PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE CLASS MEXICAN AND AMERICAN MALES ABOUT PARENT-CHILD AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS*

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*Adapted from an Invited Address before the First International Conference of the Western Regional Chapter of the American Academy of Psychotherapists, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico, November 1963.

This research was supported in part by a grant from the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies of the University of Michigan.
PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE CLASS MEXICAN AND AMERICAN MALES ABOUT PARENT-CHILD AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS¹,²

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The purpose of this paper is to offer some data pertinent to hypotheses about Mexican family life and Mexican interpersonal relations as compared to that found in the United States. While the data are not definitive, nor do they represent all the varieties of Mexicans or Americans to be found, they do show clear contrasts between Mexicans and Americans and are believed to contribute to our fund of knowledge about cross-cultural differences.

There is no super-abundance of cross-cultural research involving our nearest Spanish-speaking neighbor. Mexican contributions to self-understanding include works on Mexican philosophy (e.g., Luquín, 1961; Paz, 1959; H. Ramírez, 1961; Villegas, 1960); the development of personality in Mexico (e.g., Bermúdez, 1955; González Pineda, 1959, 1961; Iturriaga, 1952; de la Maza, 1953; S. Ramírez, 1961; Reyes Nevarez, 1952) and a handful of empirical studies (such as those by Díaz-Guerrero, 1955, 1959, 1961; Gómez Robleda, 1962). Although this list does not exhaust the bibliography of psychological analyses of Mexicans by Mexicans, it comes close to doing so. Furthermore, with the exception of the empirical studies, there is a strong tendency for the existing studies to cite each other, adding little new information.

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There does exist some research on intellectual characteristics of Mexicans (e.g., Mercado, Díaz-Guerrero & Gardner, 1963; Velarde Rosas & Romo Organista, 1963). There is a growing body of literature on information about attitudes and values (e.g., Anderson & Anderson, 1959, 1961, 1962; Díaz-Guerrero, 1961; Murray, 1954; Nall, 1962; Peck & Díaz-Guerrero, 1961; Samora, 1961), and the beginning of an understanding of Mexican middle-class juvenile delinquency, a phenomenon now only some six or seven years old (see Maslow & Díaz-Guerrero, 1960). A bibliography of sociological studies on Mexico, done by Americans, has been compiled by Cumberland (1960). Several anthropological studies are available, of which perhaps those by Lewis (1959, 1961) are the best known.

There is, however, a notable lack of detailed studies of Mexican parent-child relations, the foundation for an adequate understanding of personality development. Mexico has no Allison Davis, no Urie Bronfenbrenner, no Whiting and Child, no Patterns of Child Rearing, no census of the variety of relations which exist among Mexican parents and their children. As a consequence there is a strong tendency (among Mexican writers also) to assume that all Mexican parents treat their children in the same way, and in a way very different from that employed by American parents, with the consequence that all Mexicans are very different from Americans.  

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3It should be noted that most of the analyses of "Mexican" or "American" personality usually refer to middle-class persons or families in both countries and in any empirical study only refer to a very local population which the investigators call by an overly generic term. The reader is warned that our use of the word "Mexican" is only for convenience in language and reference to literature. Inferences to generic types are nevertheless necessary, if hazardous.
A second theme for which there are few empirical studies (but which is, according to Mexicans, of great importance for an adequate understanding of Mexican culture and personal development) is that of interpersonal relations.

To help fill these gaps we will first present the results of a study on parent-child relations and then some data on interpersonal relations, comparing questionnaire responses of Mexican subjects to those made by Americans. The hypotheses which will be used to guide the presentation of the data were, for the most part, generated by Mexicans.

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS

Perhaps one of the most clear and succinct statements, in English, about Mexican family life is that presented by A. H. Maslow and Rogelio Díaz-Guerrero (1960). Intended as an explanation for the until-recent absence of middle-class juvenile delinquency in Mexico, the article draws upon observations in Mexico, a few empirical studies, and comments by Mexican authors, to describe the general middle-class pattern of child rearing. The relations ascribed to Mexican parents and their children are similar to those hypothesized by, for example, Bermúdez (1955), González Pineda (1959, 1961) and S. Ramírez (1961) and as such can be considered representative of current Mexican thought about middle-class family relations.

Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero begin by noting that Mexican children are "better behaved," more polite, obedient and respectful of adults, than are American children.

4 Though it is not specifically noted in their article, the reader should understand that Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero are talking only about middle-class Mexican families.
Mexican parents seem to have less trouble with their children than do U.S. parents. . . . They are seldom, if ever, disrespectful to their parents, or openly defiant or rebellious. There are more often expressions of affection for adults, i.e., kissing fathers, arms around mothers and grandmothers, etc.

This is the case, assert Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero, even though the Mexican father is home less frequently than his American counterpart. One reason they offer is that Mexican parents have a clear-cut idea of how to raise children.

