The Chocolates of Sucre: Stories of a Bolivian Industry

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Chocolate is a Sucre trademark, one of the few products that this Bolivian city regularly markets to other parts of the country. Despite Sucre's long history of chocolate production, however, the city's chocolate industry at the turn of the twenty-first century remains small, unable to export, and generally uncompetitive with products from neighboring countries. Yet Sucre's chocolate-making enterprises have not disappeared; they continue to produce on a small scale in the face of mass-produced, imported brands. In this article, the history of Sucre's chocolate industry is examined to shed light on larger issues of industrial development and "underdevelopment" in Sucre and on the roots of the city's strong artisan identity.

The road to Sucre is little more than a dirt track, but products from the larger Bolivian economy arrive regularly. Few products leave, however, and Sucre's residents describe this city of about 220,000 people as an "artisan city," "without industry." Production tends to be small scale and household centered, requiring little capital. The *artisano* or *artisana*—involved in the labor-intensive independent production of items ranging from traditional clothing to television wall units—is still a key feature of the economy, and of individual identity, in Sucre. Though such artisans face competition from mass-produced, often cheaper goods from other regions, they have not been replaced by large-scale capital-intensive producers.

Sucre lies outside the Bolivian *eje central*, or central hub, cities of Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz (see map). The city's regional industries (including agriculture, petroleum, manufacture, mining, and construction) produce only about 6 percent of the value of all

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Map of Bolivia.

products represented in Bolivia's Gross National Product.[1] The city's population is much smaller than that of the nation's three hub cities and even El Alto, the satellite city of La Paz: only about 4 percent of the country's urban population lives in Sucre.[2] Yet Sucre has a long and significant place in the region's economic and political history. The territory that now comprises Bolivia was called Alto Perú (High Peru) under the Spanish. Its central city, established as La Plata in the 1530s, and called variously Chuquisaca (Golden Gate) and Charcas (after the *Audiencia de Charcas*, the governing unit of which it was the seat), remained the base of colonial administration in the region for the duration of Spanish rule. Renamed Sucre in honor of a hero of the revolution, it served as the capital of Bolivia from independence in 1825 until 1898, when the administrative capital was

1. Cámara de Industria y Comercio de Chuquisaca, *Diagnóstico de Empresas del Sector Industrial Asociadas a la "C.I.C.CH"* [Diagnostic of Industrial-Sector Businesses in the Chuquisaca Chamber of Commerce and Industry] (Sucre, 1995), 5–24. Data from 1992 for Chuquisaca department.

2. República de Bolivia, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas [National Statistics Institute], 2000 data; viewed 3 Feb. 2002. URL: http://www.ine.gov.bo.

moved to La Paz. Sucre retains its role as Bolivia's judicial capital. From being one of the country's wealthiest cities, however, Sucre has become one of its poorest: according to a 1996 World Bank study, about one-third of its residents were living in extreme poverty.[3]

Chocolate is a Sucre trademark, one of the few products that the city regularly markets to other parts of the country. Sucre consciously projects the image of a chocolate-making city, with its large chocolate agencies along the Central Plaza, downtown, and in the airport. Some products bear wrappers with typical Sucre scenes such as the Recoleta Church and the twin hills. The unspoken message is, purchasers who take home our chocolate take home a piece of Sucre as well. But Sucre is a city with low "export" potential—little ability to sell its manufactured goods beyond the local market.[4] Sucre's chocolates are produced by five small factories and about ten home-based (*casero*) microenterprises.[5] These businesses turn out a range of products, from traditional bonbons and drinking chocolate to molded milk chocolates and chocolate-covered cereals.

Though the economic importance of chocolate to Sucre's economy is minimal, its symbolic importance, as the most visible local product, is great. In this article, I explore the history of Sucre's chocolate enterprises and the light it can shed on the "underdevelopment" of local industry. How did a highland city far from the tropical cocoa-producing Beni and Alto Beni areas become a center of chocolate production? Why has Sucre never become the Switzerland of South America—despite an involvement with chocolate that reaches back to colonial times? Finally, how is it that the Sucre chocolate industry survives and continues to produce on a small artisanal scale, even in the face of nearly crushing competition from large-scale producers elsewhere? The history of chocolate production in Sucre has not previously been documented; the histories constructed

3. World Bank 1996 cited in Christian Jetté and Rafael Rojas, *Chuquisaca: Pobreza, Género y Medio Ambiente* [Chuquisaca: Poverty, Gender and Environment] (La Paz, 1998), 68–71.

4. Export potential is calculated by comparing the size of the local manufacturing sector (versus the national manufacturing sector) to the local consumer population (versus the national consumer population). Sucre manufacturing had a coefficient of only 0.55 (where coefficients greater than 1 would indicate the capacity to "export" goods to other regions). Santa Cruz had a coefficient of 1.7; Cochabamba, 1.07; and La Paz, 0.94. Cámara de Industria y Comercio de Chuquisaca, *Diagnóstico de Empresas*, 11–15, 26.

5. Most data in this article comes from fieldwork (interviews, business visits, participant observation and some limited archival research) carried out in Sucre in 1997. Follow-up visits to Sucre in 1999 and 2000 have confirmed the continued existence of the five factories, with anecdotal reports of an increase in the number of chocolate microenterprises.

here from oral interviews and one family's preserved archives constitute a first attempt to trace the industry's development.[6]

Colonial Chocolate

The production of chocolate originated in Mesoamerica, where indigenous peoples produced a spicy, bitter chocolate drink from the cocoa bean (*cacao*). The Spaniards added sugar to make a sweet beverage that was diffused through the Americas and into Europe.[7] In Alto Perú, some of the best-known chocolate was produced on the Jesuit missions of the Beni cocoa-growing region by indigenous women of the *Moxos* (or *Mojos*) tribe, who created a hand-ground, sweetened, full-fat drinking chocolate, of the style that remained a mainstay of Spanish chocolate consumption into the twentieth century.[8]

The cocoa bean does not grow in Sucre's highland climate; nevertheless, according to an economic history of the Chuquisaca region, Sucre produced chocolate during the colonial period with cocoa brought in from the tropical Beni and Alto Beni regions.[9] In colonial La Plata and other areas of Alto Perú, indigenous peoples apparently did not drink chocolate beverages.[10] Then as now, the coca leaf (the source of cocaine) was the stimulant of choice; indigenous Andeans do not regularly consume hot drinks.[11] Nevertheless, historian Jorge Querejazu identifies "*chocolatero*" (chocolate maker) as one of the main occupations of colonial La Plata.[12] The market for chocolate likely came from the city's Spaniards and their descendants (*criollos* and *mestizos*), who may have shared something of the passion for chocolate of their contemporaries in other parts of Spanish America and Europe.[13] Among *criollos* in the viceroyalty of Peru, chocolate's image was "European and progressive"; residents of La Plata were

6. The Bolivian National Archives and the National Library are both located in Sucre, but they contain no histories or studies of Sucre's chocolate industry.

7. William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate, 1765–1914* (New York, 2000), 11–12.

8. Ibid., 68, 84–85.

9. Jorge Querejazu, *Apuntes para una Historia Económica de Chuquisaca* [Notes toward an Economic History of Chuquisaca] (Sucre, 1977).

10. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, 12.

11. Present-day Quechua people in rural areas occasionally drink sweetened tea or hot cinnamon drink (rarely coffee or chocolate).

12. Querejazu, *Apuntes para una Historia Económica*.

13. *Criollo*: of European parentage, born locally; *mestizo*: of mixed European and indigenous parentage. For an overview of chocolate consumption patterns in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, see Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate,* 11–18.

Cacao plant, Theobroma cacao L. Reproduced from Hermann A. Köhler, *Medizinal-Pflanzen in naturgetreuen Abbildungen mit kurz erläuterndem Texte* (Gera, 1887).

even importing *Moxos* chocolate from the Beni in the late eighteenth century.[14]

Sucre's colonial-era chocolate makers would have been producing drinking chocolate by hand, much as indigenous *Moxos* women did in the Beni and as various early chocolate makers, including Sephardic Jews, did in Europe.[15] To produce drinking chocolate in the traditional manner, the chocolate maker toasts the cocoa bean (often in a clay pot or pan over a fire), using a rock to remove the husks. The beans are then placed in a pan, shaken and thrown, to separate the clean beans from the husks. Next, the toasted beans are ground by hand on a *batán* (a flat stone for grinding and mixing), heated by a

14. Ibid. 18, 68.
15. Ibid. 66.

fire underneath. The ground cocoa is then heated on the stone with sugar, vanilla, and salt, mixed well, kneaded, cut, rolled, cooled, and packaged. A few producers in Sucre still make chocolate completely by hand in this manner.

