

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN
GODPARENT SYSTEM IN TUCSON

by

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William T. Ross

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Basic Postulate and Definition of Terms

Starting with accepted definitions of social function,¹ Kluckhohn develops the basic postulate "that no cultural forms survive unless they constitute responses which are adjustive or adaptive, in some sense, for the members of the society or for the society considered as a perduring unit." "Adaptive" here is a purely descriptive term referring to the fact that certain types of behavior result in survival, for the individual or for society as a whole, while "adjustive" refers to those responses which bring about an adjustment of the individual through the removal of tensions created by needs.³

One of man's basic needs,⁴ both economic and psychological, for himself and his family, is security. He needs to feel that he belongs, that he is accepted by his fellowmen, that he has reliable friends on whom he can call in time of need. The ritual co-parenthood system is one of the cultural institutions by which man has met this need in various societies.⁵ In Latin countries, padrinazgo is generally used to refer to the relation-

1. Radcliffe-Brown, 1940, p. 10.

2. Kluckhohn, 1944, p. 46.

3. Kluckhohn and Murray, 1948, p. 14.

4. Cf. Linton, 1936, pp. 394-5; 1945a, Ch. I, 1945b, pp. 204-5, for discussion of needs.

5. Erasmus, 1950, p. 2.

ships between godparents (padrinos) and the godchild (ahijado); compadrazgo refers to relationships between godparents and parents (compadres). We shall use the term compadre system to include both these relationships.

Plan and Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how the compadre system is functioning among the Mexican Americans in Tucson and what processes of enculturation are going on in the effort to perpetuate the system in succeeding generations. This involves an examination of the requirements of the Catholic Church, which provides for sponsors to meet such life crises as baptism and confirmation, as compared with the further extensions of the system on a more secular basis; it will necessitate also a close examination of the family structure -- blood and affinal relationships, as well as the ritual kinship patterns -- and the reciprocal attitudes and feelings, as well as the overt behavior, in each group. A limited attempt will be made also to look into the past and future of the godparent system in order to evaluate its place in social development; incidental reference will be made to similar patterns in historic and current cultures, without any effort to establish cause and effect relationships; and especial attention will be paid to interpersonal relationships between parents, godparents, and children, ranging from the mere ritual attendance to full responsibility for the spiritual, physical, and socio-economic welfare of the child, with particular stress on the content and method of enculturation under these circumstances.

6

6. Content would involve the scope of learning: some of the aspects of religion, manners, morals, vocational and economic adjustment, sex education, and so on; method would consist of the conscious and unconscious techniques for "teaching" and the processes of assimilation of this material.

The bulk of the data for this study was drawn from the close observation of five Mexican American families, including parents, children, and godparents, over a period of five months. The study was so limited because we felt that more could be gained from a specific, detailed observation of relatively small, well-knit groups which illustrated the system than from random reports from innumerable unrelated sources. While the sampling was not entirely scientifically planned, it turned out to cover a range of economic level, attitude toward the Church and the Mexican customs, and in degree of participation in the compadre system. A Catholic priest recommended to us two Mexican American university students who might serve as informants and interpreters for the study; these girls provided one of our families and recommended two others, who in turn suggested others. So our sample grew, especially since the godparents provided a wealth of information representing other groups than the ones we were contacting directly. Supplementary data has been supplied from the field notes of two other graduate students, our own notes from interviews with priests and others to whom our families sent us, both Mexican and non-Mexican, and by a controlled classroom study of the art and play activity of small Mexican children relative to their godparents.

Methods

The methods used were varied. The recorded interviews, of which there were over eighty, ranging from three-quarters of an hour to three hours in length, were both structured and casual. Most of them were held in the homes of our informants, or in their places of business; some were held in our home, when informants came to teach us to cook or to share our

food while telling us more about Mexico and its customs and recommending places we must see and books we must read. A few were held in the offices of priests and nuns who gave us the Church's version of the godparent system and some of their experiences with the Mexicans in Tucson. We also attended baptism and confirmation services in three different churches, to see the actual ceremony performed for some of our group of children, attended by their godparents. There were also a few more fleeting contacts here and there which served to check our previous observations rather than to provide new data. The numerous telephone calls went uncounted.

Experimental play and art sessions were also held in our improvised playroom to see what we could learn about the children's conceptions and attitudes about their godparents through free conversations, socio-drama, and art expression. This was checked and compared with the classroom experiment of the same nature conducted by an experienced teacher in one of the public schools. The art expressions of the children in both cases were assessed and evaluated by the Art Director of the Public Schools as a check on our own interpretation, in the interest of objectivity and validity.

Two guided conversation experiments were also conducted, using selected small groups of young people who were willing to discuss the compadre system and how they felt about it. Tape recordings were made of these conversations both as a means of retaining the information and of checking on our own techniques in handling this method of information-getting.

It might be added here that, while our experimental procedures did not always yield as good returns as they might have done in a long-range

and better-controlled study, we feel that they were justified in terms of what we learned about new ways of securing data. We shall now have more confidence in further experimentation and hope that we have improved our own techniques in handling new media.

Contacts with Informants

While we were happily surprised at the enthusiastic cooperation accorded us by our many informants, to the point that we were accepted as friends (if not compadres) in many cases, especially when they laid a place for us at table and invited us to attend ceremonies for their children and attend the parties afterwards, there were still certain problems involved in the study. First, some of our children and adults knew very little of their godparents for the simple reason that they did not live in Tucson and were not often visited in other parts of this country or in Mexico. Second, a very few of the older members of our extended families spoke so little English that they found it difficult to tell us what they had to say; in most cases they conveyed their meaning better than they thought; in other cases we had to rely on younger members of the family to interpret, in which case we felt on one or two occasions that the interpreter was doing too much of the talking so that we were not getting all the information which the older generation might have had to offer. Except for these difficulties, the way was made unusually easy for us, with the informants adding vitality and enthusiasm, as well as information, to the study.

CHAPTER II

TRADITIONAL BACKGROUND OF SPONSORSHIP

Old-World Usages

"Of course, you know who the first compadre was -- John the Baptist, when he baptized Christ in the Jordan." This was the version of one of our informants. But the Greeks had a name for it before this, for they had sponsors at their festival in honor of the goddess of fertility and the queen of the underworld.¹ The Jewish word for the witness required to hold the child at circumcision was derived from the Greek. The word "sponsor" itself comes from sponsio, a Roman legal term signifying a contract enforced by religious rather than by legal sanctions. In the early days of persecution, the Church used sponsors to guard against the admission of untrustworthy individuals; hence sponsors came to be known also by the term fidei iussores, those who testified to the good faith of the applicant. And from Old English we get god + sib, literally "god-friend" or god-related, first used of the sponsors at baptism, then of any familiar friend of the family, then by natural transition to its present meaning of gossip.² There are evidences of sponsorship systems in other early cultures, too, so that Canon Law, according to Kearney, refers to "custom"³ as the basis upon which the precept rests in the Church.

1. Mintz and Wolf, 1950, p. 343.

2. Krapp, 1909, p. 190.

3. Quoted in Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., p. 343.

Under the guidance of the Church, the concept of ritual kinship derived from sponsorship at baptism developed its own colorful patterns in terms of the needs of a given culture at a particular time in history.⁴ During the period of St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.), the custom of parents' acting as sponsors of their own children was so widespread that Bishop Boniface was of the opinion that no one else could serve in this capacity. Then St. Augustine called his attention to cases in which owners had acted as sponsors for the children of their slaves, orphans had been baptized with the aid of unknown persons who had consented to act as sponsors, and exposed children had been initiated under the sponsorship of women under holy orders.

About a hundred years later, the Byzantine emperor Justinian the First issued an edict prohibiting marriages between spiritual relatives. The terms compater and commater first appeared in 585 and 595 A.D. The Council of Munich, held in 813 A.D., prohibited parents from acting as sponsors of their own children.

The next two hundred years saw a wider extension of the ties of ritual kinship and a concomitant growth of the endogamous group. An effort to restrict the development was without effect. The incest group, biological as well as ritual, grew to cover seven degrees of relationship. There was an increase in the number of ceremonials at which sponsors officiated and in the number of people enacting distinctive roles at any one ceremony, all of whom could be included in the circle of kin. Baptism and confirmation became two separate ceremonies, with two sets of sponsors, both becoming ritual kin, since confirmation was looked upon as a completion of

4. Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., Sect. 1, "Historical Antecedents."

the baptismal act. In the Eastern Church, however, baptism and confirmation remained one rite, but different sets of sponsors and hence ritual relatives were added for a hair-cutting rite as well as for "wet" baptism. For a long time it was also believed that the sacrament of confession produced a bond of ritual kinship between the father confessor and the confessant, until Pope Boniface abolished this relationship in 1298 A.D. At first, the officiating priest, as well as the siblings of the child, was included in all spiritual relationships. Eventually the number of sponsors increased until the general custom admitted between one and thirty for baptism alone.

Feudalism developed to its height between the two main periods of church legislation on the subject of sponsorship (from the ninth century to the thirteenth through the sixteenth). Mintz and Wolf show how the compadre mechanism functioned as part of this class system, especially in connection with land tenure.⁵ The Crown, the Church, the lay aristocracy, and the serfs, playing off one against the other in their efforts to perpetuate their own, all found the familiar compadre mechanism highly adaptive under their manipulation. The result was an extension of the system both vertically -- from one social class to another -- and horizontally, among members of the same rural neighborhood. It extended, also, into other spheres of activity, as when medieval journeymen adopted the sponsorship system in initiating apprentices to their ranks, and when knights who aided a candidate for knighthood went by godfather and compadre terms.

As the Middle Ages drew to a close, increasing efforts were made to restrict the extension of endogamy through ritual kin ties on the part of

5. Ibid., pp. 345-52.

both Church and State. "This is the work of fools," said Luther. "Because in this way one Christian could not take another one, because they are brother and sister among themselves. These are the money snares of the Pope -- these stupid barriers due to spiritual fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, sisterhood, and childhood. Who but Superstition has created these spiritual relationships?"⁶ On the other hand, his collected proverbs stress the purely mundane and neighborly aspects of the compadre system.

Most of the restrictions coincide with the rise of Protestantism and the early beginnings of industrial civilization. As interest grew in the accumulation of private property and virtue, the tendency to limit the drain on individual resources and freedom involved in the over-extension of ritual kinship ties grew also. So the compadre system disappeared almost completely from areas marked by the development of industrial capitalism, the rise of a strong middle class, and the disappearance of feudal or neo-feudal tenures. This was especially true within the classes in which the family no longer formed the primary unit of production: economically mobile upper and middle classes on the one hand, and the industrial wage-earning classes on the other. Within these same areas, however, kinship mechanisms were more likely to be retained where peasants had not yet become farmers. In Europe, as a whole, the greatest survival was in such areas as Spain, Italy, and the Balkan countries.⁷

Introduction in New World

It is from Southern Europe that the complex was transmitted to Latin

6. Quoted from Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., pp. 350-1.

7. Cf. Redfield, 1930, p. 141: "compadres, a very close and intimate relationship characteristic of the peasant peoples of Catholic South Europe."

America, along with the call to baptize the infidels and to bring them into the fold of the Christian community as an addition to the faith through baptism, and as an addition to the riches of the Spanish Empire through labor.

The Catholic ceremonial complexes took a new turn in the New World in terms of the peculiar history of development in this new setting. Baptism of natives went on apace. Fray Toribio de Benavente writes that between 1521 and 1576 more than four million souls were brought to the baptismal font.⁸ Father Gante, with an assistant, proselytizing in Mexico, claims to have baptized up to fourteen thousand Indians in a single day; they stated that they had claimed more than two hundred thousand souls in a single Mexican province.⁹

Since godparents were supposed to guarantee religious guidance to the initiate during the years following his baptism, the mechanism took on new significance under these circumstances. It seems that there was little time for prior instruction; formal acceptance of the faith was all that could be required. Actually, Spaniards who were members of exploring parties frequently served as sponsors for Indian converts, and thus fulfilled but a formal ritual necessity.¹⁰ Under these circumstances the compadre mechanism developed very slowly at first, and with its own modifications.

But the baptismal ceremony was readily accepted by many native popu-

8. Quoted from Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., p. 352.

9. Bancroft, 1883, p. 174.

10. Espinosa, 1942, p. 70 passim.

lations. Several investigators have sought to show the similarities of the Catholic rite to those already existing in pre-Columbian ceremonies and social patterns.¹¹ The Maya of Yucatan had a native baptism so like the Catholic ritual that many people have been led to believe that the Mayans must at some time or other have been visited by Christian workers from Europe. The Aztecs also had a kind of baptism, as well as godparents of sorts, chosen in an ear-piercing ceremonial.¹² Various kinds of formal friendship among native peoples may have given an aboriginal basis for the compadre structure.¹³

We cannot describe, with the present data, the exact processes of adaptation of the Church sacrament and the aboriginal ceremonial procedure. We may assume, though, that it was the flexibility and utility of the institution that brought about the most important result of the baptismal ceremony: the satisfaction of a need through the creation of a security network of ritual kin folk.

Current folklore concerning the fate of the unbaptized child suggests that a strong emphasis on the moral necessity for baptism was made from the start. There is considerable evidence, however, to show that once the usefulness of the institution became apparent, the Church might not even be consulted. This was especially true in Mexico, when poverty and conflict between Church and State caused some communities to be without priests except on rare visits. Makeshift ceremonies, without orthodox clerical approval, became so widespread as to be made illegal by ecclesi-

11. Erasmus, 1950; Paul, 1942; Mintz and Wolf, op. cit.

12. Quoting Sahagun in Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., p. 353.

13. Paul, op. cit., pp. 85-87.

astical ruling in 1947, except in cases where the child's death threatened
14
before official baptism could be arranged.

Going beyond the original Catholic life crisis ceremonial sponsorship,
godparenthood has been elaborated in various Latin American communities
15
into the ceremonial sponsorship of houses, crosses, altars, carnivals,
16 17 18 19
circumcision, the future crop, commercial dealings, and so on.
20
Gillin lists fourteen forms of compadrazgo for a single community. Whether
the adaptation was developed locally or carried over from some kind of older
European practice, the recognized value of the system in the minds of the
natives cannot be denied.

21
Paul makes the point that the mechanism of compadrazgo may be used
either to enlarge numerically and spatially the number of ritually-related
kin on the one hand, or to reinforce already-existing blood or ritual ties
on the other. These contrasting motives he calls "extension" and "intensi-
fication." Erasmus, also, shows how extension takes place by increasing
social cohesion across the community or area and by strengthening the co-
hesion among members of two families joined by a sponsorship service, either
22
horizontally along the same age plane or vertically across age planes.

In Pascua, a Yaqui village on the outskirts of Tucson, depending en-
23
tirely on external sources for its income and employment, Spicer describes

14. Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., p. 354.

15. Gillin, 1945, p. 105.

16. Beals, 1946, p. 102.

17. Parsons, 1936, p. 228.

18. Zingg, 1938, pp. 717-18.

19. Erasmus, op. cit.

20. Gillin, loc. cit.

21. Paul, op. cit., p. 57.

22. Erasmus, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

23. Spicer, 1940, p. 114.

the compadre structure as

an all-pervasive network of relationships which takes into its web every person in the village. Certain parts of the network, here and there about the village, are composed of strong and well-knit fibers. Here the relationships between compadres are functioning constantly and effectively. Elsewhere there are weaker threads representing relationships which have never been strengthened by daily recognition of reciprocal obligations. These threads nevertheless exist and may from time to time be the channels of temporarily re-established compadre relationships.

He adds that many individuals without any relations either by blood or marriage found security and assistance in the compadre system. He notes also that sponsors are sometimes sought outside the village, in nearby towns, or among the Mexican population of Tucson. Here we note the functioning of the system among the landless, wage-earning group, with strong emphasis on adult relationships as compared with godparent and child contacts.

Gillin also points out this emphasis on relationships between contemporaries, especially in his discussion of the Peruvian community, Moche. Here, it would seem, the spiritual relationship and ceremonial sponsorship concepts are subordinated to that of co-parenthood, a man-to-man relationship, more in the nature of deep friendship.

Thus we see everywhere selectivity and adaptability within the compadrazgo pattern, without losing reference to the Catholic doctrine. Local variations are established to meet local needs.

24. Ibid., p. 91.

25. Cf. Mintz and Wolf, op. cit., p. 355, concerning the rare use of compadrazgo in inheritance in Latin American countries.

26. Gillin, op. cit., p. 104.

Tucson, Another Environment

In view of these findings in Latin American countries, Tucson, with its large Mexican population, provides an interesting place to study the social functions of the compadre system. Despite its size and special type of urbanization, this community, because of its peculiar history, might be expected to offer traces of many of the variations in the compadrazgo already studied in the Latin American communities.

