

A study of a Mexican American family in rural Iowa

by

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It was a straight shot on I-35, the Proteus agency worker had been giving me some insight on la familia which I would meet soon. We came to the Annsburg (a fictitious name for the town name) exit and from there it would not be far. Annsburg, a rural community with a population of 4500 who were predominantly Euro-American, was located in North central Iowa. Those ten miles from the interstate were the reasons why the Mexican American had come. Throughout my Mexican cultural history, the land had served as my predecessors' provider and those last ten miles were a classic example. The Mexican and Mexican American had worked the agricultural lands of America for almost a century. While other cultures like the Afro-, Euro-, and Puerto Rican American had turned away from the field work, the Mexican American became a permanent fixture of the land.

My calling was to explore the reason why a single Mexican American family had decided to settle in Iowa. Flashbacks of my childhood haunted me as I remembered the truck with a camper coming to take my family away at the crack of dawn. We would travel across the Texas stateline to work in the cotton fields, and after a long day of work, we would rejoice during our long drive home. My mind was filled with thoughts of what I would ask the family, while my senses were mesmerized by the landscape of cornfields as we drove down the farm road.

Unlike the fields on the interstate, these fields were alive and had a story to tell me. I would continue to visit these cuentistas (story tellers) throughout the next year. They were story tellers indeed, or perhaps witnesses to what would be my ethnography of a single settled out rural Mexican American family in Iowa. I wondered if their experience would be similar to my family's or if the Midwestern Mexican American family experience would be foreign to me.

The Proteus agency (an agency that works with migrant workers and settled out families) worker and I were scheduled to attend a meeting which was to deal with Mexican American migrant families and their civil rights in Annsburg. The meeting had been going for almost a hour when a Mexican American couple walked into the church; almost immediately the house gave them the floor. His name was Lorenzo and her name was Eloisa and their last name was Sanchez-Garcia. Lorenzo brought the group of thirty or more people to a total silence as he described to us what had happened to him earlier that summer. The migrant workers responded with concern and anger. With the tension rising, the Proteus coordinator recommended that the group organize and voice their concerns to the community. The group nominated Eloisa as their spokesperson. She accepted, at the time my thoughts were why would she accept this responsibility after already experiencing a life threatening experience with her husband. Not knowing Eloisa

and wondering what was behind this women's motivation, I decided to select the Sanchez-Garcia family for my study.

After several weeks had passed and I had been briefly introduced to the Sanchez-Garcia family, I made my first visit to the Sanchez-Garcia family home. By that time, the green fields of Iowa and the tall stalks of corn had vanished from the winding road. The symbolic vanishing of the corn fields marked the migrant workers' exit. It would be my second winter in Iowa and this time I would experience it through the eyes of the Sanchez-Garcia family. For the Sanchez-Garcia family, this would be their fourth winter and probably the most difficult one in their life. As a student at the university, I wondered if this would hinder my study. I did not want the family to feel I was a person who was trying to preserve what little culture I had left. Rather, I hoped the family would see me as person who had lived through what they were experiencing and who could possibly give some insight into what might lie in the future for the family.

My perspective of the study would be one of an outsider within. Although I would not be a part of the community or the family, I would still be able to understand the family and the community's perspective. Having been raised in a family similar to the Sanchez-Garcia family, outside of the Mexican American culture, we shared the bond of depending on the land to survive. My understanding went beyond the understanding of

a typical researcher by knowing what the Sanchez-Garcia family was experiencing in a community of Euro-Americans with Mexican Americans as the minority. Through this lens, I hoped that the Sanchez-Garcia family would allow me to experience their life and for which my study would serve as a tool for the community. As a tool, the study would benefit the community not only in the present, but also in the future as more Mexican American families would make Annsburg their home.

The purpose of my study was twofold. The first purpose was to begin the study by allowing the reader to gain a simple understanding of the Mexican American family structure based on previous research. I would conclude this section by giving some of my own thoughts and insight into the future of Mexican American research. Second, by dividing the study up into two sections, I was able to capture the Sanchez-Garcia rural life experience and how the community of Annsberg would play its role. By focusing on Lorenzo's incident and how it affected the family and community, my goal was to be able to understand a single Mexican American family's experience in rural Iowa. Furthermore, I was able to establish a two dimensional concept on Mexican American family socialization and its benefits not only to the Mexican American family but also to other American families.

### Historical Background

As a priority, I felt the need to establish a historical background of how long Mexican American families had actually been settled in Iowa, specifically Annsburg. Because of the nature of the study, I decided to hit the pavement in hope of acquiring an oral history. After several informal conversations with business merchants and the locals, I discovered that the majority of the settled out families had worked with a local nursery and eventually settled.

According to the nursery owner, the Mexican American families started to settle around World War II. She also was helpful by giving me the name of the Chavez family, which of all the Mexican American families, had been in Annsburg for the longest time. She pointed out that the majority of Mexican American families usually were migrants and did not stay after the migrant season.

### Rationale of Study

The importance of the study was twofold. First, this is the first study in North central Iowa to study a Mexican American settled out family life experience through an ethnographic study. Second, this was the first study to incorporate the community environment and how it affects the family life experience. Furthermore, the study was proactive in nature. Its purpose was to develop an understanding of the Mexican American family experience. In addition, the study



would serve as a tool for future settled out Mexican American families and the community when it is in need of ethnic and cultural understanding.

### Thesis Organization

The thesis will have a general introduction that presents for the reader the two papers that follow and explains the purpose of the study. The first paper consists of a literature review of Mexican American family structure. The second paper is a qualitative study of a Mexican American family in rural Iowa. The thesis concludes with a general conclusion that discusses the findings of the two papers and my insights gained from the study.

## MEXICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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The purpose of the present study was to review previous research in the area of Mexican American families. Second, the study revisited the most commonly identified characteristics of the Mexican-American family. The review will not only discuss the characteristics, it will attempt to discuss how these Mexican American characteristics will be viewed in the future. This is important because of the increasing numbers of immigrants from Mexico who will change the makeup of the United States in the next century.

As a Mexican American family researcher, I feel that it is important to be able to explore the characteristics that the Mexican American family has been identified as possessing. With the increase in immigration, research will have to involve monitoring the family system of the already existing Mexican American and the continuous arrival of the Mexican to America. In the state of Iowa the Hispanic population will increase 27.8% between 1980 and 2000 (Goudy & Burke, 1991). Furthermore, it is important to gain an understanding of the Mexican American family system because the Latin American population is the fastest growing minority group in the United

States, with an estimated increase of 48% between 1980 and 2000 (Macias, 1985).

In the review of literature, I will discuss the characteristics of familism which include the extended family and compadrazgo. The next two areas that will be discussed are machismo and egalitarianism in the Mexican American family. Furthermore, it is important to point out that there has been a lack of research in these areas during the 1990's.

#### Familism

The Mexican American family has always been a topic of discussion for the social scientist. Based on past research, two views have developed, the traditional and the reinterpretation of the Mexican American family. The reinterpretation view was developed like many other views as a reaction to the lack of empirical evidence in the traditional view. Usually the reactionary researchers have been of that culture, in this case Mexican American, or researchers who were sensitive to the culture.

The traditional view of familism places the family ahead of individual interests and development. It includes many responsibilities and obligations to immediate family members and other kin including godparents. Extended family often live in close proximity to each other, with many often sharing the same dwelling. It is common for adult children to supplement their parents' income. In many ways, the Hispanic

family helps and supports its members to a degree far beyond that found in individualistically oriented anglo families (Ingoldsby, 1991).

Kephart and Jedlicka (1988) claimed that a large majority of Mexican American young people comply with parental rules in the following areas: 1) dating and marriage within their ethnic and religious group, 2) having parental approval and some supervision of dating, and 3) complete abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage. American-born Hispanics are less likely to insist on the tradition of chaperoning their daughters on their dates and it is not known how well the children adhere to the "no sex rule." The study went on to state that in an individualistic society the children would rebel against such parental intervention. But the study found that usually the Mexican American children comply and rebellion was rare.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) describe childrearing as directed toward producing the "good" child in the conception of contentment in present time. Only to a very limited degree was there a concern for providing the kind of advantages that could permit a child to become independently successful in the future. Spanish American children were seldom permitted to show much initiative or express boldly their own ideas. They were as rigorously trained for dependent behavior as the average Anglo-American child is schooled for independence.

Mexican-Americans are indeed handicapped. They are born into larger families, their family training includes little emphasis on mobility values and behavior conducive to advancement, they acquire few skills in school, their youthful world lacks visible models of achievement and they are not aware of existing opportunities. Moreover, their ethnic identification and sense of group loyalty encourage behavior in keeping with the traditional values and norms that hamper mobility (Heller, 1966).

Rubel (1966) looked to the family for the source of traditional beliefs and behavior that impede the Mexican-American's use of professional health services. He describes the ideal family as: male dominated, female submissive, unworldly and chaste; and greatly involved in custom and ritual. He maintained that individuals manifested anxiety and disaffection toward interpersonal relationships outside the immediate family and concluded that the family reinforces the isolation and pathology within the community.

The authoritarian Mexican-American family constellation produces dependence and subordination and reinforces a present-time orientation that impedes advancement. Chicanos live in a perpetual "mañana land." The resulting conclusion is that Anglo culture stresses achievement and control of the environment, while Chicano culture stresses fatalism and resignation (Samora & Lamanna, 1967).

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the majority of the research in the traditional view is lacking empirical evidence. Furthermore, it is important to understand who did the research. Similar to other cultural research the researcher has often compared the culture under study to his or her own culture. The results can be a misinterpretation of the culture and its characteristics. This was the case in the research done by individuals lacking the cultural sensitivity to Mexican American families.

Mexican American social scientists sought to challenge the traditional view of Mexican American familism by reinterpreting Mexican American familism. Reacting to the stereotypes of the predominately Euro-American researchers, they succeeded in refuting the stereotypes; however, they did not succeed in establishing a different type of Mexican American family structure. Montiel (1973) stated that the scientific point of view, by focusing on the exotic traits of the Chicano family, has been unable to view the family as a distinct and viable entity and denies its right to be different.

Ramirez and Arce's (1980) current research interest on the Chicano family has originated primarily in response to the lack of adequate empirical data. Prior to 1970, Chicano family literature was sparse and empirically deficient. It argued that the family was old-fashioned, structurally rigid

male-dominated, unresponsive to the demands of contemporary industrial society and detrimental to individual mobility and coping ability.