It is likely that colonial-era chocolate production in the city followed one or both of the labor patterns still seen today in Sucre's chocolate microenterprises: merchants (of European, *criollo,* or *mestizo* background) hired chocolate makers (of indigenous or *mestizo* background), who received a casual wage for their services; alternatively, chocolate makers worked as independent microentrepreneurs with their own capital.[16] These labor patterns echo those identified by William Gervase Clarence-Smith for early chocolate production throughout Latin America and Europe: a combination of itinerant chocolate-making specialists and artisan workshops.[17]

In colonial-era La Plata, another labor pattern also may have been common. Large landholders could easily have made use of the unwaged labor of indigenous workers on their properties to produce drinking chocolate for home consumption, for sale, or both. There is evidence of this sort of labor arrangement in Sucre's chocolate industry from the early twentieth century. In pre-Revolution Bolivia (before 1952), as with many other places in Latin America, indigenous "peons" commonly provided labor services as in-kind rent or tribute to European or *criollo* landholders.[18]

The technical side of chocolate making was likely not an occupation of the wealthier classes in Sucre until the turn of the twentieth century, when the local production of eating-quality chocolate candies was launched. There is no evidence that chocolate makers produced candies in Sucre during the colonial period. Internationally, chocolate was consumed mostly as a drink until the late nineteenth century, and even then, the stimulus for quality chocolate candy production came from European firms.[19]

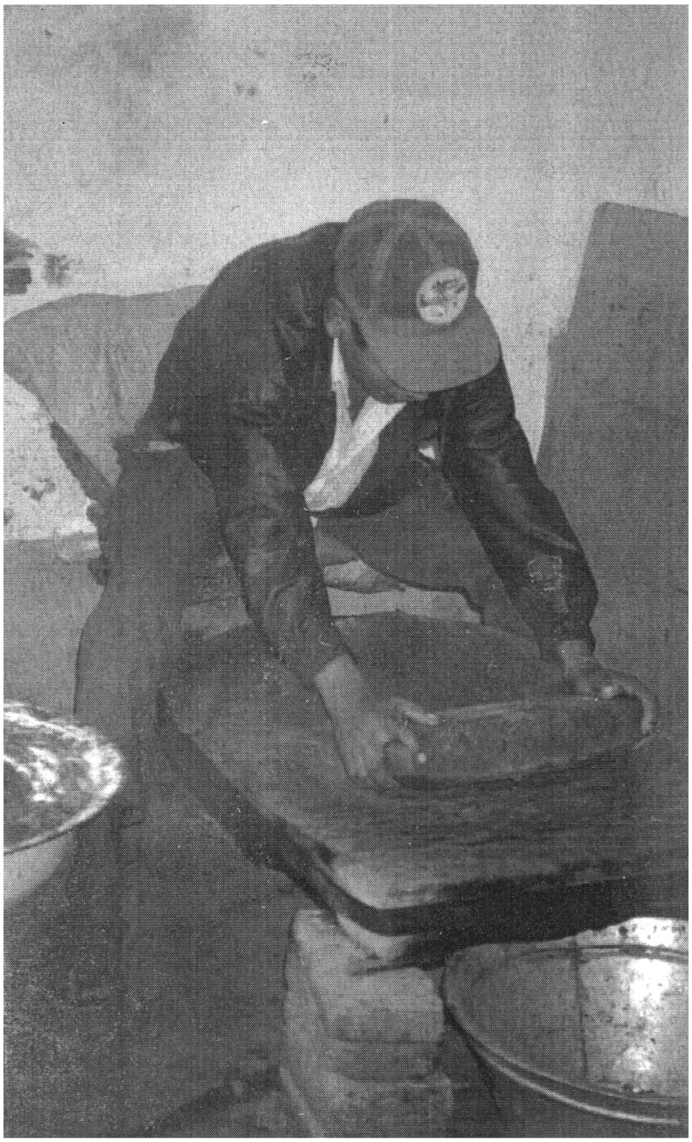
Because of its importance in the colonial period, I argue, Sucre had significant potential for growth as a chocolate-producing city.

16. Present-day Sucre merchants who hire chocolate makers are generally small grocery-shop keepers. The vertical link between chocolate production and sale of foodstuffs is a logical one; the founder of Cadbury's chocolates also began by producing drinking chocolate by hand for sale in a grocery shop. Cadbury, "History of Cadbury Fact Files"; viewed 12 Nov. 2001. URL: http://www.cadbury.com.au/history/.

17. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate,* 66.

18. See, for example, Paul Harrison, *Inside the Third World: The Anatomy of Poverty* (1993; London, 1979), 106–8; also Róbinson Rojas, "Latin America: Blockages to Development" (Ph.D. diss., London, 1985); viewed online 16 Nov. 2001. URL: http://www.rrojasdatabank.org/foh6.htm, 161–89.

19. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, 11, 27, 72–75.



Present-day Sucre chocolate-maker using a *batán* to mix chocolate.
Photograph by the author.

Despite its distance from the cocoa-growing Beni and Alto Beni regions, the city had a local market for chocolate and had developed an incipient local chocolate industry in the colonial period. Sucre was located much closer to sources of supply than were European chocolate makers, who had to import their raw material from overseas. Moreover, Sucre was no isolated hinterland: as colonial capital of the Alto Perú region, seat of the *Audiencia de Charcas*, Sucre was a major administrative center and home to many elite families. Sucre's incipient industry also had another advantage, in terms of both market and potential investment capital: its proximity to the mining center of Potosí. In the sixteenth century, Potosí, with its "Rich Hill" (*cerro rico*) of silver, quickly became the largest population center in the New World.[20] La Plata, about 60 miles to the northeast, became the seat of government because of its lower altitude and hence milder climate. Sucre drinking-chocolate producers of the twentieth century frequently cited the cold, high-altitude mining region of Potosí and its surrounding areas as important markets for their product. This may have been true in earlier periods as well. In addition, the wealth generated by the mines could have offered a strong source of capital for investment in new industries.

Although the Sucre chocolate industry had its start in a wealthy urban center in an economically prosperous region, it was not able to build on those advantages, and it did not develop to meet the growing popularity of drinking chocolate internationally. The reasons for this failure to grow lie within the larger debate about industrial development and underdevelopment. Dependency theorists would point out that, rather than being converted into local or regional investment, much of Potosí's wealth simply left the country for Europe, enriching the colonial powers at the expense of the periphery.[21] But external relationships alone cannot determine the trajectory of regional investment and industrial development: internal characteristics are also important. The development of local industries is informed by the roles of government, institutions, and policy in providing an environment favorable to investment; class structures and relations among the factors of production; and the characteristics of domestic and export markets.[22]

Through the early colonial period, it is clear that La Plata was at no inherent technical disadvantage as far as chocolate produc-

20. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), "City of Potosí"; viewed 12 Nov. 2001. URL: http://www.unesco.org/whc/sites/420.htm.

21. See, for example, Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America; Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York, 1967).

22. See Stephen Haber, "Industrial Concentration and the Capital Markets: A Comparative Study of Brazil, Mexico, and the United States, 1830–1930," *Journal of Economic History* 51 (1991): 559; Rojas, "Latin America: Blockages to Development"; Nils Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition: The Peruvian Altiplano, 1780–1930* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993); Ron Ayres and David Clark, "Capitalism, Industrialisation and Development in Latin America: The Dependency Paradigm Revisited," *Capital & Class* 64 (Spring 1998): 89–118; Kenneth J. Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito, 1690–1830: The State and Regional Development* (New York, 1995).

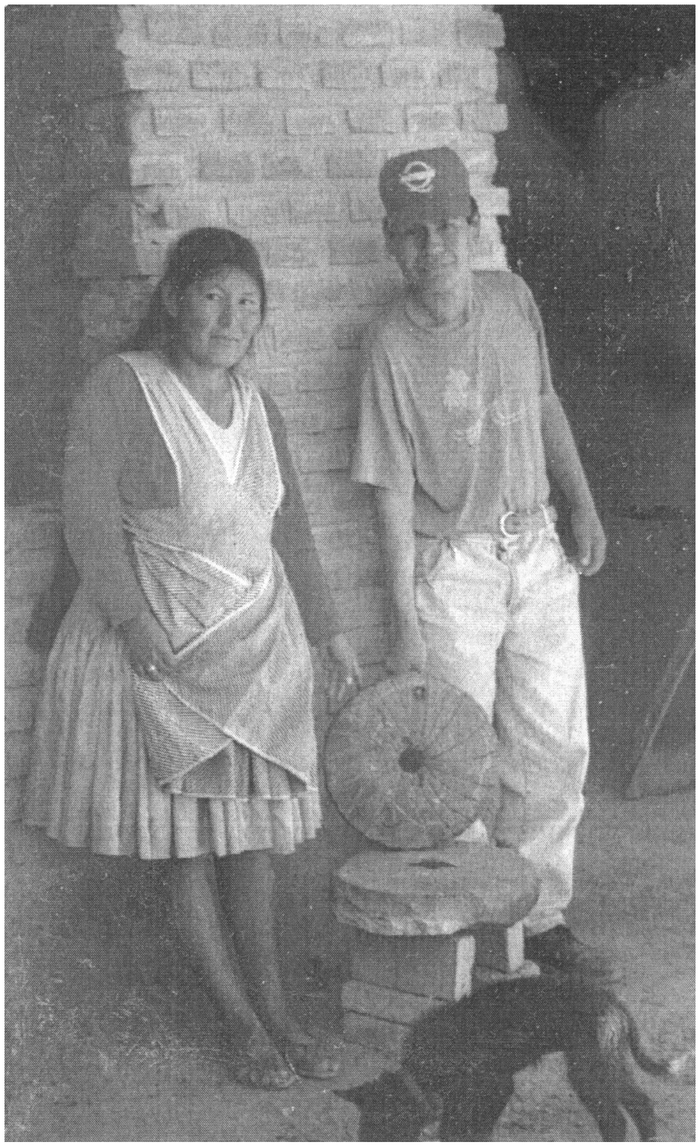
tion was concerned. Stone grinding and mixing would have been the common method until the mid-eighteenth century, wherever chocolate was produced.[23] The late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries, however, witnessed the emergence of mechanized chocolate factories producing at significant scale—but not in La Plata. By the 1800s, Sucre's chocolate industry seemed well on its way to being "underdeveloped" by international standards.