Around 250 years ago, Padre Kino established two religious centers for the Indians he found scattered along the valley of the Santa Cruz River: the first dedicated to San Francisco Xavier; the second known as San Jose del Tucson. Then, in 1776, a presidio was set up to protect the area against Apache raids. The next year, Padre Garces established a ranch, operated by Spanish priests to train the Indians in farming methods. It was the presidio that continued on through the years to become the nucleus of the present community of Tucson.

Until 1820, the troops were able to maintain relative peace and prosperity in the Santa Cruz valley. Then, in the last years of Spanish rule and in the early years of Mexican control, the Apaches took to the warpath again, no longer held off by Spanish gifts and rations. In 1846 a battalion of Mormon troops, on their way to open up a wagon road to California, arrived in Tucson. The Mexican troops retired, leaving a handful of civilians to receive the Mormons, who raised the flag of the United States while they replenished their foodstores before moving on westward.

The first Anglos to take up residence in Tucson arrived in 1854. In

27. Getty, 1951.

1856 the community was reported to have from "300 to 400 Mexicans and about 30 Americans." By the end of the Civil War the community had a population of 1200, about ten per cent of whom were Anglos. Those early Anglos who came to Tucson opened up business enterprises, stores, and shops of various types. Soon they began to dominate the economic and political life of the community. Capitalizing on their contacts with commercial centers elsewhere in the United States, they served ranchers and miners in southern Arizona and supplied a considerable area in northwestern Mexico. In 1880 a rail line entered Tucson from the west, replacing eventually the stagecoaches and wagon trains. Later a rail line was built from Tucson down the west coast of Mexico, which facilitated contacts between Tucson and Sonora.

28

Eventually, the Anglo population came to exceed the Mexican, until by 1950 the United States Census report gave the following figures for Pima County: total, 141,216; Spanish-white, 27,224. Now we have the interesting situation of an erstwhile majority become the minority, about 19.3 per cent, or a little less than one-fifth of the total. Whatever social or political insecurity may have been left behind in this country or in Mexico by the more recent immigrants, they now face new problems as a minority group. As a group, we may expect them to defend the old while selecting from the new, and as individuals, to find personal security through contacts with both old and new.

28. Getty, 1950, p. 4.

29. U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census. It is interesting to note that the Mexican Consulate could give no figures, but estimated the Mexican population at about one-half!

30. Linton, 1945a, pp. 481-2.

With this background, we should expect to find many remnants of Mexican culture -- more, say, than in another city where the "foreign" section was composed of recent immigrants -- and perhaps even more persistent adherence to church doctrine than in Mexico, since the Church and priests are always available here, as they have not always been in the more turbulent country to the south.

31

The Church requires sponsors for baptism and confirmation. Most others are of secular origin. For the sponsors, the regulations are fairly simple. Any variations from these prescriptions must be considered from the individual and cultural standpoint, not on the basis of the authority of the Church. What specific form the compadre system has taken in Tucson we may see in part from the following study.

A chart showing the commonly-accepted relationships and Spanish names involved in the system will provide a common ground for further discussion (see p. 17).

31. Catholic Encyclopedia, 1907, II, p. 272; IV, p. 215.

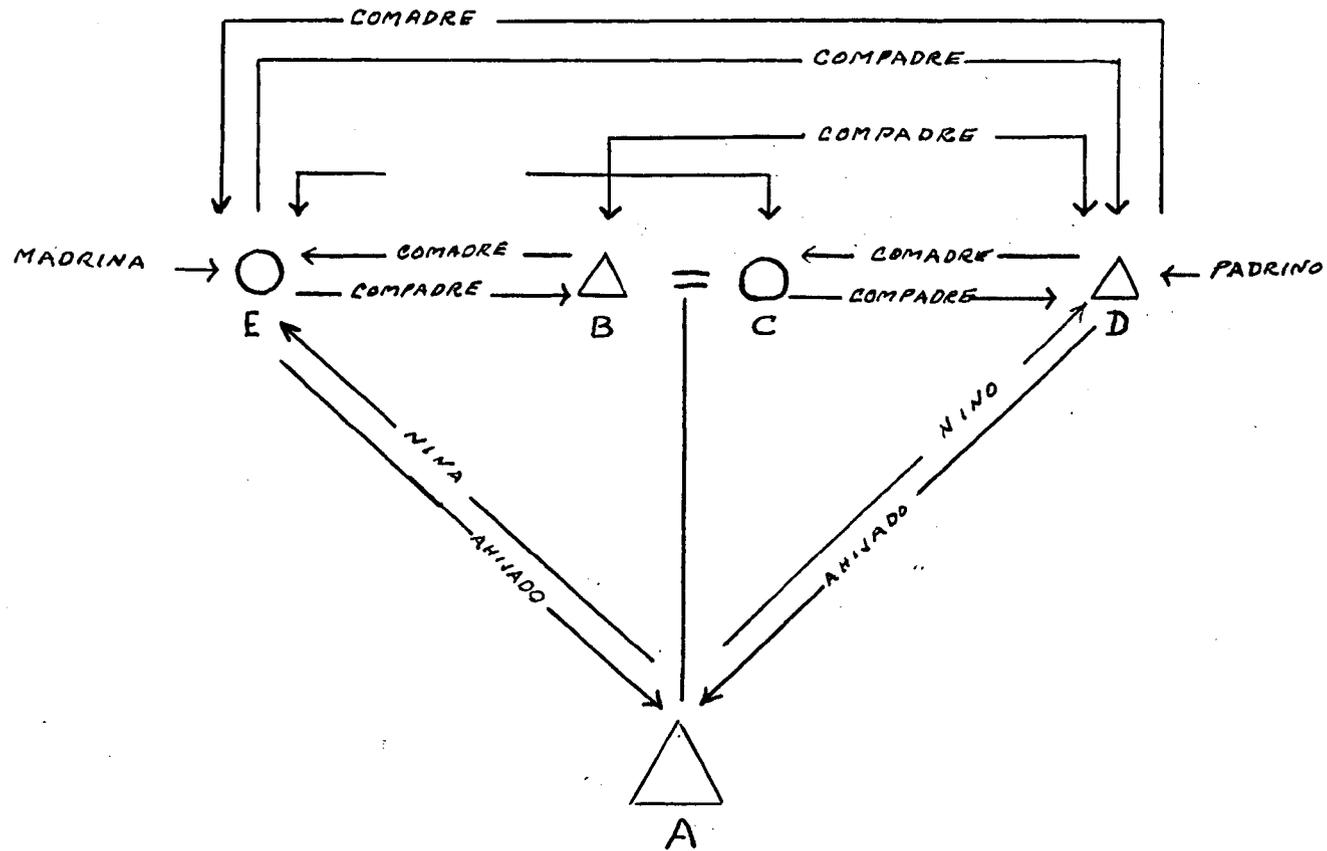


Fig. 1. Compadre system terminology. (Adapted from Spicer)

CHAPTER III

THE COMPADRE SYSTEM IN FIVE TUCSON FAMILIES

In our study of the adaptation of the compadre system in Tucson we have concentrated on five families of middle-class Mexican Americans, most of whom have been in this country long enough to have become relatively acculturated in certain aspects of Anglo culture. With one exception, the parents in each family were born in the United States or came here at an early age. In one case, the father is non-Mexican and non-Catholic. A total of twenty-two children are represented; no family has fewer than three children or more than six.

There is no great difference between the economic status of one family and that of another. None is poverty-stricken and none is wealthy. All have been able to provide themselves with the necessities, and some with many of the luxuries of living.

We have tried to find out the significance of the compadre system in each family: the method of selection, type of person chosen, the responsibilities and duties assumed, terms of address employed by godparents, parents, and children, frequency and strength of contacts, and the affectional relationship between godparents and parents, and between godparents and children.

An Auto Mechanic's Family

¹
The Landram family live in their own home in a predominantly Anglo

1. All names used in this study are fictitious.

neighborhood. The father, a non-Mexican, is a mechanic for an auto parts and service center. The mother, Mexican, is kept busy at home caring for her five children and her mother-in-law by a former marriage which ended in divorce. There seems always to be a great deal of activity about the home: children's play, cooking, school work, radio or television, neighbors dropping in -- all of which goes on simultaneously and in all of which the entire family shows an active interest.

Two of the five children, one in college and one in high school, are the daughters of the first husband, an Anglo who is now remarried. The older of the two works at whatever she can find -- baby-sitting, clerical work, library attendant -- to help herself through college, where she is preparing to become an elementary teacher; the entire family watches her progress with keen interest, and the step-father, particularly, seems to assume the responsibility of helping her gather materials for her work, and so on, whenever he can. The second daughter is the athlete of the family, with everyone following her success in tennis matches and other activities with the same interest. The three younger children, the oldest of whom is in her first year of school, are favorites of the block; the neighbors say they are "cute, with their big brown eyes" and "well-behaved," in spite of their mother's insistence that they are "little demons."

Spanish is not spoken in the home. The father understands and speaks it readily; the two older girls have studied it in school; and Lora has picked up a fairly good vocabulary and can understand most of what is said. But Mrs. Landram's mother-in-law does not like to hear it spoken. There are other indications, too, that the two older girls are inclined to identify themselves with Anglos and disclaim knowledge of Mexican customs. Mrs.

Landram says she is proud of being Mexican and deplores the practice of one of her Mexican neighbors who tries to pass herself off as French. Mr. Landram, a non-Catholic Anglo, who had considerable difficulty with the church and felt free to tell the priest he was a taxpayer and would send his children to whatever school he saw fit, still encourages the family to continue their church training. He says, too, that he considers the compadre system a fine thing and wants to see it carried on.

The five children in this family have a total of twelve godparents, representing ten different families. Mrs. Landram says she prefers to keep godparents in the family, but of the twelve godparents seven are not relatives. She feels, too, that the parents should be petitioned for their children instead of having to seek godparents, and says that, with the exception of Lora's baptism godparents, the children were asked for. As she explained it, the chief duty of godparents is to see that the child is brought up in the Catholic faith. They should visit the godchildren frequently, and remember them on their birthdays, at Christmas, and on other holidays with small gifts. But Mrs. Landram says only Lora's godmother does these things. Except for the relatives, the others either never visit or do so on such rare occasions that the children know little or nothing about them. The prescribed terms of address, nina and nino, are not used by these children. Instead, they refer to them by name.

Nellie's two baptismal godparents were friends of her mother. The padrino is a broker from Nogales, and she does not remember much about him except that he "was tall and had long legs." According to Mrs. Landram, there has been no contact with him since the baptism. His one-time girl friend, who served as Nellie's godmother, used to visit and bring little

gifts, but she lost contact with the family when she married and left Tucson. Upon her return last November, she made one visit to the family, which they have not returned, and neither Nellie nor her mother knows her address, except that she lives somewhere near the University. Nellie's confirmation godmother is her mother's brother's wife's sister, who lives in the extreme southern part of Tucson. Nellie says she does not remember her name and her mother never mentions her. Upon contacting this godmother, we found that, while she knew the name of this godchild without prompting and said she called or otherwise "remembered" all her godchildren several times a year, still she said that since Nellie was a "big girl about twelve" when she was confirmed, there was little need for offering her instruction. She also said she had been asked to serve. We see here some discrepancy in information (see chart). Some of the confusion may possibly be explained by the fact that she had served as madrina on more than forty occasions, a fact of which she is very proud. She says a godparent is a second parent and has as much right to correct a child as the priest, although this is not always possible in cases of older people.

Lizzie's baptismal padrino lives in north Tucson. He is her mother's brother and asked for the privilege, but contacts with him have been rare during the past few years. She addresses him as "Uncle." His wife is also Lizzie's confirmation madrina. Our interview with these godparents revealed that they differ radically from Mrs. Landram in their views of the Church and religion -- one of the reasons for their infrequent visits. They feel that every family is entitled to bring up their children according to their own standards, and since they are opposed to many of the Church's practices, they don't feel they can insist on any special training for Lizzie. As the

madrina says, "He used to go to see her, but he's pretty busy with six children to feed, and he wouldn't go around telling her what she should do about the Church. Anyway, her mother sees that she goes to church and all that."

Mr. and Mrs. Landram, as well as Katy (Kathryn), say that her baptismal godmother never comes to see her, that Katy would not even recognize her. This madrina, although her father studied for the priesthood in Mexico, and she was one of our best sources on church ritual and other sponsorship ceremonies, says frankly that she knows she has not been a "good godmother," and gives two main reasons for this: first, that she is married to a non-Catholic and feels she cannot properly carry out her duties of instructing the child in behavior fitting a Catholic, since obviously she has not set a "good example," and has therefore undertaken her duties as godmother protestingly every time; and secondly, that she has nothing in common with the Landram family. She says she became godmother when she was a close neighbor, at their request. (This again conflicts with information Mrs. Landram gave us.) Then she moved to another part of town shortly afterwards. She had difficulty in recalling the child's name, then noted, when it was recalled for her, that they had perverted the name of a saint in their spelling.

Katy's padrino, her mother's sister's husband, does make fairly frequent visits to this family; there is a good deal of visiting back and forth among all members of these two families. He feels his main responsibility to be that of seeing that Katy is instructed in Catholic religion, but that her own family takes care of that. He adds that if her parents should die, he would certainly fulfill his responsibilities. He admits that his gifts

have been very rare, a point on which the Landrams have also commented.

Lora's baptismal godparents are outside the family and are described by all the Landram family as "the best of the lot." Mrs. Green, a devout German Catholic whose brother studied for the priesthood, and her husband were invited to become godparents when they were neighbors of the Landrams. Since they have been living in another section of town for several years, Mrs. Green still comes by from time to time and telephones often, although her heavy schedule -- full-time nursing at the VA hospital, care of a semi-invalid mother-in-law, and night classes at the University -- keeps her from making as frequent visits as she would like. She asks about the welfare of the child, what is being done about her learning the catechism (even remonstrated with Mrs. Landram about Katy's catechism), and remembers Lora on her birthday, Christmas, Easter, and other holidays with small gifts of one sort or another. Usually she gives something to the other children too on these occasions, but does make a difference with Lora, making hers something special.

Rondo's godparents live only two doors away, but in spite of this and the fact that they urged the Landrams to let them baptize Rondo, they never pay any attention to him, never visit him, never remember him with gifts. Mrs. Stark, the neighbor who refuses to speak Spanish and claims to be French, said she did not know very much about being godparents, but knew they are supposed to see to the spiritual education of the child, and said she supposed if Rondo's parents died she would have to take over his support. She indicated that she would hesitate to tell his mother what to do about his religious upbringing even if she knew it was being neglected, and even though she had known the family well for twenty years or more.

Landram Family Chart

Name	Relation	Age	Place of birth	Yrs. in Tucson
1. Marcus	head		Iowa	17
2. Maria	wife	42	Hermosillo, Mex.	25
3. Nellie	st-dau.	20	Tucson, Ariz.	20
4. Lizzie	st-dau.	16	Tucson, Ariz.	16
5. Katy	dau.	7	Tucson, Ariz.	7
6. Lora	dau.	5	Tucson, Ariz.	5
7. Rondo	son	2	Tucson, Ariz.	2

		Baptism		Confirmation		Communion		Other	
No.	Age	God-mother	God-father	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent
1.	(non-Catholic)								
2.									
3.	4 mo.	Friend	Friend	2 yr.	MBWS	8 yr.			
4.	8 mo.	Friend	MB	1 yr.	MBW	7 yr.			
5.	8 mo.	Friend	MSH						
6.	1 wk.	Friend	Friend						
7.	1 mo.	Friend	Friend	9 mo.	MBWSH				

Legend of abbreviations:

MB - mother's brother
 MEW - mother's brother's wife
 MBWS - mother's brother's wife's sister
 MBWSH - mother's brother's wife's sister's husband
 MSH - mother's sister's husband

A Carpenter's Family

Mr. and Mrs. Lonzo and their three young children live in south Tucson. The neat brick house, with its metal fence, the modern-type furniture in the home, and the good automobile all reflect the better-than-average income the father makes as a carpenter in a local aircraft plant. The oldest girl is in her first year at parochial school, and does a great deal to help her mother care for the two younger children when she is at home. Parents and children speak both Spanish and English.