Hawkes and Taylor (1975) stated that the traditional stereotypes of groups, such as ethnic minorities noted in literature and in public assumptions, need more adequate verification. It is possible that more sophisticated methods of research may negate many of the previous assumptions. They also suggested that dominance-submission patterns are much less universal than previously assumed. Either they never existed, but were an ideal, or they are undergoing radical change. The traditional forces of change, acculturation and urbanization, were not found to be responsible for the results of this study.

Several other authors not only refuted previous research but offered an alternative point of view of the Chicano family. Murillo (1971) stated that the Chicano family is the most important unit in life and that the individual is likely to put the needs of the family above his/her own. Rather than being rigid and authoritarian, the family is now seen as a stable structure where the individual's place is clearly established and secure. Cooperation among family members is also emphasized. The family seems to provide more emotional security and a sense of belonging to its members. Murillo

also suggested that the individual in the Latin culture can experience life sooner and perhaps more fully.

Alvarez and Bean (1976) responded to the traditional negative view by noting that only a person who has never experienced the warmth of the Mexican American family would tend to see it primarily from a negative perspective. Rothman et al. (1985) found that Mexican American parents subscribe to the same standards and goals for their children as Anglo parents; however, Mexican American children must contend with the disadvantages of racism, economics, and language barriers, and often find it difficult to fulfill parental expectations. In the same study, Buys et al. (1976), was credited with finding the presence of an encouraging home environment, strong Mexican-American parental support for education, and strong parental belief that the household environment, were indeed conducive to educational pursuits.

The traditional view of Chicano families was interpreted and measured by the status quo of the American middle class. Chicano families were perceived as going against the American dream. Erikson (1950) questioned the American identity. He stressed that there is a definite restriction of American children's egos. Children are socialized to be independent; however, only children who reach the peak of this socialization are rewarded.



With the advent of industrialization and mechanization in this country, this new man-made world of machines offered its mastery only to those who would become like it. A movement in child training began and is present today that embodies the strict regulation and standardization of the world of machines. He further explained this process in child rearing. In the pursuit of the adjustment to and mastery over the machines, American mothers (especially the middle class) found themselves standardizing and overadjusting children who later were expected to personify that very virile individuality that in the past had been one of the outstanding characteristics of the American. The resulting danger was that of creating, instead of individualism, a mass-produced mask of individuality.

Sotomayor (1971) stated that the external community has given the Mexican-American family an inferior status and has defined the status as one with inferior standards of behaviors and rewards. The present societal structure denies the Mexican-American family a positive status and identity, excludes it from community activities, and gives it the feeling of alienation, marginality, and anomie. Sotomayor added that the extent and quality of the interaction determines the solidarity of bonds between society and the family unit. The daily interaction with the external system has been blocked for many Mexican-American families, and as a

result they have withdrawn from participation in community affairs.

Slater (1970) characterized American society as one that stresses individualism but actually produces uniformity rather than individuality. The tendency to avoid engagement is evidenced by what is done to the aged, the infirm, and the mentally ill. The small autonomous nuclear family is not equipped to handle the special care required for these individuals so they are institutionalized and their visibility is then reduced. In a sense, Americanized individualism has been based on the denial and increasing avoidance of human interdependence.

Throughout the research on Chicano families, Chicano familism has always been a primary area. However, some researchers have questioned if Chicano familism is present in today's Chicano family or if it is a concept of the past.

Miller (1978) suggested that the global statement concerning Chicano familism should be regarded with caution. The study pointed out the importance of the Chicano extended family as a key transitional link for migration and resettlement. The Chicano extended family often serves as a facilitator for those moving from the Southwest to the Midwest.

The same study went on to state that even in rural New Mexico where historically the extended family was a viable

institution, it had been affected by urbanization and improved transportation. However, the study showed that the extended family continues to serve as a source for job and housing information between the city and the rural community. It also stressed that despite the flight to urban areas, bonds between the kin remain strong through frequent visitations (Miller, 1978).

Mirande (1977) stated that, while the impact of the family may have been eroded somewhat by urbanization and acculturation, it is still a central institution for the individual. The family is a basic source of emotional support for the child as he/she develops close bonds not only with members of the immediate family but grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and family friends. Chicano familism can be distinguishable by its degree of family cohesiveness and by its extended definition of family membership (Rothman, et al., 1985).

The Mexican American family system should not be blamed for the limitations and ordeals that it has experienced. Rather, the larger Euro-American system should examine itself before criticizing any minority family system. The following subsections of familism, the extended family and compadrazgo, are discussed as they have evolved in the literature.

### Extended Family

The research of the extended Mexican family has not been consistent. The research shows several definitions for the Mexican American extended family. Research has also challenged some of the concepts that were thought to be the norm, for example the trigenerational household.

The extended family has been described in the literature as characteristic of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic groups. The definition of this concept has alternated between that of a family with many relatives living together in one big household to that of a nuclear family living alone but in a large kinship network (Pelto, Roman, & Liriano 1982).

Sena's (1973) research, in a semi-urban southern California town, argued that the trigenerational household has never been the norm universally for the extended family in Mexico nor for descendants of Mexicans in the United States. Exception occurs at times of individual-nuclear or entire-extended family stress or during periods of general societal upheaval such as that which occurred soon after the Spanish conquest of Mexico and following the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Exceptions also occur for those purposes of geographic, occupational, or economic mobility of individual family members, entire nuclear families, or entire extended kinship groups, which can even include fictive kin. In another study, Sena-Rivera (1979) went on to state that the norm and common

occurrence is the nuclear-centered household. Geographical propinquity among households, however, is both the norm and the actuality for all the families.

Williams (1990) focused on contemporary life-cycle rituals- those relating to birth, marriage, and death. She looked at the basic revisions that have occurred in the Mexican American extended family. Williams explained that routinization of a bureaucratized modern urban environment means that work proceeds within the context of a structured time frame. Wives work, husbands work, and children attend school and, because of the segmentation of various activities, the time frames of family members may not coincide. This makes it difficult even for one family to synchronize their activities so that the members can attend a wedding together. She found that today's Chicano family has modified the life-cycle rituals by being selective about what they attend and how much money they invest in the extended family life-cycle ritual.

Although the Mexican American extended family has been modified over the years, what is important is the extended family continues to exist. Furthermore, because it has survived, whereas in other cultures it did not survive, the Mexican American extended family will continue to serve as a tool to conserve the Mexican American culture.

### Compadrazgo

Compadrazgo (fictive kin) can be defined as coparents through the process of baptism, first communion, confirmation and marriage. Compadres usually consist of a couple, however, today it does not have to be a married couple. The responsibility of the compadres is to serve as a support to the parents of the child. In case of death to the parents, the compadres would assume the role of parents and raise the child. Similar to the extended family role, compadrazgo has changed over the generations yet it continues to be a strong function of Mexican American familism.

The institution of compadrazgo dates back to the early post-Conquest period in Mexico. This Spanish custom was apparently adopted by the Indians during the Colonial period (1550-1650) as widespread epidemics led to massive native depopulation, leaving many orphaned children (Mirande, 1977).

Miller (1978) identified the four basic occasions for the establishment of the coparentage bond (compadrazgo) -first communion, confirmation, and marriage although baptism is the most frequently sponsored and most seriously taken event. In the same study, Miller cited Clark who studied a San Jose barrio and determined the compadrazgo to be one of the strongest Mexican cultural elements present, and highly functional in binding individuals together and maintaining neighborhood and community stability. Likewise, it reportedly

remained as an influential part of Kansas City barrio life: "Besides the consanguineal and affinal kin affiliation, the compadrazgo is the most important feature of social organization, which has a significant function in religious instruction, cultural value orientation, social control, and maintenance of emotional overtones" (Miller, 1978, p. 222).

Grebler, Moore, & Guzman (1970) found that the young do not view the relationship as seriously as do older Mexican Americans. They found many cases in which it was not strong, and in some nonexistent. Among those from Mexico, it is apparently strongest and socioeconomic status has little association with either its presence or strength. They conclude that although undoubtedly still viable, compadrazgo appears to be a minor feature of kinship and community social organization in the major urban centers. They went on to state that compadrazgo may be changing from an integral feature of the kinship system to an expressive one.

Williams (1990) stated that the compadrazgo ceremony no longer serves to sustain the "fictive kinship system" as it was traditionally defined. She went on to point out the importance of the compadrazgo ceremony and how it provides us with an insight into the struggle on the part of many Mexican Americans to sustain aspects of the traditional culture.

With the majority of Mexican American families residing in the inner-city, the meaning of compadrazgo has continued to

evolve. Furthermore, with an increase in the Mexican immigration it will be interesting to see the role compadrazgo will take with that specific population.

In summary, familism continues to be an important part of the Mexican American culture. The Mexican American family should be understood through a culturally sensitive lens. The research has shown that the cohesiveness of this family system will not only benefit the Mexican American, but the American people as a whole.

#### Machismo

The traditional view of the Latin male, in this case the Mexican American, has depicted him as always wanting to show his physical strength, specifically with his family. Through this mentality, the concept of machismo has evolved. The traditional Mexican American family research has described the male as dominating and as the cause of the dysfunctional Mexican family. Similar to familism, Mexican American researchers and other researchers have challenged the traditional view of how the Mexican American male is depicted and his role in the family.

Baca Zinn (1979) found that the social science image of the Chicano male is rooted in three interrelated propositions: 1) that a distinctive cultural heritage has created a rigid cult of masculinity, 2) that the masculinity cult generates distinctive familial and socialization patterns, and 3) that



these distinctive patterns ill-equip Chicanos (both males and females) to adapt successfully to the demands of modern society.

Baca Zinn (1980) went on to state that the social science literature views machismo as compensation for feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness. This interpretation is rooted in the application of psychoanalytic concepts to explain both Mexican and Chicano gender roles. The widely accepted interpretation is that machismo is the male attempt to compensate for feelings of internalized inferiority by exaggerating masculinity. At the same time that machismo is an expression of power, its origin is ironically linked to powerlessness and subordination. The common origins of inferiority and machismo are said to lie in the historical conquest of Mexico by Spain. The exploitation of Indian women by Spanish men produced the hybrid Mexican people who have an inferiority complex based on the mentality of a conquered people. Baca Zinn went on to argue that viewing machismo as a compensation for inferiority, whether its ultimate cause is seen as external or internal, in effect blames Chicanos for their own subordination.

The macho male demands complete deference, respect, and obedience not only from the wife but from children as well. In fact, social scientists maintain that this rigid, male dominated family structure has negative consequences for the

personality development of Mexican-American children. It fails to engender achievement, independence, self-reliance, or self-worth values, which are highly esteemed in American society (Heller, 1966).

