

**ANOTHER, YET UNIQUE, ARTISAN FAMILY BUSINESS IN SAN ANTONIO
PALOPÓ
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One overcast morning in San Antonio Palopo, I was waiting in front of the church to catch a pick-up into another town. There were a few others waiting as well. It was around 8am and there were not many people out in the streets. I needed to be in town by 9am and it was a safe bet to be out waiting for transportation in town an hour before I needed to arrive at my destination. There was a big truck parked outside of my host family's house delivering logs. This had the attention of many people that cared to collect some for their homes. As I was waiting, I saw some tourists walking up the street towards the church. This was an unusual time of day for tourists to be visiting, but I did not think anything of it and began to read a book. After a minute of noticing more and more tourists, I realized that none of the *vendedoras*, women that sell *típicos*, clothing made for tourists, knew that they were here. Tourists normally arrive by *lanchas*, which is the name of boats used for water transportation around the lake. They can be seen ten minutes before they arrive at the dock, giving *vendedoras* and shops time to prepare for their visit. This particular group had arrived by bus and were not drawing unnecessary attention to themselves. Therefore, there was no way for anyone to know that they were in town unless they were seen. I ignored the tourists for a few minutes and then began to think that this could be a missed opportunity for my family to make money. I thought for a second, and then decided to go tell my host mother, Maria. I walked nonchalantly the minute and a half to the house. Maria was sitting outside talking with someone. At this point, the log truck was blocking the view from the church, so there was no way for them to know there was tourists. I told Maria that there were about 8 tourists. She thanked me and went inside to get items to offer. I walked back to my original place to wait. There turned out to be about 20 tourists. When Maria walked up with clothes to offer resting on her shoulder and in her hands, she had a good response from the tourists right away. I got that super exciting feeling inside because she was having luck. She called over to me to go get her sister. After about twenty minutes the tourists had gone or dispersed. Maria had sold a few items. She thanked me for being her helper. *Vendedoras* have to take advantage of every opportunity they can because they rely on the money they make from tourists as their daily income. This is one example of their daily work and shows the importance of location. There is an advantage to living close to the church to interact with tourists and act quickly if necessary.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOWN

Approximately, 10,000 people live in the town of San Antonio Palopo. People from San Antonio call themselves *Tunecos*. This is a quiet town where the people are friendly. Passing people in the streets always comes with a greeting such as *buenos dias*, *buenas tardes*, or *buenos noches* depending on the time of the day. Tourism is an important aspect of the town for the simple fact that families depend on tourism for their daily income. There is a boat tour offered to tourists in Panajachel, the main town in Lake Atitlán, that goes to three different towns around the lake. San Antonio is the last stop. Tourists have anywhere from 40 to 60 minutes to spend here. During this time they walk around the town and see the central area where the historical church is. This is also where members of my family wait to offer what they are carrying in their arms in hopes to sell something. Tourists arrive on an average of three times a day. They come around 10am in the morning, and 3pm and 4pm in the afternoon. A little information about the natives children. Kids go to school in the morning and the afternoon. Ones that go in the morning have the afternoon off and vice versa. Education is required up to the sixth grade. Even then, many children do not attend school in order to help their families work. Children start school around the age of five. In each session, morning and afternoon, there is a 30 minute break for snack and playtime.

The main area of transportation is located right outside of the church. It is where people are able to ride in the back of pick-up trucks as one form of transportation. The ride from San Antonio to Panajachel costs 3.50 quetzales. Quetzales are the monetary unit in Guatemala. The exchange rate is about 8 quetzales for 1 US dollar. Another form of transportation to leave and enter the town is by *lanchas*. This is how some natives travel, but most *lanchas* carry tourists to the docks down the hill below the church and houses. It takes a few minutes to walk from the main docks up to the center of the town where the church is located.

