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Indian-Ladino Relations in Mesoamerica

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INDIAN-LADINO RELATIONS
IN MESOAMERICA

by
Sharon K. Hunt

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
Degree of Master of Arts

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Sharon K. Hunt
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INTRODUCTION

When the Spaniard waded ashore in 1519 in his first large scale attempt to subjugate the inhabitants of the New World, he initiated a series of events that had dramatic consequences for the Indians whom he encountered. The impact of the European and Indian cultures on each other has been well documented historically (Herring 1955; West and Augelli 1966); of less interest have been the more recent developments in the patterns of interaction between the two. This paper is, in part, the result of a study conducted concerning that very point. What has been the outcome of the centuries of cultural interaction? What type of social structure has resulted? What are the predominant behavioral patterns found in Mesoamerica? What trends can reasonably be projected on the basis of the data now available?

This study of cultural interaction has been restricted to Mesoamerica (see Appendix) for a number of reasons. The Indians living there are, and were in the sixteenth century, sedentary horticulturalists (James 1966:407; West and Augelli 1966:229). This has resulted in a high population density. The portion of Mexico that is included in Mesoamerica contains about 25 million people, approximately 2,375,000 of whom speak Indian languages (West and Augelli 1966:229).
1966:315). Guatemala's population of 4.2 million includes 1.8 million Indians (van den Berghe 1968:514-515). Thus, in Mesoamerica, we are dealing with approximately 30 million people, a significant number.

A second reason for focusing on Mesoamerica is the virtual annihilation of the Indian population during the Conquest in many parts of southern Central America. The culture patterns to be found there now are predominantly European (West and Augelli 1966:6).

The third reason for concentrating on Mesoamerica is that some areas still inhabited by Indians, such as northern Mexico, are so desolate and sparsely settled that interaction with outside forces has been minimal (West and Augelli 1966:262). It has only been in recent times that the area, through irrigation, has become attractive to settlers. As noted by West and Augelli (1966:231):

It is precisely within the bounds of ancient Mesoamerica that we find today the bulk of Indian population, the greatest number of spoken aboriginal languages, and most of the Indian ways of life that are retained in the culture of Mexico and Central America.

There are many facets of cultural interaction that can be examined; the interest here is on just one aspect—the interaction between the Indian and Ladino populations. Although various definitions exist for these two terms, Ladino will here refer to those individuals who are non-Indian (Whetten 1961:46), whether Mexican or Guatemalan.
While the use of the term Ladino with reference to Mexicans is not common in the ethnographic literature, van den Berghe and Colby (1961) do employ it in such a manner, and their practice will be followed in this paper. The term Indian will refer to those people who have retained elements of their indigenous culture. Dress, language, attitudes and customs comprise the basis for the distinction.

It is important to note that no reference is made to physical traits in these definitions. Although various authors (Clark 1963:10; Dozer 1962:8; Forbes 1932:82; Gillin 1949:157) have based their cultural categories on physical characteristics, there is an increasing tendency to recognize the fact that, while the concept of race does exist in Mesoamerica, racial status is generally determined by cultural characteristics (Adams 1960:19; Colby and van den Berghe 1961:772; Edelmann 1965:65). However, this is a complex point and will be discussed more fully in a later portion of this paper.

Whetten (1961:47-48) argues for a division of the Indians into two groups, traditional and transitional. The former are those individuals who closely adhere to the indigenous way of life, the latter those who are abandoning the traditional customs and are acquiring the attitudes and behavior patterns of the Ladino. While the distinction is a useful one and would be easily operationalized in field research, the necessary information is not available to
permit its usage in this paper. The distinction is not recognized in the collection of census data; our research, and that reported in the literature, focus on the transitional Indian, making it difficult to ascertain the extent to which the traditional Indian is found. Most Indians, it would appear, are transitional in status. To varying degrees, they have begun to wear western dress, they are learning Spanish, they are participating less actively in traditional religious organizations and more actively in politics, and they are playing a more significant role in a market economy. The Indians considered in this paper will be assumed to occupy some point on the continuum between the traditional Indian and the Ladino.

The data appearing in this paper have come from two sources—library materials and field research conducted by the author (as a member of a three person research team\(^1\)) during the summer of 1966. Ostuncalco, our research site, is located approximately seven miles from Quezaltenango, Guatemala, in the western highlands. The village proper has a population of approximately 3,500 to 4,000 persons, the majority Indians. The economy of the town is based on

\(^{1}\)The team was composed of Dr. Robert Jack Smith, Professor of Anthropology and then Chairman of the Latin American Studies Program at Western Michigan University, who acted as the advisor; Miss Kathleen Cutler, then a student in anthropology at Western Michigan University, and myself. The research was financed by a National Science Foundation grant.
some small shops, a municipal market, some specialty crafts (loom weaving, marimba making, carpentry) and agriculture.

The material available in the literature on Indian-Ladino relations is scarce. Many authors treat it in a casual fashion; rarely is it a focus of attention. Studies emphasizing the economic and political systems, and changes in them, are most common. Human relations are only alluded to. As a result, it has been necessary to base the major portion of this paper on my own field research and a few major library sources (and many minor ones). The outcome, I realize, is uneven coverage of some aspects of ethnic relations. Such is inevitable, however, until more investigators turn their attention to this area of research.