All fathers (and mothers and children too) know how a father 'should' behave toward his children. . . . Or to put it another way, the Mexican father (or mother) 'knows' far more definitely what the 'right' way is to bring up children. . . . By comparison the American parent is confused, uncertain, guilty, and conflicted. . . . Every Mexican parent is an 'authority' in a sense.

As an authority on child-rearing the Mexican parent rules by whim instead of by Spock, and the punishments or rewards he metes out are dependent more upon his current mood than some fixed standard. But he does this within fairly well-defined limits (i.e., what he thinks is right or wrong doesn't vary too much) and the child therefore has some security. Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero argue that the Mexican child has more security than the American child, as the latter is faced with parents who are never certain that their conduct as parents is correct. Because the Mexican parent is secure in his position of authority he can also lavish affection without fear of "losing face."

The Mexican child, therefore, is raised in an atmosphere in which adult values are the only ones which matter, where obedience to (parents') authority is of paramount importance, and in which the parents' criteria of "good" behavior is clearly defined. To support Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero's hypothesis that these attitudes are well-ingrained in Mexican children we
have presented in Table 1 the results of a study on middle-class Mexican and American attitudes toward authority. The Mexican subjects were 94 male seniors in a private preparatory school in Guadalajara. The 90 American subjects were male freshmen and sophomores at the University of Michigan. The subjects indicated on a six-point scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, their reactions to the statements presented. The direction of the scales was alternately reversed to avoid response set.

On 9 of 11 scales the Guadalajara subjects were significantly more authoritarian, according to our criteria, in their attitudes than were the Michigan students. For example, 90 per cent of the Guadalajara students, as compared to 24 per cent of those from Michigan, affirmed that one should agree with the authorities even when they, the authorities, are wrong. Some 66 per cent of the Guadalajaranas, as compared to 24 per cent of the Michigan students, stated that someone who does not feel love and respect for his parents is not a moral person. Ninety-five per cent of the Guadalajara boys (61 per cent of those from Michigan) felt that young people need more control.

The two exceptions are interesting. There is no significant difference between Guadalajara and Michigan young men in their agreement that small children should never be allowed to hit their parents. Apparently this is insupportable in either culture. It is possible that in Mexico the prohibition results from the position of parents as unquestionable authorities, while in the United States it is more a function of middle-class prohibitions.
against direct, physical expressions of hostility. Secondly, Guadalajara students were more emphatic than Michigan undergraduates in denying that patriotism and loyalty are primary requisites for good citizenship. In the discussion that follows, therefore, we should understand "obedience to authority" to refer to that given to parents.

In summary, according to Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero, we should expect to find that middle-class Mexican parents are seen by their children as demanding and stern, as arbitrary and inconsistent in their demands, but also as loving and more demonstrative of affection. By contrast the middle-class American parent would be seen as relaxed, lenient, somewhat flexible, and much less authoritarian. There follow some data which are pertinent to their hypotheses. Let us also briefly note that Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero are cognizant of other characteristics produced by the type of Mexican parent they have described, characteristics such as "deeper passivity, irresponsibility, and inferiority feeling ... in the Mexican male.

Given that Maslow and Díaz-Guerrero have emphasized the obedience of Mexican children to authority, how can we explain this apparent deviation? One explanation, we believe, lies in remembering who the Guadalajara subjects were; they were Catholic students in a Catholic school taught in part by priests, and they represented the upper-middle class of Guadalajara. Article 3 of the Mexican Constitution prohibits church-affiliated schools and it is to be expected that part of the students' education includes comments on the illegitimacy of a government which pays at least lip-service to such a constitution. However it should be noted that, according to many observers, non-Catholic Mexicans show the same lack of respect for governmental authority at all levels, suggesting that a more universal reason is the basis for considering patriotism and loyalty to be of secondary importance.
METHOD

Subjects

Our aim in selecting these local groups for exploratory study was to control for social class, age, sex, and educational level of respondents. The Mexican subjects for the study were the same 94 students described in the study on attitudes toward authority. They were all in their last year in a Catholic preparatory school in Guadalajara and were all nominally Catholic. All of the students planned a university career. Social class was estimated from their fathers' occupation; the group represented the upper middle-class of Guadalajara society. The average age of the group was 17.5 years. The subjects were contacted through the school officials and served voluntarily.

The American subjects were male undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Michigan (not the same group as for the attitudes toward authority study). The majority were nominally Protestant. Social class ratings were essentially the same as for the Guadalajara subjects. Their average age was 19.6 years: a check of the data showed no difference between the subjects' responses as a function of age. The Michigan students were paid volunteers serving in a larger study on blood pressure.