Main jobs in this town are farming and working with textiles. A diagnosis of the city of San Antonio in the year 1997 to 2000 called "*Diagnostico del Municipio de San Antonio Palopo*" gives different statistics of the city. The main fruits grown here are peaches, guacamole, apples, plums, and spices. A few main vegetables grown here are potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beets, tomatoes, onions and broccoli. Agricultural products that are the staple diet of many *tunecos* are corn, beans, coffee, and wheat. There exists about 72 stores and 4 functioning pharmacies. There is one main cooperative called *Cooperativa Integral de Produccion Artesanal, R.L. San Antonio Palopo*. There are a couple small cooperatives beginning also. About 150 individual business owners and workshops exist in town. For this reason, there is a lot of competition. Many men work in the mountains with crops and wood. Other men also work as *tejadores*, weavers that work on a large loom. Women stay in the home, take care of the children, weave, and have other jobs as well. At night there are typically only men out in the streets. Some houses are made out of tin for the roof, called *lamina* (Ehlers:1993, 184) and others out of cinder blocks.

The natives of San Antonio Palopo are of Mayan descent and wear the traditional dress of indigenous peoples. There are two main ethnicities in Guatemala, *Ladinos* and *Indigenas*. *Ladinos* live mostly in cities and urban areas. They own houses, cars, and live lives more like Americans. They dress in everyday clothes and have everyday jobs in offices and department stores. *Indigenous* people, Indians, live in rural areas and live more simple lives. They are of Mayan heritage and keep many traditions of their ancestors, such as ceremonies and traditional dress, called *traje*. Many are farmers and work in textiles. They typically do not own cars. Around Lake Atitlán are towns inhabiting *indigenas*. There is a different patterned *traje* for each town. The *traje* of San Antonio is a patterned shirt called a *huipil* with purple, blue, and black vertical stripes. The skirt is navy blue in color and falls to the ankles. They tuck the shirt into the skirt, fold the skirt around to fit their waist and use a colorful belt to hold everything together. The men wear a different styled shirt with the same pattern and a knee length brown and cream checkered kilt. They wear it in a similar fashion as the women with a belt. Women wear jelly sandals and men wear durable, with a small platform, brown sandal and a cream colored hat similar to a cowboy hat. My family thought I had so many clothes and that it was interesting that I wore different clothes everyday. I was asked if people wore the same thing like they did where I came from. I said no, that we wore whatever we wanted every day.

PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS OF MY RESEARCH

The purpose of my research is to determine how the business of the family I lived with was unique from other family businesses. To do the research I spent a lot of time with my family talking to them, asking questions, and observing. Much of my information came from these methods. After each day, or when I had a chance throughout the day, I would jot down new information I had learned. I carried around a small notepad with me and as my study progressed I recorded mostly information that applied to my research. I got information from friends that lived there, from people that had access to information about the history of San Antonio and the cooperative.

I am going to explain where I live because it was a limitation in my research. It was a limitation because I was not able to observe my family in everyday activities, during meal times, and their daily interactions among each other. From my family's house, I lived up the side walk to the right and about 20 feet up an alley. On the left stood the door to my living area. As the door is opened there are stairs to the right that lead up to a courtyard at the top. As it opens up, my room is in the building on the left and two other buildings are on the right, the kitchen and a work

room. At the side of my building, outside, sits the table that I use for every meal. One chair is at the table. I eat alone three times a day, every day. Eating with a family is a great way to see their interactions with one another and to know what their family life is really like. I was not able to experience this. I asked several times if I could eat with the family. At first, the response was, "Ok, when we are all here and the siblings that go to school in another town are here. Then we can all eat together." When her siblings came into town and the opportunity presented itself to eat together and quickly passed without happening, then I became confused. So I asked again. Later, the response became, "The other girls are shy because you eat at such a nice table, they are embarrassed for you to eat with us." I was caught off guard and surprised by this response and I told them that was not important and it was not necessary to feel that way. Unfortunately, nothing changed.