These parents feel the main duty of godparents is to see to the spiritual welfare of the child and to take care of his physical needs should his own parents become unable to do so. They were quick to state, however, that the overall pattern, the degree of responsibility taken by the godparents, the relationships that exist between godparents and child and parents, would all vary with the individual. Mr. Lonzo said, "If you talk with one hundred people, you will find one hundred different opinions and ways of doing this thing." For example, he said, the prescribed pattern set forth by the Church is adhered to more or less by all people who have godparents. That is, they have godparents for baptism and confirmation, but beyond that it is up to the individual to interpret his duties in his own way. He cited the variation in ages of children at the different ceremonies, the order in which the ceremonies take place (in some cases, first communion precedes confirmation and vice versa), the frequency of visits between the two families, and so on. In his own case, he says when he was young his padrino visited him frequently, but as he grew older and into his teens he saw less and less of him. Now that he is a grown man with his own family and responsibilities, he does not visit his padrino more than

every year or so. He added that nowadays the welfare agencies take over some of the responsibilities formerly assumed by the godparents. "When a child's parents die, you are supposed to report it to the 'authorities,' and sometimes when the welfare people investigate the homes they decide that it is not the place for the orphan child." He made it clear that he was not condemning this practice of the welfare or adoption agencies, but was simply pointing out that the godparents are not in all cases permitted to keep the child and bring it up "as their own," and added further that perhaps this was a good practice in many cases.

The Lonzo family has a total of sixteen godparents, eleven of whom are blood relatives. They are related through these ritual kinship ties to eight families, three of whom are outside the circle of blood relatives. Mr. Lonzo and his wife have made no attempt to keep godparents within the family circle, and he says it is usually the custom to let the first person who asks be the godparent. Mrs. Lonzo says this is not always possible, since frequently a child is asked for by a number of people long before it is born and by the time it is ready for the ceremony something may have happened to change their plans. They have never sought godparents for their children, since they feel it might be considered an imposition and would be embarrassing for one who had to refuse the honor of serving. A godparent should, if he fulfills his obligations properly, keep in touch with the child, give him gifts from time to time, and at the time of the ceremony, buy the clothing for that particular occasion. It is also customary to have a little party afterwards. The godparents for their children have always done this, and they have reciprocated when they stood as godparents for others. Sometimes it has not been much of a party, but they have always

entertained to some degree. Frequently there are music and dancing for a larger guest list.

Wanda's godparents are her mother's mother's sister's daughter and her husband (Mr. and Mrs. Lares), who asked for the privilege of baptizing her. They have maintained very close contact with this child, who calls them nina and nino, and have carried out fairly closely the ideal pattern of the compadre system. They bought her baptismal clothes, had a big party for her which lasted until 3:00 o'clock the next morning, with an orchestra and dancing, cakes, sandwiches, chocolate, beer, and whiskey. The two families visit frequently and the comadres telephone each other several times a week. They have remembered her every year at Christmas, her birthday, and Easter. Mrs. Lares explained that they had not done so much for all their ahijados (she has seven others besides Wanda, and her husband couldn't count all his), but they do try to remember the ahijados who are relatives at some time of year with little gifts. Mr. Lares, a friendly person whom "everyone" calls compadre, has so many ahijados who are children of former schoolmates that his wife and he feel they cannot possibly stand the expense connected with giving gifts to all of them. They do not have parties for all their ahijados either, but usually entertain the parents of those who are related to them. They asked their own children's godparents not to have a big party -- just chocolate and cakes for the young friends and relatives.

Mrs. Lares says it is the duty of the madrina to take the little girls (their ahijadas) to first holy communion, and buy the new dress and veil if the parents cannot afford it. She has never had a comadre who could not, and Mr. Lares has not had to furnish clothes for his ahijados at first communion either.

Wanda will make her first holy communion in May; Mrs. Lares has already bought her a prayer book and a rosary, and is planning a party for her afterwards.

Wanda's confirmation madrina lives next door to the family and asked to confirm her. She is the mother of Vergie Ann's confirmation madrina, and grandmother of the child whom Mr. Lonzo confirmed at the same ceremony in which his two older daughters were confirmed. She became acquainted with the Lonzo family when they moved into the neighborhood, and has taken an active interest in the children. She has so many godchildren she cannot recall them all, and no longer makes an attempt to remember them with presents as she did when she was younger and had fewer godchildren. Since she has been Wanda's godmother only two weeks, a description of her relationships with this child cannot be given, but on the basis of her past relationship with her we would predict that while she may not conform to the pattern of giving gifts, she will continue to take an interest in her activities. Already, Wanda has been told by her parents that she should now address this woman as nina. It would be interesting to follow out the development of relations and attitudes recently set into formal motion by this ceremony.

Mr. and Mrs. Martinez, the Lonzos' neighbors on the other side, baptized Vergie Ann. They have nine children of their own, ranging in age from nine months to twenty years, besides seventeen godchildren through confirmation and baptism, and two through marriage. They became godparents to Vergie Ann when Mrs. Lonzo told them her brother, who had not been married by the Church, wanted to baptize the child. They told her this could not be -- it was against the rules of the Church, and the child would not

be properly baptized if they went through with this. Mrs. Lonzo was confused and embarrassed over the situation and said she didn't know what to do. This couple then offered to become godparents themselves, and Mrs. Lonzo consented. They see Vergie Ann almost daily since they live so near, and the children of the two families play together. They say their financial condition will not permit them to make gifts to their godchildren several times a year, since it is expensive to keep their own large family going, and they do not think it is the purpose of the compadre system to do this anyway. They prefer godparents who are good Christians, understand Church doctrine, and who are in a position to advise the child on matters of religious and moral behavior, if there is need for it. They bought the baptismal clothes for Vergie Ann and paid the priest, but did not give a party. Mrs. Martinez says she has never had any parties for her own children because she does not believe in them for one thing, and that her children have always been baptized within three days after they were born, while she was still in bed and could not have attended the party anyway.

Vergie Ann's confirmation madrina is Mrs. Bragg, daughter of Wanda's confirmation madrina, and mother of the child whom Mr. Lonzo confirmed two weeks ago. Her relationship with Mrs. Lonzo dates back to school days, when they were close friends. However, for a number of years they lost contact with each other, and it was not until the Lonzo family moved next door to her mother a few years ago that the relationship was renewed. She and Mrs. Lonzo were talking one day about compadres and comadres and the religious upbringing of their children. It developed that the one had two children old enough to be confirmed and the other had one. Mrs. Bragg does not remember who thought of it first, but one of them said that Mr. Lonzo could

confirm Mrs. Bragg's little boy and she could confirm one of their little girls and they could become comadres and compadres. Thus it was decided. Again we see here the beginning of a new ritual kinship relation, the course of which we cannot really predict. However, Mrs. Bragg says that while she has baptized only one other child (and that child's parents took her away soon afterwards, so that she had had no contact with her for several years), and has served as confirmation madrina only once before, still, becoming a godmother is serious business and should not be undertaken unless one intends to fulfill his obligations. She feels, however, that there is usually a less close relationship between confirmation madrinas and the child than there is between baptismal madrinas and the child. She intends to keep in close contact with Vergie Ann and is prepared to do whatever she can to help her in case her parents should become unable to provide the necessary training and/or economic support.

When we interviewed her non-Catholic husband at his place of business, he told us he had of course never served in the capacity of godfather and could tell us practically nothing about it, except that it is an "archaic practice of the Catholic Church," dating from medieval times, but still in wide use among Mexican peoples in Tucson and the Southwest generally. He lets his wife take care of all arrangements for their son's religious training and advised us to see her for more information.

Maria Louisa has for her baptismal godparents a couple from Hermosillo, Mexico. The padrino is a medical doctor and Mrs. Lonzo's second cousin. They asked to be godparents and came to Tucson for the ceremony. They paid for all the expenses in connection with the baptism, but, according to Mrs. Lonzo, there was only a small gathering of close relatives for a little

celebration afterwards, because the doctor and his wife had to get back home. They usually come to Tucson for a visit about once a year, and have brought presents for Maria Louisa on these occasions; they also write to Mr. and Mrs. Lonzo occasionally during the year.

Lonzo Family Chart

Name	Relation	Age	Place of birth
1. Armando	head	32	Tucson, Ariz.
2. Vergie	wife	35	Tucson, Ariz.
3. Wanda	dau.	7	Tucson, Ariz.
4. Vergie Ann	dau.	3	Tucson, Ariz.
5. Maria Louisa	dau.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Tucson, Ariz.

No.	Age	Baptism		Confirmation		Communion		Marriage	
		God-mother	God-father	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent
1.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.	FCW	FC			10			Cousin
2.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.	Cousin	Friend			10			Cousin
3.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ mo.	MMD	MMDH	7 yr.	Friend				
4.	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ mo.	Friend	Friend	3 yr.	Friend				
5.	2 mo.	Cousin	Cousin						

Legend of abbreviations:

FC - father's cousin
 FCW - father's cousin's wife
 MMD - mother's mother's dau.
 MMDH - mother's mother's dau.'s husband

An Aircraft Mechanic's Family

Mr. and Mrs. Chavez and their four children live in one of the almost wholly Mexican districts of town. Mr. Chavez works as an air mechanic at a local air base and spends much of his spare time caring for his birds. Having been a pigeon-racing enthusiast for years, he has recently gone in for raising canaries and other more exotic birds. The house is filled with trophies (won by Mr. Chavez for his birds and for amateur boxing when he was younger) and birds, about which the family enjoys telling visitors.

The three older children are in public school. Wilson is interested in wood-carving and other arts and crafts, while his older sister Carmen is more interested in music. Cecilia is applying the friendliness she learns at home to the first-graders in the public school which she attends. Jose, aged three, is interested in everything, but his favorite topics are marines and cowboys.

This couple feels that parents should not solicit sponsors for their children. Mrs. Chavez says if a couple has plenty of friends they will not have to ask anyone, and they have asked only in the case of Jose's confirmation padrino and Carmen's baptismal madrina. While they describe the main duty of a godparent as that of seeing to the child's spiritual education, they feel strongly that their duties should be extended to include frequent visits, concern for the health of the child and its parents, gifts for the child when it is young. At the time of our first visit to this family, one of their godchildren was in the hospital, dangerously ill. Mrs. Chavez was making daily visits to see the child, and was doing chores at home for the mother while she was away; Mr. Chavez had given blood for a

needed transfusion, although there had been some doubt as to whether he was in physical condition to do this.

Carmen's baptismal godparents are Mr. and Mrs. Padillo. The godmother is Mr. Chavez's double first cousin, i.e., their mothers were sisters and their fathers were brothers. Mrs. Padillo says this, of course, makes them just like brothers and sisters since they both have the same blood in their veins. When they were younger, she says, they really thought of themselves as brothers and sisters and the families were very close to each other in their relationships. She suggests that this is why she and her husband were chosen for godparents. Although the Padillo family lives some distance away, in a fashionable suburban area, the two families still visit from time to time, but Mrs. Padillo says her contacts with her own brothers and sisters, to whose children she has been madrina on a number of occasions, are more frequent. She knows Carmen has made the sacraments of confirmation and first communion, and feels that while her main obligation is to see to her godchild's spiritual education, there is not much for her to do in that connection. Should Carmen's parents die, or Carmen be in need of financial assistance, Mr. and Mrs. Padillo would aid her.

Mrs. Padillo added that everyone is too busy these days to carry on many of the old customs, that her own little boy has a hard time deciding what to do first when he comes home from school every afternoon, with music practice, television, homework, and play all demanding his attention.

Carmen's confirmation madrina is her father's mother's sister's daughter, who lives in Mexico. She moved there shortly after the ceremony and there has been little contact with her since. She comes to Tucson occasionally to visit, and always comes by to see Carmen. But between visits,

the family only hears about her through other relatives.

Wilson never really became acquainted with his baptismal godparents. At the time of his birth they were living as neighbors, and the man insisted that Wilson should be their ahijado. According to Mrs. Chavez, this man did not ask; he simply said he was going to baptize the child. Before long he became ill and moved back to California, where he died a short time afterwards. Since his death the Chavez family has lost contact with his wife and know nothing of her whereabouts. Mrs. Chavez says this man should never have become Wilson's godfather if he were in ill health, and had they known the situation they would not have accepted them as godparents. She says, "Now, Wilson doesn't have any baptism godparents, and that is not good."

Wilson's confirmation padrino is his uncle, his father's sister's husband. The uncle said his main duty was spiritual guidance, but since he sees the family often and knows the boy is being sent to church and is learning his catechism, there has been no need for interference on his part. When the child was younger, he made more of a point of talking with him, giving him gifts, and so on, but as he became older the frequency and intimacy of his contacts grew less. Furthermore, he sees it as his duty to take over the economic support of this child should his parents die or otherwise become unable to support him, and stated he would do just that.

This same man and his wife served as baptism padrino and madrina for Cecilia. She does not call them nino and nina, but usually refers to them by their given names. Mrs. Chavez has tried to teach all her children to use the terms nino and nina, and they do know the usage of these terms enough to use them when referring to a godparent specifically, as "My nino

is so-and-so"; but they use the other terms in direct address. For this child, the godparents furnished the faldon, or baptism clothes, and remember her on special occasions with gifts. Since there is so much visiting back and forth among these two families, the godparents are well posted on her "spiritual education." Again, they indicated that as long as she is being taken care of and sent to church and school, they do not offer advice to the child or her parents, but would take over full responsibility should the necessity arise.

Cecilia's confirmation madrina, who was her mother's brother's wife's sister, is no longer living in Tucson. There has been little contact with her since Cecilia was confirmed, and the family states they have not seen her for some time.

Jose's confirmation padrino so overshadows his other godparents in interest that the family almost forgot to mention the baptism nino and nina, who are relatives and close at hand. Interviews with the nina, though, reveal that she visits often with the family and they visit her. Telephone conversations between the two sisters are almost daily. Mrs. Landrom says she feels closer to Jose than to her other nieces and nephews, by virtue of being his godmother, and does give him special attention. We noted, too, that he asks to go alone to her house, although he had already informed us he would cry for his mama if he went visiting without her.

His godfather is his mother's brother and lives only a block away. He says that Mrs. Chavez offered Jose for him to baptize, and that since Jose was sick at the time they had no party for him afterwards. He paid the fee to the priest, while his sister, the madrina, furnished the baptismal faldon. He says the usual practice is for the padrino to pay the priest and the expense of the dinner or party, while the madrina buys the child's clothes,

although madrina and padrino may share the expense, or it may be borne entirely by the child's parents. He keeps in close contact with his god-child, but feels that since he "is in the family" he does not need to buy gifts as often as he would if the child were not a relative, or if he did not see so much of him. He and his wife feel that it is really enough for a person to take the responsibility of baptizing the child and promising to look after it in case something happens to its parents, without having to buy so many gifts all the time.

Jose's confirmation godfather was acquired by proxy. He and Jose's father became "pen-friends" through a bird club they both belonged to. After some correspondence, Jose's father thought Mr. Soleski, who is Polish rather than Mexican, but a "good Catholic," would be a good god-parent for Jose. He accepted the offer with enthusiasm and has taken his duties seriously, although he lives in New Jersey and has never visited his godchild. At the last minute he was unable to come to Tucson for the ceremony, and Mr. Chavez's brother "stood in" for him. Jose has been taught to call this man nino who sends him gifts (usually money) at regular intervals. At the date of our first interview he had sent him something over \$30, most of which had been deposited in the bank to be used for Jose's education later on. Last year Mr. Chavez accompanied his brother-in-law on a trip to New York and went by to see Mr. Soleski. He was invited to stay for several days and was "royally entertained." Mr. Soleski keeps up a regular correspondence with the Chavez family and never fails to mention Jose in his letters. He plans to sponsor Jose at his first communion and says he will definitely come to Tucson for that ceremony. Since Jose makes everyone he meets his friend, that should be a happy occasion!

Chavez Family Chart

Name	Relation	Age	Place of birth	Yrs. in Tucson
1. Jose	head		Tucson, Ariz.	
2. Stella	wife		Hermosillo, Mex.	25
3. Carmen	dau.	13	Tucson, Ariz.	13
4. Wilson	son	11	Tucson, Ariz.	11
5. Cecilia	dau.	6	Tucson, Ariz.	6
6. Jose, Jr.	son	3	Tucson, Ariz.	3

No.	Age	Baptism		Confirmation		Communion		Other	
		God-mother	God-father	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent	Age	Sponsor
1.									
2.									
3.	3 mo.	FMS	FMSH	5 yr.	FMSD	8 yr.	FMS		
4.	1 mo.	Friend	Friend	5 yr.	FSH	8 yr.	FSH		
5.	3 mo.	FS	FSH	2 yr.	MBWS				
6.	4 mo.	MS	MB	18 mo.	Friend				

Legend of abbreviations:

FS - father's sister
 MS - mother's sister
 FMS - father's mother's sister
 FSH - father's sister's husband
 FMSD - father's mother's sister's dau.
 MBWS - mother's brother's wife's son
 MB - mother's brother

A Merchant's Family

This large family lives in a section of the city that would probably be classified as solid middle class. Mr. Romero owns and operates a small hardware store and has some other property in the city, including a gasoline station near the store. Apparently his father and grandfather held considerable property which has been passed on to the sons and daughters. One of his sisters has an office from which she manages the property of all her brothers.