Recall of Treatment Received from Parents

To measure the perceptions which subjects had of relations with their parents a modified form of the Semantic Differential (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) was used. This instrument, called the Parent Image Differential, has been used in several doctoral dissertations (e.g., Harburg, 1962; McGinn, 1962).
The subject is asked to read a concept at the top of a page and rate its meaning on a number of scales below the concept on the page. The six concepts which constitute the Parent Image Differential in its present form are:

How My Father Treated Me When I Was A Child
How My Mother Treated Me When I Was A Child
How My Father Taught Me When I Was A Child
How My Mother Taught Me When I Was A Child
How My Father Disciplined Me When I Was A Child
How My Mother Disciplined Me When I Was A Child

A sample of the scales used for the various concepts is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hard</th>
<th>mild</th>
<th>soft</th>
<th>stern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the scale-concept combinations used in this study.

The Parent Image Differential has now been used with more than 1000 subjects, male and female, of various ages, in the United States and Mexico. In each of the seven independent studies which have been done scale responses by subjects for each of the concepts were factor analyzed by varima rotation. The similarity of the factors produced was then compared by use of a similarity index developed by Kaiser. Some of the factors produced in all of the groups, especially between Americans and Mexicans, were highly similar, suggesting that there are certain universal dimensions of relations between parents and children, such as Potency (or the severity with which parents treat their children), Support, Affection, Inclusion. Subjects use some of the same

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6H. F. Kaiser, relating factors between studies based on different individuals (Urbana, Ill.: Bureau of Education Research, Univ. of Illinois, 1960). (Mimeo.)
dimensions in both Mexico and the United States in recalling experiences with parents even though, as we shall see, the position of parents on these dimensions varies between the cultures.

The validity of the Parent Image Differential has been supported in two ways (see McGinn, et al. for a more complete statement). First, responses on some of the factors measured by the Parent Image Differential correlate highly with responses to questionnaire items intended to measure the same variables (e.g., subjects who see their parents as highly potent as per the Parent Image Differential concurrently report their parents as frequently punishing). Secondly, the reliability of factor scores on the Parent Image Differential averages about 0.70, measured on two occasions a year apart (N = 24). If the Parent Image Differential produces reliable responses there is reason to believe that it is measuring recollections of childhood treatment which have existed for some time, and which therefore have had considerable influence in determining the development of the child's personality. It is possible that in some instances the translation of the scales from English to Spanish did not convey the exact meaning as in the original form, but the similarity between basic dimensions generated by subjects in the United States and those in Mexico argues that subjects were able to grasp the meaning intended. It is also possible that subjects responded according to a cultural stereotype of what parents are like. That this is probably not the case is suggested by two facts. First, Mexican subjects produced a number of dimensions similar to those by subjects in the United States, even though they differed from

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7Ausubel (1958) asserts that the only way to measure the validity of perceptual instruments is by stability over time, stating that perceptions formed in childhood should continue to exist through adolescence and thus be repeatedly measurable.
American subjects in the mean position ascribed to their parents. Secondly, there is considerable variability among Mexican, or American, subjects and, as will be shown, this variability is related to other variables in a meaningful way.

Each of the seven scale positions was assigned a number from 1 to 7 in series beginning with the left hand side of the scale. The means presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 thus represent the average responses of each of the two groups to each of the various scales.

RESULTS

In none of the scales were the two groups significantly different on extreme opposite ends of the scales. For that reason the findings are reported here in terms of which group was most extreme and in what direction. That the two groups were not more extreme in their differences suggests that there is considerable heterogeneity in both cultures in terms of treatment received from parents. However, the significance of the differences, and the number of them, suggests that there are some core disparities between the two cultures.

As responses to some of the scales did not meet the requirements of normality of distribution they were analyzed with the Mann-Whitney U Test. The resulting z scores may be interpreted in the same manner as those resulting from the application of Student's t (Siegel, 1956). In the following description, for convenience of language, we speak of the extreme ends of scale responses to indicate the direction of differences; each scale distribution is actually continuous and most are normally distributed within each group.

In Table 2 we see that there were eight significant differences between the subjects from Guadalajara and those from Michigan for the concept How My
Father Treated Me. Guadalajara subjects were significantly more extreme in their responses, in comparison to those from Michigan, for the scales: stern, hard, skillful, just, usually critical, and close. That is, the Guadalajara subjects saw their fathers as having been more stern, hard, skillful, etc., than did the Michigan subjects. The Michigan subjects were more extreme for the scales: relaxed and lenient.

For the concept Mother Treated there were also eight significant differences. Guadalajarans saw their mother as having been more stern, skillful, just and close, than did the Michigan students, while the Michigan students saw their mothers as having been more soft, with praise, lenient, and usually praising.