One way to become close with others is to share living space. I was not invited into their personal living space. The place where they use the bathroom, bathe, and sleep remain mysteries to me. I will explain the set up of their living arrangements so you can get a better picture. The store is located at the main entrance of the house. Sometimes members of the family sleep on the floor of the store and sometimes they sleep up above in the main part of the house. Walking in the store on the left side there is a door. The door leads to an area where a sister, her husband and two kids live. It is a very small area, basically a corner where they cook, eat, sleep and store their belongings. Going around the corner to the right up a gradual hill, this is the path that connects both parts of the house which exists outside. At the top of the hill is the sink and the rest of the house. There are 2 or 3 rooms with doors. I do not know what the rooms are used for or what is in them. In this area is also where they bathe. Here is where I was not welcomed to enter, where much of their personal life takes place. For this reason, I was not aware of many interactions in the house which is a limitation in my research.

Another limitation was my Spanish speaking skills. I was able to communicate on a basic level of Spanish. I could hold a conversation in Spanish, but I was not able to get detailed information from asking questions and probing their answers due to lack of vocabulary and grammar. When I asked a question and they did not understand it, I would try to rephrase it. If that did not work there was not much else I could do but move on to another question. In a couple interviews, I had my professor translate questions for me before hand, which made it much easier in preparation and to conduct an interview. Nevertheless, I got by with what Spanish I knew.

METHODOLOGY

There were many methods used for different types of research. For example, in observing another family to compare with my family I used the following (shadowing, systematic observation) method first. I followed a *vendedora* in Panajachel for 3 hours. I made a note of what she was doing every 5 minutes and followed approximately 20 feet behind her not to interfere with her interactions with others. Then I followed up with her a few days later for a more formal interview. In interviewing different informants, I would ask several similar questions to each person. In doing this, making a comparison in the difference of business and family was easier.

One way that I was able to see my family interact and observe them was by spending time in the store during the day. Also, by sitting with them in front of the church when they were waiting for tourists to offer the items. The house of my family usually had someone in it. Whether it be kids or a sister every afternoon. For their location, the family members that walked by would stop in and say hi. Nieces and nephews were over often passing time with their cousins and aunts. One sister's family lived below my family when they were in town, another lived a ways above them and the last sister's family lived with them. I tried to determine if all the families in the family group were in one textiles business together or separate. A couple times I saw a niece and Maria exchange money, string, or cloth. They spoke in their indigenous language, Kaqchikel, so I did not know what they said. When I asked her, Maria said that it was just her, two sisters and mother that worked together, that every family was different. When a

woman gets married, she is then on her own to earn money independent of her mother's family. One time Maria took me with her to get string out of storage to use, but it was from her sister's house. I realized that this is a whole other study in itself and began to just concentrate on my family.

HISTORY OF THE FIRST COOPERATIVE

In an article written by Tracey Ehlers, "Belts, Business, and Bloomingdale's: An Alternative Model for Guatemalan Artisan Development," tells the story of the creation of the first cooperative in San Antonio Palopo. Jerry Goldstein, a Peace Corps volunteer living in Lake Atitlán, helped in the development of the cooperative. Around the year of 1983, people in the town saw how they could live differently and how it would bring new opportunities to them if they could learn to weave. After a couple failing attempts at bringing weaving to San Antonio through different means, one man saw a hope that he thought could work. After witnessing how a weaving cooperative was being run in Santiago Atitlán, another town around the lake, the son of the mayor saw that it could be done in San Antonio if set up correctly. Jerry Goldstein was the person "in charge of the artisan cooperative store" in Panajachel at this time. They went to see him to find out about cooperatives. One thing led to another and he began to work with the people of San Antonio to begin a cooperative. First, Jerry educated the people about a cooperative and members duties and what their reciprocation would be. They learned how to use a tape measure and how to make traditional clothing from a nearby weaver of another town. The meetings were held at Jerry's house and he donated his Peace Corps paychecks to the starting of the cooperative. Some women already knew how to use the back strap loom and were taught to use the larger loom. Jerry used the very best quality fabric and that is why today the *tipicos* from San Antonio are still popular because most are made of great quality. Then, women began making new items for tourists such as blouses, napkins, placemats, and purses. Since the road from Panajachel to San Antonio was being built, there was a hope that a flow of tourists would come shortly after. In preparation, these items were being made and new patterns were being formed. A cooperative building was built with the help of donations from supporters in San Antonio and Panajachel. Responsibilities were distributed and shared in the cooperative. The supplies needed in order to make clothes increased as well. Things were falling into place. Jerry continued to run the cooperative as more people became members. At the highest count, there were 240 members. Men also began to join, where as in the beginning it was only made up of women. This was the first cooperative to be legalized in the National Institute of Cooperatives. The cooperative progressed, had some trouble with administration but made it's way through to be very successful.

