my father, his older son, a portion of his land for a symbolic amount. During the 1950s, my father constructed his adobe house on top of a small hill in a neighborhood known as *barrio de Arroyos*. Many *arrieros* from different regions of the State of Oaxaca settled in this neighborhood. During this time, one or two local *caciques* owned beautiful concrete two-story homes. Like my father, people constructed adobe homes along the perfectly lined up pebble streets that converge in the main marketplace, the church, and the *presidencia municipal*. Putla has the infrastructure of colonial towns in México.

Like many other homes in town, my house has the living room facing the main public street, an interior hallway to place beds, and the kitchen looking at the backyard. For years, my father planted different varieties of mango, avocado, banana, papaya, lemon, and coffee trees in the backyard. He also brought large and small circular and rectangular pebbles from the river to place in the middle of the backyard. There he built a place where clothes would dry under the sun. I loved to lay down on the stones to see the white and black clouds passing through the valley. My mother also planted beautiful red bougainvillea and yellow and pink roses in the home's backyard. My mother loved seeing *chupamirtos*, *palomas*, and butterflies feeding off the plants. On hot days in spring, we sat under the red bougainvillea for respite and to refresh drinking *chilacayote*. One year, the house was painted in blue simply because it was my mother's favorite color. We called it the Blue House. As a child growing up in a small rural town with no more than 1,000 families, the Blue House and the backyard looked similar to others. As an adolescent, I was proud of the *barrio de Arroyos* because it was a beautiful place integrated in the semi-tropical territory.

Because Putla was a small town, I had a very strong sense of belonging and being part of the community. I remember that adults would greet me on the streets. They would say, bye, Guille. Sometimes, women would stop me on the streets to inquire about my mother or father's wellbeing. My affiliation became more complicated as an adolescent because people would also identify each other based on last name. People would ask, *¿hija de quien eres*? Or whose daughter, are you? when they did not recognize me. I would reply, my mother is Guilla. Or they

would say, *¿en que barrio vives?* Or, what is your neighborhood? People saw me and I was happy to belong to the *barrio*, and to a respected, loved family. My three younger siblings and I were born and raised in the Blue House while my older siblings were born in rented homes. My mother would always say that we had our belly buttons buried in the patio. My older siblings had their belly button somewhere in Putla. I lived in Putla until I was 16 years old.

Marketplace and *tianguis*

My identity as a Putleca developed in communal experiences such as going to the marketplace and the *tianguis* every day to purchase food. Putla was embedded in an economic web of complex regional marketplaces where people from other regions and towns sold their products. The marketplace was a square block covered with tin sheets located right in the middle of the town, near the Catholic church and the jail. Many women would sell their products in the *tianguis*.

The marketplace had many small stalls where women would sell their merchandise. Some women would sell meat like beef, pork, and chickens while others would specialize in the sale of vegetables like watercress, tomatoes, chilis, and zucchini squash. A few women would sell homemade food in the marketplace. On weekends, people from other towns came to sell their seasonal products in the *tianguis* or in the streets near the marketplace. This was a unique, intercultural space beaming with precolonial traditions of exchange and social life. Markets had their origins in the sixteenth century with the expansion of the Western/modern colonial market; and all places of exchange were "destituted"

from vernacular languages (Mignolo, 2021, p. 249). Actually, as the precolonial *tianguis* proves, such places were reconstituted not only as places of exchange of food stuffs, but also as sites of knowledge, and social relations.

I recall that Indigenous women of the *tianguis* would display small quantities of fruit like *granadas*, mangoes, bananas, or small apples. Dressed in their multi-colored *huipiles*, they would sit in the open-market spaces of the *tianguis* to sell seasonal products. Black women from Pinotepa Nacional would also come to sell fresh and dry fish in big handwoven baskets. Peasants from the surrounding towns would arrive at Putla to sell corn, dry chilis, or sugarcane products. *Caña*, *guanavos*, *huajes*, bananas, and sweet ripe mangoes would be placed on a tarp on the floor, and customers would choose which produce they wanted to buy. In the *tianguis*, before paying, people would bargain the final price and the *chiso*. The marketplace and the *tianguis* were filled with sweet aromas of ripe fruit, colorful aromatic yellow mangoes, and red hot chilis. In a decolonial turn, Mignolo says, we must rebuild "communal places exchanges'' to include "gnoseological (knowing) and aesthesic (sensing, emotioning, subject-formation)" (2021, pp. 246 and 249).