Table 3 presents the differences for the concept How My Father/Mother Taught Me. For Father, Guadalajarans were more extreme in the direction of reporting him as: skillful in teaching me new things, stern, acting as if always right, and basically understanding. Michiganders were more extreme in the direction: criticized mistakes, relaxed, and soft. For Mother, those from Guadalajara saw their mothers as more often: discouraging disagreement with her, supporting mistakes, skillful, and easy to irritate, while those from Michigan reported their mothers as more: mild, soft, and willing to admit mistakes.
Differences for the concept How My Father/Mother Disciplined Me are reported in Table 4. The Guadalajara students reported their fathers as: usually persuading, got angry when punishing, severe, easy to irritate, expected me to do as he wished (as opposed to expected me to know the rules), strict; and these students more often blamed themselves when punished (instead of blaming father). For Mother, the Guadalajara students saw their mothers as: got angry when punishing, easy to irritate, made reasonable demands, strict. The Michigan students were more extreme in reporting their mothers as: rarely punished, soft, and lenient.

The differences between the two groups are summarized in Figure 1. Guadalajara students saw their fathers as more stern, hard, critical, strict, easy to irritate, and as getting angry while punishing, but at the same time more skillful, just, close, understanding, and persuading. The Guadalajarans also felt that their father acted as if always right and expected the child to do as he, the father, wished, but reported that they blamed themselves when punished by their father. The Michigan students saw their fathers as more relaxed, soft, lenient, but critical of mistakes.

The Guadalajarans saw their mothers as more stern, strict, easy to irritate, angry when punishing, and as discouraging disagreement, but also more close, just, reasonable, supporting and skillful with the child, while the Michiganders saw their mothers as more soft, praising, lenient, mild, willing to admit mistakes, and rarely punishing.
PARENT IMAGE AND FRIENDSHIP RELATIONS

There is a remarkable similarity between the description of parents as provided by these two groups of students and that hypothesized by Maslow and Diaz-Guerrero, suggesting that we now have at least the beginnings of an adequate description of relations between middle-class Mexican parents and their children.8

The middle-class Mexican father, as described by his son in this study, is seen as domineering and demanding, but demanding compliance to his personal whims rather than to a set of absolute rules which have meaning and importance outside of the family. At the same time this father is seen as just and close and warm, so that the child does not resent his authority and his demands but wants to conform to them. The child also blames himself if he is punished: a just and close father, even an arbitrary one, could not be wrong.9 From these data we do not learn much about the American father, except that he is softer, more relaxed, lenient, less sure of himself, and more often produces resentment in the child. Maslow and Diaz-Guerrero describe the American father as "confused, uncertain, guilty and conflicted."

We suggest the confusion and guilt increases with the educational level of the father and is concerned with the relationship between discipline

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8 Though in this section we refer to "Mexican" and "American" parents we must continue to keep in mind that these data might be limited in generalizability to middle-class parents of students in Guadalajara and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

9 In the American sample the Parent Image Differential produced a factor in which the most salient scales were "just-injust" and "consistent-inconsistent." This was not true for the Guadalajara group, and it remains an interesting question as to why justice is not associated with consistency for that group.
and affiliation, or force and friendship. In a national sample of the American people, Gurin, Veroff, and Feld observe that "parents of a higher educational level seem to be more involved in the parental role, as measured by their greater concern with the parent-child relationship. With this involvement comes more introspection about their parental adjustment, evidenced as in the marriage area, in their greater sense of inadequacy in the role" (p. 140). Specifically the data show such parents to feel inadequate in what is classified as "parent-child affiliative relationship" and "lack of tolerance for child's behavior," with the fathers having more problem with the former and the mother more with the latter. But "... fathers ... seem to be reacting to a lack of warm relationship, and feel guilty about emotional neglect of the child."

The Mexican mother is seen as similar to her husband in her strictness, but also as close, just, and supporting, while the description of the American would suggest that she is a bland creature who does not push her child toward acceptance of parental authority, and who, again according to Gurin et. al., feels most inadequate or guilty about their anger and loss of temper with their child.

Assuming, as do Maslow and Diaz-Guerrero, that the Mexican father plays a paramount role in the formation of his son, we might ask ourselves, "What kind of child would this type of father produce?" Most normal children usually want to avoid punishments and receive rewards. The normal child learns to perform certain actions and avoid others according to the rewards or punishments which his parents assign to these actions. We can therefore imagine that if the Mexican father places a high premium on compliance with his demands, as indicated by the data above, the Mexican child will be highly
motivated to comply with his father. But if the demands of the father depend upon his mood, if the child does not know exactly what will be demanded of him from one time to the next, if there is no fixed standard of "good" behavior, then compliance is made difficult or impossible, and the child has to seek some other way to avoid punishments. The Mexican child does not want to run away, for his father offers him a great deal of love, nor can he neutralize the effect of punishment by hating his father whom he sees as just. The only solution left to him is to attempt to manipulate his father so that his arbitrary demands will not be too difficult to comply with, and/or to manipulate his father in the administration of punishment when the child is unable to comply. That is, the child must strive constantly to maintain an image of himself in his father's eyes as a good and loving child who does not merit punishment. He is forced constantly to seek that his father love him, and one way to do this is by demonstrating great affection for his father. As Maslow and Diaz-Guerrero say, "There are more often expressions of affection for adults, i.e., kissing father, arms around mothers or grandmothers, etc." Caught in the performance of an infraction Mexican children often plead with their parents not to punish them, to forgive them, offering great demonstrations of affection for them. All this, we would suggest, happens because the child learns that "right" or "wrong" depends upon what the parent feels at the moment toward the child and not on some fixed standard.