The question might reasonably be raised of the generalizability of the research findings of such a limited number of studies to an area as extensive as Mesoamerica. With respect to this point, de la Fuente (1967:447) has stated that "Each local ethnic system, as well as the factors upon which it depends, shows many similarities with other local systems . . . ." And, in fact, those studies that are available dealing with ethnic relations do indicate a significant amount of agreement, whether the village studied is in Chiapas, Mexico or eastern Guatemala. Colby and van den Berghe (1961:785) attribute the resemblance in patterns of ethnic relations on both sides of the Mexican-Guatemalan border to the "geographic proximity of the two areas, their
close political ties until the early nineteenth century, and the cultural similarity between Ladino and Indian groups in the two regions. . . ." However, an attempt will be made to indicate the specific basis for opinions and conclusions stated in this paper and the particular source of information.

Before plunging into the substantive portion of this paper, it seems wise to establish some historical and cultural context for the reader. This will be done very briefly, with the suggestion that Coe (1962, 1966), Herring (1964) or any of a number of historians and anthropologists be consulted for elaboration.

In some areas of Mesoamerica, conquest proceeded relatively rapidly after 1519, surprisingly enough in those areas of greatest cultural development and population concentrations. In the Mexican highlands, the Spaniards simply replaced the native aristocracy, and the aboriginal population, long used to the demands of their rulers, found themselves contributing tribute and slaves much as they had in pre-conquest days. Within twelve years after Cortes' landing at Veracruz, his men had gained relatively effective control of the Mexican highlands. Although he had also penetrated southern Mesoamerica, the Indians of the Yucatan Peninsula and the Guatemalan and Chiapas highlands offered stiff resistance, and Spanish influence, though felt, was checked to a large degree. It is in this southern portion
of Mesoamerica that the greatest evidence of Indian culture is seen today (West and Augelli 1966:260).

The process of New World culture change did not begin with the arrival of the Spaniards. Certainly for as long as the American continents had been peopled, different tribes and groups had intermittently come into contact with one another and had assimilated segments of the others' ideological and material culture (Coe 1962, 1966). The legends of the various tribes and kingdoms of the Valley of Mexico suggest this process, even if they do not authenticate it. The arrival of the Aztecs at Lake Texcoco in the thirteenth century is just one example (Coe 1962). However, none of these previous contact situations can possibly have compared with the cataclysmic effect of the Spanish conquest. For the first time, the Indians were faced with men of different physical appearance who carried awesome, noisy weapons and rode on huge, snorting animals. Never before had contact with "foreigners" resulted in a decimation of the native population from new diseases and unusually harsh work demands (West and Augelli 1966:267). In short, the Spanish conquest brought changes of a magnitude never before experienced by the aboriginal inhabitants. Some, who lived in less accessible regions, such as the Chiapas-Guatemala highlands, escaped the ravages of European colonization to a great extent (West and Augelli 1966:260). For hundreds of years their descendants lived
in relative isolation, shielded by their mountains. With varying degrees of success, they protected the integrity of their native culture (Tax 1952:249).

The most serious threat during the colonial period was the Catholic religion, carried by zealous missionaries. But the Indians met this challenge quite successfully, adopting the Catholic faith in a form modified by their traditional beliefs, producing a religion that has traces of both and yet is neither (Hedrick 1967). Try as they might, conscientious priests even today are unable to stamp out these traces of traditional religion. Sorcery is practiced by "good Catholics;"¹ some individuals appeal indiscriminately to the saints and to witches for favors (Nader 1964:283). Indians in Chichicastenango, Guatemala burn incense as an offering to traditional gods on the steps of the Catholic church, in spite of repeated attempts by the priests to dissuade them (Bunzel 1952:3).

Thus, until recent times, the major force for change has been the Catholic Church. Important as this has been in some areas, its influence has been weakened through the manipulation of Catholic teachings to make them more compatible with traditional beliefs. The military conquests of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and later efforts to impose western culture by force had largely failed in the highlands. The Indians maintained their cultural integrity

¹Dr. Robert Jack Smith, personal communication.
remarkably well. Adaptations were made, but general aboriginal patterns of behavior were maintained (Reina 1960:101). The process of acculturation proceeded slowly between the Indian and European-derived cultures.

Today, however, multiple factors have created a situation in which the Indian is not only accepting western material and ideological culture, he is seeking it out. As Firth (1963:81) has pointed out, it is now necessary to conceive of "primitive people not simply as accepting civilization when it is introduced to them, but as reacting in positive fashion to each new element as it is presented to them." As hesitant, perhaps unconscious, as the Indians' pursuit is, it does seem to be a fact (Tumin 1952:239).

In some cases, it is due to experiences of the young when they leave their villages to find work beyond their mountains (Nader 1964:210) or serve in the army (Gillin 1951:8) or travel (Tumin 1952:170). Many return home eager to spread the wonders of westernization. Mass production of items such as transistor radios has made them available to larger numbers of Indians. With these come popular music and national news. Improved transportation has made it possible and profitable for many to travel further from home in selling their goods. Glass mugs from Japan are sold in the market place at Totonicapan, the traditional center of Guatemala's pottery manufacture. In short, progress and all it entails--industrialization (and its demand for
labor), greater mobility of populations, advanced medical practices, etc.—has finally penetrated the mountain barriers. And the Indian is finding there are apparent compensations for the loss of his ethnic identity. Throughout Mesoamerica new attitudes, new desires, new demands of the Indians are challenging the traditional social structure (Scheele 1957:57). Before we can examine the implications of the challenge, however, we must explore the current patterns of behavior, transitional as they might be.
INDIAN-LADINO RELATIONS

De la Fuente (1967:447) has listed some general characteristics of relations between Indians and Lados:

- Generally superior economic position of the Ladino group over the Indian group; cultural duality, with generally admitted overvaluation by Lados of their culture, and undervaluation of Indian culture and language frequently accepted by the Indians; racial duality, whether real or imagined, which in some cases rationalizes the positions of the groups, favoring the Ladino and undervaluing the Indian; constant narrowing of the ethnic relationships between the groups through traditional contacts and, more frequently, new ones in spite of the instances of breaks of the relationships; and the crossing of Indian to Ladino through acculturation and amalgamation.