Giraldo (1972) defined machismo as aggressiveness; each macho must show that he is masculine, strong, and physically powerful. Differences, verbal or physical abuse, or challenges must be met with fists or other weapons. The true macho should not be afraid of anything, and he should be capable of drinking great quantities of liquor without necessarily getting drunk. The other major characteristic of machismo is hypersexuality. The impotent and homosexual are scoffed at and the culturally preferred goal is the conquest of women, and the more the better. To take advantage of a young woman sexually is cause for pride and prestige, not blame. In fact, some men will commit adultery just to prove to themselves that they can do it.

Mexican American researchers and others researchers who are culturally sensitive to the Mexican American culture challenged the traditional view. As in familism the traditional literature on machismo was lacking empirical evidence. Furthermore, traditional research misinterpreted some of the reasons for machismo. The researchers also focused on the negative aspects of machismo rather than looking at the concept in its entirety.

Mirande (1979) explained that social scientists have been reluctant to reject this stereotyped view of machismo even when faced with contradictory evidence. Findings that show that the Chicano family is more egalitarian than previously assumed have been down played or explained away as resulting from increasing acculturation and assimilation.

Murillo (1971) stated that the concept of machismo is important but it is defined more in terms of family pride and respect than in terms of male dominance. As the ultimate authority in the family, the father is responsible to the outside world for the behavior of family members. An important part of this concept of machismo or maleness, however, is that of using his authority within the family in a just and fair manner. Should he misuse his authority he will lose respect. Machismo is a pathological force or a tool for protecting male prerogatives, but also a mechanism for upholding family pride and honor. Grebler et al. (1970) found that the machismo concept was not culturally bound, but has much in common with "lower-class definitions of masculinity, especially youth-culture definitions, across ethnic groups in American society" (p.369). They went on to state that when comparing Black and Mexican American families in their study both families are seen as producing basically the same kind of young man -one who drops out of school because he is

preoccupied with immediate pleasures, but producing radically different structures and values.

Chafetz (1979) calls into the question the cultural stereotype of machismo by proposing that it is a socioeconomic characteristic. More than most other Americans, the various Spanish speaking groups in this country (Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban), stress dominance, aggressiveness, physical prowess, and other stereotypical masculine traits. Indeed, the masculine sex role for this group is generally described by reference to the highly stereotyped notion of machismo. In fact, a strong emphasis on masculine aggressiveness and dominance may be characteristic of most groups in the lower ranges of the socioeconomic ladder.

There is no doubt that machismo exists within the Mexican American culture. However, one must realize that when a researcher investigates another culture they must be sensitive to the culture regardless of whether the researcher agrees with the culture or not. In the case of the Mexican American family research, what was once thought of as a male dominated family and culture is now not the norm. This does not mean that machismo does not exist within the Mexican American culture but rather the research should focus on why the male has decided to take on this role.

### Egalitarianism in Mexican American Families

Research has been inconsistent when evaluating Mexican American dominance when pertaining to marital decision making and marital relationships. Traditional Mexican American couples were perceived as male dominated with females being submissive. Traditional research showed the Mexican American woman as hopeless without the male. As in the previous two sections Mexican American researchers and other researchers challenged the traditional view of the Mexican American woman, specifically in the marital dyad. Furthermore, the traditional findings were not based on empirical evidence.

Traditional Mexican American couples were perceived as male dominated with submissive females. Ybarra (1982) identified two false premises (1) the Chicano family shows no variations from traditional patterns until it achieves acculturation; (2) and the ideal of egalitarianism is unique to, and widely practiced in the Anglo-American culture. Yabarra went on to state that these assumptions should be questioned before they are so readily accepted, especially the assumption that acculturation fully explains why the Chicano family is undergoing changes.

Cromwell and Ruiz (1979) stated that the patriarchal Hispanic structure characterized by macho dominance in marital decision-making is a myth that prevails in social science literature. This myth, which is perpetuated and disseminated

through impressionistic essays, is compatible with the "social deficit" model of Hispanic family life and culture. Their conclusion, based on an intensive analysis of four major studies in marital decision-making within Mexican and Chicano families, is that the available data failed to substantiate the hypothesis of Mexican and/or Chicano male dominance in marital decision-making.

Staples and Mirande (1980), in their review of Mexican American families, stated that virtually every systematic study of conjugal roles in the family has found egalitarianism to be the predominant pattern across socioeconomic groups, educational levels, urban/rural residence, and region of the country.

Yabarra (1982) found that outside employment of the wife, a factor seldom considered in studies on the Chicano family, proved to have a statistically significant correlation with an egalitarian conjugal role structure. The study also supported the findings of recent empirical studies conducted in different regions of the country, which concluded that egalitarianism is the predominant conjugal role arrangement in Chicano families.

Cromwell and Cromwell (1978) found no discernible patterns reflecting the hypothesized stereotypic classification of patriarchy among Chicanos or matriarchy among Blacks. As with patriarchy, the decision-making process

structure variable showed a preponderance of egalitarian decision-making by sex and ethnicity. Their data called into question the stereotypic classification of family structure based on ethnic group membership.

Hawkes and Taylor (1975) found in their study that 62% of overall Chicano family patterns were egalitarian. In light of the descriptions in the literature of the patriarchal power structure in the Mexican and Mexican-American family, this was an unexpected finding.

Previous Chicano family research attributed any change within family decision-making towards egalitarianism as acculturation toward Anglo-American culture. However, Ybarra (1982) questioned this premise. His results supported the hypothesis that acculturation cannot be considered as the sole and or major influence of changes occurring with the Chicano family. For example, no correlation was found between who did household chores and whether they had assimilated into American society. Also, whether respondents held Mexican traditional values or not had no statistically significant relationship with whether they maintained low or highly egalitarian childrearing practices. According to literature previously cited on the Chicano family, those that were least assimilated should have had very patriarchal, segregated sex roles. However, this assumption was not validated.

Mirande (1979) stated that it is not acculturation or improved socioeconomic status of Chicanos that produces a more egalitarian pattern. The sheer fact of employment outside the home may necessitate adjustments in conjugal roles and a movement towards joint or shared decision-making.

Some researchers argue that the Chicano father gets involved with the process of childrearing as opposed to previous myths of the Chicano father. Luzod and Arce (1979) stated that it was not their contention to say that no sex role differences occur within Chicano families, but rather demonstrate the level of importance that both the father and mother give to respective duties as parents as well as the common hopes and desires they appear to share equally for their progeny than was commonly thought. It, therefore, appears erroneous to focus only on maternal influences in the Chicano family since Chicano fathers are seen as being important to the children and moreover may provide significant positive influences on the development of their children.

Ybarra (1977) found that a large number of Chicano husbands helped their wives with household chores and child care. Also, the Chicanos interviewed were not as obsessed with the idea of machismo as has been suggested in the literature. The overwhelming majority of Chicano husbands preferred to participate in social and recreational activities with their wives and children. Overall, the data indicated



that the majority of Chicano wives played an important and/or equal part in most facets of conjugal role relationships.

Researchers have taken it one more step by stating that the Mexican-American family is mother-centered rather than a patriarchal system. Baca Zinn (1976) stated that the patterns are not contradictory; however, one should recognize that each sex has primary responsibility for its respective sphere, the man outside and the women within the household. The power of the Chicana is thus rooted in the domestic realm as she has primary responsibility for handling the daily affairs of the family. This power extends not only to decision-making on domestic matters but to child care. There is a substantial body of evidence that suggests that "la mujer" plays an especially important part in the lives of children.

Tuck (1946) noted that it looks like a man's world with a heavy patriarchal accent. The suffering of many helpless and unprotected women would bear witness that it was. But the women, entrenched with their children in the circle of the great family have some peculiar and far reaching powers. As the "madrecita" entitled to respect and homage, she may actually dominate in all matters that affect her children. Hers may be the deciding voice in every important decision.

In summary, the research demonstrated that the Mexican American woman is not the submissive woman as once thought. It showed the importance of the Mexican American to her family

while being her husband's equal. The research also demonstrated that the women might perhaps be the center of the family rather than the male as once thought.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

Throughout this review it was important to demonstrate the traditional view of the characteristics discussed and follow it with how the reactionary research disposed of any negative stereotypes that the traditional research might have established. Furthermore, as stressed in the paper, the majority of the literature from the traditional view was not based on empirical evidence. The traditional research was also conducted by researchers who showed a lack of sensitivity to the Mexican American culture.

As mentioned in the introduction to familism, the majority of the research in the traditional view of familism was lacking empirical evidence and was culturally biased by the researchers. With the reinterpretation of familism researchers were able to give a different depiction of the Mexican American family unit. Despite urbanization and the challenges of modern society, Mexican American familism has continued to be a strong part of the Mexican American culture. Furthermore, with *compadrazgo* and the extended family evolving because of the changes in the American society, familism will also evolve because of the changing society and its demands.

Machismo will always be a topic of discussion for the social scientists and will continue to take its place in the Hispanic culture as well as other cultures. However, one must take with caution the traditional interpretation of machismo and the explanations for the existence of machismo. As in familism, machismo was studied by a culturally biased lens thereby causing the true meaning and understanding of its purpose to be misunderstood. With the reinterpretation of machismo, as mentioned earlier, Mexican American and other researchers brought a different view to machismo, although not totally eliminating it. These researchers were able to give some insights into machismo and why it has existed.

Due to the traditional belief that the male was the center of the Mexican American family, the female was always seen as the subordinate. Research challenged the notion of male dominance in the Mexican family and found that egalitarianism was more of the norm than previously thought. Furthermore, with egalitarianism seen as more of the norm, research also found that the male participated more with child care and some research even described the woman as the center of the household rather than the man.

Probably the biggest limitation of previous research was the researcher and his or her intentions. As with other ethnic groups, researchers focused on specific situations throughout their study rather than looking at the culture in

its entirety. An example would be machismo, although machismo does exist and at times to the researcher the male might have come across as a person who demanded to be obeyed, the traditional researcher failed to see beyond the situation. Furthermore, the traditional researchers never took the culture for what it was. There was always a comparison between the culture under study and the researcher's culture. In this case, the Mexican American family was seen as an unhealthy environment for its children and for its members when compared to the mainstream Euro-American culture.