I loved going to the *tianguis* because my mother would give me extra money to purchase treats for everyone in the family. For example, I would buy two or three pesos of sweet brown yucca, so everybody in the family would eat a little piece. Women from the surrounding villages would sell white salty yucca, or they would bring my favorite sweet brown yucca cooked with sugarcane molasses. The women would wrap the yucca in big leaves from the tropical *buchicata* plant. One day, after I ate the

yucca, I decided to lick the big *buchicata* leaf because it still had sweet juices dripping from it. A second after I licked the leaf, my tongue burned like hell! I could not close my mouth until the burning sensation stopped minutes later. When my mom saw me, she said, *eso le pasa a las comelonas* (that happens to gluttons). My mother scolded me for being selfish. She then told me to wash my mouth with clean water from the water tank. Although the water did not erase the burning sensation, it decreased it. At least I could stop dripping saliva and close my mouth. *Buchicata* leaf contains a white liquid containing calcium oxalate that provokes irritation in the mouth, tongue, and lips. I never again licked *buchicatas*. As a child, licking the big green leaves was below the knowing and beyond the sensing of the *tianguis* experience. Despite the tensions, I learned the power of sharing with my family and to think as a member of a collective through foodways.

When I was about 10 years old, I remember going daily to the marketplace to shop for groceries because we did not have electricity and people did not own refrigerators at home. Sometimes, my mother would ask me to buy a specific product in the marketplace. For instance, she would tell me to buy a kilogram of beef steak with her friend *doña* Natalia, a kilo of tomatoes, and a bunch of *papaloquelites* or *pierna de vieja*. I would take my handwoven palm basket and the money, and I would cheerfully walk on the beautiful cobbled streets to the marketplace. As I walked, I repeated the list for fear of forgetting an essential item. Un kilo de bistec, un kilo de tomatoes. Perhaps because we were poor, our Putleca diet was very healthy since we ate meat two times per week and consumed edible plants the rest of the week.

Once in a while, my mom would give me money to buy my favorite snacks in the marketplace and I felt very special. I would buy my favorite *gelatina de pata*, which I would eat right in the marketplace. Because I did not want to share my treat with my siblings, I would eat it before returning home with the groceries. At other times, I would buy one stick of sugarcane for myself or I would buy several sticks for all of the family. I learned that peasants from the surrounding villages would bring two kinds of sugarcane sticks. One was soft and the other was really hard. The soft variety was called white sugarcane, and it was more expensive. I would peel the soft sugarcane with my teeth and eat it before coming back home. Other times I would secretly peel the hard kind of sugarcane with my father's *machete* at home. Sometimes, I did not want to share the sugarcane with my siblings, nor did I want to wait to eat it. My mother would scold me for not sharing snacks with my siblings. I loved going to the marketplace because my mom would always give me extra money to buy my favorite treat or sweet cassava. I always had to be careful of not coming home with leftovers or additional evidence, so I would throw the wrapper on the street so as to not give myself away. Unlike rational capitalist consumers engaged in the exchange of merchandise and money, I participated in an emotional experience of feeling special, seeing colorful delicious fruits, smelling sweet aromas of food, and hearing simultaneous conversations in various languages.

I had two Indigenous *nanas*, *doña* Sole and *doña* Estrella, who played an important role developing my communal worldview. They lived with us in the Blue House and I recalled that they were tender, loving, and caring with me and my siblings. In the

absence of my migrant mother, they would send me to the marketplace to buy groceries and they would give me the shopping list. They would say buy meat, bread, or milk, and I had to decide how much meat or milk to buy. Sometimes, our neighbors would see me with the container in hand and would tell me not to buy milk. My neighbor, or women in the community who watched for each other, would say that so-and-so added water to the milk and it was not good for drinking. A few greedy men would put our health at risk for a few pesos by adding water to milk, but consumers would immediately notice the watery taste of milk and spread the word. Word-of-mouth information was a way of taking care of each other in the community.