Mr. Romero is a quiet, friendly person to whom many of the Mexicans and Indians come for advice and help. He has befriended many of them, and because of his active interest in their problems is often asked to serve as sponsor at one or another of their life-crisis ceremonies. He has had to refuse these invitations since his second marriage, having been divorced and therefore made ineligible as a godparent. Even before his divorce, however, Mr. Romero decided to stop baptizing children because of his mano mala. He states that he considers this merely a superstition, but that in two cases children whom he had baptized died within two weeks after the ceremony. In the second case, he warned his friends that he was not a safe risk, but they assured him they had no fear and finally persuaded him to take the responsibility. Now, Mr. Romero says, none of that family will even look his way when they meet on the street.

Mr. Romero's own baptismal padrino was his older brother, who is also padrino to Mr. Romero's daughter, Harriet. They are in very close contact with each other, meeting at the store every Sunday to talk for a couple of hours. Mr. Romero noted that this relationship is much closer than with his other brothers, whom he sees much less frequently. He told also about one of his father's compadres by way of illustrating the close ties that exist between compadres: "Every Sunday afternoon, he would say, 'Let's go get compadre and go for a ride'....and we'd go and stop at his house, where my father would say, 'Come on, compadre, let's go.' And they would talk for hours...I don't know what they talked about...just things in general, I guess. But it was that way every Sunday...I can't remember a Sunday afternoon, when I was young, that that didn't happen."

Mr. Romero's madrina was a very religious woman who took her duties

seriously. (He says women keep the compadre system going, and can give more information about it than men.) Every Sunday morning until he was eleven or twelve years old she took him to church with her, and later to her house for lunch, where she instructed him in religious lore and proper behavior. She helped him study his catechism and listened to his recitations.

Mr. Romero was reluctant to say that the compadre system is breaking down in Tucson, although he said he knew it was not so strong as it was when he was a boy, because, he supposed, there are so many other things to do now, and people don't take the time to visit each other as they once did. He also mentioned that governmental agencies have taken over some of the responsibilities of godparents, as when the Welfare Agency has its own regulations about the adoption of needy children. (See Chapter V for further treatment of this problem.)

Mrs. Romero does not remember very much about her own godparents, but says they were members of her mother's family -- aunts and uncles -- and she thinks it better to keep godparents within the family circle. "They should be just like another mother and father to the children, and should be respected the same way." Members of her family, or her husband's, are godparents to all her children. Before she married Mr. Romero she was godmother to three children, all within the family. She has always remembered them with gifts on the proper occasions, and while she has never been called upon to assume full responsibility for their economic welfare, she says she would certainly expect to do so should the necessity arise.

The six children in this family have a total of fifteen godparents, two of whom are not relatives. The family is linked, through these god-

parents, to nine other families.

Harriet, the oldest daughter, has opinions of the godparent system that seem to conflict with those of her parents. She feels that "there is nothing to the compadre system anymore." Further, "You simply hold the child during baptism, and give it right back to the mother, and that's all." She says that the madrina and padrino may never see the child again -- or not very often. She cited the case of her own madrina, her mother's sister, who lives about one hundred miles away, and whom she sees only about twice a year. Her padrino, the same as her father's, she sees no more often than her madrina, and then usually on the street, in passing, when they usually exchange "hellos" and go on. She says that he used to come around more often when she was a child and play with her.

Bart's and Grace's baptismal godparents were acquired during the short period the Romero family lived in California. Ties with these sponsors have never been very strong, probably because they have not lived near each other for any length of time. When these children were younger they received some gifts from their godparents at birthdays, Christmas, and other holidays, and the parents continue a sporadic correspondence.

Bart's confirmation padrino is his half-brother (Mr. Romero's son by a former marriage), who lives in Yuma. He visits the family from time to time and corresponds regularly, but has never given Bart gifts.

Grace's and Harriet's confirmation madrinas are sisters, and age-mates of these girls, whom they chose themselves. They are the only ritual kin outside the family.

Don's baptismal godparents live in south Tucson, and say they consider him the same as their son and treat him the same way. They never forget him

on his birthday or other holidays, and visit often with the family. The madrina telephones his mother often and inquires about the boy. She has invited him to spend part of the summer vacation with her, to which he is looking forward eagerly. Don's father told us that every time he took him anywhere near the section of town in which this madrina lives, Don begs to go by to see her, and that if he did not restrain him, Don would "buy out the town" for his nina.

Donna's godparents are Mrs. Romero's sister and her husband, who say they have a deep affection for this child. They visit often with the Romero family, and since they know Donna's needs are being taken care of by her own family, they have not needed to do much in the way of advising her. They do give her gifts on her birthday and other occasions.

Another of Mrs. Romero's sisters and her husband are Armando's godparents. They are in close contact with Armando and his family and consider him the same as their son. Mrs. Sanchez says she cannot tell any difference in her feeling toward Armando and her feeling for her own children, and now that her own children are getting older, Armando somehow seems closer than ever. They always remember him with little gifts on his birthday, at Christmas, Easter, and other times. Mrs. Sanchez laughed and said, "Armando's mother says he's the meanest of the lot, but he really isn't... and I love him like my own."

Romero Family Chart

Name	Relation	Age	Place of birth
1. Alfredo	head		Tucson, Ariz.
2. Dolores	wife		Tucson, Ariz.
3. Harriet	dau.	24	Tucson, Ariz.
4. Bart	son	15	Los Angeles, Cal.
5. Grace	dau.	14	Los Angeles, Cal.
6. Donna	dau.	10	Tucson, Ariz.
7. Don	son	8	Tucson, Ariz.
8. Armando	son	6	Tucson, Ariz.

No.	Age	Baptism		Confirmation		Communion		Other	
		God-mother	God-father	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent
1.									
2.									
3.	6 mo.	MS	FB	18 yr.	Friend	9			
4.	3 mo.	FMSD	FMSS	12 yr.	FS*	11			
5.	3 mo.	FMS	FMSS	11 yr.	Friend	10			
6.	2 mo.	MS	MSH			8			
7.	5 mo.	FMBSW	FMBS			7			
8.	1 mo.	MS	MSH						

Legend of abbreviations:

MS - mother's sister FMSD - father's mother's sister's daughter
MSH - mother's sister's husband FMSS - father's mother's sister's son
FB - father's brother FMBS - father's mother's brother's son
FMS - father's mother's sister FMBSW - father's mother's brother's son's wife

* Father's son by former marriage; thus, No. 4's half-brother.

A Rancher's Family

Mrs. Merry, her two daughters and two sons live in an almost exclusively Anglo section of town, near the University. The girls came to Tucson from Sinaloa, Mexico, in 1947 to attend a convent. After finishing there two years ago, they enrolled in the College of Business and Public Administration at the University. At that time their mother and the two boys moved to Tucson, where the boys have been attending parochial high school. Mr. Merry was born in San Marcos, California, of Irish parents. His mother died when he was small, and his father remarried -- a Mexican girl -- and moved to Sinaloa. Mr. Merry continues to live there so he can manage his five plantations. He flies to Tucson for short visits with his family from time to time, and the mother and children usually return to the family home in Mexico for the summer vacation.

This is a friendly, sociable family, all of whom like to have company. Mrs. Merry encourages her children to entertain at home. The girls love to cook, and there are often young friends in to share their Mexican food -- and the kitchen chores afterwards! They seemed very much interested and well informed in Mexican political affairs, and take great pride in their homeland.

Until their school duties became too heavy, both the girls and Paul worked part-time. The girls held clerical jobs, and Paul worked in a curio store.

The girls have learned English quickly and speak it well, but most of their friends seem to be either Mexican or other non-Anglos. The boys they date most frequently are from the foreign cadets at Marana -- Iranian,

Iraqian, and so on -- who also speak English. On the other hand, callers at their home are often foreign students from Mexico or South America who feel more at home where Spanish is spoken. Mrs. Merry does not speak English, and the two boys use it haltingly, especially the younger one, who has been accused by family friends of "just not trying." The girls first told us the boys didn't speak it at all; but we soon learned that they are likely to say this of anyone who speaks ungrammatical English or Spanish, as in the case of their father, who is certainly articulate, if not precise, in both languages.

Mother and children agree that the compadre system does not operate so forcefully here as in Mexico, and that people do not "take it as seriously." Their explanation is that people in Tucson have more things to do; they have become "independent," and social life here does not center around the Church as it does in Mexico. The Mexicans are becoming more like Americans, and "Americans are too serious; they never want to take time for fun."

Marcia's baptismal godparents were friends of the family in Mexico. Her padrino is dead, but her madrina, whom she calls nina, continues to keep in contact with her by correspondence since she has been in Tucson. Marcia says she considers her a second mother and never fails to visit her when she goes to Mexico. When she was younger, Marcia received gifts from her madrina on her birthday, at Christmas, and on other special occasions, but now that she is older she does not expect them. However, the madrina, who is an excellent dressmaker, has promised to make Marcia's wedding gown, and keeps asking her when she is going to get married, so she can start the gown.

Marcia's confirmation madrina, another family friend, was never very close to her, and died some time ago.

Marcia is also madrina to the son of one of their maids, whose husband deserted his family. Marcia takes great interest in this little boy, who "seems to be pretty smart in first grade," and says she will take care of his education herself if his interest in school continues.

Lucia was not baptized until she was fifteen years old. She says this was because priests were few in Mexico; then her mother "just didn't get around to it." While on a plane trip to her home town, she stopped over in Nogales, Sonora, where several of her girl friends were making their first communion. She decided to be baptized there because she, too, wanted to attend first communion and had become afraid that, if she were killed in a plane accident, she would suffer the punishment of the unbaptized. She asked a schoolmate to serve as madrina and a priest agreed to serve as padrino under the unusual circumstances. (She pointed out that ordinarily a priest will not take this responsibility, and must secure the permission of the bishop.) Since then she has had little contact with the madrina, who is now in Mexico City, married, and has a child of her own. Until the priest was transferred from Nogales, she visited him fairly often. He never gave her any gifts, nor did she expect them, but did give her much advice on how she should live "a good life." She still writes to him three or four times a year.

Lucia also chose her own confirmation madrina, a close friend of her own age, and daughter of the baptismal godparents of her brother, Paul. She considers this madrina as her sister (not mother in this case), and they often tell strangers they are sisters. This sister relationship also exists between Lucia's madrina and Marcia.

Paul was fourteen years old when he was baptized and chose his own godparents, Mr. and Mrs. Villa, close friends of the family who, at that time, lived across the street. This family now lives in Mexico City, where they are in contact with important social and political figures of the capital. At present they are in Europe and North Africa, but the children have been expecting to visit them during the summer. Paul addresses his godparents as nino and nina, and maintains a very serious attitude around them -- especially around Mr. Villa. He used to keep Mr. Villa's car washed and polished for him and run small errands from time to time. Mr. Villa would give him money now and then, which Paul says was not in payment for his work -- he insists he did these things because Mr. Villa was his padrino, and Mr. Villa gave him the money simply because of their padrino-ahijado relationship. Paul adds, however, that Mr. Villa was always such a busy man that it was Mrs. Villa who gave him more attention and advice. She often talked with him about his school work, and chided him when he made poor grades. "She used to say she didn't want me to grow up and be a tramp." She, too, gave him little gifts when he was small and continues to write him at regular intervals, inquiring about his school work, his health, and general conduct.

Jesse, at the age of thirteen, chose as his baptismal godparents young Eduardo and Maria Villa, children of Paul's godparents. Eduardo is nine years Jesse's senior and Maria is the same age as Lucia. Jesse calls them by their given names and says they "have a lot of fun together when we are in Mexico."

Since the families are so closely connected on both a friendly and ritual-kinship basis, their contacts are frequent. The older Villas take

the three older Merry children to impressive dinner parties, the opera, and other places where they will meet important people. Their son and daughter see that their friends enjoy the night clubs and dances given by their own generation. They all maintain a respectful, serious attitude toward the elder Villas, whom the Merry girls and Jesse call "Aunt" and "Uncle," while Paul calls them nina and nino. With the son and daughter there is less formality; they use given names and enjoy a good deal of camaraderie and joking. The girls mentioned, however, that they would not think of going to a night club with any other young man, but they felt safe to do so with the Villa son and his sister. They also objected good-naturedly to young Villa's telling the Merry boys jokingly that they should learn to "treat women rough."

Merry Family Chart

	Name	Relation	Age	Place of birth	Yrs. in Tucson
1.	James	head	56	San Marco, Cal.	Non-res.
2.	Andrea	wife	43	Verdura, Sin., Mex.	2
3.	Marcia	dau.	23	Verdura, Sin., Mex.	6
4.	Lucia	dau.	20	Los Mochis, Sin., Mex.	6
5.	Paul	son	18	Los Mochis, Sin., Mex.	2
6.	Jesse	son	17	Los Mochis, Sin., Mex.	2

No.	Age	Baptism		Confirmation		Communion		Other	
		God-mother	God-father	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent	Age	God-parent
1.									
2.									
3.		Friend	Friend	12	Friend	9			
4.	15	Friend	Priest			15			
5.	14	Friend	Friend						
6.	13	Friend	Friend						

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUNGER GENERATION AND THE COMPADRE SYSTEM

Processes of Enculturation

In order to understand better the dynamics of the compadre system,¹ it seemed necessary to make some study of enculturation, as well as acculturation. What and how are the younger generation learning about this system of ritual kinship? What does it mean to them? How does it assist them in adjusting and adapting in the society in which they find themselves? Does it have sufficient value to make them want to perpetuate the system?

There is ample evidence to show that infants thrive better, both somatically and psychologically, with affectionate than with indifferent² care. We know, too, that response to social environment begins earlier than some parents would like to believe. Long before the child reacts to words as such, he senses the emotional atmosphere in which he lives; he knows whether his mother or nurse is happy or discontented. With the acquisition of language, he learns to make symbolic identifications of his own feelings and the feelings of those around him, as well as to listen in on adult conversations about new situations. Eventually he begins to figure out some of these interrelationships for himself, adding his own³ connotations in terms of his particular cultural contacts. Thus, the

1. Herskovits, 1948, pp. 39-40.

2. Ribble, 1943.

3. Cf. Kluckhohn, 1944, pp. 45-6.

processes of experiencing and enculturation begin early -- and continue throughout life.

In the light of this knowledge, the precise contribution of the com-⁴
padre system to the basic personality of the individual and the group would require a controlled study of growth and development over a long period of time, similar to those of Kardiner and Mead;⁵ likewise, a defini-⁶
tive study of the processes of learning this cultural pattern would require close observation throughout the period of childhood and adolescence. Such problems, interesting as they might be, are beyond the scope of this study. What we have tried to do here is to make a cross-sectional observation of the attitudes and behavior of children and young people at the present time, with as much attention to the learning processes as our limited data would allow.

Method

Besides our observations and conversations with the children when we were visiting their homes, we used several other methods of finding out what we needed to know: we invited youngsters of different age levels from our five families and others to visit us, one or two at a time, on a purely social basis, to make friends and incidentally to pick up whatever information we could; we also had coffee with Mexican students on the campus as often as possible. Then we tried some techniques which have been familiar

4. Kardiner, 1945, pp. vii-viii; Chapters VIII, XIV.

5. Ibid.

6. Bateson and Mead, 1942.

to the psychologists as diagnostic and therapeutic devices, but which seemed to us to have possibilities as fact- and attitude-finding devices as well, particularly in dealing with small children who are not yet able to articulate clearly their feelings and attitudes. In an improvised playroom (Plate I) operated in a permissive atmosphere, but still with some direction toward the subject which interested us most, we tried to induce the children to express themselves freely through play, ⁷ conversation, ⁸ art, ⁹ and socio-drama. ¹⁰ With the cooperation of the Supervisor of Art in the Public Schools and the teacher of the 10 group (five- and six-year-olds who are learning English before entering first grade) at Drachman School, we were able to conduct a similar experiment on a group of thirty-five children with no previous orientation. Since these children are accustomed to acting out and drawing their new language concepts, we felt that the data thus obtained served as an objective and concrete basis of comparison with that on our own groups. Each device produced something useful to our purpose, and showed promise of more if we had had time to have the children back as often as we should have liked. (Their mothers lent them to us two or three at a time, sometimes sending along an extra little brother or sister for good measure.)