The reinterpretation view also showed its limitations; however, as the research evolved it did improve over time. As Mirande (1979) explained, some of the reactionary researchers, although trying to eliminate traditional views of the Mexican American family, for example, machismo, actually reinforced them in a different way. Sometimes the alternative literature would offer a different perspective; however, it would not be able to provide empirical evidence. Previous research also showed its limitation by using Mexican American familism as a blanket explanation for all Mexican American families. By doing this, the possibility of various types of familism (a typology) within the Mexican American culture was ruled out. Furthermore, recent research on the Mexican American family has repeated past research and has failed to contribute a future direction to the study of Mexican American families.

Due to the reinterpretation of the research of the Mexican American family, the research can now focus specifically on the family system rather than reacting to negative stereotypes as before. For example, the research could focus on sibling relationships within the Mexican American family system. Future research should also examine the Mexican American culture to see if variations of families exist and develop over time. Future research could investigate, as mentioned in the introduction, the increase of Mexican families and how they will influence the current Mexican American family system and American culture as a whole. Future research should also look at the Mexican American family system and how individuals will influence other systems, such as the community. Furthermore, since Mexican Americans come from families that focus on the good of the whole rather than the individual, research should compare the Mexican American and Euro-American family's method of socializing it's children. In closing, because of the vast ethnic diversity in the United States, researchers should concentrate on assuming nothing until they have developed an understanding of that particular ethnic culture.

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A STUDY OF A MEXICAN AMERICAN FAMILY  
IN RURAL IOWA

A paper to be submitted to the  
Journal of Comparative Family Studies

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*It happened in the summer it was late July and it was a Saturday night. I was going to the store in downtown Annsburg and I got jumped by a group of white men. They were in their early twenties and I don't know if they were drunk that night. They basically beat and kicked me. My compadre Domingo came over to help me but they out numbered us. At the time of the fight I reached for a knife in my car and cut one of the men. By that time the police came and broke up the fight or I would call it a beating. They handcuffed me and took me to the hospital with the cuffs still on my hands. My body was in bad shape and I could not see out of one eye. I was in jail for nine days and the majority of that time I did not have the proper medicine. When the doctors asked the policemen to remove the cuffs they refused. When I was released from jail I was charged for attempted murder and my attackers had not been charged with anything. In fact it took two weeks for the police or anyone to do any*

*thing to my attackers. Throughout this time Eloisa my wife tried to do some investigating on her own but she was threatened to be thrown in jail by the city and the police station. I eventually had to have plastic surgery on my face. I think that the way the city and the police department handled the whole situation was unfair (Lorenzo, November 1993).*

The incident just described was experienced by a Mexican American family in rural Iowa. The focus of this study was the Sanchez-Garcia family and how the members were affected by the incident. The study makes two important contributions to the literature. First, it is one of the first ethnographies of rural Mexican American families in Iowa. Second, it challenges previous literature that identified the Mexican American family as dysfunctional. Most important the study examined a two dimensional concept of cabellerismo-mujerismo and how this concept served as a resource to the Sanchez-Garcia family in the year following the incident described above.

Throughout the ethnography, I was able to contribute to the research. I am a Mexican American, so I was able to understand what the Sanchez-Garcia family was experiencing. My life experience is similar to the Sanchez-Garcia family in many ways. First, my family had at one time or another worked on farms and lived in a predominately Euro- and Afro- American

community. Second, my family had depended on the land as a means of survival. Third, my family made a transition to the city from the farm as did the Sanchez-Garcia family. My family experience and my own personal experience allowed the Sanchez-Garcia family to be able to relate to me. For these reasons, the study was a better experience for the family and myself. I was able to capture the details of the Sanchez-Garcia family experience.

Collins (1986) discussed an outsider within status for Black female academicians. She stated that Black women in academia are frequently struck by the difference between their own experiences and sociological descriptions of the same phenomena. For example, while Black women have and are themselves mothers, they encounter distorted versions of themselves and their mothers under the mantle of the Black matriarchy thesis. I had a similar experience as I studied the Sanchez-Garcia family. As a Mexican American researcher and a person whose family had depended on the land, I was able to obtain the rich data that in my opinion most Euro-American and even some Mexican American researchers would have not obtained. Because of my background the family and the community were able to share their experiences with me. Furthermore, by being an outsider to the community, which brought another perspective to the study, I was able to look in from the window at the different people and put the pieces

of the puzzle together. In the end, my hope was that the community would be able to reflect on what had happened and focus on what needed to be done to make Annsburg a better community for all its members and visitors.

Prior to the 1970s social scientists viewed the Mexican American family as detrimental to an individual's autonomy and independence. According to the traditional view of the Mexican American family, because of the loyalty to the family, individual members are limited and prevented from being mobile. The traditional view also characterized the Mexican American family as male dominated, which was supposed to be the main cause for the dysfunction of the Mexican American family (Giraldo, 1972; Heller, 1966; Ingoldsby, 1991; Kephart & Jedlicka 1988; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961; Rubel, 1966).

Mexican American social scientists and other researchers challenged the traditional view of the Mexican American family. Social scientists have been reluctant to reject a stereotyped view of machismo even when faced with contradictory evidence. Findings show that the Chicano family is more egalitarian than previously assumed and these findings have been down played or explained away as resulting from increasing acculturation and assimilation (Hawkes & Taylor 1975; Mirande, 1979; Montiel, 1973; Ramirez & Arce, 1980). Other researchers went a step further and interpreted machismo in a different way by incorporating machismo into Mexican

American familism as a positive characteristic. Murillo (1971) described machismo in terms of family pride.

However, probably the best example of the previous research was a challenge by current research on the egalitarianism in Mexican American couples. Research showed that egalitarianism was not unique to the Anglo-American culture. It also showed that the majority of studies of conjugal roles found egalitarianism to be significant across socioeconomic groups, regions, educational levels, as well as urban and rural residence (Baca Zinn, 1980; Cromwell & Cromwell, 1978; Hawkes & Taylor, 1975; Staples & Mirande 1980; Ybarra, 1982). The Mexican American family research during the 1970's was reactionary to the stereotypes of previous research. Furthermore, there has been a lack of research in the area of Mexican American families during the 1990's. The present study fills a gap in the research and provides direction for research with Mexican American families specifically in the Midwest.

Throughout the Mexican American family's development, compadrazgo has been a characteristic that has withstood the test of time. Compadrazgo, or fictive kin, is a system in which a person or couple serve as coparents to a child through baptism, first communion, confirmation, and marriage. Over the centuries, the purpose of compadrazgo has been modified. Research has found that the compadre serves more of a social

role as opposed to a coparent role. Furthermore, the research showed that the younger generations of Mexican Americans have struggled to sustain the compadrazgo aspects of the traditional culture (Williams, 1990; Mirande, 1977; Miller, 1978).

#### Methods

The present study was not meant to be representative. By electing to do a case study of a Mexican American family, the purpose of the study was illustrative rather than representative. By using qualitative methods, specifically ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979), this study focused on the rich data source obtained from the Mexican American family's experience. Feagin, Orum, and Sjoberg (1991) stated that the qualitative research exemplified in the case study usually brings us closer to real human beings and everyday life. Rather than assuming a world of simplicity and uniformity, those who adopt the qualitative approach generally picture a world of complexity and plurality. It is the richness and subtle nuances of the social world that matter and that the qualitative researcher wishes to uncover. (p.23)

The Sanchez-Garcia family, which was the focus of this study, was not representative of other Mexican American families in rural Iowa. This family had experienced a life threatening incident that Lorenzo described earlier. However,

other settled out Mexican American families were affected indirectly from this incident and could be subject to this treatment.

The study was conducted in rural Northeastern Iowa. The community population of the town of Annsburg (fictitious name of town) is 4500, the majority of whom were Euro-Americans. The sample consisted of one Mexican American family. For the purpose of the study, the family will be named Sanchez-Garcia and pseudonyms will be used to protect family identity. The family was intact with five children. A grandfather and a compadre lived with the family for an extended period of time. I was first introduced to the Sanchez-Garcia through the Proteus agency. Proteus is a private corporation that receives funding from the state and federal government to aid migrant workers and settled out families. After several weeks had passed and I had attended various Proteus meetings, I was ready to begin my ethnography of the Mexican American family. A Proteus worker and I visited several Mexican American families in Annsburg. I decided to do my ethnography on the Sanchez-Garcia family and began my interviews with the family several weeks later. The other subjects in the study consisted of other Mexican-Americans and Euro-Americans in the community including a school counselor, a police officer, and a community liaison for the Mexican and Euro-Americans.



The methods used in the study were qualitative, specifically ethnographic interviews. The family and community interviews were used as the primary data base. The interviews were unstructured. Although there was a predetermined set of questions (see sample of questions in the Appendix), I did not hesitate to modify and extend the questions when the subjects had some information that deviated from the list of predetermined questions. I used a tape recorder and the interviews were conducted in the family's home. The interviews with the other subjects were done in local businesses, schools, and city government offices. The interviews were done in Spanish, English, and sometimes a combination of both languages (Spanglish). All of the interviews of the parents were conducted with both spouses present. The children's interviews were separated by age group and sex. For example, the two older children were interviewed together. The mother was present when I interviewed the younger children. I was also accompanied by a Mexican American colleague who had experience with rural Mexican American populations. This individual also aided me in the transcriptions and analysis of the data. During this process we would come to an agreement on the important points of each interview and how it would contribute to the study.

Trustworthiness for the study was accomplished through the method of triangulation and respondent validation. This

approach entails checking data from one participant by collecting data from other participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1986). I asked more than one member in the family the same question to gain a better understanding and to triangulate or verify the data I had collected. For example, when I asked Eloisa about the children's school experience, I checked her interview with the children in a later interview. With the community members, for example, I triangulated the police officer's interview with another community leader.

To achieve trustworthiness, I also used thick descriptions of the families and the community member's experiences from the interviews in the study. Through these interviews, I was able to establish and then develop a two dimensional concept, *cabellerismo-mujerismo* that will be discussed in the analysis and interpretations section.

In addition, to accomplish trustworthiness, the method of member checking was used with several of the family and community members. Before writing the final draft of their quotes, I asked Lorenzo and Eloisa if they agreed with how I had recorded their quotes and wrote them. With the police officer and the community liaison I had a telephone conversation with them and asked them if they agreed with the way I had interpreted their interview.

The member check, whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members

of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314).

Because of the nature of the ethnographic interviews there was an abundance of data collected. Only the data "interviews" that pertained to the specific focus areas are reported here. In particular, I focused on the interviews that pertained to Lorenzo's incident and the two dimensional concept of cabellerismo and mujerismo.