On Saturday or Sunday when the marketplace was full of people from all over the Costa Chica and the Mixtec regions, people would buy the famous *masa de chivo*. This was made up of ground corn, chili, tomatoes, avocado leaves, and goat meat. This would be cooked in an underground oven until flavorful and tender. Given the difficulty of cooking it, many women just purchased it from *doña* María because she cooked the best *masa de chivo* in all of the town. Street vendors, women sellers in the *tianguis*, and local families like my own loved eating *masa de chivo*. Although the state of Oaxaca is internationally known for its *moles*, I ate *mole* at special celebrations like weddings. Banana leaf *tamales*, *pozole*, and *mole* were not an everyday food, but *masa de chivo* was a staple food of the local cuisine.

Another favorite shopping activity was related to buying *semitas*, *pan de llema*, or *pan de muerto* at the baker's home. Every evening, I would take my basket to buy ten pesos of bread. As I walked back home, I carried my basket full of freshly baked round *semitas*

sprinkled with sesame seeds. As I passed by *doña* Tomasa's home in the *barrio de Arroyos*, her big black dog would try to steal a piece of bread from my basket. I would feel the sudden weight of the dog's paw on my basket, in an effort to knock some of the bread out. Frequently, the dog would sneak behind me and grab a piece of bread. Sometimes, I saw the dog approaching me and I would just whisper, *¡perro!* At other times, I would stomp my foot and yell at the dog. I tried to scare him away, but it was a big, black, scary dog.

The dog would prey on anyone walking by *doña* Tomasa's home. My sisters, like other women in our neighborhood, would also deal with the badly behaved dog. When my mother was at home, my younger sister Margot would be sent to sell gelatins. One day, she was walking with her basket full of treats when the dog sneaked behind her. It managed to take one gelatin, although my sister resisted him. Because the dog was very big, she fell, scratching her legs. My sister came home crying, with her knees bleeding. When my mom asked her what happened, she explained that the dog had taken some gelatins with him. I do not know why mother never went to discuss the issue with the elderly *doña* Tomasa. My sisters and I still remember the scary black dog and laugh.

I also remember that my mother or older siblings sent me to the market or the *tianguis* to buy comic books. As a child, I was an avid reader of *revistas de historietas*, which would arrive in Putla once per week. I remember that I would run to the store to purchase our favorite ones. My siblings and I read *Kalimán*, the white blue-eyed Middle Eastern superhero wearing a white turban, a comic storybook where he fights evil. Kalimán and his

friend Solin fought together, but Kalimán would always preach "patience, much patience". We also read *Memín Pinguín* . Memin was a young Black boy who lived in the city. He was a little rascal whose mother worked as a domestic employee for a wealthy family. On the weeks we could not buy the books we would rent them in the parks, near the *tianguis*, magazine and newspaper stalls. Sometimes, we would borrow them from a friend, but had to return them on time or they would stop lending us them. My siblings and I would take turns, from oldest to youngest, to read the many racist and stereotypical comic story books that we purchased.

As an adolescent, my favorite story books were western novels, which were very popular in Putla. I would sit to read the story book by candlelight at night. Most of my male friends purchased *Estefanía*, the story of a cowboy who would travel from Kansas City, in the United States, to the open and wild western frontier. Estefanía always killed Native Americans who opposed the marching of cattle ranching herds and colonial settlement on Native American lands. My older siblings would ask me to buy an issue, which we would trade after reading it. Popular comic books and western novels circulated among Putlecos who were symbolically learning the politics of settler colonialism.

I further recall that a red plane flew over Putla once or twice per year dropping flyers and very small bottles of Coca-Cola. Usually, the airplane would fly low to avoid the wind carrying these into the mango trees. Then, hundreds of little bottles containing a black sweet liquid fell one by one to the cheering of children going crazy on the streets. I would stand in the middle of the street and look up at the gifts falling from the sky. All the children

in town would stop doing their chores and run towards the street to catch the bottles before they hit the ground. After the airplane left, kids tried to open the bottles by twisting the tiny caps. Others tried to open the bottles by using their teeth to remove the caps. The Coca-Cola bottles were hermetically closed, so we would usually fail in the endeavor. Only older and smarter, or stupid, kids, could open the bottle with their teeth. Frustrated young children who could not drink the beverage would smash the tiny bottle with a stone. Other people would put the bottles on the Virgen de Guadalupe's altar or on the countertop of a small grocery store. There, the tiny bottle of Coca-Cola would be displayed for everyone to see. I imagine that Coca-Cola corporation flew its airplanes all over the region to promote the consumption of its soft beverage since these were still untapped capitalist consuming markets.