Tumin (1952:173) has reported more specific characteristics of Indian-Ladino interaction. He states that:

- Those situations in which Indians and Lados jointly participate are characterized by at least one or more of the following conditions:

  1. Lados and Indians are mutually dependent for the success of the effort about which the situation is constructed.
  2. One of the groups needs the other and profits from its participation without the latter incurring any loss or feeling especially "used."
  3. Both groups are compelled by a force or custom external to and compulsive upon both of them to participate jointly.
  4. The joint participation is unavoidable and of short duration, even though it may be regular in its occurrence.

The circumstances of joint participation—(1) seller-buyer, (2) landowner-tenant, and (3) employer-employee—typify the first condition. The second class of conditions includes (1) the godparental system as initiated and main-
tained by the Indians and (2) relations between Ladino men and Indian women. Instances of joint participation in (1) Ladino religious affairs, (2) political matters, and (3) the educational system are characteristic of the third condition. The fourth type of situation includes encounters on the roads, the public streets and plazas, and inside the public buildings.

Discussion of the different types of interaction situations will proceed in an order quite similar to the preceding paragraph. Deviations will be made from Tumin's organization in just a few places. Following that discussion, the explanations offered by the Indians and Ladinos for the class structure will be examined, and the incidence of upward social mobility and its implications for the future will be considered.

Joint Economic Participation

The greatest degree of integration between the Indian and the Ladino is found in the economy of Mesoamerica. Nash (1967:89) has characterized the market system as a regional one, tied to the national and international economies. There is a necessary interdependence here that does not exist in the other areas of interaction. But even here, the class distinction is maintained; the Indian does not participate as a partner but rather as a subordinate. While he is an integral part of the economic system, and
the Ladino's success depends on him, the Indian is still dominated by the Ladino (Ebel 1969:143).

The economy of most towns is based on exchanges which take place in the privately owned stores and in the public market. The stores are predominantly Ladino-owned (Redfield 1956:261; Tax 1952:52); most skilled craftsmen are Ladinos. Tumin (1952:111) reports that one-half of the Ladinos derive their income from specialized skills. Indians sometimes have small shops in their homes, where a few items, such as gum, or sugar, or homemade articles are sold, but the bulk of the retail trade is overseen by Ladinos.

The municipal market, on the other hand, is in many cases an Indian enterprise, particularly in Guatemala (Nash 1967:96; Tax 1952:53). The Indians produce most of the items for sale, and they constitute the majority of the vendors. Likewise, small stands selling drinks and snacks at festivals are run by Indians. In Mexico, however, the best market locations are rented by Ladinos, leaving the less desirable ones for the Indians (Colby and van den Berghe 1961:779).

There is not full agreement on the relations between Indian and Ladino in economic transactions. Nash (1967:96) states that in the market, the price is the important factor; the buyer and seller are indifferent to the person they are bargaining with. Gillin (1951), Tax (1953) and Tumin (1952) fail to discuss this aspect of economic transactions.
However, Colby and van den Berghe (1961:779) and de la Fuente (1967:439) describe a number of abuses of Indians by Ladinos, ranging from cheating them on weights and prices or selling them diseased meat to bullying them into selling their goods below the market price. The impression gained from our research is that Indians are often cheated in counting back change and are sold inferior merchandise in the stores; however, no substantive data exist to support this feeling. Speculation that the class system extends into the economic sphere is probably sound, considering the general social system. One member of our research group reported an incident that occurred in the Ostuncalco market. He was engaged in conversation with an Indian about some goods being sold when a Ladino approached and addressed the researcher, ignoring the Indian. The Indian quickly and silently withdrew from the situation.

One of the aspects of the economic system that has important consequences for the social structure is the pattern of landholding. According to Whetten (1961:108,367), few of the Indian plots in Guatemala are larger than a few acres. Nearly one-half of the farms in the country consist of less than 3.5 acres; the amount of land held by our Indian informants in Ostuncalco ranged from under one acre to less than five. Tax (1953:59) and Tumin (1952:113) report comparable conditions in central and eastern Guatemala. The irony is that the Indians, who are in most cases much
more dependent upon the land for a livelihood, own smaller and less fertile plots than the Ladinos.

This situation leads to a strong pressure on Indians to acquire income beyond that produced by their farmland. One possibility is land rental; the other is part-time or seasonal employment. Gillin (1951:19), Tax (1953:81), and Tumin (1952:126, 128) all report the prevalence of Indians renting land to supplement their income. Most of this is share cropping, rather than the payment of rent in money. However, the severe shortage of land in some areas makes it difficult to find available land. It thus becomes necessary for an Indian to attempt to establish a privileged position with a landowner. One of the common practices employed toward this end is becoming involved in a godparental relationship with a land-wealthy Ladino (Tumin 1952:126). More will be said of this later.