TOURISM AND THE FAMILY BUSINESS

How does tourism affect their lives? Through tourism is one main way Maria's family earn their income. They make a living weaving clothes for tourists in hopes that they will come to town and buy from them. If none come, they do not earn money. The money they earn every day depends on how many tourists visit San Antonio. Another form of income for my family is to house students like myself. Maria has two rooms she is able to rent out to travelers or house students for study abroad programs. She said that she has about one student per year stay with her and anyone else who comes along looking for a place to stay. When I was there a Japanese man stayed for one night. He was in town and asked her if there was anywhere he could stay and he accepted to rent a room from her. The atmosphere in the store is laid back, welcoming, open for conversation, and slow-paced. There is a table in the middle of the back wall which carries *huipils*, shawls, shirts, pants, and shorts. On the back wall of the store hangs blankets, shawls, things for hair, belts and other items for sale. On the right wall sits a shelf. This was just put in recently. It has flower patterned lining in the bottom and on the sides of the shelf. It holds pottery, bracelets, backpacks, and other items to put on display. In the morning, the doors are closed because some of the family sleeps on the floor of the store on mats. Facing the store from the outside, with the lake behind you, the door is in the middle and there is a window to the right

of the door. The outside color of the building is white. The door and window is green. It has a rustic look of many years old with an attractiveness to it. The lights are kept off during the day, maybe to save money or because the sunlight is sufficient enough light to brighten up the room.

There are several people that come to their store from different countries to buy *tipicos*. They are bought here, taken back to their country and sold. When I witnessed one girl that came from France, she only bought shawls. She bought around 25. They sell to people that come from France, Mexico, and the United States. They come randomly throughout the year and do not have any routine of coming a certain number of times a year.

APART FROM THE BUSINESS, ATTITUDE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MY FAMILY

There are 8 daughters in the family and one son. Only 3 of the daughters are living at home at this point and all 3 are single. The son, who's 16 years old, and two sisters, 14 and around 22 years old attend school in another town, called Quetzaltenango. Public school in San Antonio goes up to sixth grade. If anyone desires to have more education after that they have to pay and typically live in the same town where they are attending school. Having the family business and housing students has allowed my family to pay for their extended education.

My host mother decided to remain single and gives reason for her decision. Maria said she did not want to get married because she did not want a man calling her asking where she was all the time. She wants to do her own thing and it is better to be single and believes that all men are the same, they get drunk. A fiesta came to San Antonio for 4 days while I was there. Single men would drink alcohol and dance all day long while a band was playing. Women and children would watch. There were many *borrachos*, drunkards, every night of the fiesta. On this particular night the action reached our front door. I was sitting in the store eating my dinner. One sister was sitting near me looking out the window with the other two sisters. All of a sudden a man falls into the fence of their property. One of them runs up and calls for Maria. The man lies there for a few minutes and then he drags himself across the one side of the street to the other moaning loudly, "I want to die!". All the girls in our house were screaming because he was trying to push himself off the ledge. A few people gathered around and two men pulled him away from the side by the legs. He wobbled up to a stance and grabbed the next man that walked by in a headlock. In an instant reaction, the man punched him. People dispersed to avoid trouble. The drunk guy fell on the ground and with a last rush of retaliation the other man kicked him in the side and then finally in the face and walked away. This was happening right in front of our house. We were witnessing the whole event from the door and window of the store. Randomly, throughout this ordeal he was crying and shouting out a woman's name because she wouldn't marry him. After the guy got kicked in the face I couldn't watch anymore, so I sat down and tried to eat. Moaning and crying, the drunkard began to drag himself to our door. The girls quickly shut the door and window and locked them. When he made his way over he propped himself on the front step, and leaned against the door. A couple of us were pushing against the other side of the door so he couldn't come in. Maria came in a minute later and gave an ok to open the front door. She began talking to him fast and sternly. I didn't catch much of what she said, but I did hear something about respecting the people. I was on the other side of the door he was leaning against not allowing him to fall into the house. Maria said it was ok, that they knew him. So I let go of the door and he laid out on the floor. He was in the door up to his waist lying on his back, arms spread out like a bird on either side. Maria seemed calm, like she had everything under control. At this point, everyone had run out of the room. Maria said I could keep eating. Yeah, right! Not now when he's laying in the middle of the floor. It was hard enough when he was outside getting beat up. He had a swollen lip from the kick in the face and wet eyes from the tears. He would close his eyes for a minute like he was sleeping and then out of no where we would hear him shout out the same woman's name and start crying. Again he would say he wanted to die. Maria would respond with some words and he would settle down and be quiet. He yelled out like this a couple more times. Finally, Maria said something. He started to get up and crawled out the door into the street. We all ran back to the front to see what he was doing. He got up on his feet and