Such a linear understanding of industrial development can be misleading, however. Sucre chocolate making did remain strictly a rustic enterprise until its first chocolate factories were founded at the turn of the twentieth century. Still, the development of the chocolate industry worldwide was uneven, with factories emerging in some areas while hand production continued in others; indeed, as in Sucre, artisanal production often continued alongside factory methods.[24] The late industrialization of Sucre's chocolate enterprises did not necessarily place its businesses at any permanent disadvantage; many of today's South American chocolate giants (such as Grupo Arcor in Argentina and Garoto in Brazil) began production only in the twentieth century.[25] Neither, however, did Sucre's long history of chocolate production give it an advantage on the international stage. Wealth, abundant raw materials, and skilled chocolate-making labor were not enough to launch significant chocolate businesses in Sucre until the early twentieth century, when new processes and products began to enter the local scene.

The Early Factories

Chocolate production in Sucre, until relatively recently, has been limited to two varieties: traditional-style drinking chocolate and a flavored cream bonbon. Drinking chocolate of the kind favored by colonial Spaniards, known in Sucre as *chocolate en barra* or *chocolate de cocina*, is prepared as vanilla- or cinnamon-flavored bars (rolled or molded) for melting in hot milk. Sucre's bonbons are distinctive round candies with a boiled sugar center covered with chocolate. Bonbon production is a three-day process that, even today, is mostly manual. The production of the chocolate coating itself (grind-

23. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, 66.
24. Ibid., 72.
25. Grupo Arcor is a major Argentinean company; Garoto, a major Brazilian company; Arcor, "Grupo Arcor—Arcor en cifras"; viewed 12 Nov. 2001. URL: http://www.arcor.com.ar/quienes_somos/grupo_cifras.asp; Garoto, "Garoto's History—Timeline"; viewed 16 Nov. 2001. URL: http://www.baton.com.br/.



Sucre residents with an old grinding stone, an alternative to the *batán* for processing the roasted cocoa beans. Photograph by the author.

ing, mixing, and refining) is the only mechanized stage of the production process in the factories. Chocolate makers in other Bolivian cities do not make bonbons, nor do similar bonbons arrive from any of the surrounding South American countries that also produce chocolates. Sucre's bonbons, in a variety of flavors, have a very smoothtextured center that stretches lightly when bitten into. One chocolate maker explained: “People wonder, why make chocolate in Sucre? It’s that the climate here is perfect for the production of bonbons, for the centers. In Argentina and Brazil they make bonbons, but not like ours.”[26]

The exact recipe of each company’s bonbon is, of course, secret, and bonbon production, though it has been around for only slightly over ninety years, is considered “traditional in Sucre.” Indeed, bonbons are the flagship product of the modern Sucre chocolate industry. The famous Sucre cream bonbon apparently originated with the Urioste Chocolate Factory (1900–*c.*1940), the first factory to produce eating-quality chocolate in Sucre. The Martinic Chocolate Factory (1930–1950) later produced bonbons as well.[27] Sucre’s earliest chocolate-candy makers developed a product that was not only unique but also particularly suited to the highland Mediterranean climate of the region. It was not, however, the local Sucre *chocolateros*, who had been producing drinking chocolate in the city since the colonial period, who developed this distinctive product. Nor did the locals import it from Europe, whose chocolate makers dominated the industry. Rather, the innovation and the skill of a single candy maker, a woman from Potosí, launched the production of the famous Sucre bonbon.

Eating-quality chocolate differs from drinking chocolate in that the former is smoother and more finely processed. The move from drinking chocolate to the production of eating-quality chocolate candies in Sucre roughly coincides with the founding of Sucre’s first chocolate factories. It also corresponds with an international boom in chocolate production beginning in the 1880s. The soaring popularity of chocolate in the late nineteenth century has been attributed to the production of high-quality eating chocolate in Europe, made possible by technical breakthroughs by Swiss chocolate makers in enriching chocolate with cocoa butter and improving its texture.[28]

Internationally, many industrial-style chocolate factories (mostly water powered) were established by the late eighteenth century, including J. S. Fry & Sons in Britain, several French and other European manufacturers, and the Baker chocolate company in Dorchester, Massachusetts, founded by an Irish immigrant.[29] Nor were these

26. Don Miguel, Sucre, interview with the author, March 1997.

27. I use actual names for the early generation of chocolate factories, none of which still exists under its name or under its original ownership. Currently functioning chocolate factories, however, are referred to by number only, to preserve privacy for these present-day businesses.

28. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, 27, 77–91.

29. Ibid., 66–67, 84.

tiny operations: Clarence-Smith reports that the Dorchester mill was turning out over a ton of chocolate a day in 1794. Steam-driven chocolate-making machinery appeared in various parts of Europe in the early nineteenth century, and Mexico built its first modern chocolate factory in 1828; "Bolivia apparently stuck to older methods."[30]

Many of the first mechanized chocolate factories in South America were established by Europeans, often immigrants. In 1850 Swiss immigrants imported machinery from Europe and founded a factory in Caracas, Venezuela, with the capacity to produce a ton of chocolate per day. French and Italian immigrants set up modern chocolate factories in Argentina in the second half of the nineteenth century.[31] The trend of European immigrants' involvement in chocolate manufacture continued into the twentieth century: in 1929 a German immigrant to Brazil founded Garoto, cited as the largest chocolate maker in South America, and an Italian immigrant to Argentina founded Arcor in 1951.[32]

A modern historian of chocolate paints a believable picture of uneven mechanization across South America in the late nineteenth century, ranging from modern factories to hand-grinding on stones in artisanal workshops: the same contrasts could be seen in Sucre a century later. Some South American chocolate factories were producing primarily traditional products, especially Spanish-style sweetened drinking chocolate, while others—particularly those with Italian, Swiss, or French ties—produced European-style chocolates and other candies.[33] Sucre's own experience fits this pattern: European immigrants and upper-class residents with European connections pioneered production of eating-quality chocolates, alongside ongoing production of the popular traditional drinking chocolate.

Industrial-style chocolate production began in Sucre at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Europe (as importer of raw materials) dominated the international chocolate scene, with three times as many firms as in the rest of the world combined.[34] Closer to home, Sucre itself had just lost its role as national capital. At the

30. Clarence-Smith cites only the hand-ground *Moxos* chocolate from the Beni for that period; ibid., 68–72.

31. Ibid., 75–76, 89.

32. Garoto began as a candy manufacturer and produced its first chocolates in 1936. Susan Tiffany, "Dedication to People and Quality Combine to Make Chocolates Garoto South America's Largest Chocolate Maker," *Candy Industry* 162 (Feb. 1997): 19–21; Arcor, "Grupo Arcor—Arcor en cifras"; Garoto,"Garoto's History—Timeline."

33. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, 85–89.

34. Ibid., 79–80.

same time, the tin boom was newly under way in the mining regions to the west, bringing both entrepreneurs and markets.

Rodríguez Brothers—The First Factory

Sucre's first chocolate factory was founded in the 1890s by an enterprising mine-owning family who also owned a *hacienda* near the city.[35] The Rodríguez Brothers factory followed the pattern of earlier periods, producing drinking chocolate only, not candies, primarily for the mining market. The Rodriguez family also produced and marketed liquor and cigars at various times; their chocolate factory, which used steam-driven machinery, functioned for about fifty years, into the 1940s. The number of paid employees varied monthly, usually between two and eight; in addition, the owners would have been able to make use of unwaged peon laborers from their hacienda. The Rodríguez factory produced drinking chocolate in two varieties: vanilla and cinnamon-flavored. "[People] said that the chocolates they made were delicious," a granddaughter remembers. "They sent them everywhere, even to France."[36]

A review of the family archives produced no evidence of export to France but did reveal the family's close ties to Europe, documented through extensive correspondence with European bankers and merchants on behalf of both the factory and the household. The archives also show that Rodríguez chocolate had markets all over Bolivia, especially in the mining centers. Major clients were located in Potosí, Uyuni, Oruro, and Challapata. The factory bought raw materials from intermediary merchants; interestingly, some of the cocoa merchants as early as the turn of the twentieth century were women.

Extrapolating from these archival data, I estimate that the Rodríguez Brothers factory produced on average 880–1,100 pounds of drinking chocolate per month—about five to six tons annually.[37] At the same period, the French chocolate giant Menier was producing about 20,000 tons of chocolate a year.[38] For the Rodríguez factory, production and sales varied widely, depending on the seasonal demand for drinking chocolate: in December 1901, for example, the factory had over twice the income from chocolate sales as in No-

35. I was able to speak with a granddaughter of José Rodríguez who still lives in Sucre. She very kindly let me study the family's archives, from which I was able to piece together something of the history of this factory. They are cited as Rodriguez Family Archives.

36. Sra. Rosario, Sucre, interview with the author, April 1997.

37. Rodriguez Family Archives (multiple volumes, unpaged), Sucre, Bolivia.

38. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, 84.

vember of the same year.[39] Similar fluctuations throughout the records reflect regularly occurring high and low periods of chocolate sales.[40]

By 1941 the Rodríguez family was running a retail shop as well as producing chocolate. Chocolate production soon dropped off, and average monthly income from chocolate fell about 85 percent between 1941 and 1943.[41] The family focused on liquor sales and other retailing ventures as the original factory owners aged. According to oral reports, the founder's children chose to dedicate themselves to managing agricultural properties rather than to producing chocolate. Chocolate production is not mentioned in the family archives after December 1943, though the Rodríguez family continued to sell liquor and other merchandise into the 1950s. The 1952 Bolivian Revolution led to the loss of much of the family's land and holdings, including the chocolate factory, which was never again used for production.