Unable to rent land, and unable to support his family on the produce of his own land and the secondary income of his wife, the Indian is forced to hire out as a farm laborer (Tax 1953:99). He might seek work either on large farms near him or on a coastal plantation. The first alternative is preferred by most, since work on a plantation often means several months of separation from the family and village. The heat of the coast is also aversive for the Indians, accustomed as they are to the cool, wet climate of the highlands (Gillin 1951:47).
Many Ladinos, disdainful of engaging in manual labor themselves, are dependent on Indians for hired help (Siegel 1941b:428). Tumin (1952:109) found that 88 per cent of the Indian men in Jilotepeque owned so little land they were forced to work for someone else part-time. Indians may also be found working for Ladinos to pay off a debt (Tax 1953).

When such a need arises, Indians overwhelmingly prefer to work for other Indians (de la Fuente 1952:88; Tax 1953:100). Ladino employers in Jilotepeque are accused of paying their Indian employees less than they do the Ladinos; the Indians also are given heavier and less pleasant work and are treated more roughly (Tumin 1952:115). Only rarely do Ladinos hire out to Indians. According to Gillin (1951:19), "this is regarded as about the lowest state to which a Ladino can fall." Siegel (1941b:424) found that in his western Guatemalan village, Ladinos refused to work for Indians, regardless of the circumstances.

The Compadrazgo

The godparental relationship, the compadrazgo, is basically religious in nature. At various stages of a Catholic's life, he needs sponsors for religious ceremonies he undergoes, such as baptism or marriage. These sponsors become his godparents. While each person may have several pairs of godparents, those attending him at his baptism are the most important and assume the greatest obligation to him.
In addition to its religious function, the compadrazgo potentially furnishes economic and social benefits, as well. Two associations are actually established— one between the child and the godparents and the other between the parents and the godparents. Ravicz (1967:250) has described the function of this bond as essentially one of channeling conflict from social relations. It establishes patterns of interaction at all levels, emphasizing respectful and cooperative, rather than competitive, relations. But as indicated above, the compadrazgo entails much more than symbolic social relations. For when individuals become involved in such a bond, certain expectations arise. Favors are expected to be more freely given by a compadre and certain extra measures of respect are common.

As a result of this, a distinguishing characteristic of the compadrazgo is its extension across class lines. Indians regularly secure Ladino godparents for their children, with the expectation that they will benefit from the relationship. A prime consideration in the selection of compadres in many parts of Mesoamerica is the amount of land owned by an individual. According to Tumin (1952:126-128), hopes of acquiring rental rights to farmland influence a land-poor Indian's choice of compadres. Certain other favors may also be forthcoming— the use of the Ladino's house and facilities, such as the well, the loan of money, acts of kindness to the godchild. It is not uncommon for orphaned

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godchildren to be taken into the Ladino godparent's household, although never, of course, as equals.

In return for these favors, the Ladino may expect that an Indian compadre will run errands for him, do small pieces of work without pay, and afford him even more than the usual amount of respect due a Ladino. Also, the number of godchildren is a sign of status, and the Ladino can feel that he is "doing good" for the poor Indian (Tumin 1952:130).

While the compadrazgo does cross class lines, it is not a reciprocal relationship. Rarely, if ever, do Ladinos ask an Indian to act as a godparent for a Ladino infant (de la Fuente 1967:443; Tumin 1952:131; van den Berghe and Colby 1961:65). There is little to be gained by the Ladino from an Indian and much to be lost in prestige. The fact remains, in spite of some minor favors done the Indians by the Ladinos, that:

. . . the Ladinos can and do virtually control the entire relationship; they can and do maintain superordinacy throughout the situation; they can and do preserve their essential prerogatives over Indians and continue to treat them as inferiors throughout (Tumin 1952:131).

Sexual Relations

Sexual relations between Indians and Ladinos are common throughout Mesoamerica. They may take the form of prostitution, concubinage or marriage. Of these three, prostitution and concubinage are most common; intermarriage
is rare (de la Fuente 1967:444; Siegel 1941b:427; Tumin 1952:239; van den Berghe and Colby 1961:67).

Interethnic sexual relations occur almost exclusively between Ladino men and Indian women; in only rare instances do Indian men either go to Ladino prostitutes or live with Ladino women (Tumin 1952:98, 176). De la Fuente (1967:444) reports that in Chiapas, Mexico, rape of Indian servant girls by Ladinos is reputedly frequent. In San Luis Jilotepeque, intercourse between Ladino men and Indian women is expected, but permanent or semi-permanent relations are discouraged by both Ladinos and Indians (Tumin 1952:33).

Little attention has been paid the attitudes of Indian males toward the Ladinos' sexual prerogatives with respect to Indian women. Siegel (1941b:425) found that Indian women who grant sexual favors to Ladinos are snubbed by their own people and often have difficulty marrying. Generally, however, it appears that, as in the other areas of his life in which he is exploited:

... the Indian expresses only incidental and inconsequential resentment. It has been shown how the culture has become molded so that the Indian defines himself as a poor man, a sick man, a hard-working man, and all this because that is the way God intended it to be (Tumin 1952:170).