#### Analysis and Interpretations

Throughout my ethnography of the Sanchez-Garcia family's life experience and the rural community of Annsburg, I realized two important outcomes came from the incident. First, the incident made the predominately Euro-American community realize that they were not exempt from the multiculturalism that the United States as a whole is experiencing. Second, the importance of the Sanchez-Garcia family's socialization and structure was not only important for surviving the ordeal, but also showed how other Mexican American families might handle similar situations. Furthermore, I realized the Sanchez-Garcia family did not only show these characteristics in the family system, but also out in the community. The Sanchez-Garcia family showed me the commitment to their family, but it was the way the family carried itself in the community that allowed me to develop the

two dimensional concept of cabellerismo-mujerismo. In the following section, I define and demonstrate how cabellerismo and mujerismo have served as a resource to the Sanchez-Garcia family in rural Iowa, specifically in the year after Lorenzo's incident. I will also discuss how compadrazgo continues to be a resource for the Sanchez-Garcia family, especially after Lorenzo's incident. The following paragraphs include profiles of the Sanchez-Garcia family members.

The father of the family was Lorenzo, first introduced in the incident. He was in his forties and was originally from south Texas. Lorenzo was a man of wisdom and knowledge who was willing to share his experiences with me. A good communicator and a man willing to listen, Lorenzo was still modest in his own way. Lorenzo spoke Spanish and English, but preferred to speak Spanish.

Eloisa, his wife, was also from south Texas and was in her forties. She appeared to be a leader and a woman who was willing to stand up for what she believed in, yet, always seemed to have a smile on her face. Eloisa was bilingual, but the majority of the time she spoke a mixture of both Spanish and English (Spanglish).

The oldest son, Manuel, was 16 years old and in high school. Manuel was very mature and respectful for his age. He was an athlete and a hard working student. Manuel was talkative yet calm in his own way.

Robert, the second oldest son, was 15 years old and was in high school. He was a respectful young man with a fire in his heart and soul that could get you excited. Robert was also an athlete, but was more involved with his teenage surroundings than his brother Manuel.

The youngest son was in grade school and his name was Oscar. Oscar was 11 years old when I interviewed him. He always had a question and never hesitated to tell me about his boyhood experiences.

Teresa was 9 years old during my ethnography and like any young girl she was full of life. Teresa was very bright and when she spoke it was always a delight to hear. Teresa was an outstanding student who always had outstanding marks.

Rebecca, the youngest daughter, was 7 years old and was always on the move. I would consider Rebecca a happy girl who made her life an adventure.

The compadre who lived with the family, Domingo, was in his midforties. Although I had limited interaction with Domingo, I would consider him to be an honorable man.

The grandfather, Jose, was in his midsixties. Jose once described himself as a hard worker and a man who always "thanked God for his good comings." I would describe Jose as a man who had seen a lot of negative things in his life but still had a good soul.

### Cabellerismo and Mujerismo

This paper extends the Mexican American critical tradition by suggesting a two dimensional concept in familism: cabellerismo-mujerismo. After defining and discussing the two dimensional concept of cabellerismo and mujerismo, I will give an explanation of why I have not separated these two dimensions.

*Cabellerismo* is the socialization of a male child in which the child learns loyalty to the family while serving as a representative of the family in the community. The family serves as a nurturing support network. The cabellerismo socialization enables the child to develop a strong self-identity and esteem through his culture that prepares the individual as an adult. Also, the interacting socialization that the Mexican American develops from the close knit family enables the individual to do well in group activities. Furthermore, contrary to previous research, I believe that cabellerismo is not gender specific. The male is very much involved with the rearing of his children, this stemming from their warm and nurturing family system and the two dimensional concept of cabellerismo-mujerismo.

*Mujerismo* is the other side of the two dimensional concept. The Mexican American child is socialized to have a strong self-identity and esteem through the culture. Depending on the type of family, the focus of Mexican American

familism is to pass on the knowledge to the daughters and sons to be leaders and to contribute not only within the family but also in the community. An important characteristic of mujerismo is that it is not gender specific. Whereas previously the female was thought to be the primary socializer of the children, in cabellerismo-mujerismo it depends on the situation and type of family.

I would argue that machismo does exist in the Mexican American culture. Although some Hispanics would argue that cabellerismo (the cabellero) is the positive end of machismo, others would argue that the two have no relation. My purpose was not to settle that dispute, but rather to establish cabellerismo as part of a two dimensional concept. Whereas traditionally the cabellero was seen as masculine, I would argue that the cabellero also contains the characteristics that have been traditionally labeled as feminine. Because cabellerismo-mujerismo are not gender specific, the individual, in this case the Mexican American, is able to take on a more well rounded role. Futhermore, it is important to understand that cabellerismo-mujerismo are the same with the only difference in the sex of the subject being socialized.

As Baca Zinn (1976) hypothesized, the Mexican American family is centered around the mother as opposed to previous thought that the male was the focus. I would suggest that the Mexican American family is not centered around either parent

in the case of an intact household. Rather, the Mexican American family system is situational in nature depending upon the type of family. Regardless of the type of family, whether it is a two parent household or single parent household, the Mexican American children, regardless of sex, are still receiving the two-dimensional socialization of caballerismo-mujerismo.

In contrast, the Euro-American counterpart is socialized in a "all or nothing environment" and a gender specific society. The Euro-American male is socialized to be independent minded. As an adult, if he does not succeed against his Euro-American counterpart then he is shunned by society for failing. The individual does not look towards his family for support because he was socialized to be independent. Furthermore, because family unity was not stressed throughout socialization, the individual should not expect support from his/her siblings. Erikson (1950) stated that, instead of socializing children to be independent, the Euro-American culture socializes its individuals especially men, to be uniformistic. Erikson believed that the modern American industrial society has socialized "machines" rather than individual thinkers.

This type of socialization by Euro-Americans was at its peak throughout the economic development of the United States. Because of the individual type of socialization of American



children, the results have shown an increase of young adults who experience anxiety, stress, depression, suicide and other problems because of the lack of success. Furthermore, it is important to socialize future generations to: 1) be able to work within a system like the family, 2) be able to work in a larger system rather than an individual among many individuals and, finally, 3) socialize children in an environment that is not gender specific. The Mexican American family and other family systems would serve as successful examples. My goal was to demonstrate how the Sanchez-Garcia family possessed the characteristics of cabellerismo and mujerismo and how these characteristics served as important tools during the year after Lorenzo's incident.

#### The Sanchez-Garcia Family Story

Throughout Lorenzo's ordeal Eloisa (wife) showed her strength and persistence by going to the police and the city government and demanding that her husband receive justice. After the incident, Eloisa also served as a leader with the migrants when they were experiencing problems with some of the locals. I wondered about the racial relations between the Mexican and Euro-Americans and asked Eloisa if the tension had always been there. Eloisa said

Well it depends when we first got here we didn't have a problem with settling in and I think that some of the people in town did not like that. The older people and

business people have always been nice to us but it's some people our age and some of the youth who cause us problems (Eloisa, October 1993).

Having just experienced a life threatening situation, Eloisa showed me her professionalism in how she was not quick to point the finger at people in general for what had happened to her husband. As in the quote just cited, she continued to demonstrate cabellerismo and mujerismo by giving an example of the people who she thought were the cause of the problems while still respecting the others in the community. Furthermore, I was moved by her loyalty and devotion to her family while still serving as a positive role model for her children through her actions in the community.

Unlike the previous research, which characterized the Mexican American women as passive, Eloisa showed the opposite. Furthermore, Eloisa continued to be the center of the family. She controlled the finances in the family and throughout their life had taught her children the value of money. Eloisa continued to show the roots of cabellerismo and mujerismo when she would demonstrate her unwillingness to give up when her children were being harassed at school and in the community after the incident.

My children would tell me that the white kids at school were harassing them. They would make stupid racial remarks about Mexicans and when my children would

responded they would get blamed for starting the fight between the kids. I have made so many complaints to the school I cannot keep up with how many I have made (Eloisa, October 1993).

The year after the incident would be a critical period for the family. It would determine whether they would consider staying in Annsburg. One of the sons (Oscar) who was in grade school was having nightmares about his father's incident and felt that the white guys would come take his dad again. What surprised me was how I learned of his dreams. It was his younger eight year old sister (Teresa) who informed me of the dreams. She took it upon herself to seek counseling for him. Apparently, she went to the school counselor and explained and described what her brother was going through. Upon my knowledge of Oscar's (the son) dreams, I scheduled a visit with the school counselor.

Before I discuss my interview with the school counselor, I must stress the importance of Teresa's willingness to help her brother. Teresa's initiative showed the cabellerismo and mujerismo in her love and loyalty to her family and maturity to seek the proper professional help for her brother. It was this type of character that I witnessed from all the members of the Sanchez-Garcia family that supported the concept of cabellerismo and mujerismo. The supporting and nurturing environment that Lorenzo and Eloisa provided was indicative of

their children's development especially during the year after the incident.

When I interviewed the school counselor, I sought to gain an understanding of how Mexican American children were doing in school. He said that it depended on the Mexican American child. Some children came with weaker educational backgrounds and others came in as well rounded children. I asked him if the language would be one of those barriers for the children with less skills. He said yes it was and since their English as a Second Language was not a strong program that it could limit the children. When I asked him about the Sanchez-Garcia children, he said that the children were basically average children. When I asked him about his contact with Oscar he said that he had been working with Oscar and his nightmares. He informed me that Oscar had come to talk to him about his dreams. I asked the school counselor about Oscar's visits and if the nightmares had affected his school work and his school experience in general.

He came to me wanting to talk. We talked once or twice a week and really he has taught me things about the culture that I did not know. It has been a good experience. I have not heard anything about the incident affecting his school work. Oscar told me that the incident had affected his sister Teresa, but it had not affected her school work (school counselor, November 1993).

Oscar demonstrated the cabellerismo and mujerismo by accepting the help from his sister despite her age. He also showed the two dimensional concept by being respectful and open to the school counselor.

I ended my interview by asking the school counselor about the community attitude towards Mexican Americans, specifically Lorenzo's incident. His response was

Well, my police friends agree with Lorenzo and would side with Lorenzo. Where Lorenzo was in question was when he pulled out the knife. But I would say that the community does have its trouble makers (school counselor, November 1993).

As my ethnography of the Sanchez-Garcia family continued, I realized that the majority of the problems the family experienced came from the school, specifically the high school. I noticed that Eloisa and Lorenzo fought to keep their composure while their children experienced back lash from the incident. I wondered if Lorenzo's incident was the core of the problem or was it the result of tension that had been building for a long period of time. I decided to schedule a visit with the high school counselor to pursue my question. Were the Mexican American children, specifically the Sanchez-Garcia children, trouble makers or were they being harassed?