The child is thus rewarded for (demonstration of) friendliness toward his parents. Assuming that this kind of motivation generalizes from parents to others in his environment, that the child learns from his parents that the way to avoid punishment in the world is by always having good relations with others, we would expect that the Mexican child would be strongly motivated in
all of his activities in an affiliative direction. Because he was rewarded
by his father for his friendliness, in his adult life he would tend to seek
friendship with others and feel secure only when he is able to establish condi-
tions of goodwill. His image of himself as a "successful" person would be
more a function of the number and intensity of friendships he had than, for
example, his more material accomplishments in the world. He would be more
upset by failure to make a friend, or the loss of an extant friendship, than
by failure in some material sense, such as loss of a sale. Just as with his
father he learned to deny that anything had happened to strain their relation-
ship (as for example when he did something that his father didn't like) he
would do everything possible in his adult life that anything had happened to
disrupt a friendship.

In contrast to the type of person described thus far, we might con-
sider the kind of child which would be produced by a parent who was less
stern, hard and severe, who was willing to admit his mistakes, who demanded
obedience to a set of rules instead of to his personal wishes, and who
administered punishment in a more detached manner. This parent, we argue,
would be more likely to produce a child who realizes that to avoid punishment
and gain rewards it is necessary to do what is right, and that what is right
does not depend on any one person. This child would be less strongly moti-
ved to seek friendship from others as a means of guaranteeing security of a
positive self-evaluation. This child would also develop more independence
from his father, and from others, since they can be wrong. He would be more
likely to maintain his own opinions in the face of disagreement with other
people.
As Michigan students describe their parents as more similar to the model presented above, we might expect to find therefore that these students would be less interested in friendships than their Mexican counterparts (or at least less motivated by friendship per se) and more willing to maintain their own opinions in a situation in which a best friend disagrees with them. According to the model, Mexican students should be more concerned about maintaining the friendship than their own opinion, or should respond in a way suggesting that they believe that friendships are based upon sharing of opinions about important matters. The following comments and data have some bearing on these hypotheses.

FRIENDSHIP RELATIONS

The American who comes to Mexico has many occasions to be embarrassed by his apparent lack of knowledge of the rules of courtesy. He does not, for example, automatically stretch out his hand when he meets someone on the street, nor is he accustomed to excuse himself when he steps away from a conversation. He does not usually give an effusive welcome to acquaintances that he passes on the street (often he doesn't even say "hello" believing a simple wave of the hand to be sufficient), and he commits the "terrible" error of thinking that it is more important to be on time for an appointment than to continue a conversation with a friend.

We are, of course, not saying that all Americans are "rugged individualists" and all Mexicans conformists. But it is noteworthy that several authors have commented on the Mexican political custom of personalismo (e.g., Gillin, 1960; Maslow and Diaz-Guerrero, 1960) in which personalities rather than issues completely determine political struggles, while the United States middle-class is noted for their adherence to the rules of the "Protestant Ethic."
But Mexicans do all of these things and not just as casual or empty gestures. The American visitor is embarrassed because these indications of friendliness have great importance for the Mexican, and the Mexican is, to all appearances, deeply hurt or troubled when his demonstrations of friendliness are not reciprocated with the same intensity. Because Americans do not demonstrate their friendliness in such an effusive way they are generally regarded by Mexicans as cold or unfriendly, or as feeling superior to the Mexican.

The Mexican concern for friendly relations extends to all areas of life. The Mexican business letter, for example, is four-fifths flowers and one-fifth business. In the university Mexican students go to great lengths to be "friends" with their teacher. Outside of class they are concerned about his health, whether he would like to attend the bullfights with them, and so on.

Perhaps the best example of Mexican friendliness is contained in the Mexican promise. A Mexican will say "yes" to almost any request, but then may not comply with it. The reason is, according to various authors (e.g., S. Ramirez, 1961; Reyes Nevarez, 1952), that it would be rude, and thus endanger the loss of a friend or the possibility of making one, to say "no." (As all Mexicans know this they are not upset when the promise is not fulfilled, but the experience is continually disturbing for Americans.)

A recent study (Harburg, McGinn, & Ginsburg, unpublished) makes an empirical comparison of American and Mexican attitudes toward friendship relations.
METHOD

Mexican and American male subjects filled out a questionnaire in which they indicated their reactions to three situations of interpersonal conflict. The subjects were 174 preparatory students and university from Guadalajara and 174 undergraduate and graduate students from the University of Michigan. An analysis showed that age had no relation to responses.