There seems to be a fair amount of individual difference in the way a Ladino father treats his illegitimate progeny. Siegel (1941b:421) reports that generally the father neither acknowledges nor supports the children; they
are left to follow an Indian mode of life, supported by their mother and her family. Tumin (1952:158-159), on the other hand, found that such children may get small favors from their father and may be taken into his home as a servant. Other Ladinos partially support their illegitimate Indian children, particularly if the mother does not marry; others may act as a godfather. The children are usually raised as Indians by Indians; however, in San Luis Jilotepeque, at least, the community recognizes a special relationship between the Ladino father, the Indian mother, and the child. This relationship, however, may consist only of privileged access to the household of the Ladino parent for small favors (Tumin 1952:158). It is difficult to determine the source of the discrepancy between these two authors. It might be due to differences between villages, regions or the effects of the passage of time.

A great deal of disagreement arises concerning the status of the illegitimate offspring of a mixed union. According to Tumin (1952:245) Ladinos place more emphasis on parentage than on training. The opinions expressed by his Ladino informants indicate that a person with a Ladino parent, especially if it is his mother, has more chance of being treated as a Ladino by the Ladinos than one who is born of two Indian parents, even if this latter individual has been raised by Ladinos in a Ladino manner. However,
this assertion is not borne out by the data. Tumin (1952) found that in reality the few "mixed-blood" children who have been raised in Ladino fashion are still not considered Ladino, although Gillin (1951:61), in discussing the same village, mentions several cases where such children have come to occupy Ladino roles.

The Indians are much more divided in their opinions on how the offspring of mixed unions should be considered. Some feel that parentage is the deciding factor, others that training is of utmost importance (Tumin 1952:246).

As stated above, intermarriage is rare and generally condemned by both Indians and Ladinos (de la Fuente 1967:444; Suslow 1949:9; Tumin 1952:245, 271), although Tumin (1952:239) found Indians to be less opposed. The reasons given for this by the Ladinos related primarily to differences between Indians and Ladinos in customs, intelligence, aspirations and the possession of material wealth. Indians, on the other hand, prefer Indian mates for their children because a Ladino would not have the work skills necessary to aid a spouse (Tumin 1952:243-244).

Again, there is a disagreement as to the status of the offspring of a mixed union. Our informants in Ostuncalco reflect the indecision found by other investigators. Most Ladinos assert that the father's class membership is the decisive factor; a few claim the children would be cruzados—members of neither class. And one felt that the
matter would be determined by the amount of education the children could obtain. The Indians believe that the children of a mixed marriage would be Ladinos.

Religious Affairs

In spite of protestations that "we are all Catholics," it is apparent that Indians and Ladinos maintain separate religious systems and that interaction between them in a religious context is limited. Although Siegel's (1941b:424) assertion that "there is absolutely no interaction between Indian and white [Ladino] in religion" may have been true of the village in Guatemala he studied 30 years ago, the current situation, as is evident from more recent investigations, is quite different. Tumin's claim (1952:31) that in religious affairs "the prostitute, the undesired and low-prestige Indian, the barefooted, poor Ladino, the workman and the proud landowner tend to assume equal social proportions" seems to be exaggerated and in actuality is contradicted by other facts presented in his book.

Such a relationship of equality does not exist, at least not in Ostuncalco, nor in the villages appearing in the literature. While Ostuncalco's priest reported that Indians and Ladinos sit together in church, this did not prove to be true, and they do not mingle outside. Separate religious organizations are maintained by each of the two classes, and each has its own procession at festivals.
Gillin (1951:78-80, 86) and Tumin (1952:145) report a comparable situation in San Luis Jilotepeque, Guatemala. Although they attend those festivals that are planned and presented exclusively by Indians, Ladinos deride their naïve religious beliefs and typically behave in the manner of superiors who are honoring an inferior function by their presence. One exception cited by Tumin (1952:206) involved a cofradía (Indian religious fraternity) reunion. On this occasion the entrance of Ladinos was not visibly noted by the Indians and no special arrangements made for their comfort.

An extreme case of religious exploitation occurred in a Guatemalan village when a Ladino family kept a statue of the village saint in their home and charged Indians a fee before permitting them to pray to it (Adams 1967:218).

The Ladinos deride the Indians' "pagan" beliefs (Camara 1952:154); the Indians feel the Ladinos, especially the men, do not approach religion with enough fervor. Of the Ladinos, only the women and children participate regularly in church affairs (Gillin 1951:78; Tumin 1952:145), and their activities are largely independent of the Indians. In private religious affairs, such as baptisms, weddings and wakes, it is far more common for Ladinos to attend Indian ceremonies than for Indians to attend those of Ladinos. At Indian baptisms and weddings, the Ladinos present often are functioning as godparents. When Indians do appear at
Ladino ceremonies, they usually serve as household help (Tumin 1952:203).

Political and Legal Systems

Although exceptions exist, the political systems of Mesoamerica's Indian-Ladino villages are primarily dominated by Ladinos. Chinautla, Guatemala is one exception; the village's few Ladinos came to the village relatively recently, and their attempts to wrest control from the Indians have not had long-term success (Reina 1960:62). Gillin (1951:69) reports that in San Luis Jilotepeque, political responsibility is shared. To some extent this is also true in Ostuncalco, where Indians serve with Ladinos on the council (Ebel 1969:174). However, as Gillin (1951:71-72) and Tumin (1952:177) discovered in Jilotepeque, this "sharing of responsibility" is really of token importance. Even in villages where Indians represent the majority of the population, Ladinos control the political system (de la Fuente 1952:90; Gillin 1951:71; Scheele 1957:39; Silvert and King 1957:44-45; Tumin 1952:82, 177).