The history of the Rodríguez Brothers factory shows that local entrepreneurship was present in Sucre in the early part of the twentieth century, that chocolate was a key product, and that it was being produced industrially, at significant scale, with steam-driven equipment. This history also locates these industrial developments within the *criollo* ruling class, who controlled land and capital. The Rodríguez family members were not artisan-class *chocolateros*; they were landholding merchants of Spanish background. The family succeeded in developing a wide market for its product, but one focused almost exclusively in the traditional mining centers. The Rodríguez enterprise did not explore new markets, nor did it expand its product line beyond the basic two varieties of drinking chocolate.

It is also notable that the family looked frequently to Europe for both goods and financial services, suggesting that the provision of local goods and services may have been underdeveloped. Indeed, Bolivia's industry in general has always been unable to meet the requirements of the internal market.[42] The major Bolivian industry of the time, tin, imported all inputs and had little impact on stimulating the country's industrial development.[43] Even now, as a recent

39. Rodriguez Family Archives.

40. Such seasonal variations are normal for this product; drinking chocolate in Bolivia sells best around Christmas, Easter/Holy Week, and Mother's Day.

41. Based on data from the Rodriguez Family Archives.

42. Rodolfo Eróstegui, *El Rol de los Empresarios y Trabajadores en la Modernización Industrial* [The Role of Entrepreneurs and Workers in Industrial Modernization] (La Paz, 1992), 11.

43. Carmenza Gallo, "The Autonomy of Weak States: States and Classes in Primary Export Economies," *Sociological Perspectives* 40 (1997): 646–47.

banking article reports, "The cream of the affluent market [in Bolivia] is widely believed to place the majority of their investible assets abroad, mainly because of limited domestic opportunities."[44] Ultimately, much of the capital generated by the Rodríguez enterprises left the country. The family archives record extensive transactions abroad, as well as numerous production delays as they sent out of the region for repair or replacement of machinery parts. Thus the factory appears to have lost many opportunities to build up and stimulate Sucre's local capacity in production, commerce, and services. Suffering from common problems of intergenerational business transfer, the factory itself did not survive to contribute to the city's modern chocolate industry.

Urioste Chocolates—Experiment and Innovation

The first recorded production of chocolate candies in Sucre occurred in the year 1900, with the founding of the Urioste Bonbon Factory. This factory "produced very fine creme bonbons, which enjoyed wide acceptance in the market, as well as fantasy figures, fruit preserves, and caramel candies."[45] The factory survived for about forty years, bridging two generations.

Like the Rodriguez factory, the Urioste business was an enterprise of the wealthy, landowning *criollo* class. Unlike the Rodriguez family, however, the Uriostes moved chocolate production away from the traditional drinking-chocolate product and into a new era of unique chocolate candies. This factory also innovated a range of candy products, as the owner was directly involved and interested in the technical aspects of chocolate and candy production.

Eulalia Reynolds initiated the production of chocolate bonbons in Sucre. She was originally from Potosí, of *criolla* background—her mother from a Spanish landowning family and her father an Irish immigrant. A great-granddaughter explained Eulalia Reynolds' interest in the production of chocolate candies:

> She was always experimenting with different kinds of fillings [*almíbares*, cooked-sugar fillings]. Every day she was experimenting, trying things out. . . . There are a lot of stories that tell about her. . . . For example, she would say to José [her son], "You have to put in this, and after that, this, and you do it like this. . . . " And she

44. Global Private Banking, "Wealth Atlas: Bolivia" 4 (4 May 1998): 8.
45. Querejazu, *Apuntes Para Una Historia Económica*, 65.

> would come out of the kitchen with a plate, and have all the children try, saying, "What do you think?"[46]

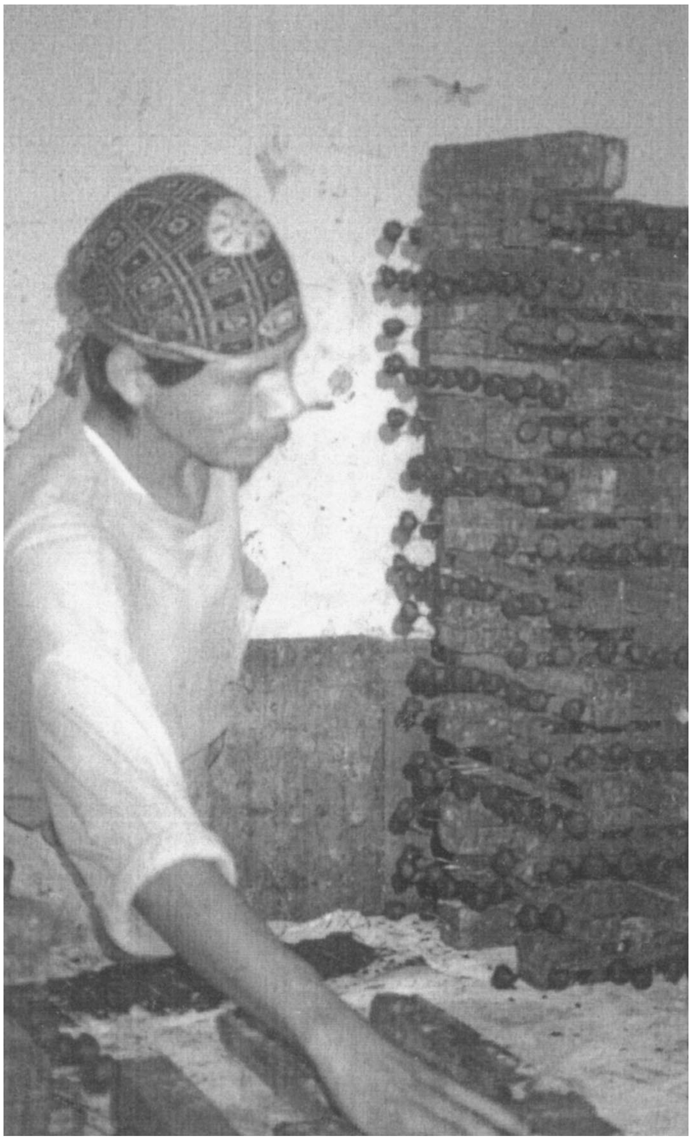
Eulalia Reynolds invented the recipes that were to make Urioste chocolates famous, but it was her son, José Urioste, who actually took charge of the commercial production of chocolates: "He produced the chocolates and she helped; she was always inventing recipes."[47] The daughter of another Sucre chocolate maker remembered: "[The Uriostes] produced chocolates, more at the family level. . . . Señor Urioste had a special recipe for creamy bonbons, they were very well known, and he was very jealous of his recipe, he didn't show it to anyone. . . . I remember seeing him [the owner], an elderly gentleman, very closed, like people were before, especially from the aristocracy. . . . They sold their chocolates in wooden boxes, but simple, without paint."[48]

The Urioste business was a family enterprise. At the beginning, production was manual; the cocoa was ground on a stone: "One person, a friend of the family, worked there, and there were peasants [*campesinos*] who came to help with the grinding."[49] The business grew, however, and soon took on a more industrial complexion, with machinery and paid labor. Still, unwaged peon labor from the rural haciendas continued to be used as a supplement; as another local resident recalls: "They had their four workers. . . plus the peons that came from the property, every week three or four; they didn't pay them because they were from the property. . . . The peons rotated the [cocoa] mill."[50]

The family hired a local mechanic and designer who had worked in a local hat factory and who, according to his grandson, was "one of the few in Sucre that knew about industrial machines" to build a cocoa mill. The grandson recalls the arrangement: "Since they didn't have any machines, they did everything manually, artisan style. My grandfather said to them that he could make them a machine to replace what they did by hand."[51]

In this case, local mechanical capacity was available, and a symbiotic relationship developed; the local mechanic increased his clientele and reputation, and chocolate candy production increased in efficiency and capacity. The eventual shape of the Uriostes' business became, as another local woman recalled, "a factory . . . on Azurduy

46. Sra. María Luisa, Sucre, interview with the author, March 1997.
47. Ibid.
48. Sra. Elsa, Sucre, interview with the author, March 1997.
49. Sra. María Luisa, interview with the author.
50. Don Tomás, Sucre, interview with the author, April 1997.
51. Don Miguel, interview with the author.



Artisanal production of Sucre's unique chocolate product, the bonbon. Photograph by the author.

Street [in central Sucre]" that "mostly had machinery."[52] Yet it is interesting to note that the mechanic himself, a mestizo artisan, never began a factory—even though he knew how to make the equipment: "My grandfather made machines for everybody, as they asked him,

52. Sra. Elena, Sucre, interview with the author, March 1997.

but he didn't start any factories. He had to support his family, and that was his trade; besides [starting a factory] takes capital."[53]

Other bonbon-making factories followed in Sucre, but the Urioste factory was the first. Something of the reputation of Urioste bonbons can be sensed in the great-granddaughter's description of them, many years later: "They say that there have never again been chocolates like the ones the Urioste made. . . . They say that it was delicious to bite into one, the chocolate coating very delicate . . . and the fillings very special. They weren't a bit rough or grainy, they melted in your mouth, and you could store them for a long time."[54]

Quality, then, was a hallmark of the first bonbon factory in Sucre: born in the kitchen of a culinary innovator and molded into a profitable business by her son. Yet the factory was gone by the third generation: like the Rodríguez children, the next generation of Uriostes did not wish to continue running a chocolate factory. Tomás, a young friend of the family (treated much as a son) took over the management of the factory for a time after the owner's death.[55] Then the Uriostes' daughter and her husband "left, closed the factory" and took the old machines with them to La Paz, where they apparently never produced again.[56] When, a year or two later, Tomás decided to launch his own chocolate enterprise, he started up his home-based business from scratch.