Similar to the other counselor, the high school counselor seemed very opened minded and did not hesitate to speak his mind. I asked him about peer relationships involving Mexican Americans, specifically Robert and Manuel (the two older Sanchez-Garcia children) and the rest of Annsburg High School. He said that because of Lorenzo's fight, there was tension between the Mexican-American and Euro-American adolescents at the beginning of the semester. He went on to say that it had calmed down with time. When I asked him how he saw Robert and Manuel, he said that they were very much respectful and were average when compared to their peers. I also asked for his thoughts about the causes of the problems between Robert, Manuel, and their peers. He said that it usually had to do with a girl. Usually the white adolescent was jealous because his Mexican American counterpart was dating a white girl who he liked.

I decided to ask the boys about their dating. I also wanted to gain an understanding of what the boys' feelings were when it pertained to interracial dating. I wanted to see if they would show cabellerismo and mujerismo in the way they perceived interracial dating and how they handled these situations. Manuel and Robert were dating Euro-American girls. Ashley, Manuel's girlfriend, was willing to be interviewed. I asked Manuel if he felt that one of the problems at school was that he was dating an Euro-American and

if before Ashley he had dated girl of other races. Manuel responded:

I have dated white and Mexican girls, to me it's the girl I meet not the race. It's not our fault that their girls (the white girls) come on to us. When I first got here that was one of the big problems with me. With Ashley we dated secretly for five months and then we got caught. Her dad and her sat down at the police station and talked about it, I guess her dad realized how much she loved me. After that Ashley called me to come over and talk to her parents. I went over and talked to her mother and her father and now we all get along (Manuel, November 1993).

I asked Robert the same questions that I had asked Manuel and did not really know what to expect. He had made some comments about his girlfriend's parents being prejudiced and I wondered if they really were. Robert, unlike Manuel, was more direct in his conversation and I sometimes wondered if that might have been why some of his teachers misunderstood him. Robert responded to my questions in this way:

My girlfriend's parents do not accept me because of our record (Manuel and Robert) that being what the cops say about me and my brother. We don't have an official recorder but the cops say that we have a bad recorder. I have mainly dated white girls and a few Mexican girls. My girlfriend's parents are not really prejudiced they

just think that I got a bad recorder because the cops have said that about my brother and I (Robert, November 1993).

When I interviewed Ashley I asked her about her feelings towards interracial dating. I also asked her about her parents' feelings towards her dating Manuel and how she felt the community viewed the boys. She responded with:

My dad is not really prejudiced but he does not believe in mixing the races. Manuel is the first Mexican American that I have dated and to me it is what is inside of the person. I think that some of the police and other people in the city can be prejudiced towards the boys because they're Mexicans (Ashley, Manuel's girlfriend, November 1993).

Manuel and Robert showed that interracial dating was not a problem, but what was important from these two quotes was their ability to handle the situation. Manuel showed cabellerismo and mujerismo by sitting down with Ashley's parents. Robert demonstrated it by being able to look beyond the races and cultures, and looking at whether he had a police record, and how his girlfriend's parents saw that.

After my interviews with the boys, Ashley, and the school counselors, I concluded that the Sanchez-Garcia children were not trouble makers. Furthermore, I felt that it was more than just a fight over a girl. Although interracial dating is



something that is a reality in Annsburg, I think that it is only a part of the multiculturalism that the community will experience in the future.

As I expected, the Sanchez-Garcia children had been socialized to be respectful but not submissive. I also noticed that the Sanchez-Garcia parent-child relationship was very much authoritative. In a discussion with Lorenzo, I asked him how he thought his children should handle themselves and what they stood for. Lorenzo responded with:

I don't expect and want my children to fight with anyone. Although lately other kids have been pushing them towards that. I think they can handle it in some other way than fighting. I have taught my children to be respectful but to know when to defend themselves (Lorenzo, November 1993).

When I asked Eloisa the same question, she said:

My children have it hard. The police for a while labeled them as bad kids and that rubbed off at school but even after all that I have always taught my children to do what is right and I think now that the incident is over the town is starting to see my children in a different way (Eloisa, November 1993).

After these interviews, I would say without a doubt that they were the best examples of cabellerismo and mujerismo in the study for Eloisa and Lorenzo. By teaching their children

to not physically confront or to be submissive but rather verbally handle the situation, Eloisa and Lorenzo were able to instill those moral values that most adults will never possess, regardless of the culture.

Furthermore, through my observations at the Sanchez-Garcia house and my discussion with each school counselor, I was able to assume that the children were applying the cabellerismo and mujerismo socialization that they had learned from their parents. Although I had interviewed the school counselors, I also interviewed the other children about their school experience. When I interviewed Robert about his school experience in Annsburg he said:

Sometimes my teachers will make smart remarks like "we're not in Mexico we don't do that here in America." One time one of my teachers challenged me physically. I think because of all this I don't get enough help in school. I could do better than I do before but I feel that some of my teachers just don't help me enough (Robert, November 1993).

There is no telling what could have happened in Robert's situation. In my opinion, most American children today are lacking that sense of respect for their elders and peers. Furthermore, they are also not prepared for situations like Robert's. Once again, Robert demonstrated, under pressure, that he could respect his elders and showed his maturity. I

must also add that Robert, unlike the other children in the family, has a short temper and is very athletic. The results could have been disastrous.

When I interviewed Manuel about his school experience, he said that it depended on the teacher. He mentioned that he respected his teachers and expected the same in return. In my interview with Oscar about his school experience, he shared with me some of his best and worse moments.

When I first got to school I didn't really know that many people but then I met my buddy Jaime who also is a Mexican American and now we always hangout with each other and I have a lot better time in school now. With my dad's fight (the incident) sometimes the white kids will start fights with me and when I hit them back the teacher blames me for starting it (Oscar, November 1993).

When I interviewed the youngest daughter, Rebecca, and asked her about her school experience, I received quite a different message than from her brothers. During this interview, Eloisa was present to help Rebecca with some of the questions and to put her at ease. In this interview, I was (M), Rebecca was (R), and Eloisa was (E).

M: Do you like school Rebecca?

R: I like school.

M: Do you like your teacher?

R: No I don't like Mrs. X.

M: Why don't you like Mrs. X?

R: She is prejudice.

E: Rebecca is hyper and Mrs. X has a hard time with her in class.

M: Rebecca do you know what prejudice is or means? She could not answer the question (Rebecca, November 1993).

Because I did not interview any school teachers, I can only speculate that some of the teachers in the Annsburg school district might lack training when working with children of ethnicity, in this case Mexican Americans. I speculate that the teachers might feel that their authority is being challenged by the Mexican American when in actuality the Mexican American children are only trying to enrich their education. Another speculation might be the simple fact that the Euro-American teacher and Mexican American child might not understand each other and each other's cultures. It concerned me to hear Rebecca say that her teacher was prejudice. I wondered if she really had an understanding of racism and prejudice and if so was it because of Lorenzo's incident.

As the year progressed, and although Lorenzo's incident would forever be in the Sanchez-Garcia family memory, the family was able to begin rebuilding. Lorenzo said that his family was in Annsburg to stay and the Euro-Americans who did not want them there would have to learn to live with his

family and other Mexican Americans in the community. I wondered if Lorenzo would recommend Annsburg to another Mexican American family who was looking to move to Iowa. I asked this question to Lorenzo throughout my ethnography and when I asked him the last time he said:

After the incident I would have not recommended Annsburg to any Mexican American family. In fact Eloisa's sister was thinking about moving to Annsburg but she changed her mind after my incident. I would say that Annsburg is not that bad but the incident will never be forgotten in this town and my family will never forget it (Lorenzo, June 1994).

In my last interview with Lorenzo, we reflected on the year and wondered what the future would be like in Annsburg. Lorenzo, having survived a life threatening incident, once again demonstrated the cabellerismo and mujersimo by turning a negative situation into something positive for his children and the children of Annsburg.

It took a life threatening incident like mine to make the people of Annsburg realize that people are different and that we must respect each other. I think that it has been a learning experience for the Euro-Americans and Mexican Americans of Annsburg (Lorenzo, June 1994).

My ethnography of the Sanchez-Garcia family life experience in rural Iowa showed a close knit Mexican American

family who set an example for the community of Annsburg and similar rural communities across the United States. The Sanchez-Garcia family showed resourcefulness of the Mexican American family system even when confronted with a life threatening incident. In an interview with Eloisa, she explained this to me.

The other day Manuel and some other Mexican Americans went to the police station to make sure that there would be no problems during the summer between the Mexican and Euro Americans (Eloisa, June 1994).

Although I was surprised with the way Teresa handled the situation with her younger brother, I was not surprised with Manuel's maturity and loyalty in his efforts to eliminate any tension that might occur between Mexican Americans and Euro-Americans in Annsburg. This showed the type of family socialization that he had received from both his parents. Furthermore, in a previous interview with a police officer, he explained to me that his station was making an effort to avoid any further incidents and to make Annsburg a better community for both Mexican Americans and Euro-Americans. He explained to me that they had hired a Mexican American police officer and who would serve as the community liaison between the Mexican Americans and Euro-Americans. When interviewed, the Mexican American officer discussed with us that he was nervous

and it was definitely a challenge to be the sole representative of an entire culture.

Lorenzo stated that his incident had caused an awareness towards cultural understanding in Annsburg. I see Annsburg taking a positive direction by wanting to improve the relations between the Euro-Americans and the Mexican Americans. I also see the Sanchez-Garcia family system serving as an example to other families in America. Similarly, the second and last section of the study shows the importance of the compadres (compadrazgo) to the rural community by using the Sanchez-Garcia family as an example.

#### Compadrazgo in a Rural Community

Throughout my ethnography with the Sanchez-Garcia family, Lorenzo and Eloisa would always bring up their compadres. For a good part of my interviews, one of the compadres lived with the family while another compadre and comadre lived in Annsburg. In an interview with Lorenzo he said that his compadre Domingo was like a brother to him. Domingo, helped Lorenzo get out of the incident. According to Lorenzo Domingo and his wife, who at the time was in Florida working as a migrant, have always been supportive of his family. Eloisa said that even before they lived in Annsburg their compadres were always a source of support and also served as friends. She said that they served as the extended family that they did not have available.

In a community like Annsburg, where Mexican Americans are few, I asked Lorenzo about the other compadres (the Diaz family) who lived in Annsburg. He said that the Diaz family had been part of the Sanchez-Garcia family since his children were young. They had always served as a support network and as friends. While Lorenzo was in jail the Diaz family was there to help Eloisa.