Perhaps the situation in San Luis Jilotepeque is typical. In that village, the Indians exhibit little interest in the political system or in holding office. A lack of confidence in their ability to direct government seems to inhibit most Indians; this inhibition is reinforced by a lack of facility in Spanish, which is necessary to
function in many government positions. Some of the experiences of those Indians who have become involved might serve to discourage others from participating. In Jilotepeque, all of the paid offices are filled by Ladinos; the most bothersome, unpaid offices go to Indians. No Indian is in a position that allows him to issue orders directly to Ladinos; he may sometimes order a Ladino to do something, or even arrest one, but only on the orders of the mayor or secretary, both of whom are Ladinos. Indian employees in general are given little respect. These factors result in attempts by Indians to avoid political service (Gillin 1951:69-76; Tumin 1952:177-181).

As is true of the political system, the legal system in most villages is dominated by Ladinos. Many Indians in Jilotepeque see little point in bringing disputes between Indians before a Ladino judge, who usually lectures both of the "wayward" Indians involved for their drinking, quarreling, etc. (Tumin 1952:150-151). Rather, the traditional leaders, the principales, are consulted, even though they have no formal means of enforcing their decisions. However, this last factor, the inability of Indian leaders to demand the execution of their decisions, has influenced some Indians, who feel that they have a strong case, to carry the dispute to the Ladino court, which has the means of enforcing verdicts. The Ladino court is also usually resorted to if one of the two
disputants is a Ladino or more "progressive" Indian. Camara (1952:152) also reports an increasing tendency to bypass traditional agents of dispute settlement in favor of the courts. It may be expected that, as the influence of the *principales* diminishes, the courts will handle more and more of the Indian conflicts.

The Educational System

Although it is common practice for Indian and Ladino children to be schooled together (de la Fuente 1952:88; Gillin 1951:125; Redfield 1943:641; Siegel 1941a:292; Tumin 1952:181), the educational setting does not provide the opportunity for the children of the two classes to interact on equal terms. A variety of factors seem to be responsible for this. One of the most important perhaps is the language problem (Siegel 1941a:292; Tumin 1952:184). Indian children often begin school with little or no knowledge of Spanish. This immediately puts them at a disadvantage, for the schools are oriented toward the Spanish-speaking Ladinos (Gillin 1951:125). Textual materials are in Spanish and the curricula reflect Ladino interests. Attempts have been made to alleviate this problem by requiring Indians to attend a special language class (Suslow 1949:22). But the inability of most teachers (who are overwhelmingly of Ladino backgrounds) to speak an Indian language, and their impatience with the Indians, minimize the effective-
ness of the class. Also, the Indian children go home to non-Spanish speaking parents, who often fail to provide encouragement for their efforts (Tumin 1952:183).

Indian and Ladino children in Ostuncalco play together at school, but not at home. In other villages, however, even social interaction at school reportedly does not occur (Tumin 1952:183). Thus, not only do inter-class friendships not form, but the Indian children are deprived of the practice in Spanish that might be provided them by social interaction with Ladinosh.

Teachers are unsympathetic with the Indian's adjustment problems (Siegel 1941a:292); complaints that the instructors are stricter and more brusque with Indians are common (Gillin 1951:125; Tumin 1952:182). Tumin (1952:196) found that Indian children typically do not appear in school plays, and when they do, it is in non-speaking parts. Indian parents generally do not attend school functions. The reticence of Indians to send their children to school is obviously a factor in the problems of the educational system. They feel that in some cases they are sending their children into a hostile environment to learn skills that are often irrelevant to an Indian's life. Also, the Indian child has to contribute to the family's support (Tumin 1952:81). The hours spent in school demand a financial sacrifice from the family, both in terms of the child's economic inactivity during those hours and in terms
of the expenses involved in educating a child (uniforms and school materials). Because of these factors, 50 per cent of the children in one school in western Guatemala drop out after one year; by the third year, the rate is 80 per cent (Ewald 1967:510).

Public Encounters

Public encounters between Indians and Ladinons, whether they occur on the roads, on the village streets or plaza, or inside public buildings, have certain common characteristics. The basic one, of course, is the unreciprocated deference paid the Ladino by the Indian (Gillin 1951:51; Siegel 1941a:285; Tumin 1952:83, 170). Tumin (1952:184-187) reports that Indians step off sidewalks and roads to let a Ladino pass and remove their hats at the approach of a Ladino. Ladinons enter buildings first and are served first in the stores and markets. Ladinons ignore Indians in public; typically they do not greet an Indian first. When he wishes to attract an Indian's attention, a Ladino whistles or shouts. If a Ladino approaches, Indians cease conversation. Indians may hang on the fringes of Ladino street corner gatherings, but they do not enter into the conversation (Tumin 1952:194). Ladinons always use the familiar form of Spanish (reserved for animals, children, close friends and those who are socially inferior to the speaker) when speaking to Indians; Indians use formal
terms when addressing Ladinos. Indians are expected to take abuse and insult silently, with bowed heads (Siegel 1941b:422).

Nor is there interaction in recreation and athletics. Indians stand outside the Jilotepeque billiard room watching the Ladinos at play; they, themselves, never participate in the games. Picnics and hunting parties are segregated. Jilotepeque has an annual Indian Day celebration, in which the Indian alderman takes part. However, only Ladinos attend the dance after the ceremonies; the Indians watch from outside (Tumin 1952:194-197). Some marimba crews, however, are mixed (de la Fuente 1952:88; Tumin 1952:187). Organized athletic events are restricted to Ladino participants. While the Indians sometimes play soccer and basketball, they are never asked to play on organized teams (Tumin 1952:195).