Another device was a guided discussion on the compadre system by small groups of three to five college students, selected on the basis of

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7. Despert, 1945, pp. 219-55, and 1940, pp. 17-29.
 8. Axline, 1947, and Conn, 1939, pp. 49-70.
 9. Alschuler and Hattwick, 1947.
 10. Moreno, 1946, pp. 601-07, and Jennings, 1946, pp. 874-77.



One session in the improvised playroom. The children acted out roles of godparents and godchildren, and drew stories. Later they listened to a play-back of recordings they had made.

their probable interest and ability to contribute. This was most helpful, since the students were interested in the project as well as the subject, and were keen to check on the accuracy of their own and each other's statements. They were able, also, to clarify several points made by other informants. The analysis and data which follow are drawn largely from these sources, supplemented here and there by early memories of some of our older informants.

Concepts of Function and Behavior

The youngest of our informants, Jose, aged three, was able to tell us without prompting, "My nino lives in New Jersey." When we asked another small child for the name of her nina, she said, "She's just nina,"...then, "Who is she, Mama?" The mother explained that none of the family calls this woman by her name. (An older college student said her forty cousins, as well as her own siblings, call their aunt nina, although she is actually madrina to only one of them.) Another little girl stopped her play long enough to answer our question and countered with, "Who's your nina?" When I said I had no nina, she looked at me in disbelief, and said, "Oh, yes, you have...everybody's got a nina...Mama, hasn't he got a nina?"

Some of the children, whose godparents had not been so attentive, were unable to give us their personal characteristics, but they all had ideas about what godparents should do. The younger children saw them mainly in the role of gift-givers. When they were asked, during one playroom session, what godparents do, they answered that they bring them Easter baskets, birthday presents, and Christmas presents. In one family where the little boy's godmother does not give him presents, his mother gives him things to



a.

"I dust the cupboard for Nina."



b.

"I shine my nino's shoes."

PLATE II.

equal the gifts his sisters receive from their godmothers.

Several children mentioned that their ninas and ninos bring them candy; a number of them told about gifts of money, or "nick-les," as they called it, with which to go to the movies, to buy ice cream, candy, toys, or other things. One little boy said his nino brings soda pop for himself and all his brothers and sisters, but the thing he likes most is the rides on his nino's truck. (This child's father died recently in the VA hospital, and his nino -- his father's brother -- and nina are doing everything they can to help look after the children.) Like most children, they did not mention clothes as "presents" -- except one little girl, who showed us new socks her nina had bought for her -- although we had learned from their parents that godparents frequently make gifts of clothing.

When their teacher asked the children what they do for their ninas and ninos, they mentioned numerous services of which children would be capable, and some which we doubted they could perform at the age of five or six years. One little girl says she helps her nina with the dishes; several said they help set the table. One child drew a picture of herself sweeping the floor for her nina, while another pictured herself dusting the cupboard. (See Plate IIa.) Going to the store and running other errands was a frequent answer. Hernando, who lives with his grandmother since his mother and father are divorced, spends a great deal of time with his padrino, whose shoes he is shining in the picture he drew. (See Plate IIb.)

Several of the children "wrote" pictures of themselves giving various things to their godparents: Easter eggs (Plate IIIa), chocolate (Plate IIIb), flowers (Plate IVa), milk (Plate IVb).

When asked what they do when they see their ninas and ninos, the chil-



a.

"I give my nino Easter eggs."



b.

"I give my nina chocolate."

dren's responses varied from an affectionate hug and kiss (which they eagerly demonstrated) to mere verbal greetings.

They all agreed that they should be "good" and thoughtful around their godparents and show their best manners. To some this meant being more dignified in manner; to other it meant just being "nice." In families where Spanish is spoken in the home, good manners include the use of the formal usted instead of the more familiar tu when addressing godparents. Two families were brought to our attention who required their children to stand with folded arms at their nina's side until she dismissed them to go and play. In one case, the father, who himself had been very lax in fulfilling requirements of the Church as to confirmation, first holy communion, and marriage, still required his ten children to behave so formally with their godparents. In the other case, the young man said, "When your madrina comes to visit, you are supposed to be on hand to greet her and see if there is anything she wants. You are already 'alerted' and maybe you hear her say she would like a glass of water. Well, you run and get the water and bring it and stand with your arms folded and wait 'til she is through...or 'til she says something to you. If she doesn't tell you you can go, or something like that, you just stand...even if it's an hour, you stand that way."

These variations in degree of formality were explained by one informant who said it depends upon the individual training given by the parents. He feels that this politeness is the same sort of behavior parents should expect their children to exhibit toward any adult. Another old man explained that "respect," the term all informants agreed upon for describing the proper attitude a godchild should have for a godparent, is in part just



a.

"I give Nina flowers."



b.

"I give Nina milk."

good manners -- "one is polite, one respects the presence of another; a child should be obedient and carry out the wishes and orders of his parents and elders. You do not go against their wishes."

The children also develop early their own ideas of how godparents should behave. It was a five-year-old who said of her younger brother's madrina: "Sarah just doesn't know how to act like a godmother...she gets so mad!"

Emphasis on the responsibilities of godparents in the case of the parents' demise varies from family to family. One girl said, "One of the first things I remember about my godparents was that they would be my parents if my own died." If this role is emphasized, the child soon becomes aware of them as "potential parents." He learns to show them the same respect as he shows his parents and to expect from them behavior similar to that of his mother and father; he undoubtedly derives a sense of security from this knowledge, as well as a concept of the function and behavior of the godparent.

In this connection we noted that, in all but two of madrina-padrino pictures drawn in the classroom, the madrina was made considerably larger than the padrino (Plate IIIb, IVa, b). Likewise, when we asked our own playroom groups to draw us stories about their godparents, only one child drew his padrino (Plate Va); all the others drew madrinas.¹¹ This would seem to indicate that the madrina is the more important in the emotional life of the child, even though they like to tell about the nice things the padrinos do for them. While this is consistent with the opinion given us by one of

11. Note use of yellow hair and blue eyes to glamorize people of whom these children are fond (Plate IVa, b). For example of wishful thinking, see Plate VI.



a.

"My nino gives a barbecue....everybody's there."



b.

"I go to visit Nina."

PLATE V.



This child's godmother never visits her or her family. Yet she drew this same picture several times. When the other children pointed out that a godmother would be "grown up", she did not change the small figure, but later on whispered, "I guess it's me." Her mother does not have time to grow flowers, but her pictures consistently frame the subject in luxuriant grass and blossoms. Is this wishful thinking on the part of this little girl? Is this how she would like her godmother to appear?

our older informants, that it is the women who have kept the system going, one is inclined to believe, too, that the madrina is more closely identified with the mother-image, and the mother is the most important figure in the child's life up to the time he starts to school. Whether this emphasis on the mother is stronger among Catholics, where the religion is focused on the Virgin Mary, might well be a subject for further inquiry.

"Playing comadre," a common game among Mexican American children, is their way of acting out their concepts of the behavior of all the participants in the compadre system. Sometimes they elect themselves parents and godparents and let their dolls be the godchildren, varying their roles to suit the occasion and the wishes of their playmates. One little girl, who has no age mates, plays comadre with the older members of her family. She raps at the door and announces that she is "a comadre come visiting," and the whole family "goes along with the game." One of our student informants says that her father still likes to tell the story of how she and her little playmate got into a fight about the arrangement of the rug in her playhouse. He thinks it a good joke that the two little girls had forgotten that comadres don't fight!

Most of our informants agreed that the closeness of the relationship of godparents and children tapers off when the children reach their teens. The teen-agers are still polite when they meet with their godparents, but the contacts are likely to be less frequent and less intimate. As one man put it, "When you get in your teens you don't pay much attention to what anybody says. That's the way with padrinos. As long as you are small you see a good bit of them...but you know how it is when you get older."

Perhaps an exaggerated example of the teen-agers' attitude toward and

interest in the compadre system is seen in the behavior of two young boys whom we tried to interview. We had already gained much information from other members of the family, and while these boys responded politely to our questions, they would not elaborate beyond the few remarks needed to answer our queries. They suggested, then, that we go with them to visit the well-informed family of one of their friends, and talked more volubly in the car on the way down. Upon arriving, they introduced us in Spanish, saw that we got into conversation with the older generation, and then disappeared with the teen-ager whom we thought we had come to talk with!

After the teen-agers have succeeded in "cutting the apron strings," the pendulum of interest seems to swing back toward the practices of their elders. The young people of around twenty whom we contacted were able not only to give us more detailed information about the compadre system, but seemed to be more objective in their attitudes, probably because they took less for granted than did the older generation. They seemed, too, to take a real interest in the values and the outcome of the system, stressing particularly the satisfactions found in the friendships so formed. They enjoyed recalling details of the parties given after the ceremonies, adding ironically that the babies were "just an excuse" for good friends to get together. They were quick to add, though, that friendships were enriched, whether the party was a big one with orchestras and dancing, or just a small one where chocolate and cakes were served to members of the families. These same young people who told how they had saved their own money to give big parties were able to give us more detail about the form and meaning of the ceremony, quoting not only the words used but the interpretations gleaned from the catechism and conferences with priests. While they felt free to

criticize the vagaries of certain priests and certain local practices, there was no indication at any time that they would deviate from the specific requirements of the Church. We noted, too, that those who had been asked to serve as godparents were proud and eager to tell of their experiences. One young man, at the age of twenty-three, had baptized eight children, and several others had from one to three ahijados. Perhaps they relish the prestige value of such recognition and feel that it enhances their adult stature; certainly, there was no indication that they were taking it casually.

When we asked this group specifically for their prediction of the future of the compadre system, they hesitated at first, as though the question had never really occurred to them. Some said it would continue as long as there were parties; others reminded us that the Church requires it; and others indicated that they had every intention of perpetuating it in the same form as their parents had practiced it. One thoughtful young lady who, throughout the discussion, had tried hard to maintain an objective and "scientific" attitude and to apply her "education" to the problem, answered that she had never thought of "doing all that." (However, we noted later, when we discussed the mano mala story, that she was the first to say, "Well, I don't believe in superstition either, but I wouldn't let him baptize my child.") Altogether, we got the impression that, insofar as this group is representative of their generation, the system is likely to endure, with some modifications.

Learning Process

As already indicated, the process of experiencing and learning this

particular phase of the cultural pattern begins at an early age. The baptismal service itself is a step in the child's socialization -- even if he doesn't attend the party afterwards. Each of the succeeding ceremonies serves to increase his comprehension of interpersonal relations and to stretch the horizons of his little world. This learning is strengthened and reinforced by all his other contacts with the members of his extended family. He is learning to "win friends and influence people" by being friendly in return. Very early in life, then, he begins to learn that battles can be won and tensions eased by affection that he bestows and receives. He is gaining insight into interpersonal relations, which has been¹² called the basis of all adjustment.

As the child is learning to walk and talk, there is begun a program of admonition to teach him how to handle the situations involving interpersonal relations; this kind of teaching continues as long as the relation of mentor to child exists. With a strong emphasis on manners and language, the child's elders begin to tell him to "Do this," "Don't do that," "Say this, say that," "That's not nice." One parent, when asked how a boy is taught "respect," said, "Explaining fully to him all the things which he must say and do. For example, I say, 'Frankie, come over here to your nina, and he must answer with 'Mande usted?'; never say 'Si,' but 'Si, senora.' He must stand in front of his nina 'til she dismisses him from all¹³ duty." From the time his mother begins to tell him, "This is your nina," she teaches him to associate proper behavior with the presence of that person. When it is known that the godparent is contemplating a visit to the

12. Stack Sullivan, 1949, pp. 175-94.

13. Field notes, b.

child's home, he is rehearsed, warned to be on his best behavior. This is equally true when the child goes to visit his godparent. From our own observation of the children's improved behavior away from home as compared with that at home, we got the impression that special instructions must be given for behavior in all extra-familial contacts. When three-year-old Jose stepped out of line, his older brother said, "Just wait 'til Mama finds out how you act away from home." At another point, he threatened to send Jose to his godmother, who lives only a few doors away. One college student said, "It was not exactly 'hammered into us,' but Mother always said if we didn't act right and use the correct form of address, people would think we hadn't been brought up right."

We were particularly impressed by the way older children take the responsibility of looking after their younger siblings. This applies not only to physical care, but to manners and speech as well. One young girl, when we commented on the good behavior of her little sisters at our first playroom session at which she was present, said she spent more time teaching the children good manners than her mother did. When we told her they were equally well-behaved on subsequent visits, and took the responsibility for checking each other's manners when she was not around, she said she was glad to see her teaching "took."

As to actual methods of training, we had to make our deductions from our intermittent observations and from what we could surmise would happen when there were no outsiders present. We also felt justified in assuming that the methods used by the older children on the younger ones reflected the methods used at home. While engaged in conversation with us, the mother (who was sometimes cooking a meal at the same time) would often interrupt

herself when the children became too noisy, to tell them to be quiet, or go on out and play, or something of the sort, instead of following what we supposed was her usual more constructive method; but when we observed the same children at our house or about the neighborhood when they were unaware of being observed, we noted training techniques that we assumed were used at home. For example, when five-year-old Lora was trying to show her older sister some pictures, her little brother stopped his own play and came over to look, too. Without stopping the flow of her conversation, Lora repeatedly pushed his hands away from the pictures without saying anything to him. Finally, becoming exasperated, she shouted his name (just as we had heard her mother do on several occasions), whereupon he quietly left the scene of action and went to look out the window. We found that most frequently older children keep a younger one "out of mischief" by cautiously steering him away, or by drawing him into their own activities, rather than by shouting at him or punishing him.

Threats and punishment do sometimes play a part in the training process. One of the most effective threats is to tell the child he will have to go home, or will otherwise be isolated if he doesn't "behave." We saw one mother slap her child's fingers when he was doing something she had told him not to do, but she did it with a smile and without stopping her conversation. On another occasion, she told him if he didn't be quiet and stop annoying his sister, he could not go to the rodeo. Since he had been talking about this event for days, he became quiet immediately and went about his own play. One mother frequently punctuates her sentences to say to her husband, when the children are misbehaving or getting too noisy, "Why don't you get up and whip these kids?", but on no occasion have we

seen either parent move to do this; more often than not, the conversation continues and the children go on doing whatever they were doing before. One father scolded his little girls in Spanish when they became obstreperous. Whatever he said got results -- the little girls went out to play and remained quiet. The most constant factor we noticed was the almost mechanical quality of the parents' admonitions to their children. They tell them constantly to be quiet, or to "see after your little brother," but no matter how loudly they shout at the children they are not really angry, and continue with whatever activity they were engaged in when the interruption came. Thus, training their young seems to be an habitual procedure with the parents, without the personalization which creates guilt feelings or inhibitions in some other cultures.

Another method of developing the concept of the compadre system is through folklore or old Spanish sayings, which the children hear over and over. We found several variations on the theme of spiritual rewards: being a madrina three times opens the gates to heaven; every ahijado added means another step toward heaven; compadres will meet in heaven. Even greater stress is placed on the relation between compadres and between compadres and ahijados: it is ten times worse to be angry with your madrina or padrino than with your own parents; godparents are the same as second parents and should be respected as such; you are never too old to respect your padrino.

Two interesting stories have grown up in the local setting in Tucson
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which emphasize the relations between compadres and between comadres:

At San Xavier Mission there are two stone lions with

14. Field notes, a.

bared fangs and gaping jaws, guarding the entrance to the church. At one time they were human compadres, but so far forgot the spiritual ties that bound them to friendly relations that they began an argument. The argument led to a fight, and while snarling at each other they were turned into stone lions and placed at this spot to remind man that compadres should be ever friendly and thoughtful of one another.

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There is a leafy green vegetable which grows wild in this area, known as verdolaga. It is similar to spinach and well-known among the Mexicans. Two comadres were gathering verdolaga one day and fell into dispute. The argument led to a fight in which the comadres pulled each other's hair out by the handful. To this day it is impossible to gather this wild vegetable without finding hair in it. No matter how many times it is washed and cleaned, some hair always remains to remind people of these two comadres who did not behave as they should.

Children are constantly told by their parents and older brothers and sisters to say "Thank you" when they are given something, or "Excuse me" when they walk in front of a person. Thus, whether they are eating a cookie or playing marionette around an older person, they are likely to be stopped in whatever they are doing to answer the demand of an older brother or sister, "What do you say?" Likewise, if a mother tells her little girls to "go play comadre," she may have in mind only to keep them entertained without their fighting with the neighbors' children or each other. But the little girls play out their roles as they have seen them played by adults, putting into practice over and over again the manners and the maxims which they have been hearing all their lives. Constant imitation and repetition, then, make these associations so much a part of the child's pattern of living that he cannot conceive of their being any other way.