Cultural sensibilities

The *comunalidad*, I learned while I lived in Putla, includes many cultural practices that continue to shape my identity as a Putleca. As a child and young woman, I lived in *comunalidad* for the first 16 years of my life when I participated in many cultural fiestas like *la calenda* and the carnival learning the power of communal obligation, sharing, affection, and spirituality.

The Catholic church priest organized *la calenda*, an annual parade to honor *la Virgen de Natividad*, on September 6 and 8. Young *madrinas* would parade through the neighborhoods. The *madrinas* would carry homemade papier mâché flowers, while local musicians led the parade. Usually, each *madrina* would invite several companions to bring flower bouquets to the

virgin's altar. At 5 a.m. the musical band would start the parade in the church and from there it would go to each *barrio*, stopping in the house of every *madrina*. After all the *madrinas* were gathered, we would go to the church to hear Mass. Then, we would make the flower offerings to the Virgin. After Mass, the musicians would walk towards each *barrio* to return to the *madrina*'s home. We would all eat *mole* and drink *agua fresca*. To celebrate *la Virgen de Natividad*, we would usually prepare months ahead of time. When I was about eight years old, in 1969, I participated in the town's most famous Catholic fiesta.

All the *madrinas* and companions would wear new dresses that the local seamstress would make months ahead. I remember that my sister Maribel, who was a few years older than me, came back to town from México City. She sewed me a purple suit with white flowers using the latest *terlenka*, a typical hippy fabric. I felt so elegant wearing my new suit. My mom purchased a pair of shoes for me to wear during the parade, for not a single *madrina* or companion walked barefoot during the parade. They were white and matched very nicely with my suit. The shoe size was exactly what I needed. The shoes were beautiful. However, the shoes had a two-inch heel, which I did not like at all. I could not walk wearing high heels on the streets that were woven with irregular pebbles from the local rivers.

One day, I decided to take my shoes to the shoemaker who had his repair shop close to the marketplace. I walked from my house for about ten minutes carrying my white shoes in a plastic bag. When I arrived at the shoemaker's store, I entered without hesitation. I stood on my toes, and I placed the white shoes on the counter. I asked him to cut the heel in half. He took the shoes

and examined them. I could barely make out the top of his counter, so he was peering over the counter to get a look at me. He stopped working on a shoe and, then, asked me, "are you sure that you want the heels to be cut in half?" I replied "yes" without a doubt. He said, "It will cost you five *pesos*. Come back in a week." A week later, I came back to pick up my shoes. I was so happy. I now had the perfect shoes. I felt like a city girl, just like my cousins when they came to visit us from México City. They were always well dressed and wore nice shoes on. The day before the parade, I tried my shoes on. My feet felt weird. I looked down on my feet and saw my pointed shoes. I was stunned at the weird shape of my shoes. Upon examination, I noticed that the heel was lower than the front of the shoes. I thought the shoemaker had destroyed my beautiful white shoes. I felt tears rolling down on my round cheeks. We were very poor, and I could not ask for a new pair of shoes.

On the day of the parade, I woke to the rooster singing at dawn. I took a warm shower, careful to not destroy my curly hair. I put on my new *terlenka* suit, earrings, socks, and my newly pointed shoes. As I excitedly walked to my friend's house carrying a bouquet of flowers, I could hear the musical band coming closer and closer. I ran carefully in my crooked shoes, fearing I would be left behind. After I arrived at my friend's home, the musical group came in to pick us up in the *barrio de Arroyos*. The *madrina* led the small and very tight group that followed the musicians. House after house, we picked up the *madrinas* to go to Mass and then brought them back to their houses afterwards. We arrived at Chela's house in the *barrio de la Cureña* because her daughter, Rocio, was a *madrina*. They lived in an adobe house with an