By means of initials the subjects indicated their best friend in school (1), a strongly disliked person (7), and a mildly disliked person (9). So that the subjects would make their responses with a specific person in mind, they wrote the initials of the persons chosen whenever the numbers (1), (7) and (9) appeared in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was a modified semantic differential form developed by Harburg (1962). This form presents the subjects with situations in which Best Friend Likes Strongly Disliked Person, Best Friend Refuses to Write An Important Letter of Recommendations, and Mildly Disliked Person Criticizes Subject's Performance in an Important Activity. (The exact situations are presented in Figure 2.) The subjects then indicated their responses to these situations on a series of bipolar seven-point scales. Means were calculated for each group and the significance of differences tested by the Mann-Whitney U Test.

RESULTS

A summary of the results of this study are presented in Figure 2. In the situation Best Friend Likes Strongly Disliked Person, Guadalajara were more extreme than the Michigan students in their reactions to the scales:
(1) could really like (7), and avoid feeling irritated at (1). Michigan subjects were more extreme on the scales: feel uneasy, like (1) less, think (1) may be mistaken, disagree with (1), like (1) less, think (1) may be mistaken, feel I knew (7) enough, dislike (7) as before, talk with (1) about (7), and not have expected (1)'s attitude.

For the situation Best Friend Refuses to Write Letter of Recommendation, the responses of the Guadalajara students were more extreme for the scales: feel anxious at (1)'s refusal, and try to change (1)'s attitude. The responses for the Michigan students were more extreme for the scales: feel angry at (1), feel job was important, like (1) less, and not have expected (1)'s attitude.

For the third situation, Mildly Disliked Person Criticizes Performance, the Michigan subjects were more extreme on the scales: feel irritated about (9)'s remark, feel like being sarcastic to (9), feel more dislike for (9), and have expected (9)'s remark.

DISCUSSION

These data are interpreted as indicating that while the Michigan subjects are upset by conflict with a best friend or a disliked person, their reaction is the same to each of them. On a paper and pencil test at least, the Michigan students tend to deny the validity of the point of view of the person criticizing them or disagreeing with them. The Michigan subject appears to maintain his own position in face of disagreement, willing to break a friendship rather than change his own opinion. The Guadalajara students on the other hand seem to deny the existence of a possible threat to their friendship (in the first two situations).
Some 45 per cent of the Guadalajara students (as compared to 6 per cent from Michigan) said they would feel pleasant in the situation Best Friend Likes Strongly Disliked Person. In the situation Best Friend Refuses to Write Letter of Recommendation the Guadalajara subjects were more extreme in the direction of "feel uneasy" than the Michigan subjects, and more extreme for the scale "try to change (l)'s attitude," but 29 per cent of them (as compared to 7 per cent of the Michigan subjects) said that they would feel that the job was not important, 36 per cent of them (as compared to 12 per cent) said that they would like friend more, and 48 per cent (as compared to 36 per cent) said that they would avoid feeling angry with their friend.

The conclusions which we think can be drawn from these data is that the Michigan subjects were less strongly motivated to maintain the friendship than the Guadalajara students, and more interested in maintaining their own position. It might be suggested that the Guadalajara students felt that in order to maintain the friendship they must avoid any disagreement with their friend, while the Michigan students felt free to disagree with him, that is, that disagreement would not endanger the friendship. However, 45 per cent of the Michigan students in the first situation, and 51 per cent in the second situation (as compared to 27 per cent and 28 per cent for the Guadalajaran) said that they would like (l) less, which suggests that the Michigan students would be more likely to take the initiative in terminating the friendship.

**PARENT IMAGE AND RESPONSE TO CONFLICT WITH FRIENDS**

Inasmuch as we have earlier shown that Michigan students recall the treatment received from their parents in a different way than that recalled by the Guadalajara students, it is feasible to argue that these differences
in recollections of parent-child relations may be related to the differences in reactions to interpersonal conflict. However, it is possible that these sets of findings have only a coincidental relationship, so we carried out a small pilot study to more directly test the relationship.

Ninety-four of the Guadalajara students who responded to the Parent Image Differential also responded to the interpersonal conflict questionnaire. If there is a relationship between recall of parental treatment and motivation to maintain friendships, then those subjects who saw their parents as most like the prototype discussed (stern, hard, arbitrary but just and warm) should also be those who attempted to deny conflict with their friend and were willing to change their opinion. Guadalajara subjects who recalled their parents in the way the modal Michigan student did (soft, relaxed, etc.) should also be those who maintained their own opinion in the face of disagreement and responded as liking (1) less.