Some reference to current learning theory is essential to the understanding of the process of enculturation.¹⁵ It is unnecessary at this point to go into the whole of the developmental background of this theory, but it can be expressed briefly thus: the learner must be driven to make a response and rewarded for having responded in the presence of a cue. "This may be expressed in a homely way by saying that in order to learn one must want something, notice something, do something, and get something."¹⁶

While it has not been our purpose here to make a definitive study of the processes of enculturation, it is interesting that the material we have gathered on learning can be fitted into the framework of these generally accepted learning theories.

Motivation in this case is based not on the primary physiological drives, as hunger, thirst, or bladder extension, but on urges of a psychosocial nature, often called secondary drives. The specific motivation may be the desire for friendship, for love and affection, the need to belong, the desire for approval and acceptance. In the immature mind, of whatever age, motivation may seem to be the desire for gifts of one kind or another; but these, too, are tokens of affection, a basic need.

The response will vary with the specific motivation and the kind and amount of learning that has taken place before. It may be an act to gain the affection and approval he wants; it may be stereotyped behavior that he knows may be expected under the circumstances -- such as folding his arms when his nina comes to visit, or answering, "Mande usted," instead

15. Cf. Whiting, 1941, Ch. VII, "The Process of Socialization."

16. Miller and Dollard, 1941, p. 2.

of "Que?".

Cues may be anything that comes to his attention that relates to motivation or reward -- or a response itself, such as "noticing." It may be the appearance of his godparent (or of any adult if he has been trained to respond with politeness to all adults); it may be a memory of a past reward (or punishment), or lectures from his parents or godparents or siblings.

His reward would be specifically the lessening of the tension aroused by his need. This would be the expression of affection that gives him a sense of belonging, a feeling of security and acceptance, and thus fulfills his needs. There is no need to add that the child does not see that gifts serve as a fulfillment of his need for affection; to him, they are values in themselves.

Thus we see that the child's learning is stimulated by precept or example, by doing what he is told or by copying the behavior he has observed in others. In either case, each incident follows the theory as outlined, and each repetition serves as reinforcement of the learning pattern. However vague his concept of the godparent and godchild relationship may have been at the beginning, it grows and matures with each succeeding incident.

Admitting that we cannot isolate the compadre system from other contributing factors and say definitely that this is cause and this is effect, we can be sure from our contacts that this whole training pattern has resulted in an unusually friendly and hospitable social group, with the kind of manners that make interpersonal contacts easy and pleasant.

CHAPTER V

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMPADRE SYSTEM

Our study of the compadre system thus far has shown us an ideal pattern which is consistent with regard to certain functions: meeting Church requirements for sponsors at baptism, confirmation, first communion, and marriage; taking responsibility for the welfare of the child in case the parents become incapacitated; providing ceremonial clothes, the priest's fee, and some form of socialization after the ceremony; maintaining a reciprocal relationship of respect and attention among parents, godparents, and children. In the matter of selection and petitioning, each family has its own ideal pattern which is more or less consistent with the others. As to the real pattern of behavior, some modification and deviations were noted from the collective ideal; even more from the family ideal.

Our question now is the extent to which this pattern, both real and ideal, is characteristic of a larger segment of the Mexican population. While we do not have adequate data on which to generalize for the entire Mexican population in Tucson, we do have information on other facets than those already described. Our interviews with godparents for our five families, with Church authorities and others who were recommended to us for their interest and knowledge, provided an abundance of data extending over many extended families in different social levels. Two other investigators have dealt with somewhat different social levels: Sklar,¹ following leads

1. Field notes, 1953c.

given him by church officials, made more contacts with successful business and semi-professional people, some of whom were inclined to distinguish their practices from those of the "lower-class Mexicans"; Sheward² confined his interviews to a relatively poor, Spanish-speaking group on the outskirts of the city.

In this chapter, we shall endeavor to give a composite picture of the functioning of the system over this extended area.

Church Ceremonies

One of our informants, who is unusually well informed on the requirements of the Church in relation to the compadre system, as well as the actual practices in Mexico and Tucson, emphasized the comprehensive functions of the sponsorship system. She said one can always have a madrina or padrino at every life crisis to look after his "spiritual, physical, or mental welfare."

Baptism

This ceremony was held to be of prime importance in the life of any Catholic individual. All other ceremonies seem to revolve about this one; indeed, without baptism, one is doomed to limbo. Fear of this consequence would seem to be an active motivation for baptism and the consequent forming of ritual kinship ties through this ceremony. Sponsors at this sacrament make promises in the name of the child, since he is too young to answer the questions put by the priest, to "renounce Satan and all his works...to believe in God, the creator of heaven and earth...and in Jesus Christ, His son...." This constitutes a promise on the part of the sponsor that the

2. Field notes, 1953b.

child will be a Christian and "defend the faith." One informant said,

The madrina holds the child's head and the padrino holds its feet. The materials used in the service are salt, oil, and water: salt for the mouth, oil for anointing the senses, and water for the child's head -- to wash away original sin. The priest blesses the child's ears, eyes, hands, feet, and mouth. The madrina is charged with the duty of seeing that the child does not hear, see, or speak evil; that his feet do not lead him astray, that his hands do not steal or commit other evil acts.³

Various informants said there is a special, formal ritual of giving the baptized child back to its mother after the baptism, but no one could remember exactly what was said. Each said he had to find out from some other person every time he baptized a child. Finally, one girl asked her ⁴ seventy-two-year-old grandmother for this information:

The madrina must hold the child from the time of the baptism until she and the godfather say together to the mother,

Comadre, aqui le entrego a mi hijo, que de la iglesia salio, con el santo sacramento y el agua que recibo.

The mother answers, "Compadres, yo lo recibo aqui en la presencia de Dios."

Then the godparents repeat to the father what they have said to the mother, substituting the term compadre for comadre. After they have said this, the comadres and the compadres embrace, and the baby is returned to its parents.

Age at baptism. Theoretically a child can be baptized the day it is born, but one week was the earliest age we found among our informants (with the exception of one emergency at two days), and fifteen years the latest. Advanced age at baptism goes back to customs developed of necessity in

3. Field notes, 1953a.

4. Ibid.



a.

The sacrament of baptism.



b.

All the children in one family wore this faldon at baptism.

Mexico, due to infrequent visits of priests in areas where roads and transportation were poor. That and other customs have "stuck" in Tucson, in some cases, though the need no longer exists.

Requirements for sponsors. The Catholic Church requires at least one and not more than two sponsors for a child at baptism. If two, one must be male and one female. They must have been baptised in the Catholic faith, must have attained the age of fourteen years (unless the Church sees just cause for making an exception), must know the rudiments of the faith, and have respectability among Catholics. There are others specifically barred from becoming sponsors: Freemasons, criminals, those under sentence of the Church (excommunication, etc.), and those who are not free agents (priests, nuns, and others of the holy order, except by permission of their superiors). A husband cannot sponsor his wife's baptism, nor she his. Several priests pointed out that if the sponsors are married they must have been married in the Church. One said that he often had couples who were married in a civil ceremony come to him to be married in the Church so that they could serve as sponsors.

Information obtained by one interviewer indicates that misrepresentation⁵ of facts concerning Church affiliation is not unknown. Conversations with priests and other informants bear out the fact that no official proof of baptism or marriage by the Church is often required, a verbal answer to the priest's questions concerning these matters being sufficient. One young informant told us that her father, a non-Catholic, has baptized at least one child. She said she supposes the priest "just took it for granted" that he was Catholic. She remembered, also, the case of a family friend who was

5. Field notes, b.

accepted as sponsor until the priest noticed he was wearing a Masonic ring. Thus, it would be relatively easy to bypass the regulations of the Church if the sponsor so desired. However, we have found that this practice is not widespread, and some informants have expressed grave concern over such misrepresentations, and feel that the stigma of such action attaches itself to the child. Thus, one informant said,

And if the godparents have lied to the parents and they are not really married in the Church, then, it is the same as though the child were not baptized at all. The sacraments are for nothing if they lie, and the hurt is to the child.

The Church makes provisions, in some cases, for non-Catholics to be godparents in practice, with another person who is Catholic and acceptable to the Church "standing in" at the actual ceremony. We found two instances of "stand-in" godparents for baptism -- one sanctioned by the Church after some discussion, and the other without the Church's knowledge:

The Urbal family had been receiving aid from the widow of Mr. Urbal's former employer, and had been on friendly terms with her for years. She had asked that she be made godmother if they ever had a daughter. When the time came, knowing that she would probably be unacceptable to the Church as sponsor, since she was of another religion, she asked that this fact be made known to the priest to see if a special dispensation could be made. According to the Urbals, the priest was indignant that they should be considering a non-Catholic for such a ceremony, and after much discussion it was decided that Mrs. Urbal's mother could bring the child to the service and hold it during baptism in lieu of the non-Catholic woman. However, on the official certificate of baptism the non-Catholic woman's name -- not that of Mrs. Urbal's mother -- appears as the godmother.

Mr. and Mrs. Romero had befriended and advised the bewildered young Mexican bride of a war veteran, but could not accept the couple's invitation to baptize their child, since Mr. Romero had

6. Ibid.

7. Field notes, a.

been divorced. It was agreed between the two families that Mr. and Mrs. Romero's young daughter and son should serve as official sponsors at the baptism, but that Mr. and Mrs. Romero would take full responsibility for the child's welfare.

The Church, or at least some priests, have restrictions against baptizing children of "unqualified" parents. In one case, where the couple had not been married in the Church, the child was baptized -- but in its mother's name, not its father's! Another case was reported of an unmarried mother who wanted to have her child baptized. The priest refused her request, but later when she was married by a missionary priest, the same priest who had refused her earlier request baptized the child.

Petitioners and Manner of Petitioning. We did not find a "go-between" for obtaining sponsors and/or godchildren. ⁸ Either the parents ask sponsors ("offer" their children), or individuals who want to serve ask the parents for the privilege. The majority of informants expressed the opinion that it was better to have the children asked for than to "offer" them, for varying reasons. On the other hand, godparents often say they like to be asked. Each, then, prefers to be invited -- perhaps to save embarrassment, and also for the benefit of the honor conferred. But individuals in each group also do the asking, either out of necessity to meet Church requirements, or out of respect and kindness towards friends. In the case of some godparents, it seems to be a matter of liking children and wanting prolonged and frequent contacts with them.

There is considerable evidence, too, that a great deal of "hinting" goes on, in which case it would be difficult to determine, strictly speaking, whether the godparents were petitioned or not. Two examples of this

8. For use of intermediary in other communities, cf. Gillin, 1947, p. 107; Wagley, 1949, p. 18; and Redfield, 1941, p. 124.

are seen in the following anecdotes:

Everybody at the _____ Shops calls my husband compadre. The other day one of the men, who is not really his compadre, said to him, "Well, compadre, it won't be long 'til you are my real compadre." My husband said, "Is Mary expecting again?" The man laughed and said "Yes." From that we know they want us to be godparents. We will ask them now in a few days.

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The husband of my friend who was expecting a baby, said to the driver who was taking me to the train one night, "Hurry, but be careful of my little girl's godmother." I thought this over on my way to the station and concluded this was his way of inviting me to be the child's godmother. A few days later I asked him about it, and he said he had been embarrassed to ask me outright, but thought he would try the "hint" and see how I felt about it.

Selection and criteria. The majority of our contacts indicated that they feel it is better to keep the godparents within the circle of biological kin, two families indicating that the grandparents are preferable, especially for the first-born; but in practice it was found that the godparents were divided almost equally between family members and those bearing no blood relationship to the family. The most frequent reason given for restricting sponsors to family kin was that "you know more about your own family and what to expect from them." However, opinions varied on this point. One informant was emphatic in her statement that sponsors should be outside the family...even to the point of refusing to be madrina to her brother's child. "You know how it is with brothers and sisters. There are many times difficulties, and you should never be a madrina feeling like that." She added that it was easier to maintain good relations with outsiders than with one's own family.

The criterion given most often for a godparent was that of a "good"

person. This means a Catholic who takes his religious duties seriously, who abides by the laws of the Church and State, one to whom the parents feel they could entrust the rearing of the child should they themselves become unable to carry out their parental obligations. Financial stand-
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 ing was never mentioned at first as a criterion; when questions were asked concerning this, the consensus was that character was much more im-
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 portant than money. As one woman put it,

No, that's not so important, although it is not bad, but the important thing is for them to be good, for you know money comes and goes. There are too many people nowadays who do not have good characters, and when it comes to sponsors you want good people.

The fact that well-to-do godparents are not sought after because of their financial status, or at least have not become sponsors to children in the families we talked with, is borne out by the fact that in only three cases out of all the godparents for the five families studied do they appear to be much above the economic level of the families with whom they have ritual kinship relations. On the other hand, when a young woman who had mentioned that her confirmation godmother was wealthy was asked how her parents hap-
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 pened to ask this woman to be sponsor, she answered,

Well, frankly, I think that because they were well off had something to do with it. It's a good thing to have a rich sponsor and somebody who can do things for the child. Of course, some people make a racket of it. This woman told me that so many people ask her to be a sponsor that she has to turn many of them down. I also knew a boy during the War who used to get red meat

10. For treatment of economic functions of godparents in feudal times, see Mintz and Wolf, 1950, pp. 342-52.

11. Field notes, c.

12. Ibid.

stamps from his godfather.

But, while she mentioned that her godmother often came to see her in her own plane and that she went down to her ranch to visit when she could get time off from her nursing job, she made no mention of gifts of any sort.

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Later, she added,

Well, the Church looks upon it from the religious angle, but from what I see, most people look upon it as getting a well-to-do person to be sponsor so they can get things from them.

Other occasional dissenters talked about other people who choose well-heeled godparents for their children, but gave no examples. One such infor-

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mant made this statement:

And parents now, all they want is some rich person to be the godfather so that he will give a big dance and a big drunk and a fight. I think a lot of this is due to the changing attitude of people to money.

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Another informant said, "People usually like to have godparents for their children who can throw a big bolo," but went on to say that her parents did not follow that custom and it is the younger generation who likes to have parties. Another man said it helped in business to have well-off compadres, but religion is more important.

These occasional references to "other people" suggest that patronage may have become part of the system among different classes of people, but

13. Ibid.

14. Field notes, b.

15. Tape recording.

there is little evidence of financial gain among our middle-class representatives.

Obligations of godparents. The primary obligation of godparents, as agreed upon by both Church and informants, is to insure the spiritual education of the child. The Church makes it clear that any obligations other than this are due to social customs of the people involved and their own individual practices. Most of the godparents we talked with feel that the parents are capable of attending to the religious education of their own children, and that they should not interfere as long as the parents are living, or unless there is a case of glaring neglect, or training that conflicts with Church doctrine. Most of them say they knew, through visits to the families and without direct questioning, that the children were going to church and were receiving religious instruction, inasmuch as they saw them progress through the various stages of sacraments, i.e., confirmation and holy communion, which they would not be able to do had they not met the qualifications necessary for the Church to administer these sacraments. We know, however, that one godmother has reminded her godchild's mother (since our interviewing began) that the children should be receiving the sacrament of confirmation. Another godmother, who stated the duties of godparents to be

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that of spiritual guidance for the child, said,

If it was in my own family, say my sister, and I knew she was going to send her child to public school, I'd tell her I thought it should go to church school...and she might tell me to mind my own business! But, I don't know about Mary [one of her comadres outside the family]...I've known Mary for over twenty years, but I don't know if I'd say anything like that to her or not.

16. Field notes, a.

It was generally agreed that the godparents should provide the baptismal robes for the child, ¹⁷ the faldon, ¹⁸ but this varied with individual attitude as well as the financial ability of those involved. What we found was that all godparents furnished the clothes, except in rare cases of emergency, or where the family preferred to furnish the clothes themselves. One mother told us she had made the baptismal outfit for her first child, and had lavished much time on it, with laces and embroidery, and had insisted that all the other children use it for baptism, although the godparents had offered to buy one for each child (Plate VIIb). One other godmother said once she had not been able to get a faldon for one of her godchildren because she was called upon in an emergency situation on Sunday when the death of the infant seemed imminent. She had no time to make one, and could not buy one, since the stores were closed. She explained this to the mother and gave her ten dollars (all the money she had with her) with which to buy something for the child.

It is also expected that the padrino will pay the small fee required by the priest for baptism (two dollars in Tucson). We found no deviation from this practice, although informants stated that this was not really necessary and the parents could pay it if the godparents were not financially able to do so.

The godparents who are financially able generally try to furnish some sort of refreshment and/or entertainment after the ceremony is over. This ranges from a simple meal at home to elaborate parties. One mother objects

17. Two student informants declared the madrina must dress the child, too, but most others thought this practice was "going out of date."