started chasing after people. Then we couldn't see him anymore. That was a scary moment. After that I didn't want to go home. But Maria escorted me to my door. They acted like it wasn't that big of a deal when it was all over. She said there are always *borrachos* like that when a fiesta is there. Seeing men in this form on a regular basis throughout different times of the year can have a lasting impact on ones perception.

My family has a great attitude. They joke around all the time and are generally light-hearted. My friends visited, were invited in and Maria supplied extra food when I had a friend stay over. I feel that my family is special because of the way they treated me, how they interacted with others in town and seeing other people's reactions of them. Being a light-skinned, brown-haired, hazel-eyed American attracted attention every where I went. Especially, from men. Maria and her sisters constantly picked on me for that. When I was having guy problems, or at least being seen with them, Maria would sit with me in my room and give me "the talk" about guys. She told me the importance of finishing school first. Then, finding a job and earning my own money so I would not have to rely on a man. After this, I could get married. A couple times we had this conversation. She said that since I was there with them and she was taking care of me, she was responsible for me. She looked out for me. The indigenous culture is not openly affectionate. They did not hug like I am used to. Many times, though, she would rub my back or pat me on the head. She showed affection in her own special way and I knew that she cared. We joked around about me being her daughter and she my mom because she took care of me. She showed me she cared in more than one way. She cared for her family well also. The third day I was there, I went to the dentist when she had to take her sister in. It was just about a 4 hour adventure to take this journey, which it turned out to be, to the dentist. She was patient and kind the entire time. I thought this amazing, considering half the words she spoke I did not understand. When ever there was something important that needed to be done in the house she would do it.

Maria is the only one that serves me meals and takes care of me. Every morning before class she would make sure that I got up on time and would walk with me to the pick-up stop and wait with me until I left. On mornings when I did not have class, after Maria served me breakfast she began cleaning the area around where I lived. She swept the courtyard area and the kitchen, picked up fallen branches and leaves. There was an area beside the outhouse she used for compost/garbage. Ever few weeks she dumped the pale of used toilet paper that sat beside the outhouse into the garbage dump and burned it. She is a confident, ambitious woman and the backbone of her family.

Traditionally, women carry things on their head from one place to another. Whether it be a bundle of banana leaves, firewood, or clothes in a bucket. My family had no need to carry anything on their heads because all they needed was close by and they buy items in small quantities. Their location benefitted them over other businesses because there were not many textile businesses near the center of town at the church. They were only a brisk walk away, which was convenient to sell to tourists. Such often interaction with tourists could have made a difference in how traditional they were, but I was not able to research that. Usually, the only time when tourists came in the store is if one of the family members meets them in the street and brings them in or when tourists walked by, Maria would try and call them in or if they see other tourists in there and join them. There is no sign or advertising for the store outside. Partly, because it used as their house as well. They do a lot of selling in the street in front of the church where tourists walk up from the dock to visit the town and see the church. The view in front of the church is beautiful. For this reason, tourists like to take many pictures outside of the church. Their location also gives them more interaction with the public. During the fiesta they sat on the front stoop of the store watching people as they walked by. It is amusing to them to watch *borrachos*, drunkards, stumble by in the street. From their house we could hear the music playing for the fiesta beside the church. There was one ride located in front of the municipality building. It was similar to a Ferris wheel, but more smaller and manually run by two men on each side at the bottom. There were about 10 seats. For their location, they could be more aware of what goes on in town because they are able to see the center of town, when tourists visit, different vehicles, special activities, holiday events. When pick-ups enter town dropping people off, their last stop is in front of my families store. When I rode up a couple times, members of my family saw me

before I exited the pick-up. Kids would run up to greet me right when I got off.