As mentioned earlier, compadrazgo continues to be important to the Mexican American family in rural communities. In the case of the Sanchez-Garcia family, Domingo proved to be "life saving." Domingo also testified in court on Lorenzo's behalf. Due to the lack of support networks for the Mexican American in rural Iowa, compadrazgo serves as the bond that allows the Mexican American family to survive. In urban communities, although in no better conditions, the Mexican American has a considerably higher population of Mexican Americans who could serve as a support network to the Mexican American family.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

Mexican American families first arrived in numbers to Iowa around the War World II era. They arrived as migrant workers and today there is still a high population of Mexican American migrant families in Iowa. The Mexican American family experience in rural Iowa, as in other regions, has not been a pleasant one. As a minority in a rural region, the



Mexican American family has had to endure prejudice and racism. Valdes (1991) stated that the Mexicanos were the last of the immigrant groups to go to the Midwest and, unlike their experience in Texas and elsewhere, they found no prior Mexicano presence in the region. Despite the ethnic diversity in the Midwest, the Mexicano was forced to endure negative stereotypes from several sources like soldiers who had developed negative attitudes towards Mexicanos when they had accompanied General Pershing to Mexico in 1916-1917.

The Mexican American family has had to deal with the lack of sensitivity to its culture which includes the Spanish language. In the opening incident, although not mentioned, the initial reason for the conflict between the local Euro-Americans and Mexican Americans was the lack of understanding both languages. It is my belief that the local Euro-American has developed a mentality of tolerance rather than taking the time to actually learn more about the Mexican American culture. The mentality of tolerance which is usually geared toward the migrant worker has also affected the settled out Mexican American family. The results can prove to be disastrous as in the case of the Sanchez-Garcia family.

The purpose of the study was to present the story of a settled out Mexican American family as they faced a traumatic life experience in rural Iowa. Through the Sanchez-Garcia family experience, I developed and applied a two dimensional

concept, cabellerismo and mujerismo, which possesses characteristics of familism and machismo. As did the research in the 1970's, this research has shown that the Mexican American family can be quite functional, as opposed to dysfunctional as portrayed in the traditional view of the Mexican American family.

Furthermore, the research explored the Mexican American family system and how it functioned within other systems, in this case a rural community. By using qualitative methods, specifically ethnographic interviews, I was able to demonstrate the importance of cabellerismo and mujerismo to the Sanchez-Garcia couple, especially during the year after Lorenzo's incident. Furthermore, the Sanchez-Garcia children showed that their development involved cabellerismo and mujerismo.

It was through my outsider within perspective that I was able to determine the children's socialization. I was accepted by the family because of my cultural background and life experiences, and I was also able to develop a better understanding of how and why the children would react to situations at home, school, and in the community. Through Lorenzo and Eloisa, I was able to observe and inquire about how they had learned to deal with racial situations like the incident. Through this acquired knowledge of Lorenzo's and Eloisa's methods of handling situations, I was able to develop

the two dimensional concept of cabellerismo and mujerismo which I found, in the case of the Sanchez-Garcia family, not to be gender specific. Furthermore, Lorenzo and Eloisa showed that their family was the most important part of their lives and because of this commitment they were able to take on whatever came their way. They also demonstrated that closing themselves to the world would not help anyone over a long period of time. Due to these actions and people like Lorenzo and Eloisa, I was able to show cabellerismo and mujerismo, which, in essence, are at the root of any family system.

Throughout the study, the children demonstrated their unwillingness to allow the prejudice, racism, and sometimes lack of cultural sensitivity to hinder their development. Abound (1988) stated that after age 9, racial attitudes tend to stay constant unless the child experiences a life-changing event. As Lorenzo stated in the study, despite the life threatening incident, the results proved to be a teaching experience to the community of Annsburg. However, as the outsider within, I must stress that the community must continue to take action towards racism and prejudice in Annsburg. What this means is that cultural sensitivity should begin with children before the age of nine. It also means that Annsburg should serve as an example to other rural and urban communities and that cultural diversity should not be taken for granted.

The United States has broken away from the family system and has focused on the individual which in my opinion will lead to the downfall of this country. Furthermore, although it is not certain that at one time other cultures in the United States possessed the characteristics of the Mexican American family system discussed above, as time passed, the modern day, economically driven, family evolved. The reality is that the Mexican American family, regardless of socioeconomic class, has retained its cultural and familial strength and continued to improve in the competitive United States. The Sanchez-Garcia family showed that their development involved cabellerismo and mujerismo. Through the cabellerismo and mujerismo socialization, the Sanchez-Garcia children will develop to have strong identities and be able to contribute to their society despite the conditions they faced in the year after their father's incident.

Through the Sanchez-Garcia family's experience, I was also able to show the importance of compadrazgo to the Mexican American family in rural communities. The strength of the Mexican American family has always been its loyalty and commitment to its family members and its extended family. Both rural and Mexican American families should revisit those values that allowed them to continue their cultural success.

The Sanchez-Garcia family experienced a life threatening situation, and therefore is not representative of other

settled out Mexican families in rural Iowa. The theoretical concept of cabellerismo and mujerismo should be taken with caution until more research is conducted to examine this concept. With cabellerismo and mujerismo established in a rural setting, research should also be done in urban areas. Furthermore, research should also be done with other Hispanic families and other ethnic families to see if cabellerismo and mujerismo are a part of their socialization process.

Due to constraints, I was forced to focus on specific issues and concepts rather than doing a holistic study of the Sanchez-Garcia family and the community. The study was also limited in the senses that all the interviews with Lorenzo and Eloisa were conducted with both spouses present, which could have influenced their responses. The study was done in Spanish and English but written in English, which could have been limited by translating the Spanish interviews to English. Furthermore, although I might have had advantages because of my ethnic and family background as a researcher, there were also disadvantages to this. Because of my background, family experiences, ethnocentrism and serving as the research instrument, my judgement was influenced at times.

In conclusion, the theoretical concept cabellerismo-mujerismo, developed in this study, should be taken with caution pending more research. Furthermore, future research with the two dimensional concept should be done with other

ethnic families including Euro-Americans to determine whether cabellerismo and mujerismo socialization will benefit the changing makeup of the United States.

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## GENERAL CONCLUSION

These two papers discussed the importance of the Mexican American family life experience through the eyes of a single Mexican American family in rural Iowa. As an outsider within, I was able to document how the Sanchez-Garcia family survived a life threatening incident and still managed to keep its family together in the following year. Yet, the importance of the second paper was how Lorenzo's incident would serve as a teaching tool not only to the family involved but to the community of Annsburg and myself.

The first paper reviewed the literature on Mexican American families. It was important to give the reader a general knowledge of how Mexican American families were structured and how the previous research had interpreted those characteristics of the Mexican American family.

As in other ethnic research, the Mexican American family was studied by culturally biased researchers. The findings were negatively stereotypic of the Mexican American family and could not be supported empirically. This research also did not look at the Mexican American family for what it was but rather compared it to the Euro-American culture. Because of this research, a group of researchers challenged the traditional perception of the Mexican American family and were able to establish a different picture of the Mexican American family. Through the reinterpretation of the Mexican American

family, the research could now focus on the Mexican American family rather than comparing it to another culture as in the case of the prior research. An example of this would be the research on egalitarianism in the Mexican American family, which was discussed in the first paper.

The importance of the second paper was how the Sanchez-Garcia family had socialized their children, which allowed me to develop the two dimensional concept of cabellerismo and mujerismo. As the year unfolded and the Sanchez-Garcia family continued to recover from Lorenzo's incident, I was able to demonstrate the socialization that the children and the parents were demonstrating not only in the home but also at school and in the community. Furthermore, as an outsider within, I was able to go to the community and learn more about how they influenced the Sanchez-Garcia family.

Through the second study, I also found the importance of compadrazgo to the Mexican American family in a rural setting. Probably the best example of this was when Domingo, Lorenzo's compadre, was with him throughout the incident and afterwards. Furthermore, compadrazgo, as mentioned in the study, sometimes is the only source of support for the Mexican American family, as in the case of the Sanchez-Garcia family. However, from the second paper it would be important to stress that the institution of compadrazgo should continue where the majority of Mexican American families reside.

The purpose of the two papers was to come to a general understanding of a single Mexican American family life experience in rural Iowa. The first paper reviewed the literature on Mexican American families. It was important to give the reader a general knowledge of how Mexican American families were structured and how the previous research had interpreted those characteristics of the Mexican American family.

In closing, I spent a full year with the Sanchez-Garcia family and as I was escorted to I-35 by the walls of cornfields, I reflected that I had come to this small rural community to hear the story of a single family but I was leaving having heard the tales of a community. My hope was that Annsburg would take a step in the right direction in the understanding of its members, unlike so many other communities in our nation's history. Having learned much from Lorenzo, Eloisa, and the children, all I could offer in return was simply my friendship. My thoughts were pleasant as I approached the interstate and looked back at the walls of corn cut by the winding road.

## APPENDIX

## POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO PARENTS

## BACKGROUND:

1. When did you come to Annsburg.
2. Where did you come from.
3. Did you like Annsburg then.
4. Why did you come to Annsburg then.

## Community:

1. Did the community of Annsburg welcome, accept you.
2. Did they seem bias because of your ethnicity.
3. How about your religion, did you find easy access to it.
4. Did you feel that the government agencies provide adequate aid and were helpful.
5. Did you feel that Proteus was helpful.
6. Do you encourage other Chicano families to move to Annsburg.

## Marital and Familial Attitudes:

1. Has your marriage changed since you arrived and settled in Annsburg.
2. As the wife/husband do you feel that the move to Annsburg has been more stressful on you.
3. Do you see your marriage as egalitarian or traditional.