18. Several informants said any dress would do, in lieu of the faldon, but the madrina should still provide it.

to celebrations where music and dancing and general merriment are involved, on the ground that the celebration is supposed to be for the child, who is too young to understand all the noise and confusion. She prefers a quiet meal at the home of the godparents or child. The student discussants laughed at the phrase "for the baby," but agreed that the party was a good thing when it could be afforded -- but that cake and chocolate, or nothing at all, was acceptable practice, too! Several told us that after the ceremony is over, friends begin to joke about the padrino, saying, "What a stingy fellow this ahijado will be! Look! His padrino hasn't offered any drinks, or any food, or anything! What can you expect of this child? He will certainly grow up to be like his padrino -- tight and stingy." Then, to save his own face and to insure his ahijado's growing up to be generous, he must invite the assembled friends to eat and drink what he has provided.

In some cases the parents may share the expense of such entertainment with the godparents, or indeed, may bear the entire cost themselves if the godparents cannot contribute. Likewise, the party may be held in either the parents' home or that of the godparents -- whichever seems to be best suited to the occasion. One young man had the parents of the child he was to baptize postpone the ceremony for several weeks, until he could accumulate enough money to buy the clothing for the child and pay for the "shindig." He admitted that sometimes the expense was a definite burden for one who had as many godchildren as he, but he did not mind. He is unmarried, but said he would some day have children of his own, and would certainly want their godparents to provide these things for them.

Without exception we found the godparents expressing willingness to accept the full responsibility for the child's welfare in case the parents

died. While this necessity had not arisen in any of the five families we studied, we found several cases among other informants.

The father in one of our five families was reared to manhood by his padrino, an elder brother, who did see to all his needs as indeed a father would. Whether this is an indication of duties incumbent upon brother or padrino would be difficult to determine.

One boy's stepmother turned him over to his padrino shortly after his father's death because the boy had become a "problem child." Both the god-parents, and especially the padrino, "worked with this boy for several years getting him straightened out." His stepmother gave up completely, and said it was as much his padrino's duty to see that he behaved right as it was hers, and she just didn't know what to do with him.

Another girl told us that she had lived with her grandmother, who was her nina, for ten years. A businessman told this story:

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My grandmother lived in Old Mexico. She baptized a Yaqui child. The Federals came and carried off most of the Yaquis, including the parents of the child. Some Yaqui women came to my grandmother and told her she'd have to take care of the child because she had baptized her. She raised the child, and when my grandmother died my parents raised the girl, until she married another Yaqui here in Tucson. Now, my wife and I are sponsors to their children.

When questioned about the function of the sponsor in case of the child's death, most informants agreed that nothing was obligatory, but one added,

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We were sponsors for a child of poor people who lived at Mammoth, and when the child died they asked us to take care of the funeral expenses, and of course we did.

19. Field notes, c.

20. Ibid.

Several informants mentioned that nowadays the welfare agencies interfere in this function of the godparents, but investigation revealed that in two cases at least, the interference was not so strong as was suggested:

An eight-year-old child, whose father was dead and whose mother had deserted it, wanted to live with its godparents, and they wanted it to come. The case was brought to the attention of the Welfare Agency by neighbors, who thought the people were too poor to have to take care of another child. The first investigator recommended that the child be removed because the home did not come up to the specifications for a foster-parent home. But a second investigator, who knew more about the godparent-godchild relationship, and the strong emotional ties existing in this case, was finally able to make arrangements for the child to be left with the godparents.

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A seventy-eight-year-old father, who knew that he had not long to live, wanted his child taken care of by the godparents. Both father and child were receiving aid grants from the State. The Welfare Agency helped to effect the transfer to the godparents without formal adoption, by having the father sign a legal document relinquishing parental control. The child is now being reared by the godparent, with the help of State aid.

Obligations of godparents to parents. In addition to the obligations to the parents through their children, godparents are supposed to maintain a close, friendly relationship with them. They should show mutual respect, and should come to the aid of each other in times of family stress, financial difficulties, and at other times when they need support and/or assistance. The terms compadre should be used between the men, and comadre between the women. They should never disagree, should not quarrel nor fight. One mother, who wanted to be madrina to her daughter's child, said, "If I'm your comadre, I can't scold you as a daughter." Only one instance was given us of a rift between families connected by ritual kin ties, although further study of the situation might well bring more to light. According to our

21. Ibid.

informant, this rift was of short duration. "They remembered they were compadres, and couldn't stay mad with each other."

Much evidence is available to show that good relations do exist between compadres and between comadres. One woman gave us an instance that points up how the compadre system operates to make for friendly relationships. She and her husband had known a certain family for a number of years and had thought very poorly of them. They had not wanted to be "mixed up" with them in any way, she said, then added:

I had hoped they'd never ask us to be godparents to any of their children, because we just didn't like them. But they did, and do you know, something inside me right away changed... I don't know how, but it did, and ever since that we have been very close friends, and we think they are the nicest people.

Obligations of godchildren to godparents. The obligation mentioned by every informant, without exception and without hesitation, was that of respect. A godchild is always supposed to show respect. By respect they apparently mean politeness, obedience to requests and demands of godparents, deferential behavior, agreement, overt acceptance of advice and criticism. The degree of respect accorded godparents varies from child to child and from family to family. All families say they try to teach their children to show this respect, but don't always succeed. Many informants say that this generation shows less respect than did theirs, or that of their parents, and so on. The college students, in a group discussion, said, "Every generation says this: The one before always shows more respect!"

Some examples of respect are given in the following:

22. Field notes, a.

23. Ibid.

My son's padrino says he is a good ahijado, and very respectful. He never talks back. He takes his advice and criticism without arguing...even when he is accused sometimes of something he did not do, he doesn't say, "No, I didn't do that," but he just hangs his head and says nothing.

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When I was small I respected my padrino very much...and still would, but I just never see him. You don't argue or talk back to your padrino...you take whatever he says...you are very polite and listen to his advice...I'd do the same thing now. I'd respect him and not quarrel with him, but still I'd do things my own way if I didn't agree with him.

Two informants mentioned visiting the graves of godparents as a mark of respect that continues after the godparents are dead. One said,

24

My mother taught me to visit his grave and put flowers on it every year...on the anniversary of his death. Also you are supposed to look at the grave and see if it needs cleaning up or repair. Maybe there are weeds...or the dirt is scattered, and you pull up the weeds, and take a shovel and pile the dirt up in a mound and smooth it out.

Confirmation. This is the only other sacrament besides baptism for which the Church specifically requires a sponsor. In this sacrament "the Holy Ghost is given to those already baptized in order to make them strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ." The Church further prescribes that "under pain of grievous sin a sponsor, or godparent, shall stand for the person confirmed." Qualifications of such a sponsor approximate those of sponsors for baptism; only one is required, of the same sex as the person being confirmed. Except in case of necessity, a baptismal godparent cannot serve as sponsor for the same person in confirmation. Two priests stated that if baptism and confirmation take place on the same day,

25

24. Ibid.

25. Catholic Encyclopedia, p. 215.

as they sometimes do in Tucson, the same sponsor may serve at both sacraments, but if confirmation follows baptism by even one day a different sponsor must serve.

Age at confirmation has an even greater range than age at baptism. The Church prefers to have first holy communion precede confirmation, and it should come after the child has attained the age of seven years, having been indoctrinated into the beliefs of the faith. Confirmation should follow, by some three to five years. However, in the Southwest there is great variation in this pattern, again occasioned in the early days by scarcity of priests and difficulties of travel. It became customary for the bishop, on his rare visits, to confirm all persons who had not previously taken the sacrament. Thus, the custom has been retained by many of the Mexican peoples, although in Tucson the bishop is on hand (usually the last Sunday of each month) to administer confirmation. As one priest put it, "We have a saying that custom practiced in the Church for a hundred years becomes law." This practice of early confirmation has not become Church law, but he feels it has become so firmly entrenched as to be very difficult to change. However, in Tucson, there are only five churches that will confirm children before they have made their first holy communion.

The family charts presented in Chapter III show the variation in ages at confirmation and first holy communion for the children studied in the five families.

Manner of petitioning, criteria for selection, and obligations of sponsors are very similar to those for baptism. Most families feel their children should be "asked for," and the godparent should be a "good Catholic." The number of sponsors chosen from the circle of blood relations is about



a.

Two sisters with their madrinas at confirmation.



b.

Proud padrino and his ahijado at confirmation.

the same as those chosen outside the family. While informants say these godparents should be responsible for the spiritual education of the child, and for his economic support should the parents be unable to carry on, we find that invariably the relationship between godparents and children and godparents and parents linked through baptism to be closer than in those linked by confirmation rites.

Ritual kinship terminology is the same here as previously discussed. The terms nina and nino apply equally to godparents of baptism and confirmation.

The godparents sometimes provide a new outfit for the child at confirmation, but we found no strong opinion on this practice. Most informants said it was "up to the godmother." There is usually a party afterwards, which custom says should be paid for by the godparent, but again this depends upon the financial status of the individual. Sometimes the expense is shared by godparent and the child's parents.

First holy communion. The wide range in age of persons receiving this sacrament has been discussed in the preceding section, and may be seen in the family charts in Chapter III. Informants do not agree on the necessity or use of sponsors for holy communion. Only one family stated definitely that they consider the sponsors to be godparents -- the others said they are simply "sponsors," or anyone of Catholic faith and in good standing, who attends the service with the child. Frequently this person is the same who served at the baptism ceremony, and is considered to have no obligations extending beyond that of attending the service. While some sponsors do furnish some of the items of dress needed for this ceremony, we found no one who furnished the whole outfit, nor any expressed feeling that the sponsor was obliged to do so. The same is true of the expense involved in the

party that usually follows first holy communion. The parents appreciate it if the sponsor furnishes the refreshments, but as often as not the sponsor does not do this.

This seems to be a case where the custom of having a sponsor or god-parent has continued while the duties have become vague in the minds of the participants; and the terms of madrina and padrino have almost entirely disappeared.

Marriage

At the marriage ceremony there can be as many as five different types of madrinas, depending upon the elaborateness of the wedding and individual preferences.
26

Madrina and padrino de matrimonio. The Church requires two witnesses to the marriage ceremony, who are usually called by Mexicans madrina and padrino. Most often they are chosen by the couple themselves, although they may be influenced by their families' wishes. Informants agree that nowadays these sponsors are more often than not contemporaries of the bride and groom, but formerly they were older people who, through their experience, were better prepared to carry out their responsibilities after the ceremony. It is generally agreed that they should do whatever they can to make the marriage a lasting and harmonious one. They should act somewhat as marriage counselors; the young couple should bring to them any problems on marriage that they wish solved, and the sponsors should do everything they can to prevent divorce or separation.

Our evidence indicates that the madrina and padrino de matrimonio do

26. Erasmus, 1950, pp. 40-1, notes seventeen studies of Latin American communities in which the function of madrina of marriage is described.

try to maintain close relationships with the married couple and advise them whenever necessary. One informant said, "Baptism is the most important, as far as the religious angle is concerned, but we keep in touch more with the people we sponsored at their weddings...they are nearer our own age, and we feel we have to make the marriage a success...we visit back and forth quite a bit."²⁷

Another informant said of his responsibilities as marriage sponsor, "...when my wife and I are sponsors, our duty is to try and make the marriage a success if any trouble develops."²⁸

Madrina de lasso. This sponsor is usually a contemporary chosen by the bride. It is her duty to put the "lasso" -- a cord, or wide, white ribbon -- around the shoulders of the bride and groom as the marriage ceremony is being read (Plate IX). "Cowboy weddings," one of our older informants calls them! One informant said that formerly the madrina de lasso was an older person, who was qualified to and did instruct the young couple in their duties of matrimony, harmonious life, and matters pertaining to sex and the rearing of children. It was her duty too, according to this informant, to help keep the marriage running smoothly, ironing out disagreements and counseling on other problems. Most informants say her only duties are in connection with placing the lasso around the couple; that the priest instructs the young couple in marital relations, and that seeing to the smooth running of the marriage is a duty of the madrina and padrino de matrimonio.

Madrina de ramos. Her duty is to hold the bridal bouquet during the exchange of rings in the ceremony, with no lasting obligations after the

27. Field notes, c.

28. Ibid.



a.

Madrina de lasso helps bind the marriage couple.



b.

Bridal pair wears lasso until ceremony ends.

ceremony is over. A number of informants recognized the use of such a madrina in Tucson as well as in Mexico, but indicated that it is not widespread.

Madrina de cojines. She is in charge of the two elaborately-embroidered cushions on which, in some marriage ceremonies, the bride and groom kneel. It is she who usually embroiders on the cushions the initials of the couple. She is a good friend of the couple or the family, but has no obligations that extend beyond those described for the ceremony itself. This is apparently an older custom and not well known. Only two informants were familiar with its usage, although some of the younger girls said they had heard of it.

While all the sponsors listed above are not commonly used in all marriages, one informant said she had noted from newspaper accounts of weddings that they are coming back into use -- particularly the madrina de lasso. Our younger informants noted that very large weddings might use all these attendants, but this was not true of most they had attended. They were inclined to think, too, that the concept of padrino and madrina was being dropped from all but the main attendants and the madrina de lasso.

Other Ceremonies

Theoretically, there is no limit to the number of individuals who can be included in the circle of ritual kin simply by increasing the number of ceremonies attended by sponsors. While the ceremonies required and sanctioned by the Church are limited to baptism, confirmation, communion, and marriage, it would be possible to have in Tucson, as in Mexico, compadres for any social function, any specific event, any trial or tribulation. As one informant put it, "You can have madrinas or padrinos to stand beside you, or help you over

any of the rough spots in your life. That's what they're for...at any time in your life." Apparently, the need for such a wide extension of formal friendship is no longer felt in Tucson, or is being met in some other way.

29

Madrina or padrino de habito. An individual who is ill or in danger of his life often makes a vow to wear, for a certain period of time, or until it is worn out, the garb of a certain saint if that saint will intercede for his life. The person who helps robe this individual in the saint's clothing thus becomes his padrino or madrina. He shares the responsibility of seeing that the vow is fulfilled. This usage is frequent and known to all informants. One informant said this is often done now during the winter months so that a long coat can be worn over the habito in order to avoid the stares and questions of the curious.

30

Madrina de santo. An individual who has bought a new saint (statue or picture) does not himself take it to the church to have it blessed, but must ask another person to do this. Thus the two individuals become madrina and ahijado. Another version has it that two people may share the expense of buying a new saint, and in that way become compadres. This type of sponsor was known to most of the informants. Some of the college group said they do not call people who bless sacred objects for them madrina or padrino -- they "hadn't thought of it in that connection."

31

Scapular madrina. Only one informant was familiar with this type of

29. Erasmus, op. cit., p. 42, notes evidence of this function only in Tenia (Sonora, Mexico) and Pascua (cf. Spicer, 1940, p. 98).

30. Erasmus, op. cit., p. 45.

31. Ibid., p. 42.

madrina. Most of the others said that often it is the madrina (usually of baptism) who gives a child her scapular medal, but they do not think of it in terms of a special madrina. Others said they were given their scapular medals by the sisters at the convent or by their parents.

32

Madrina or padrino de rosary: This sponsor places the rosary about the neck of a deceased person. He may or may not pay for the rosary himself, and may be the same person who served as sponsor at another ceremony, or a new one selected by the family, or one who has volunteered for the duty. Such a use was reported by only one person, and was practically unknown among other informants. Some said they remembered hearing about such a use, but had never really seen it.

Madrina de manto (shroud). This madrina serves at the ceremony in which a nun takes the habit for the first time. Her duties are to accompany the nun in the processional and recessional and stand beside her during the ceremony. In some cases she may help the girl to change from her bridal dress into the black habit. There is no obligation on the part of the sponsor, but often she does bear at least part of the expense of the new habit. One of the nuns told us there are three ceremonies in which sponsors are used from the time one becomes a postulant until she takes her final vows. At the first one, when the nun is dressed as a bride, there are usually at least two sponsors, one male and one female, called by the Mexicans madrina and padrino. In the other two ceremonies, sponsors are also used, and if the nun is Mexican she usually calls these madrinas. Frequently these sponsors will pay for a reception after the ceremony, which may be as elaborate and expensive as they desire. Ordinarily, there is little relationship with

32. Ibid., p. 42.

the sponsors afterwards, but one informant told us she knew a nun whose sponsor, or madrina, sent ice cream and cakes for the whole convent every year for fifteen years, and before her death ten years ago made arrangements for her family to continue this practice.