The most adequate test of this relationship would involve a considerable number of subjects matched according to the profile of their perception of their parents, and then tested with the interpersonal conflict questionnaire. Such a study is currently being designed. For the present a less adequate and revealing analysis will have to suffice.

The responses of the 94 Guadalajara subjects to the Father Potency scales (i.e., stern, hard, severe) were summed to give a number representing potency of the father. The same was done for Mother. The Father scales: acted as if always right, expected me to do as he wished, and usually persuaded, were combined in a similar fashion. Two other variables for Father were constructed using the scales: usually critical, got angry when punishing, easy to irritate; and skillful, just, blamed myself. An additional
variable for Mother involved summing responses for the scales: just, made reasonable demands, skillful, and with praise.\textsuperscript{11} Each of the variables was keyed so that a high score would represent a "Mexican" parent, a low score an "American" parent.

These six parent image variables were used in a multiple correlation equation to predict to the sum of responses on seven of the ten scales on the first interpersonal conflict situation for which there were significant differences between the two groups. These seven scales were chosen because factor analysis indicated that each partially measured the same basic dimension. The scales were: feel uneasy, like (1) less, think (1) mistaken, (1) could not like (7), feel irritated, disagree with (1), feel I knew (7) enough. The scales were so keyed that a low score would represent "American independence" or "dissociative response" and high score, "Mexican friendship motivation" or "associative" response.

The six parental variables yielded a multiple correlation of 0.37 with the interpersonal conflict variable, indicating that subjects who saw their fathers as "Mexican" also tended to react with "Mexican friendship motivation" in the conflict situation. Though we cannot be sure that this correlation describes a causative relation, it would support a hypothesis that "Mexican" fathers produce sons who are highly interested in maintaining friendships, even at the price of sacrificing their own opinions about things.

That the multiple correlation coefficient is not higher (although it is significant at the 0.01 level it indicates a relatively weak association)

\textsuperscript{11}The only Affection scale which differentiated between the two groups was: close. As single scales on the Parent Image Differential are not highly reliable this was not used as a variable.
can be explained in at least two ways. First, as suggested above, the most appropriate analysis would involve a more sensitive combination of the various parental perception scores rather than a simple summing, and a more sensitive combination of the interpersonal conflict scales.

A second explanation, not necessarily contradictory to the first, would be that other variables are involved, either parental characteristics which are not measured by the current Parent Image Differential (a very real possibility) or variables not related to parent-child relations, such as intelligence, experiences with peers, social class of the family. An attempt will be made in future studies to determine the relative contribution of these factors.  

**SUMMARY**

We have attempted an empirical corroboration of various hypotheses about Mexican character which have been proposed by a number of authors, both Mexican and American. The data presented generally confirm these hypotheses, indicating that perceptions of their middle-class parents which Guadalajara students have differ from those of Michigan students in that the Guadalajara parents are seen as more strict and demanding of obedience, as more arbitrary, but at the same time more affectionate and sure in their treatment of the child. Significantly, this type of treatment is not associated with resentment in the child but rather with an even greater respect and admiration for his parents. As a result the child is more likely to adopt his parents' values, as indicated by the high agreement among

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12 The Harburg, et al., report cited previously provides a detailed consideration of other alternative explanations for the findings discussed here.
Guadalajara students that authority is to be obeyed without question. It was argued that this kind of parent is likely to generate in his child a strong motivation to seek and maintain friendship with the parent and, assuming that this kind of motivation generalizes outside of the family, to value friendship more than would children of other kinds of parents. Data were presented which tend to support a hypothesis of a relation between perception of parents and reaction in situations of interpersonal conflict, with children of "Mexican" parents being more willing to change their opinion than risk disrupting a friendship, in comparison with children of "American" parents, both sets of children being Mexican subjects. The supposed limited generalizability of these results was indicated by referring to subjects as students from Guadalajara and Michigan, instead of Mexicans and Americans. The variables measured involved responses to a paper-and-pencil instrument.