In each interview I asked the interviewee what the roles of each person was in the house and in the family business. Each time the person was not able to answer the question. They would say that they all do the same thing or whatever needed to be done. There were no specific duties assigned in the household. From what I observed, Maria and her sister hired their brother-in-law to make textiles for them, such as napkins, shawls, and blankets. Then, they would try and sell them. In the house, all the women cooked. I was not able to retrieve the information about the duties of the house. I got most of the information about duties and responsibilities from what I observed.

Maria's sister that usually sat in the corner nearest the window of the store in the afternoon's would know better than anyone the goings-on of the store. Her sister, Gladis made handmade shawls. She also helped by spooling string around a soda can or bamboo stick. Many times she was the only one in the store when I visited. Gladis had a handicap on the left side of her body. Her arm was always covered by a cloth and she walked with a limp. Even though I never saw her go outside one time, she had a good attitude and seemed content with her situation. Her family treated her just like anyone else. She cooked meals and did chores around the house as best she could.

ANOTHER FAMILY IN SAN ANTONIO

I studied another family in San Antonio. This part of my research did not go quite as planned due to limited time and the occurrence of unplanned problems. I originally planned to study a different *vendedora* than I ended up studying. After being stood up twice and left by the side of her friend, Ella, I changed my plans. Ella agreed to help me with my research. I shadowed her for a few hours and asked her questions about her business and her family. My main limitation was that she was a *vendedora* on the streets of Panajachel. It was difficult to get in touch with her. She did not have a phone where I could call her or a set schedule when she worked. The only way I could get in touch with her was to take a pick-up to Panajachel, walk down Calle Santander, the main street, and hope to find her. It would only take a few minutes to find her if she was working on that day. If I didn't see her, she would see me and call out my name.

There are many things to be learned about a person or trade by observing. When I shadowed Ella for a few hours I was able to see what she was like when she was offering her items to tourists and when she rested and socialized. The items she carried with her to sell were shirts, shawls, hair accessories called *cintas*, and table clothes. When she ran low on a certain item she would go to a store in Panajachel and buy supplies from them. She said it was easier than paying for a pick-up to go back to San Antonio to get more. Shawls were carried on her head with the rest draped over one shoulder. Her hands were free in order to display one item for show. The hours I was shadowing her consisted of walking up and down Calle Santander. I recorded how many times she approached someone on the street and in a restaurant. Also, out of those times, how many times she sold something. 14 times, she approached someone on the street and 6 times she entered a restaurant to approach someone. Out of those 20 times, 2 times she sold something. We rested and talked to other vendors. This particular day was a weekday and not many tourists were around. On days like this, she does not walk around as much. At lunch time, she bought fruit from a street vendor to eat. We talked a bit during times when she was resting. She said she always buys lunch on the street. She is 18 years old and her family makes the items that she sells. The days that she sells are everyday except Thursday because that is market day in Chichicastenango, which most tourists go to. Therefore, there is no use in coming when there would be no tourists.