Several informants told us that priests, when they take holy orders, also have madrinas and padrinos who sponsor them. We were unable to contact anyone who had served as such a sponsor.

Madrina de coseche. This form of madrina is practically unknown in Tucson. Two informants told us that in Mexico it is customary to take a statue of the madonna and child out into the fields as a blessing. Prayers are said by a priest, asking for fruitfulness of the fields, as the Virgin Mary had been fruitful. Only one informant had heard of this being used in the general vicinity of Tucson; she said she had heard that some Mexican farmers on the outskirts of Tucson had used it some years ago.

33

Emergency baptism. In cases where death is deemed imminent, anyone may serve to baptize the child, whether he is Catholic or not. Afterwards, however, if the child survives, another sponsor who can meet the requirements of the Church is designated for the child's proper baptism.

Other sponsors. Another type of sponsor is the person who initiates, or stands with, an individual who joins various organizations, such as Daughters of the Blessed Mother. Most informants agree that ordinarily such sponsors are not called madrinas or padrinos.

Although no informant was found who knew about madrinas for first hair-cutting and nail-cutting ³⁴ for babies, the majority of them adhere to the

33. Gillin, op. cit., p. 110, and Erasmus, op. cit., p. 41

34. Gillin, loc. cit.

practice of waiting at least until baptism (or until forty days after the birth of the child) to cut the nails. Reasons for this varied from frank admission of superstition to the expressed belief that to cut the child's nails before that time would make him have poor eyesight. Some claimed that doctors had given them such advice. One informant said she knew a priest who always examined a child's nails to see if they had been cut before he baptized it.

Likewise, we found no instance of a madrina for ear-piercing.³⁵ We did find instances where the madrina was thought to be obligated to give a child her first earrings. One informant told us her mother always pierced the ears of her ahijadas and was very proud of the fact that, of the great number she had pierced, she had never had a child's ears become infected! Whether these practices reflect survivals of sponsorship that have lost their ritual functions cannot be determined from the present data.

Other types of sponsors noted by investigators in other areas, but not found in Tucson, include: housewarming,³⁶ hetzmek,³⁷ death,³⁸ ceremonial society,³⁹ engagement,⁴⁰ birth (midwife), altar-lowering, drinking compadres, gambling, and games.⁴¹ Some others mentioned by informants in this study and not found in the literature we reviewed are: madrina de lasso, madrina

35. Ibid., loc. cit.

36. Erasmus, op. cit., p. 41

37. Erasmus, op. cit., p. 43, and Redfield, op. cit., p. 221

38. Erasmus, op. cit., p. 45, and Spicer, op. cit., pp. 105-07.

39. Spicer, op. cit., p. 99.

40. Gillin, op. cit., p. 111.

41. Parsons, 1936, p. 69.

de ramos, madrina de manto, madrina de coseche, and madrina de cojines.

The metaphorical use of compadre was noted here, as in other societies. Some of the men indicated that they called their pals compadre whether they were ceremonial kin or not, and several of the women mentioned with pride that their husbands were the kind everyone calls compadre.

42

Incest Taboo and The Compadre System

43

Erasmus has pointed out the widespread existence of the incest taboo among peoples who practice the compadrazgo, and says of his examination of the studies made of the system, "...in no case do we find any mention of negative occurrences." In Tucson we have found no strong feelings centering around the incest taboo. Most informants appeared mildly surprised that we should ask questions about who can marry whom. They all agree that a godparent cannot marry his godchild, some adding, "unless a special dispensation is made by the Church." Actually, the Church does not forbid such marriage, but says such a relationship is "an impediment" to marriage. This impediment can be removed by special dispensation. Most informants are vague as to the restrictions beyond this. Some say they can think of no reason why a comadre and compadre should not marry, but no one could give us a case where this had occurred. They seem to "take it for granted" that such will not happen. One young girl reported that her grandmother was "horrified" to think that baptismal compadres and comadres might marry. "What sort of a religion is that," she asked, "when compadres and comadres de pila marry each other?"

While marriage between children of compadres is not prohibited by the

42. Paul, 1942, p. 142.

43. Op. cit., pp. 33-36.

Church, and most informants agreed they could see no objection to it if they were not otherwise related, no cases were found where this had happened. We found over and over again a saying that a young couple who baptize a child while going together will never marry. Numerous examples were given of young affianced couples whose marriage plans were interrupted after serving together at a baptism. We found only one person who could give us an example of a madrina and padrino of baptism who were later married. We do not have sufficient data to link this superstition to a feeling of incest taboo, but it might be fruitful to make further investigations along this line.

The data gathered in Tucson does not point up a clear-cut difference in emphasis on relations that exist between godparents and parents (compadrazgo)⁴⁴ or those that exist between godparents and children (padrinazgo). Rather, we found in most families a network of relations that include all these participants. That the frequency of contact, as well as the intimacy, varies from family to family and under different sets of circumstances is clear. In a family where the godchild is very young, his contacts with his madrina will probably be limited to the gifts she gives him and only bits of conversation while she is visiting the family. Most of her conversation and telephone calls will be with the older members of the family. Frequently we have found that the younger generation has married and moved away, but their parents and godparents have remained in Tucson and have maintained their

44. None of our informants used the words compadrazgo or padrinazgo, speaking rather of the compadre or godparent relationship. By contrast, see Gillin, *op. cit.*, p. 104, and Mintz and Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 355, who are inclined to assume from the report on Moche that in all modern Latin America the "compadre-compadre relationship outweighs the godparent-godchild relationship."

friendly relations and frequent contacts. One little girl, when asked what she does on her visits to her madrina, replied, "I play with the kids." On the other hand, one widowed mother reports that her son's contacts with his padrino have increased in the last few years, because now is the time he needs advice about what he is going to do when he gets out of school -- and other advice that "only a man can give a boy."

Intimately bound up with the ritual kinship pattern are other social aspects such as gift-giving, entertaining, and mutual aid.

We find gift-giving prevails during infancy and childhood. The various occasions on which godparents give their godchildren gifts have been discussed earlier. As the child grows older, there seems to be some decrease in this practice, but at the same time there seems to develop in the older child the feeling of an obligation to reciprocate by giving gifts to his godparents. A young college student said, with some embarrassment, "My godparents gave me my Christmas gifts, but I've never got around to giving them theirs, this year. It's ready, though." One godmother said that a number of her ahijados went overseas during the war and sent her many nice gifts, including a rosary made of rare woods from France. Yet another said, "I remember all of my ahijados at Christmas and on their birthdays, and most of them don't forget me either...I like to get at least a Christmas card from them."

Aside from the entertainment provided after the various ceremonies, information from our informants would indicate that there is more social visiting back and forth between families of the compadres than there is with families not related through ritual kinship. Most of the family dinners, picnics, get-togethers on holidays such as Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving usually include compadres and their families.

Mutual aid among compadres in Tucson seems to exist more on the level of entertainment than in bigger enterprises. Whether this is a condition brought about by the urbanization of Mexican Americans we are not prepared to say. However, it is obvious that in Tucson there is no need for cooperative efforts in such enterprises as harvesting or house-raising, since in the first instance Tucsonans are not agriculturists, and in the second they hire contractors to build their houses or buy them already built. Neither were we able to find instances of borrowing from compadres; one informant said he would certainly feel freer to ask for a loan from his compadre than from some one he did not know, but expressed no inclination to do so under the present circumstances. Again, the fact that we were working with middle-class families who are apparently able to solve their own financial problems may have prevented our obtaining such information. In view of what we learned of their attitudes toward taking over the financial responsibilities of their godchild should the need arise, we would hazard a guess that they would also come to the aid of a compadre in need of financial assistance.

Resumé

The ideal pattern already described for the five families seems to persist throughout the broader group; again, in selection and petitioning there is decided discrepancy in the expressed ideal, as in the real expression of that preferred pattern. There is general agreement on these factors: (1) for baptism, the most important ceremony, there must be two sponsors (madrina and padrino), with reciprocal respect and friendly regard between parents and godparents (compadres), responsibility on the part of the godparent for the religious training of the child, and for his physical care if the parent

dies, as well as general interest, including visits, gifts, and so on; in return, the child calls his godparents by the endearing terms nino and nina, pays them a high degree of respect at all times, listens to their advice, and continues to show his courtesy by visits and gifts as he grows older; (2) for confirmation, there must be one sponsor, of the same sex as the child, also called nino or nina; (3) for communion, there is generally a sponsor who may or may not be referred to as madrina or padrino; (4) for marriage, there are "witnesses" who serve as attendants and are generally called madrina and padrino; they assume all or part of the expense of the wedding, and should take the responsibility for seeing that the marriage holds together. There should be also some kind of party after each ceremony, but this may range from cakes and chocolate to a big dinner or reception with dancing late into the night.

Some families feel strongly that sponsors should be members of the family (grandparents often preferred); others feel just as strongly that good friends serve best. All agree that a sponsor should be "good," a "good Catholic," and a kindly, "respectful" person.

Likewise, some people feel that the child should be asked for; others, that he should be offered to the right person for sponsorship. All agree that sponsorship is an honor not to be refused except under stringent circumstances. In addition to the departures from this ideal pattern occasioned by marriage outside the church and moving from one place to another, there are many variations also due to relative degrees of acculturation and to personality and circumstantial differences. There is marked departure, also, from the ideal of former times of having a sponsor for other life crises or emergencies than those so defined by the church. None of these is generally

practiced in Tucson, and when they are, not too much attention is paid to the sponsorship once the emergency is over.

As always, the older generation laments the laxity of the younger in maintaining standards, but most of the younger people seem to take for granted their adherence to the ideal pattern, although they may deviate in the form of their expression. They think they can hold on to what is good in the system without seeming peculiar in their Anglo setting. They meet with indulgent smiles any reference to some of the patterns found in older Latin American cultures, and excuse their tendency to slough off certain of these forms on the basis of their being out-of-date or "just superstition"; but in no case have we seen this attitude applied to the fundamentals of their Catholic religion. They are frank to criticize certain local situations in the Church, but not the basic doctrine.

As expected, the keenest interest in perpetuating the system is shown by those whose parents and godparents have been "good" compadres, and in a few cases, by those who have been denied that relationship but have seen its advantage to others. In other words, they want their children to have what proved to be "good for" them, to meet their basic needs.

Although all declare themselves ready to assist compadres in emergencies, there is little evidence of the use of the system for mercenary or social-climbing purposes. Since they are relatively independent financially, they see no need to use the system as a source of subsistence. Respectful, amicable, friendly interpersonal relations based on religious faith are stressed instead. It is in these terms that they tend to justify the system as a whole, and socializing in particular, as well as their own modifications of prescribed practices.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND QUERIES

The godparent system as we have seen it in Tucson challenges classification beyond the fact that it maintains the general characteristics of godparenthood wherever it is practiced. We note a tendency toward the limitation of ceremonies to those taking place within the Church -- a trend toward contraction rather than expansion. Within these boundaries, there are as many variations in local practice as there are differences in usages in Latin American cultures. Still the system serves its original purpose in that it "dramatizes the social value of the ritual occasion and inaugurates enduring relationships"; it¹ "makes the immediate social environment more stable and its participants...more secure"; it acts to transmit² the moral and spiritual values of the group from one generation to another by the ideal of consistent selection of sponsors of good character and religious "respectability"; and it serves to make all social action smoother by training the young in ways of courtesy and respect.

Our study of the system in a middle-class setting reveals certain other characteristics which help further to show its place in the total social structure. Since there is little cutting across class (or caste) lines, it makes for horizontal integration within the class, not a vertical mobility upward or downward. (Perhaps these people remember too well the recent struggle to establish a solid middle class in their homeland to want

1. Paul, 1942, p. 59.

2. Mintz and Wolf, 1950, p. 355.

more for the present.) It has struck a nice balance between intensification and extension;³ it is strengthening its ties within the kinship circle while adding new ones from the outside by electing new sponsors for each required ceremony for each child, but not -- in this case -- adding so many semi-secular rituals as to spread itself thin and so eventually wear itself out. Likewise, by leaving behind in large part the colorful differentiae which would link the system with the more primitive Middle American cultures of pre-Catholic days, it has enabled this segment to remain au courant with the accepted patterns of the larger group of which it is a part; thus it promotes integration, not isolation, in the new environment. And by refusing to submit to opportunism and patronage, it has maintained its own independence and integrity as well as that of its participants. It may be less basic to social organization than, say, in Pascua nearby, but as a technique of social control it has been made to serve well.

But still we might wonder why the system, if it may be called a system in this particular situation, has endured in Tucson, where the environment is conceded in many ways to be not highly propitious for such a pattern. Students of the compadre system in other settings find that it does not thrive in urbanized, industrial, transient populations. They find, too, that the system tends to weaken as life is centered less and less about the Church, as many Mexican Americans lament that it is doing in this country. Still it continues on through one generation after another.

The answer would seem to lie not so much in its significance as a part of the social structure as in the motivations and rewards which it affords the individual participants. That brings us back to our basic postulate and

3. Paul, op. cit., p. 56.

the responsibility for "showing how the fulfillment of the pattern promotes the solidarity or survival of the society and the maintenance of their equilibrium on the part of the individuals."⁴

The compadre system helps to meet a need common to all people: a sense of security and companionship, a "we are not alone" feeling. If possible, this need is even more keenly felt by people in a minority group, separated from the source of many of their ways of life and in constant contact with new ways which they are in the process of assimilating.

For the individual, the system provides added affection when the infant needs it most. It enables him to grow up in a less tense atmosphere, since his parents are relieved of some of the anxiety which they might otherwise feel. It also gives him a personal sense of security to know he has parents in reserve, that there is always someone to love him. It develops behavior patterns which are designed to ease and enrich personal relations; he learns to do things in ways which will gain him not only approval and affection, but also cooperation. It eases the usual tensions between young and old by providing a pattern for dealing with these relationships amicably. It does not solve all the problems of the individual, but it puts him into a better position to solve them himself through its insurance against having to cope with more than he can bear alone and without panic in the unknown future. He has someone with whom to share the trials and tribulations ahead of him, which knowledge is a source of satisfaction to him even if he never takes advantage of it. As he grows up, he meets new friends and these friendships are in turn enriched by what he has already learned about getting along with people. Eventually he is asked to take his turn at serving as compadre,

4. Kluckhohn, 1944, p. 47.

and he begins to feel an added dignity and stature as he assumes the responsibilities and ties of the mature relationship. He is proud to be considered worthy to hand on the values which have accrued in his own life.

For the group, the system provides integration, but with independence and integrity, not a desperate clinging together against pressures they cannot cope with otherwise. It is based on mutual regard and respect for both the individual and the group. Therefore, it strengthens, not weakens, the total structure, even though it may be operating more as a graceful embellishment than as a part of the essential framework. Because it is flexible and adaptive, it can be adjusted to fit new patterns of living; it does not deter progress by becoming stereotyped; while based on ritual, it does not become meaningless routine; it is based on sacred ceremonies in which the people believe, and it is carried out in ways that are acceptable in the current overall pattern of mores. Those parts of the earlier patterns which might have become tawdry accoutrements and a source of embarrassment in a new environment where they have lost their meaning have been left by the wayside -- fond memories of the old days, not impediments to present advance. So the system has maintained its life and its dignity! Without being rigid and pompous, it has become the symbol of good form in social relations. Based on deference and respect, it has inspired these qualities in those who come in contact with the participants.

Since the system does meet a deep-felt need, we are led to make further inquiries of a heuristic nature: How are these needs met in the absence of this particular system? It would seem that a profitable study could be made of other Catholic and non-Catholic groups to see how they have adapted the godparent system to their own purposes. Likewise, a study of other minority

groups in Tucson -- Chinese, Greek, Italian, and so on -- with emphasis on their methods of achieving social solidarity through group deference and respect should prove most interesting. Our study of an essentially middle-class segment brought up references to "other people," which suggests another pursuit: How does the compadre system function in the upper and lower classes of this same group? Have they been able to improve upon or lessen the effectiveness of the institution? What differences have developed among those who have not yet achieved middle-class status and those who have risen above it? And finally, where breakdowns do occur in the system, what are the causes? Is it due to personal idiosyncrasies, to increased urban sophistication, to a breaking away from the binding institution, the Church, or is it a substitution of other more satisfying patterns? One way to get this information would be to study the children more extensively, particularly their comadre play. From this and other forms of free expression, what can we learn about the attitudes and behavior they are developing in regard to the system? The incidental data which we gathered in our limited experiments, but which we could not use in this particular study, would indicate that there is a wealth of unexplored material in the uninhibited activity of children which would contribute much to our understanding of all social patterns.

This study is by no means complete. It should be thought of, rather, as one other exploration into the study of the social function of a given aspect of culture.

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