The Briançon Chocolate Factory

A French military man founded another well-known Sucre chocolate business, contemporary with the Urioste and Rodríguez factories. Señor Briançon arrived in Sucre in 1892 as part of a mission to establish a Bolivian military academy. He married a Bolivian woman of Spanish descent and settled in Sucre. His family had been chocolate makers in Paris; when he saw that cocoa was available in Bolivia, he began to produce chocolate in his free time, joining the ranks of European immigrants who came to South America and established chocolate factories. The Briançon factory, founded in 1902, began as a very rustic operation, making only drinking chocolate:

> There were six workers, that were called *chocolateros*. . . . [Sr. Briançon] brought them from his property that he had . . . about 65

53. Don Miguel, interview with the author.
54. Sra. María Luisa, interview with the author.
55. Here begins the current generation of chocolate factory owners. As I do for the names of their factories, I use pseudonyms for "Tomás" and all other present-day chocolate producers.
56. Don Tomás, Sucre, interview with the author, April 1997.

> km from Sucre. . . . He brought the peons from the property to do the work. They toasted [the cocoa] in a clay pot—that's the best way to do it, in a clay pot; the heat is more uniform. The husk they took off with small blows with a stone. Afterward . . . they used wind to get rid of the husks and any other debris . . . ; then they had a clean bean, and that's what you grind [in a *batán*]. It was a week-long process.[57]

Señor Briançon's wife was not involved in chocolate production; "she had nine children, that kept her busy!"[58] Two daughters helped, however, and the factory passed to them in 1934 when their father died. The factory remained about the same size, run only as a part-time activity. The miners' cooperative was a major client for the factory's drinking chocolate.

In 1980 Sra. Gloria, the great-granddaughter of the founder, took over and began investing in more modern machinery:

> I worked on improving the workshop. In 1981 I made my artisanal workshop, with a mill [to grind cocoa beans], a mixer, a vibrating table, and I started to heat by gas, not by coal. . . . The equipment was Brazilian, but I bought it in Bolivia [with an investment of $7,000]. Then I traveled to Brazil in 1985. I bought all the equipment: a mill with cylindrical rollers, a cylindrical toaster, a husk remover, a thermal tank [to conserve the liquid at the proper temperature, with rotation to eliminate gases], another vibrating table and a mixer to make bonbon cremes [a $45,000 investment.][59]

At this point, production expanded to include bonbons. Sra. Gloria managed the factory herself and hired sixteen workers. Her husband helped informally with the business accounting. She also hired vendors to sell to local shops and in country towns. Despite these entrepreneurial efforts, she found that the market was difficult for bonbons; the business's main client was still the mines, where drinking chocolate was the product of choice.

Briançon's great-granddaughter sold the factory in 1990 and has since invested in a different line of business. She says her new business earns more, but she misses chocolate making and would like to return to it "in the next few years."[60] Meanwhile, the new owners, a small group of investors, have renamed and expanded the factory.

57. Sra. Gloria, interview with the author.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid

Martinic's Chocolates

The Martinic factory, which produced a range of chocolate and candy products, appeared on the scene later than the others, in 1930. It was established by Potosí entrepreneur Rodolfo Martinic, the son of a Yugoslav father and a Bolivian mother; he was also a successful merchant and the founder of a bank. The Martinic factory grew rapidly and enjoyed success, but it did not outlive its founder. The rapidity with which the Martinic business made the shift from small-scale artisan or *casero* ("home-based") production to mechanized "factory" production makes this an interesting case.

The 80-year-old daughter of the factory's founder, Sra. Elsa, still living in Sucre, described the history and development of the Martinic factory, and her role in it:

> My father was a merchant, he had his shop in the Plaza Zudañez, he was well known, his name was Rodolfo Martinic. One day, a young man came to see him, who had worked as an employee with the people who made chocolates, and he said that he had a recipe for bonbons. He came to speak with my father—my father didn't know anything about such things, he was a merchant, but he wanted to do this, so that's how it began. . . . The young man wanted someone to help him make [chocolates]. . . . There was a family, Urioste, that produced chocolates. . . . This young man had gone to work for [Sr. Urioste], and learned how to make [bonbons]. . . . That's how he came to my father, and my father became interested. He said, "All right, we'll try it."[61]

Rodolfo Martinic's access to capital and business expertise speeded the development of this business. As Sra. Elsa remembered, "My father founded the factory in 1930, but it was just in the house, everything by hand. . . . Afterward, in 1935, he had that building [chocolate factory] built that's on the corner across from the telephone building. This used to belong to my father. He brought machines from outside the country, from Germany." At first, the factory had ten workers, all women, and produced only bonbons. Sra. Elsa was actively involved:

> I was the only child, and I always helped my father, but not in the factory itself, rather, with the accounting. I kept all the books. . . . Everything went well [with the business] and after five years it was possible to have the factory built. . . . They began to make a lot of

61. Sra. Elsa, interview with the author.

> products, not just bonbons but also small chocolates [*chocolatines*], chocolate bars, marshmallow candies, gummy candies. . . . They made delicious *turrones* [rolled cookies with chocolate and peanuts inside]. . . . They made "fantasy" boxes, they painted them. . . . I made boxes too, painted, very pretty. . . . They sent [products] all over Bolivia, to La Paz, Cochabamba, Potosí, Santa Cruz. . . . [My father] sent samples to other cities. . . and orders arrived from all over. The chocolates were very well known. . . . I don't remember quantities . . . but we sent all over Bolivia.[62]

The factory's books apparently have not survived, but Sra. Elsa recalls that her father's factory grew to have forty workers—all women except for two male mechanics; it specialized in bonbons, but also made drinking chocolate:

> He was always sending off to Europe for catalogues, all kinds of information; he also had ingredients brought from Europe. . . . He was very active with all this. . . . My father did a lot of things, he was always doing something, attracting clients. . . . He also founded the Yugoslav Bank in Chile. . . . He also worked in places where they were building railroads, always with his shop. . . .
>
> I always helped him. Then I got married, but just the same I went on helping him. Afterward, he got sick and had to sell the factory [because he could no longer manage it]. . . . He sold it to a Señor Zamora . . . [around 1950]. He [Zamora] didn't have it long, less than a year, then he sold it.[63]

The next buyer was Tomás, the young family friend of the Uriostes. He, along with his brother, had already launched their own *casero* chocolate microenterprise using basic, locally manufactured equipment, and had competed directly with the Martinics. When the brothers managed to obtain the Martinic infrastructure and equipment, they expanded production to a larger scale and created the first of Sucre's present-day chocolate factories.

The history of the Martinic factory again demonstrates the potential for entrepreneurship and rapid growth in the Sucre chocolate industry in the early decades of the twentieth century—as well as the difficulties of maintaining this drive into the next generation. Rodolfo Martinic's daughter did not see any reason to continue running a chocolate factory, despite her long experience assisting her father. When asked if she had considered continuing the enterprise on her own, Sra. Elsa replied, "Why? It was just to help my father,

62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.

and afterward, it wasn't the same."[64] Her father may not have even considered passing the factory management to her, a married woman, when he became ill; he simply sold the factory.

The histories of Sucre's early generation of chocolate factories reveal several points about the city's chocolate industry and its development throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Neither independent artisans nor chocolate-factory workers were in a position to begin factories. The young man cited in the Martinic case, who approached a local merchant with an idea to begin a factory, did not establish a factory on his own; he lacked capital (and perhaps business know-how). The city's early chocolate factories were owned by the elite, people who had the capital needed to launch production: often landowners (who had access to laborers from their haciendas) or merchants. Nevertheless, even they often began production manually, artisan style—but using workers from outside the family.

Some factories such as Rodolfo Martinic's grew quickly, added industrial machinery, and innovated a range of products. Others such as the Briançons' changed relatively little over long periods. Two of the four early factories developed a range of chocolate and candy products, but the other two concentrated solely on drinking-chocolate production for the mining market. The tin boom provided a significant market for chocolate, spurring industrial development in that sector in the early twentieth century.

A single entrepreneur, Eulalia Reynolds, had a key role in the development of Sucre's chocolate industry and its flagship product, the chocolate bonbon. Her innovation, combined with her son's managerial interest and ability, was the starting point for the city's chocolate-candy industry. Much of the Sucre chocolate industry's subsequent history, however, has been one of imitation rather than innovation. There has also been a tendency to rely heavily on the drinking-chocolate market in the mining regions, in a context where mining has been a volatile industry.

The inability to transfer factory ownership successfully from one generation to the next was apparent in all cases but that of the Briançons. Even there, the second generation of owners kept the business going only as a part-time venture, almost as a hobby. Entrepreneurial management and improvement did not re-emerge in the Briançon factory until the founder's great-granddaughter took over. Overall, children's lack of interest in continuing factories begun by their parents may have been related to attitudes in the larger society, such as

64. Ibid.

a low level of prestige attributed to manufacturing activity and the greater perceived desirability of living in La Paz (the capital) rather than in Sucre.

None of Sucre's early factories has survived into the present. The city's five current factories, however, all have some connection to the earlier generation of the Rodríguez, Urioste, Briançon, and Martinic businesses. Sucre also has ten smaller, home-based (*casero*) chocolate microenterprises, many of which have ties with the early generation of chocolate factories as well.[65] The most common link between the early factories and contemporary businesses is a former factory worker. We thus see a movement of the chocolate industry from the hands of the elite into the hands of the working class.