Indians and Ladinos rarely visit each other socially. Although Indians insist that they have Ladino friends, such inter-class friendships are denied by Ladinos (Tumin 1952:197-201). Ladinos sometimes come to an Indian home for a social occasion, but the Indian generally ends up playing a servant's role, serving his guest, with no interaction as an equal of the Ladino (Gillin 1951). The Ladino is received as an honored guest; the Indian is not so received in a Ladino home (de la Fuente 1952:86). Indians and Ladinos typically do not eat at the same table (de la Fuente 1952:86; Tumin 1952:201).
EXPLANATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The circumstances of interaction between Indians and Ladinos show a great similarity throughout Mesoamerica, as has been demonstrated above. The reasons given for these circumstances differ between the Indian and the Ladino. The Indians maintain that it is ignorance on both sides that keeps the two classes apart; the Ladinos reply that they do not interact socially because the Indian culture, language, occupations and interests are different, and, of course, the Indians are inferior racially (de la Fuente 1967:444; Tumin 1952:63). To the average Ladino, the Indian is ignorant, superstitious, alcoholic and, furthermore, enjoys being that way. In the Ladino's mind, these qualities nullify any possibility of interaction with Indians on a basis of equality.

Such are the explanations offered by Indians and Ladinos. The Ladinos focus on the differences between the two groups, differences which they feel make the Indian inferior. Tradition, too, is cited as a reason for the lack of social interaction (Tumin 1952:286). The Ladino belief in his own superiority is deeply imbedded in his culture and his own early experiences as a child in school confirm what he has been told of the Indian's stupidity and lack of ambition. Siegel (1941a:292) discusses the
damage to social relations which results from the educational system. The Indian, because of his language handicap, is slow academically, and thus, fulfills the Ladino child's expectations that the Indian will be less capable.

One additional factor not offered as an explanation for the inequality by either Ladinos or Indians is the economic structure of the villages. As demonstrated earlier in this paper, the Ladinos dominate the economic life—they own the stores and land, and they secure the best employment. Their continued domination of the economy depends on the Indian's remaining in a position of subservience, both socially and economically. The Indian population is an inexpensive source of labor and provides a market for Ladino services and products. Any upward movement of Indians would threaten Ladino control, and although the Ladinos may not verbalize this, certainly the implications of an improved status for Indians—acquired through better jobs, more education, redistribution of land, and their acceptance by Ladinos as social and intellectual equals—have not escaped their consideration. All the emotional, social and economic advantages afforded Ladinos by the current situation would cease.
SOCIAL MOBILITY

In spite of the social distance that is maintained, class lines are not rigidly inviolable (Wagley and Harris 1955:447-448). Most Indians assert that if they, or their children, were able to get an education, learn Spanish, acquire more land or a trade, and begin to wear western style dress, then they would be Ladinos. Tumin (1952:71, 264) tells of several individuals in San Luis Jilotepeque who know of Indians who have moved away and are "passing" for Ladinos. Not all Ladinos, on the other hand, agree that Indians can attain Ladino status. Tumin (1952:68) found that only 26 per cent of the Ladinos interviewed felt that a change in class membership— from Indian to Ladino—is possible. Many of those dissenting from this minority position attribute the impossibility to the biological basis of class membership, or, as one of our Ladino informants in Ostuncalco told us, "An Indian cannot change his blood."

This attention to biological factors in class designation is surprising in light of the evidence produced by so many investigators that race in Latin America refers to social and cultural, rather than physical, traits (Adams 1960:19; Colby and van den Berghe 1961:772; Edelmann 1965:65). The references to biological characteristics
we heard in Ostuncalco came from Ladinos, and those reported by Tumin (1952:67) from Ladinos and older Indians. In no case did we ever hear an Ostuncalco Indian refer to race as a deterring factor in social mobility. What then, in light of the contradictions mentioned above, is the role of race in the process of ladinoization?

In his study of an eastern Guatemalan village, Tumin (1952) depicted the relationship between the Indian and the Ladino as that of a caste system. Tumin fails to define caste, but his application of the term corresponds to a general definition proposed by Kroeber: a caste system is "a hierarchy of endogamous divisions in which membership is hereditary and permanent (Berreman 1960:120)." Colby and van den Berghe (1961:783), however, report that:

If an Indian [in Chiapas, Mexico] acquires a fluent knowledge of Spanish, dresses in ladino clothing, and adopts ladino customs, he can "pass" the ethnic line. During his own lifetime his origins may be remembered and he may still be called an Indian, but he will be treated as a ladino for most everyday purposes. His children will definitely be considered to be ladinos.

Beals (1953:338) states that in Mexico, a person becomes a Ladino by working in a factory or living in a city. Tax (1943:28) reports similar ease in "passing" in the western Guatemala village he studied. However, most investigators in Guatemala have found that, while "passing" is possible, it is successful only if the individual leaves his native village; as long as he remains there,
his Indian origin will never be forgotten or forgiven (Beals 1953:338; van den Berghe 1968:518; Whetten 1961:80).

This varying opportunity in different areas of Mesoamerica for an Indian to be accepted as a Ladino is perhaps the most notable difference in ethnic relationships between southern Mexico and Guatemala (Colby and van den Berghe 1961:786). De la Fuente (1967:447) concludes that as one proceeds further south in Mesoamerica, a caste system appears with increasing rigidity. Colby and van den Berghe (1961:788) propose two complementary hypotheses to account for this. The first is that the Mexican government, since the revolution of 1910-1917, has introduced a series of agrarian and social reforms designed to bring the Indian into the national culture. In Guatemala the Lradinos monopolized political power until the 1944 revolution, and even since then, progress toward assimilation of the Indian population has been slow and rocky. As stated above, Lradinos still maintain significant political control.