A few days passed by and I met her to ask her questions about her selling. Arriving in Panajachel at 8 o'clock in the morning, she prepares her day by folding all of her things and putting them in a nice stack. Ella carries what she sells back and forth from San Antonio everyday, paying the travel wages for a pick-up each way. Her mom used to be a part of the cooperative, but is not anymore. When her mom worked in the cooperative she was able to save a

little money over time to work for herself and now she earns more money working independently. Ella has been selling *típicos* for 8 years with 5 people in her family business, which includes her 3 brothers, her mom, and herself. Her father does not live with them. Their family owns one large loom and one small loom. String to weave *típicos* is bought in Sarcaja. Most of the time she is the only one in her family that sells. Sometimes, her brother will sell necklaces, jade, and wood. He would sell in Panajachel and Santiago also. They never sell in San Antonio because they are not able to sell anything there. They do not have a store, but simply work out of their house. I asked her the different roles of men and women and she said that they were the same, everyone made stuff. She began working with the business at her mother's will and was also taught by her mother to make and sell. Her family does not take orders because it is too expensive to ship. People come to their house from other countries, such as Mexico, France and the U.S. in order to sell them there. Her other responsibilities at work are to make shirts, shawls, and *cintas*. When she is not on Calle Santander selling, she is at home helping weaving. Her routine is the same when there are many tourists and few tourists. When there are not many tourists she tries to sell to Guatemalans, but they rarely buy anything. In the morning and at midday there are more tourists. Tourists near the ages of 40-50 tend to buy more because they are more stable. College students are always telling her they are poor and may buy one thing. Usually, she sells 3 or 4 items per day. Her goal is to sell 10 each day. If she has kids, she is probably going to help them learn this business. There are many more things I would have liked to have asked her but wasn't able to. I learned an interesting fact that I observed as I was spending time with Ella and her friend for one of the last times. We were in Panajachel and I was on my way back to catch a pick-up to San Antonio. I asked if any of them wanted to go with me and head back to our town. Her friend said that Ella was not going to come because she was staying here tonight with her mom in Panajachel. I asked why and she said that her mom lived there. I was confused. Before I understood that all her family lived in San Antonio. I thought the whole time that she lived with her family in San Antonio and that her mother and brothers all lived there, but only her brothers do. That makes me a little worried about the information she gave me. I'm sure that there is much more there that I am not aware of that could have a great impact on my research. I do not want to think that her information is not valid, but this makes me weary.

COMPARISON OF FAMILIES

I found differences and similarities in comparing this family and my host family, the dynamics of the family and the family business. There were roughly four people in my host family's business that lived in San Antonio and worked on a regular basis. They are all women. Maria, two single sisters, and her mother. The sister with a disability is limited in her ability to work in some areas. She never goes out into the street for any reason. Their father died a year ago. Ella's family all lives in San Antonio except her mother. Their father does not live with them either. Her family has different dynamics with more men than Maria's family. From my understanding, men work on the larger loom more than women. Women make the handmade *típicos* and spend much of their time selling. My family hires people, often times a brother-in-law, to work on the loom making items for them, which they can then turn around and sell. Ella's brother will work on the loom. It could help having a male in the family to save money. But having more women may mean that they have an opportunity to sell more having more bodies to sell. There are benefits to both.

The difference in staying in San Antonio to sell and traveling to Panajachel every day is great. Number one, the pick-up fare must be paid to leave and return every day. That's Q7 per day. Usually, shawls are sold no less than Q10. That's almost one item that must be sold each day to ensure that they are not losing money in the business. Although, Ella does stay with her mom occasionally in Panajachel, she has to travel back to San Antonio to retrieve clothes from her brothers to sell. My host family in San Antonio, only has to walk out their door to offer to tourists. They are pre-warned by a view of a *lancha* coming to prepare for tourists' arrival. They may not run into as many tourists because there are only a few boat loads that may come in one day. Granted, sometimes there are large groups of about 15 people in each boat. Although, some

days hardly any tourists would arrive. One plus is that there are not as many *vendedoras* selling in San Antonio, therefore, the chances of selling are greater. Maria, also, has a great location where she can bring tourists to her store to look at more options of colors and designs. Where as, what Ella has is what you see. She can run into another store on Calle Santander to exchange a size, but the customer has to sit there and wait for her. Sellers in both families knew a bit of English to persuade someone to buy from them. It was also helpful in haggling the price. It seems that this business is passed on in the family. In both cases, the women were taught by their mothers when they were young to weave. Neither family knew their yearly income, so I don't know the difference in how much money they earn. Both sell internationally and people come to their houses, or store to buy to sell in other countries. San Antonio has been their home's for all their lives. Another way that Maria's family earns income is by housing students and for Ella's family her brothers are able to sell items as well to add to their families income.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COOPERATIVE