From Worker to Entrepreneur

Over the years many ex–factory workers have managed to launch independent chocolate-making microenterprises. Working primarily by hand, with rustic technology and a small amount of capital, artisanal producers carved out market niches alongside the city's factories. Like the early generation of factory founders, they started small; unlike those factories, they tended to hire little or no outside labor. Nor did they have hacienda properties from which to bring in unwaged workers. Financially and socially, these producers had fewer resources on which to draw. They also entered the market at a time of greater competition, when established factories were already functioning in Sucre.

Chocolate businesses begun by workers in Sucre have followed various trajectories. One has grown to become a small factory; some have disappeared, as their founders moved away or took up other opportunities. Most commonly, however, these businesses simply continue as *casero* microenterprises, sometimes over two or three generations. They demonstrate an ability to maintain themselves, to survive even when they cannot grow—and to grow when they can. They are typical of artisan enterprises not only in Sucre but around the world, so-called "informal" businesses that development organizations target with microenterprise programs meant to help local economies grow.[66]

65. *Casero*: it bears noting that even "factories" may be located in a section of the family's home—three of them are. *Casero* is, however, a distinction that is made locally; such home-based production of chocolates is less visible and on a smaller scale than the city's five factories.

66. See Keith Hart, "Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 11 (1973): 61–89.

Drinking chocolate, particularly, fits the description of a commodity through which workers may become entrepreneurs—entry costs are low, production is very labor-intensive, and labor time has a low value.[67] We can trace half of the current home-based chocolate microenterprises in Sucre back to a family member who was once a chocolate factory worker; this was also the case for a number of other microenterprises that no longer produce. In addition, two of the city's five current factories have connections to former chocolate factory workers.

Don Pablo's Descendants

The story of Don Pablo and his descendants documents the way in which workers have undertaken chocolate production in Sucre and then passed it down as family tradition and artisan trade. Don Pablo and his wife (name not recorded) once worked in the Rodríguez Brothers chocolate factory. They later began their own business making drinking chocolate by hand, working out of their home. They "took chocolate" and sold it in other Bolivian cities, such as Oruro and Potosí. This family has now been producing chocolate in Sucre for three generations.

A grandson, Don Marcelo, and his wife Señora Irma, have been producing chocolate in Sucre for six years. This couple took up chocolate production after Marcelo retired from his job at the Telephone Cooperative, at a time when Irma was seeking to leave market vending for a job that would keep her nearer home to care for children. Chocolate making appeared to offer the opportunity they were looking for. Marcelo had learned about chocolate production from his parents, who had a full-time drinking-chocolate microenterprise employing five workers. Marcelo and Irma currently produce both drinking chocolate and bonbons, usually working with two employees (young men). Though never considered a "factory," this small-scale home-based business has supplied markets in other Bolivian cities, hired as many as five workers at a time, and often provided the sole source of income for its household. It has done so with a minimum of technology and a very limited range of products.

Two other chocolate-making enterprises have been founded by Don Pablo's descendants. Don Ciro is a great-grandnephew of Don Pablo who in 1996 was just starting up his own small "factory," a

67. Carol Smith, "Does a Commodity Economy Enrich the Few while Ruining the Masses? Differentiation among Petty Commodity Producers in Guatemala," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 11 (1984): 60–95.

two-person operation with simple machinery, in a space owned by his father-in-law. He explained his background: "A relative of my grandmother had worked in a chocolate factory. That's how she learned. . . . She taught my mother. I remember always growing up around it, since I was very small, they made chocolate."[68] Ciro's grandmother and mother produced drinking chocolate bars by hand in their home, hiring one man to do the grinding on a stone. They also occasionally made bonbons. Customers came to the house, and the women traveled to sell their chocolate. While traveling, they became involved in cocoa merchandising, an activity that Ciro continues today. Ciro's mother also continues to work as a cocoa merchant in the city of Cochabamba.

Ciro's grandmother taught chocolate-making not only to Ciro's mother but also to a daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law, Señora Rosmery, later began an independent drinking-chocolate business and taught her second husband chocolate making so that he could help her. This *casero* microenterprise had a brand name that was widely recognized in Sucre and Cochabamba, and the product was known for its quality, yet the business never had employees or machinery other than a simple cereal mill. It closed in 1992 upon the death of Rosmery's husband, when there was no labor to replace him and little capital with which to continue production.

These cases show that skills in chocolate-making are passed down through families, but with no set pattern: men may teach women, women may teach men, and in-laws as well as blood relatives may be taught. Technology varies from simple cereal mills and grinding stones to the creatively adapted machines of Ciro's new factory (he uses an industrial bread mixer to mix and refine the chocolate). Modern chocolate-making equipment is out of reach for any of these enterprises, which produce on a small scale; Marcelo and Irma turn out 1,630 pounds of product per month; and Ciro, with his newer business, only 500 pounds. Most produce drinking chocolate, some produce bonbons as well, and Ciro produces a range of eating and drinking chocolates similar to those made by the five local factories.

The skills and experience obtained by working in a chocolate factory, and the low barriers to entry, allow workers' families to include chocolate making in their repertoire of economic options. Yet chocolate production, once begun, does not necessarily continue unbroken; it may be set aside in favor of more promising options (such as a good job at the Telephone Cooperative) or because key resources (such as labor) are lacking.

68. Don Ciro, Sucre, interview with the author, 15 April 1997.

Do Workers' Enterprises Grow?

Most chocolate-making businesses begun by former factory workers have never grown large, often continuing as *casero* microenterprises over two or more generations. Only one (Sucre's present-day Chocolate Factory No. 2) has expanded to become a factory in its own right. Others have closed their doors. What circumstances have allowed Factory No. 2 to grow successfully—and why have most workers' enterprises not done so?

In most cases, ex-workers simply have not had the capital to expand. Once workers leave their factory jobs, they often lack any income source or significant cash assets beyond the microenterprise itself. Profits from chocolate production typically provide the income to support the household but generate little or no surplus for reinvestment.

Rosmery's case is an example. Her drinking-chocolate brand developed an excellent reputation, yet the business closed when her husband died—ostensibly because his labor was not available. Theoretically, one can hire labor, and profit margins were good (50 percent). But chocolate production provided the only income in a household with eight children; there was apparently little or no accumulation of capital in the face of high consumption needs. "How we would like to have had a good factory, and workers, and producing a lot!" Rosmery commented. "But there wasn't capital."[69]

The low entry barriers for drinking-chocolate and bonbon production mean that startup is easy: the very simple technology and small number of inputs make it possible for workers to become entrepreneurs. But growth is a challenge. In addition to the difficulty of accumulating capital, owners face an environment that has changed over the years, as more producers have entered the market and competition has become tighter. Serving primarily low-income markets, businesses in Sucre compete on price, leading to minimal earnings margins.[70] Yet reaching larger markets in other cities requires significant investment, and microentrepreneurs seldom have the resources to undertake market research or to establish extensive contacts. Sucre itself, and sometimes neighboring Cochabamba, remain the primary markets for these businesses.

In Sucre's current market context, manual production of drinking chocolate and bonbons is no longer a viable *business* option—although it is still a way to generate an income. Essentially, small pro-

69. Sra. Rosmery, Sucre, interview with the author, April 1997.

70. Nearly 70 percent of Sucre's population is low-income. Data from the 1992 Bolivian census, cited in Edwin Hurtado Urdininea, *Estudio de Mercado para*

ducers can generate their own wages. In a tight market, with a small capital stake, their businesses cannot grow—no matter how well managed they are. Current chocolate-factory workers can become independent microentrepreneurs—but the rigors of hand-production and the promise of low earnings do not attract large numbers. Savvy entrepreneurs with little capital will generally look elsewhere for better business opportunities.

Señora Elena, a local baker, explained how her family abandoned chocolate production when they recognized better opportunities elsewhere.[71] She, her father (a carpenter and cabinetmaker), and her elder sister once produced drinking chocolate on a small scale, starting in 1945. Their case is less typical, in that they were not ex–factory workers: they learned the chocolate-making process from books and hired workers who had worked in the local factories. The family also had a peanut-toasting business, however, and they soon discovered that they could earn well with it, even reaching markets in Peru and elsewhere. Thus, as Elena put it, "we became tired" of chocolate production and "dedicated ourselves more to toasting peanuts." By 1950 Elena and her family saw that toasted peanuts (which nobody else was producing locally) offered greater opportunity for success than chocolate (where there were already competing factories).[72]

People undertake chocolate production out of interest, a lifestyle choice—or a lack of better options. Don Fabian is an example of a determined former chocolate-factory worker who has started a chocolate microenterprise in recent years. Fabian is of indigenous (*Quechua*) background; he came to the city from a rural community as a child, and formerly worked in both the original Briançon chocolate factory and the present-day Chocolate Factory No. 1. After a total of five years as a chocolate-factory worker, Fabian began making chocolate on his own in the mid-1990s. "But I don't do it continually, I don't do it every day, I do other things," he said. "Sometime[s], I go to Argentina to work."[73] From the perspective of Fabian's socioeconomic background, manual chocolate production—with about U.S.$100 monthly net income—is not a bad option, despite its limited growth potential.

Fabian produces only drinking-chocolate bars, using a small hand-toaster and a stone cocoa grinder he made himself. He mixes

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Bienes Transformados de Madera de Pino [Market Study for Pine Wood Products] (Sucre, n.d.), 17.

71. Not her real name.
72. Sra. Elena, Sucre, interview with the author, March 1997.
73. Don Fabian, Sucre, interview with the author, May 1997.

the chocolate by hand on a *batán*. He has looked beyond the local market and travels, sometimes with his wife (who does part of the marketing), to other Bolivian cities to sell his chocolate informally on street corners. He knows how to make other products besides drinking chocolate, but in order to make eating-quality chocolates, he says, "you need machines," especially a refiner to mix the cocoa and the sugar.[74] Fabian hires no workers, carrying out the entire process himself, making about 250 pounds of chocolate per month.