It is to be hoped that other investigators will be sufficiently interested by these findings to (1) develop new forms which measure variables not tapped here, and (2) replicate the findings on other groups of subjects and/or in other cultures. The striking differences between the responses of the two groups of subjects and the clarity with which these differences demonstrate the acquisition of personality characteristics indicates that this will continue to be a fertile field for new and useful information about personality development.
TABLE 1
MEANS AND Z SCORES FOR MEXICANS AND AMERICANS WITH RESPECT TO ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY
(1 = strongly agree; 6 = strongly disagree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Guadalajara N=94</th>
<th>Michigan N=90</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Per Cent Responding &quot;Authoritarian&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally one should agree with people in authority including those few times when they are mistaken.</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>9.21&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who doesn't feel love and respect for his parents is still able to be a good and moral person.</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>4.83&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues a child should learn.</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>7.18&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism and loyalty are not the first and most important requirements for a good citizen.</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.57&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A well taught child is one who doesn't need to be told twice in order to do it.</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>5.02&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When they are angry, small children should occasionally be allowed to hit their parents.</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That which is most necessary for young children is strict discipline, the determination to succeed, and the will to work for their family and nation.</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>6.36&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's best for one to make up his own mind without taking into account whether he agrees with persons in authority.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>3.82&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts like juvenile delinquency and sexual immorality show that most of the young people should be controlled more closely by their parents and the community</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>6.67&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are occasions when a small child's disobedience to rules or orders should be passed over and supported by the parents.</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>2.82&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small child should not be allowed to talk back to his mother without being punished.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.26&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup><sup>b</sup><sup>c</sup> <sup>p < .05.</sup> <sup>p < .01.</sup> <sup>c p < .001.</sup>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Score - High Score</th>
<th>Guadalajara N=94</th>
<th>Michigan N=90</th>
<th>Z Scores Differences Between Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warm - cold</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stern - mild</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relaxed - tense</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard - soft</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with ridicule - with praise</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lenient - severe</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skillfully - awkwardly</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insensitive - sensitive</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justly - unjustly</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with punishment - with reason</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inconsistent - consistent</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouraged me - discouraged me</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerned - indifferent</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually critical - usually praised</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close - distant</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) p < .05.
\(^b\) p < .01.
\(^c\) p < .001.
### TABLE 3

**Means and Z Scores for Mexicans and North Americans for the Concepts "How My Father/Mother Taught Me When I Was a Child"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Score - High Score</th>
<th>Guadalajara N=94</th>
<th>Michigan N=90</th>
<th>Z Scores Differences Between Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often discussed things with me - rarely discussed</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagreeing was discouraged - disagreeing encouraged</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supported my mistakes - criticized</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skillful in teaching me new things - awkward</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stern - mild</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often did things together with me - rarely did things together</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy to irritate - hard to irritate</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a tense way - relaxed</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soft - hard</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acted as if always right - willing to admit mistakes</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basically understood me - basically did not understand</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impatient - patient</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually criticized my conduct - usually praised</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleased when I acted on my own - displeased</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ap < .05.  b p < .01.  c p < .001.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Score - High Score</th>
<th>Guadalajara N=94</th>
<th>Michigan N=90</th>
<th>Z Scores Differences Between Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often punished me - rarely punished</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard - soft</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always explained why - rarely explained why punished</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usually persuaded me - usually ordered</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>got angry when punishing - stayed calm</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lenient - severe</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy to irritate - hard to irritate</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made me feel guilty - made me feel resentment</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expected me to do as he wished - expected me to know the rules</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mild - stern</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made reasonable demands - unreasonable</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strict - permissive</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I resisted him - I yielded</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often wanted to run away - always wanted to be with family</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blamed myself when punishing - blamed him</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> p < .05.  
<sup>b</sup> p < .01.  
<sup>c</sup> p < .001.
FIGURE 1. SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEXICANS AND AMERICANS IN MEMORIES OF TREATMENT RECEIVED FROM PARENTS

FATHER

Mexicans more extreme than Americans in the direction:

- stern
- hard
- usually critical of me
- severe
- strict
- easy to irritate
- got angry when punishing me

Americans more extreme than Mexicans:

- relaxed
- lenient

MOTHER

Mexicans more extreme than Americans in the direction:

- stern
- strict
- easy to irritate
- got angry when punishing me
- discouraged disagreeing with her

Americans more extreme than Mexicans:

- soft
- with praise
- lenient
FIGURE 2. SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEXICANS AND AMERICANS IN REACTIONS TO INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT\textsuperscript{a} (N = 174 in each group)

SITUATION A. You like (1); you strongly dislike (7); you have just learned that your best friend (1) really likes (7) extremely well.

Mexicans more extreme than Americans in the direction:
- (1) could really like (7)
- avoid feeling irritated at (1)

Americans more extreme than Mexicans:
- feel uneasy
- like (1) less
- think (1) may be mistaken
- disagree with (1)
- feel I knew (7) enough
- dislike (7) as before
- talk with (1) about (7)
- not have expected (1)'s attitude

SITUATION B. You are competing with several others for a desirable job. You need a character reference, and you use the name of your best friend (1).
(1) later tells you he would rather not recommend you for the job and asks you to select someone else.

Mexicans more extreme than Americans in the direction:
- feel anxious (as opposed to irritated) at (1)'s refusal
- try to change (1)'s attitude.

Americans more extreme than Mexicans:
- feel angry at (1)
- feel job was important
- like (1) less
- not have expected (1)'s attitude

SITUATION C. While you are doing (X), (9) tells you, "You are doing wrong and pretty poorly."

Americans more extreme than Mexicans in the direction:
- feel irritated about (9)'s remark
- feel like being sarcastic to (9) (as opposed to feel hurt)
- feel more dislike for (9)
- have expected (9)'s remark

REFERENCES