The main cooperative in San Antonio is about 25 years old. There are others as well. I talked with one woman that started a cooperative for women only. It is about 1 month old. The men are the only ones that work in the loom in this cooperative. Most other people said that men and women can work on the loom. In San Antonio, there are roughly 176 members. The cooperative makes napkins, table runners, shirts, bags, purses, backpacks, and clothes for curtains. They are given supplies and orders to make items. Members work from their own homes to complete orders. When they are finished, the items are brought to the cooperative and shipped off. 30 looms are in use at people's houses. Each member has a small notepad to keep with them to record what materials they have used for what order and what they made. The majority of orders are within Guatemala. Places such as Guatemala City, Antigua, and Xela. Others are made internationally from Holland, Germany, and the U.S. The average age in the cooperative is between 20 and 30, but the oldest goes up to 50 years old. There is not a program in place to teach people how to weave and use the loom. That is a project that is being looked into at the moment. There is no hiring going on because the demand and orders are low. When this occurs members of the cooperative must pick up other jobs to make money, such as working in the mountains. People join the cooperative because it provides all the material, and a guaranteed sale. A typical family that works for the cooperative is poor. If a family has many children that can work it is better for them and for the economy. Different responsibilities within the organization are administration, someone to watch over commission, a person to administer client's orders, and those who make the cloth. The monthly income for a woman is Q450-500 and Q700-Q750 for a man. In one month, they may receive orders for 500 meters to be made. This only takes 5 people, 100m per person. To place an order, people have to come to the cooperative in town. Members are paid every 15 days. In August, March, and December there are more tourists and they sell more. When there are no tourists, they sell less.

There are two locations in the cooperative. They have the building on the upper main road in town that holds the administrative offices, bookkeeping, and supplies, such as string. The other building is located on the lower road. This is the store and also carries material. A rule of the cooperative is that no patterns are allowed to be taken out because they have special patterns that no one else has. If they are taken out of the cooperative, someone could copy the pattern and it wouldn't be an original anymore. The cooperative has a license to export and catalogs to send to other countries to advertise.

BEING A MEMBER OF THE COOPERATIVE VS. HAVING AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY BUSINESS

In the cooperative, one characteristic of many families is that they are poor. It is more or less consistent work and pay for them to be a part of the cooperative and better for their economy. There are limitations and benefits in being apart of the cooperative compared with being an independent business. One gets paid every 15 days and has all material and orders provided for them to make clothes. Compared to an independent business that is able to take the

money they earn for selling items everyday and have it in their hand to use as they wish. They have to go to other towns to buy material when they run low and make sure they have everything they need in stock themselves. Members of the cooperative have guaranteed money as long as there are enough orders, but when there are not many orders, they have to go and find other business. Where as, an independent family, could save some money along the way if they have big sales and when times are not so good, they will still be ok with what they have. They do not have to rely on anyone but themselves and they can do what they want, when they want as far as buying materials and making cloth. They choose where they sell as well. There is more freedom in being independent of a cooperative, but there is no guarantee of benefits. Each family differs depending on their economic situation.

Maria is strong willed and she runs her business well. When times are slow and there are not many sales being made, she cuts back on food, but they make it. She enjoys not having to answer to anyone else. She is a good business woman with tourists. She has a good personality from which has resulted from her family and life situation. Her family is unique because of the way the dynamics of each individual come together. The atmosphere they create is inviting and playful. There is a variety of ages from 5 years old to 55 years old. The ability to have a business in her home town and be able to sell there allows her to be with her family throughout the day and cut down on traveling costs. The 2 months I spent with them she only left town a few times to buy materials, take a sister to the dentist, go to a bigger market to buy food, or pay a bill. She is a responsible, independent, smart woman with a light-hearted nature. A lot of responsibility has been placed on her shoulders due to the fact that her mother cannot speak Spanish and she is the oldest child in the household. They have a successful business and benefit more through their independence.

*All names have been changed and fictional.

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