Despite the constraints of circumstance and capital, however, it is possible for workers to make the leap to factory ownership, as the case of Chocolate Factory No. 2 shows. Señora Celia, formerly a worker at Chocolate Factory No. 1, began Chocolate Factory No. 2 in the 1960s, making bonbons. Her success is notable: of all the enterprises begun by ex–factory workers in Sucre, hers is the only one that has grown to recognized factory status. She used no mechanized equipment, but hired a man to grind the cocoa on the *batán*. At that time, Celia worked out of a single room. She sold her bonbons to local shops and sales posts, and the chocolate business became her household's main income. She was essentially working as an artisan producer, at about the same (or even more primitive) level as Fabian—yet with a difference: she chose to focus on bonbons, at a time when the bonbon market was on the rise.

Celia entered the market at a key moment, when competition was low and profit margins high.[75] At the time, only she and Chocolate Factory No. 1 were producing bonbons, though there were other people in Sucre who made drinking chocolate. Celia was able to compete with the much larger Factory No. 1 because she charged a lower price and because the small size of her business meant that the larger factory did not perceive it as a threat.[76] Unlike most businesses begun by ex-workers, Celia's enterprise earned enough to provide money for reinvestment.

Through the urging and support of children and friends, Celia and her friends developed this small-scale bonbon-making enterprise into what Celia's son-in-law considers "a real business" in the early 1980s, when they "went on the market" with their own brand name and packaging.[77] At this point, the fledgling factory had acquired a cocoa mill and a refiner, both bought in Sucre. The factory soon used earnings to buy a larger refiner and a cocoa toaster and expanded production to include a wider range of products.

74. Bonbon production, however, does not require a refiner.

75. Chocolate Factory No. 2 reports formerly having a profit margin of 100 percent: a $100 investment generated $200 in sales; Sra. Celia's daughter (factory manager), Sucre, interview with the author, April 1997.

76. Sra. Celia's son-in-law, Sucre, interview with the author, August 1996.

77. Ibid.

Since 1996 Chocolate Factory No. 2 has been a nearly complete, semi-industrial factory. It produces about 400 pounds of chocolate a day—more than Fabian can make in a month. Production varies depending on the orders that come in. About 70 percent of the product is sold in Sucre and 30 percent to other Bolivian cities. The number of employees varies from twelve to fifteen people in periods of high sales (cold weather) to four or five in periods of low sales. Despite this success, however, a great deal of up-to-date chocolate machinery is still out of range for this small factory; an industrial mixer priced in Brazil, for example, would have cost $48,000.[78]

In this case, a good product, strategic management, and timing (harnessing a growth market for bonbons) led Celia's business to grow considerably from its rustic beginnings. Overall, however, exworkers have not been able to act as a driving force behind the development of a modern, competitive chocolate industry in Sucre. This role has historically rested with the elites: the European hacienda owners and their descendants who began the early factories and, more recently, the university-educated owner-managers of the larger factories. Yet neither group has succeeded in creating an industry visible outside the nation's borders.

Sucre's Chocolates: An Artisan Industry

Sucre currently has five chocolate factories. None is large. In 1997 production varied from something over 3,300 pounds per month for the smallest (Factory No. 3) to around 12,100 pounds per month for the largest (Factory No. 1). Only two factories have enough equipment to be considered industrial; the others are semi-industrial operations. The two industrial factories tend to produce significantly under capacity. Altogether, Sucre chocolate producers (factories and *casero* microenterprises) are turning out around 33,000 pounds of chocolate per month.

Sucre's total annual production is about 200 tons, compared to the 1,500–2,000 tons produced by Ghana's state-owned chocolate company annually, or the 17,700 tons produced by a single large Mexican chocolate maker, La Corona.[79] Of Sucre's chocolate production, over half is sold locally; other Bolivian cities buy the remainder, and there are no exports.

78. Ibid.

79. ICCO (International Cocoa Organization), "Answers to Question—Cocoa Production and Export in Ghana"; viewed 16 Nov. 2001. URL: http://www.icco.org/questions/ghana3.htm; Grupo Corvi, "Informe"; viewed 12 Nov. 2001. URL: http://grupocorvi.com.mx/informe/pag02.htm.

Sucre residents are aware of their reputation as a chocolate-making city, but still state that Sucre "doesn't have industry." They emphasize that Sucre remains "an artisan city" in comparison to more industrialized cities elsewhere. Sucre's colonial-style architecture, relaxed lifestyle, and surrounding mountains of agricultural smallholdings present the face of a city that never has—and never will—see much industrial development. As one Sucre chocolate-factory owner put it: "This isn't an adequate spot for entrepreneurial activity. It's a very rich city in history and tradition, and very poor in economic opportunities." [80] Another stated, "A factory can survive, but it's difficult."[81] The market is small (220,000 people, most with very low incomes), the transport infrastructure is poor, and support industries (such as labeling and packaging for chocolate makers) are inadequate or nonexistent.

Sucre's five present-day chocolate factories are all linked to the early generation of factories. Factory No. 1 is connected to both the Urioste factory (through Tomás's experiences working with that family) and to the Martinic factory (through his later purchase of their infrastructure). Factory No. 5, on the other hand, was directly purchased from the Briançon family by a group of investors (professional managers) in 1990. They have set about improving the factory's infrastructure; nevertheless, their investment is relatively small, and they face a considerable market-development process, competing against strong industries in other regions, before they can justify greater investment and higher production levels.

Sucre's other three chocolate factories are semi-industrial operations that continue to grow incrementally, innovating new products and packaging styles, pricing their products a bit lower than the larger factories, and maintaining their visibility, like the larger factories, through retail outlets. Señora Celia began Factory No. 2, and her son and daughter-in-law run Factory No. 4 (they chose to start their own independent business). These factories have an indirect link to the first generation of factories, through Factory No. 1 and Celia's experience as an employee there. Finally, the grandson of the mechanic who built the chocolate-making machinery for the original Urioste factory, founded Factory No. 3. His brothers and father were also mechanics, enabling them to build the factory's machinery themselves.[82]

80. Co-owner of Chocolate Factory No. 5, Sucre, interview with the author, November 1996.

81. Sra. Celia's son-in-law, Sucre, interview with the author, August 1996.

82. Another brother, Don Miguel (not his real name) also started an occasional chocolate-making business in Sucre. There are three semi-industrial operations in Sucre that are not included among the five known factories, either because they

Overall, none of the current generation of Sucre's chocolate factories has had both the capital and the timing to make its business successful in markets beyond Bolivia's borders. These businesses are ill-equipped to compete in an export market (unless, perhaps, they manage to target niche markets with particularly innovative products—as Factory No. 5 is attempting to do with chocolate-covered Andean grains). With chocolate entering from elsewhere in South America and from other countries as well, Sucre's producers can capture only a small segment of the national market. Thus, in 1997 Bolivia imported chocolate products worth nearly U.S.$3 million—around 1,650 tons.[83] Exports of edible chocolates, on the other hand, were around $8,000 total that year.[84]

South American chocolates are still the principal competition for Sucre's producers, though chocolates from multinationals such as Hershey and Mars have also recently begun to enter Sucre in greater numbers, moving from high-priced specialty shops to street-corner sales. Yet their relative costliness means that local products still have a price advantage—important in a low-income market where consumers count pennies. South American competitors, on the other hand, produce low-cost products in attractive wrappings. They also produce unusual, innovative, and technically sophisticated products like toy-filled eggs. One factory owner commented: "They produce very cheaply. . . . We have our agency. And right next door they are selling this other stuff, chocolates with toys inside. . . . If it were just the Bolivian companies, we could compete, but we can't compete with the Chileans on price."[85]

The imported products tend to be of lower quality, containing less cocoa butter than Sucre chocolates, but their packaging—prohibitively expensive for Sucre producers—gives the impression of high quality, and the chocolate is adequate. Access to more advanced machinery than that available to Sucre producers permits producers abroad to make chocolate more cheaply and in greater quantity. Their market networks are far more developed, their vistas are wider, and they can better afford to take risks in developing and promoting

produce only sporadically (Don Miguel's and Don Martín's), or because they are relatively new, "hidden" operations (Don Ciro's).

83. COMTRADE database of the United Nations Statistics Division (1997), quoted in ITC (International Trade Centre) databases; viewed 1 Aug. 2001. URL: http://www.intracen.org/tradstat/sitc3–3d/index.htm, and República de Bolivia, Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Statistics Institute].

84. However, there were exports of $368,892 of raw cocoa and $49,441 of powdered cocoa, as well as of non-chocolate bonbons and candies worth $58,800. República de Bolivia, Instituto Nacional de Estadística.

85. Co-owner of Chocolate Factory No. 4, Sucre, interview with the author, Aug. 1996.

new products. Sucre's one advantage—its unique bonbon—has not captured a wide market, for bonbons are delicate and break easily, and so are difficult to transport. Nor have those producing the traditional rich drinking chocolates in Sucre promoted them to wider markets as an alternative to processed cocoa drinks. Tomás of Chocolate Factory No. 1 commented:

> We would like to export. But there are two problems. One is, our quantity that we produce really isn't sufficient, and the other is, our price is a bit high. The foreign chocolates, they have a very elegant container, but we have to buy our containers in La Paz, in Cochabamba or Santa Cruz, and they're not that good. . . . And bringing in containers from other countries, it ends up being very expensive.[86]

Sucre's producers face twin obstacles in the first years of the twenty-first century: the underdevelopment of other support sectors of the economy (such as quality packaging and machinery supply) and their own small size. Competing with imported South American chocolate may require high-capacity, up-to-date machinery, yet chocolate makers in Sucre know that such machines are beyond their means. This is the "Catch-22" of small industry in small markets: businesses need better machines to both dominate and move beyond their small markets, yet within those markets they cannot generate enough capital to afford even to contemplate the purchase of such equipment.