## Familial Attitudes:

1. Do you feel that your children look to you more than your spouses.

2. What your role as the mother or father of the family?

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO EXTENDED FAMILY

Grandfather:

1. Where did you come from (birth place).
2. Do you see the Mexican culture in your family in Annsburg.
3. What's your role in the family.
4. How did you perceive Annsburg? Did you go through the same discrimination that you experience when you first arrived in the United States.
5. What type of social, cultural, political, economic future does the Mexican American family have in Annsburg and also in Iowa.
6. Do you see a racial problem here in Annsburg.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO THE ADOLESCENTS

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ANNSBURG:

1. What do you like/dislike most about Annsburg.
2. Do you like your new home is it big enough.
3. Do you think that Annsburg is accepting of you.
4. Do you feel that people of authority in Annsburg are accepting of you.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEERS:

1. Do you feel accepted by your peers at school and outside of school.

2. Do you get involved with extra circular activities at school. (question also applicable to middle childhood: AAMC).
3. Who are your friends in schools and outside of schools. (AAMC)
4. Do you feel that there is tension at school because of your ethnicity, or as an individual. (AAMC)
5. Are your friend minorities or do you have a good cross section of friends. (AAMC)

DATING:

1. Do you date anyone.
2. When do you date do you mind dating other ethnic, cultural people.
3. When you do date other ethnic groups is there a conflict between you and the parents.
4. Since Annsburg is a small community does it accept you date another ethnicity. Do your peers accept it.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT:

1. Do you feel that you are at the level of your peers education.
2. Do you feel that your teacher behaves in the same way to you as your classmates.
3. How do the school authorities treat you.
4. Do you see yourself as graduating and going on to college.
5. Do you get into conflicts with your peers at school.

6. How do you resolve these conflicts.

ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURE: Adolescents & Middle childhood

1. Do you feel that the community accept your culture.
2. Do you like to speak Spanish.
3. Do you feel that your culture is an important part of your life.
4. How do you identify yourself

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD:

1. Who do you play with at school.
2. Do you like your class.
3. Do you like your teacher.
4. Who are your friends.
5. What do you want to be when you grow up.
6. Is school fun.
7. Do you to play with the children that you want to play with at play time.
8. How are your grades in school.
9. Do you think that your teacher treats you the same as your peers.
10. How does the principal, and school counselor.
11. Do you get in trouble at school.

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE RESTAURANT OWNER'S BROTHER- ROLANDO

This interview was not recorded, so the following will be written from memory.

Rolando is the brother of Norma, the Mexican restaurant owner. He has lived in Annsburg nearly as long as she has. They both first came to Annsburg as migrant farm workers. He currently works for a road construction company. Working for the construction company, during the warm season months he spends most of his time on the road only returning to Annsburg one or two weekends per month. During the months too cold to continue the road construction, he stays in Annsburg continually.

From Rolando's point of view, the Mexican-Americans in Annsburg get along just fine. He said that he has never had problems in the community. He did state that occasionally a European-American will get offended because he, Rolando, and his friends and family will speak Spanish in public places. Occasionally the European-American will ask them why they don't just speak English. However, Rolando doesn't see this as a problem to him, rather he sees it as a problem for the European-American.

Concerning "Lorenzo's Incident", Rolando doesn't see the incident reflecting badly on the rest of the Mexican-American families in the community. He feels that it was an isolated incident that has no affect on him what so ever. The way that he heard the story, from a nephew of his who witnessed the incident, Lorenzo had come to help his own son who was in a conflict with another teen-aged boy. Rolando felt that if this is the case, that Lorenzo had no business interfering with the conflict between the two boys. Rolando felt that Lorenzo should have let the boys resolve the conflict themselves.

Rolando feels that the future of Mexican-Americans in Annsburg is as secure as in any other community. He feels very comfortable in Annsburg and is confident in raising his children in this community. He feels that his sister's business has been very profitable and will continue to be profitable in Annsburg. He feels that his family has done well for themselves in Annsburg.

Rolando is a Mexican-American from southwest Texas. He first came to Annsburg as a migrant farm worker as a teenager.



## AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH ROBERTO

This interview was not recorded, so the following will be written from memory.

Roberto is a Mexican-American who was born and raised in south west Texas. He and wife have moved to Annsburg because she acquired a teaching position in Annsburg. Roberto's education is in law enforcement. He is currently working as a teaching assistant at the Annsburg Middle School and as a reserve police officer. Beginning next year, Roberto will be assuming the position of liason between the Mexican-American and European-American communities in Annsburg.

Since there has never been a "Liason" position in the community, his role is not already defined for him. Essentially it will be up to Roberto to define this role. He views the role as that of a 'go between'. He hopes to get the Mexican-American families more involved with the school system, more the PTA. However, he realizes that getting their involvement will be very difficult because many of the parents work long hours at labor intensive jobs and are exhausted after they return home. He also realizes that many of the parents don't feel comfortable in the PTA meeting setting. However, Roberto seem determined to get them involved in any way possible.

Roberto seemed a bit worried because he does not feel adqutely prepared to take on the role of liason because it has not yet been defined and his duties and responsibilities are not clear. He seemed eager to learn of any written work, studies, reports, or other literature, that might better help him define his role and perform well in that role. He is determined to do the best job possible for both communities.

One issue of particular concern to Roberto was the fact that few if any of the young Mexican-American children spoke Spanish. I tried to explain to him my perspective on the issue, myself coming from a predominantly anglo community yet being a Mexican-American person and at one time child. My explanation was this, as a child you spend most of your waken hours at school where only English is spoken. After school as a child you watch television, on which only English is spoken, or you play with your friends, who probably speak only English. Most of your siblings, having grown up in the same envirnment, speak only English. After this explanation he said something to the affect of what about the parents, they speak Spanish to the children and they understand, how can the children not know how to speak Spanish? I answered in this way, in Mexican-American families there is very little discourse between the young children and the parents. The parent will tell the child what to do, and the child will do it quietly. And in the case of most Mexican-American families, by the time the working parent/s get off of work, the parents main concern is feeding the children and putting them to bed. Therefore, the child is exposed to much more English than Spanish.

TRANSCRIPTION- Police Officer, 4/22/94

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R: " Do You think, and this just happens, this happens everywhere with so much multiculturalism going on, that when a Mexican or a black person or whoever, someone of ethnicity does something that it brings more attention than your typical white case? I guess we can say here in Annsburg."

PO: " I would say, We had a very serious incident happen last, and yeah that incident was, and that was even, that escalated from this fight uptown here from minors 17, 18, 19 year olds, 16, 17, 18 you know, to adults where they got the big brothers and dads involved and stuff like that. And, if there's a real bad incident, which we had by the way, we had a situation where a big fight uptown one of the local hispanics driving by was clocked by one of our local jerks as he was driving by, and caused him to lose control of his car, got out, this guy was surrounded by about 25- 30 white people, caucasians up here. He pulled out his knife in self defense. If he'd of just held that knife and held his own and , but this guy baited him and everything, and he finally wound up attacking. That's where he lost it. If he'd of just defended himself versus attacking, hell, he'd of probably been alright. He went after this guy and cut him long, wide and awful. He's lucky he didn't kill this guy. So he crossed, at that point then, he crosses the line."

R: "I've seen a police thing, and that's the whole reason why I said that the police officer, I have several friends who are police officers in my home state of New Mexico and also a friend of mine who's going to be a State Trooper in Texas, Yet when I say you're, an officer is in a bad situation because they're put in the middle and they have to, well not put in a bad situation, in a very difficult situation, because they have to cypher everything out."

PO: "Well, Naturally it looked, I know what you're saying, it looked like when we got up there, you had a crowd of 30- 40 people then all of a sudden we have a crowd of 150 people looking on, everybody knowing a caucasian guy cut up by a Mexican."

R: "Right."

PO: "O.K."

R: "Perceptions."

PO: " And, the group that was there all stated that its the Mexican's fault. Well, by the time, it took 2 or 3 day to figure out everything, to get to everything and everything. Things aren't always as they initially appear. You know what I mean? It takes 2 or 3 days to work through something like that and find out the truth of what really happened there. You know?

" We have to make some quick decisions initially to calm a situation and that. And, eventually, if we've made a mistake we can correct it. Nothing has been done that we can't. And so that was eventually done. You know what I mean? Initially the hispanics were charged with a more serious crime."

R: "Right."

PO: " And then, it got to be a regular cluster before we got everything all straightened out. But then, like I said, you know, the hispanics, you know, initially they were involved in the incident and like I said, you got '74 people all hollering 'well you know this and that.' They get to be pretty intense sometimes some of these situations."

R: " I guess you the Police Officer have taken an active role to recruit someone of Hispanic descent. Do you feel that the community and the different leaders are also doing the same?"

PO: " I think so. Now, this gentleman that we hired on a reserve officer, and we're looking at another Hispanic gentlemen here, that works here in town down here at the Napa store, his name is Isaiah, and I think we're going to get him on the reserves if there's anything we can do about it. He's going to be a good man.

" I would say that the community, this Roberto who works with us, he works with the Annsburg Community School District. I guess some of the local migrant children don't speak english very well. I know that he works with them there. This community, we've had about 3 meetings. There's a group of community leaders that meet, I think we've had 2 meetings now, we're going to have another one, to help this community deal with the problems that the migrants have when they come to town here, to better offer them services and explain things more clearly for the people. And we're working with Proteus, have you ever heard of that?"

R: " Yes, I have."

PO: " And so I'd like to think I had alot to do with having these meetings, you know, with the community leaders, the Association, the schools, the City government, myself, of course, some of the larger employers, and stuff like that there, to make their transitions when they come up here easier not only for them but for us so that there's a better mutual understanding on behalf of everybody."

R: " Do you see that understanding from the locals, the Anglos, spilling overto, basically in college terms, cultural sensitivity to the Mesican-Americans who stay here? Is that going to, obviously its going to have some affect, if there's some,

PO: " Let me say this, that's my hope.:

R: " Right."

PO: " I'd like to see this community grow, prosper, and; from my perspective. And I would like to think that everybody would feel that way. I don't know that. I know that there's alot of misunderstanding as far as alot of people are concerned. Perceptions that I hear having coffee or someone will make a comment, a 'nigger' comment sometimes, and I hear that often. Not everybodies going to share that, the old Police Officer does."

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE POLICE OFFICER

The manner in which the high ranking Police officer handled the incident is consistent with that of an equivalent officer in the small midwestern community in which I grew up. In "Lorenzo's Incident", Lorenzo indicates that he felt that "I think that the way the city and the police department handle the whole situation was racist." This is consistent with the feelings his children have that the 'Authorities' are against them, the Mexican-American children.

The fact that the onlooking crowd all blamed Lorenzo reinforces Eloise's perception that the Anglo's in and around her age group are resentful and don't appreciate having to accept the Mexicans as equals.

The fact that the Police Officer has hired 1 and is attempting to hire another hispanic to the Reserve Police Force is a step toward achieving cultural sensitivity. Several Mexican-American families, including my own, have lived in my community for 20-30 years and the population of the community has since grown to nearly 25,000 people, and it was only 3 years ago that the community hired a hispanic Police Officer. Setting up meetings and having Roberto work with the school system are also steps toward cultural sensitivity.