What are the roots of the Sucre producers' disadvantage? The original generation of chocolate factories seemed well placed for growth. They enjoyed the strong economy of the tin era and the economic resources of the elite. Although Sucre's chocolate industry in the early twentieth century was apparently "behind" its contemporaries in Europe and North America, Sucre's first factories were on the scene earlier than some of Latin America's present-day chocolate giants. Yet these early Sucre factories stagnated and ultimately failed. The owners' children were not interested in continuing; many of the second generation preferred to live elsewhere and were more interested in professions or other nonindustrial activities. In a city of elite landowners and administrators, the advantages—or even the social respectability—of entrepreneurship may have been questionable. It is interesting that the first generation of chocolate factory founders, with the exception of the Rodríguez brothers, tended to be entrepreneurs from outside Sucre: two from Potosí, one from France. Even

86. Don Tomás, interview with the author.

today, Sucre's local elite are more likely to be functionaries and professionals than business people.

Claiming a lack of local entrepreneurial culture is, however, not sufficient to explain the situation of Sucre's chocolate industry. Obviously, the city has had some entrepreneurs—like Tomás, who began producing chocolate rustically on a back patio, and is now the owner of the city's largest and best-known chocolate factory. Yet, these local entrepreneurs were few, and their road was not smooth. As they grew their businesses, they had to deal with situations of frequently severe macroeconomic instability and unpredictability (for example, inflation reaching almost 24,000 percent in the twelve months before 1985, the sudden end of trade protectionism in the mid-1980s, political instability, and so forth). Macroeconomic problems such as inflation and government policy interrupted the successful growth of Factory No. 1:

> A law came out that said a worker could leave and you had to give him three months pay. Well, for the people who worked here, three months pay was quite a bit of money. We had 58 employees at that time. . . . Well, of the 58, 38 left! It was a big drain on us. . . . But we installed new machines, we went on.[87]

Don Nicolás, son of a co-owner of Factory No. 1, elaborates on the problem:

> There were periods of inflation when it was very difficult, the factory almost disappeared. . . . My father took a little from here, put it there . . . plugging the holes, so to speak . . . until things got better, and he was able to put it back. . . . The tendency is always to get better, to grow as much as you can, but everything depending on the economy of the country . . . and hoping that people's preferences don't change. In Bolivia, there are periods of bonanza and periods of crisis.[88]

Bonanza and crisis are typical in a country whose fortunes are tied to primary products. The risk for business investments increases as a result. Factory No. 1 purchased a piece of high-quality, expensive packaging equipment, only to find that a planned expansion was not feasible: "Unfortunately, the state of the economy hasn't permitted us to do it."[89] Sucre's microenterprises, even if they could access

87. Ibid.

88. Don Nicolás, son of co-owner, Factory No. 1; Sucre, interview with the author, April 1997.

89. Ibid.

the capital for more productive equipment, would face the same uncertainties and economic fluctuations—with a much smaller margin of error to survive the slow times. This is one reason why many microenterprise loans tend to be used as working capital for merchants, rather than as fixed capital for producers: fixed investments to improve productivity tend to be both larger and more risky.[90]

Bolivia has not been the only South American country to face bouts of severe macro-level instability, political or economic. Yet in neighboring countries like Chile and Brazil a more competitive chocolate industry has developed. Macroinstability alone cannot explain the difference; rather, combinations of factors influence the occurrence of industrial development. From local relationships of work and exchange, and the culture that informs them, to the larger framework of government policy toward investment, industry, and trade, each society presents a unique combination of factors. International relationships react with this mix to create opportunities and constraints. Add to that the varieties of local environments and physical resources, and the key role of individual initiative—the presence of local entrepreneurs like chocolate pioneer Eulalia Reynolds—and the recipe for success becomes even more complex. Even when analysts can agree that certain things, such as market-friendly governments or Weberian "better bureaucracies," are good for industrial development, no factor works in isolation.[91] Success lies in the combinations. Given a larger population or a stronger middle class, better government policies or more innovative entrepreneurs, Sucre might have developed a strong chocolate industry capable of acting on the international stage—or, it might not have.

Chocolate is still a growth sector in Latin America.[92] However, Sucre's artisanal chocolate industry, with its five small factories and various microenterprises, is not well placed to compete internationally. Domestic opportunities for profitable chocolate production have also narrowed. The loss of mining markets (with their high chocolate consumption) has meant a lower demand for drinking chocolate. Eating chocolates, on the other hand, face stiff competition from low-

90. Robyn Eversole, "Beyond Microcredit—The Trickle Up Program," *Small Enterprise Development* 11 (2000): 48.

91. See Peter Evans, "Transferable Lessons? Re-Examining The Institutional Prerequisites of East Asian Economic Policies," *Journal of Development Studies* 34 (Aug. 1998): 66–86, for a review of positions on the role of government bureaucracy in industrial development.

92. ICCO (International Cocoa Organization) "Answer to Question: Information on the Chocolate and Confectionary Market in Brazil and South America"; viewed 16 Nov. 2001.

URL: http://www.icco.org/questions/brazil.htm cost, attractively packaged imports made with technology local producers cannot afford. Many of Sucre's chocolate producers report that over time, profit margins have dropped.

Entry barriers have risen as well. Although Chocolate Factory No. 2 could start as a tiny operation in the 1960s and gradually expand into a growth market while supporting a family on its earnings, and Chocolate Factory No. 1 could begin with hand-production in the 1940s and move to high-tech equipment in a generation, such rapid growth is no longer possible. Factories that started more recently have had to do so with larger initial investments in order to "catch up" with their competitors. Factory No. 5 made an initial investment of around $30,000 (buying an existing factory) in 1990. The owner of Factory No. 4 estimated that to start a factory in Sucre one now needs around $50,000 or more.[93]

Finally, the market does not seem to justify more investment to bring Sucre's chocolate technology up to a state-of-the-art level. Most producers work under capacity; the owner of Factory No. 5 reports working at only 25 percent capacity (as of 1997); Factory No. 1 was well under capacity as well. Ciro says he makes 500 pounds of chocolate a month in his semi-industrial microenterprise, but he could do twenty times that, if he had the market: "It used to be, it was hard to produce, and hard to sell. Now, the difference is . . . it's easier to produce than to sell. It's easy to produce, but difficult to sell."[94]

There is either no active pursuit of potential markets, or they simply do not exist for the products and prices that Sucre can offer. One attempt at market development has involved producing rustic and unusual chocolate packaging (woven baskets and old-fashioned hand-made boxes), primarily targeting the tourist market. In this way, Sucre producers have been able to capitalize on the industry's "artisan" image, turning their smallness into an asset. The often cited lack of modern, quality packaging has thus become an impetus for innovation and the development of a distinctive product. Packaged in this way, the chocolates sell well to tourists and as novelty products in other Bolivian cities. Yet the tourist market in Sucre is small, as is the novelty niche market. Chocolate continues to make only a tiny contribution to the economy of the region.

The story of Sucre's chocolate industry is disappointing from the perspective of regional development: the flow-on benefits that a

93. Co-owner of Chocolate Factory No. 4, Sucre, interview with the author, Aug. 1996. In the case of Factory No. 4, the prospective owners were able to borrow money from relatives for startup; in the case of Factory No. 5, the money was available from investors and savings.

94. Don Ciro, Sucre, interview with the author, 21 April 1997.

strong industry could have provided to the community (such as employment, economic movement, and funds to invest in social services) have never been achieved. Yet this industry has survived in the face of competition from major companies. Its advantage lies in the unique products it is able to offer: Sucre bonbons, traditional rich drinking chocolate, and inexpensive, plainly packaged chocolate snacks that fit the budgets of schoolchildren. These niche products may not translate well into foreign markets, but they do meet a demand closer to home.

Sucre's chocolate industry offers an interesting alternative to typical visions of industrial development. Though it is small, low-tech, and often produces under capacity, this "underdeveloped" industry nevertheless manages to employ well over a hundred people locally, offers opportunities for self-employment, and creates a positive image for the city as Bolivia's traditional chocolate producer. Alongside the small chocolate factories, there is still room for artisan microentrepreneurs to compete. In addition, these artisanal producers have a distinct advantage over wage workers: the opportunity to exercise ownership and self-determination in their work.

Throughout Sucre's economy, among its chocolate makers, carpenters, jewelers, tailors, mechanics, and other local producers, "independence" is an important and sought-after asset. "I am going to make myself independent [*independizarme*]," declare producers preparing to open their own workshops. An economy of many small businesses, most artisanal or semi-industrial, means that more people enjoy this valued independence. Local producers often innovate, and the flexibility and creativity they develop as local entrepreneurs can also be great assets to communities. But, though an artisan economy certainly has its strengths, it also has its limitations. Microentrepreneurs often work long hours accomplishing what machines could do in minutes, with little scope for expanding their horizons. Sucre's small factories, meanwhile, hover in a danger zone of circumscribed market opportunities and narrow earnings margins. In both cases, producers' ability to create value for themselves and their economy is limited. The result of their efforts is survival, or modest success—but seldom prosperity.

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