The second hypothesis is that the Indians, until just four or five years ago, constituted a majority of Guatemala's population and are found throughout the country. The cultural and linguistic differences between Indian and Ladino are apparent. In contrast, Mexico's Indians are found only in small isolated groups; the Lradinos, even in villages where they are in a minority, identify with
the national culture and thus share the national view that Mexico's population is essentially homogeneous. Thus, differences between Indians and Ladinos are seen as insignificant.

Whatever the explanation, the fact remains that "passing" is occurring increasingly and generally unidirectionally—from Indian to Ladino. The extent to which this takes place and its influence on the relative proportions of Indians and Ladinos is an open question.

Using population statistics derived from the Guatemalan censuses of 1950 and 1964, van den Berghe (1968:515) asserts that the Indian population has declined from 53.6 per cent of the national population in 1950 to 43.3 per cent in 1964. In- and out-migration in Guatemala is too insignificant to account for the difference (West and Augelli 1966:389), the net reproduction rate (based on the birth rate and infant and adult mortality rates) for each group is nearly equal, and there has been no change in the definition of ethnic group (defined in terms of the

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1Whetten (1961:211-214) reports that both infant and adult mortality rates are higher for Indians than for Ladinos and that life expectancy is higher for Ladinos than for Indians. While this would seem to pose a possible explanation for the relative decline in the Indian population, van den Berghe (1968:515-516) concludes, on the basis of census data, that net reproduction rates are nearly equal and that the Ladinos' advantages may be cancelled out by their disproportionate concentration (West and Augelli 1966:393-394) in the low altitude regions where malaria, intestinal parasites and other tropical diseases are common. Resolution of this discrepancy would seem to require further research.
"social estimation in which a person is held where the census is taken") by the census bureau. Thus, van den Berghe (1968:516) concludes that the decline in Indian population is largely due to Indians, perhaps as many as 15,000 to 20,000 a year, "passing" as Ladinos.

Van den Berghe (1968:520) notes that:

. . . "passing" takes place overwhelmingly in three kinds of cases:

1. When Indians move outside of their home area;
2. When Indians are adopted or serve as domestic servants in Ladino households from childhood or adolescence on [as in cases where orphaned godchildren are taken into the home as discussed above];
3. In cases of interethnic marriage or concubinage, when one of the spouses adopts the way of life of the other. . . .

The ethnic affiliation of mestizo children is generally determined by the dominant culture of their family of orientation, or, in the case of illegitimate children, by the ethnic affiliation of the parent who brings them up. Some local communities, however, recognize an intermediate category of mestizos (cruzados). This generalization concerning the status of children of mixed parentage appears to be an oversimplification in light of the differing opinions presented earlier in this paper. However, there are cases where van den Berghe's (1968) conclusions do seem to reflect only local, or at least, individual, opinion. Also, the status of Indian children taken into Ladino households as servants, according to Tumin (1952), does not generally change, even though they might acquire
Ladino dress and behavior patterns. They are still not accepted as Ladinos. Thus, van den Berghe's first example seems to be most supported by the findings of other investigators, such as Tumin.

Besides the very general instances of social mobility listed above, there are other factors at work in Mesoamerica. These mobility mechanisms produce changes primarily of an acculturative nature; they are very much the same in both Guatemala and Mexico. One important exception to this similarity has been Mexico's agrarian reform. Through the ejido program, Indians have been part of the national economy and this in turn has led to the adoption of other national characteristics. Increasing industrialization is also important, especially in Mexico (King 1967:530).

Coastal plantations function to some extent as a mechanism for mobility in Guatemala. They attract highland Indians needing employment, taking them from their homes for months at a time. With wages in their pockets, Indian workers begin buying more and more items in stores. Their housing is different (wooden frame structures replace the stone or adobe buildings found at home) and modern (or at least quasi-modern) medical facilities are available on the plantations (King 1967:533). Many Indians learn Spanish, an essential first step toward ladinoization (King 1967:523). These new behaviors and possessions go home with the Indians (Adams 1967:93).
Mesoamerican social structure has traditionally been based on the Ladino ownership of land and control of other economic resources. Ewald (1967:510) aptly points out that, as new economic enterprises open up, that traditional basis will inevitably crack, producing significant changes socially. Also, Indians are increasingly turning to Ladino occupations, such as cabinet-making (Tax 1952:49) or weaving and tailoring, even though these often remain secondary to work in the milpa.

One factor with important implications for social change is the rising population pressure in Mesoamerica (Whitten 1965:329). This creates the need for further economic development, since without an unlimited supply of land, agriculture cannot continue to support growing populations. As Chonchol (1965:88) points out, however, a change in values is necessary before people can be persuaded to exchange the traditional source of income for a new one. Some means of doing this are discussed below.

The population increase also makes the everyday business of social planning and social control more complex. Successful execution of this business, in Whitten's (1965:321) view, demands a more rational form of government.¹

¹By rational, Whitten is referring to a systematized, centralized secular power structure, as opposed to the traditional, personalized structure intertwined with religion.
The more rational manner of government Whitten (1965) refers to would lead to, and is perhaps dependent upon, greater interaction with the national political system. Since the Guatemalan revolution of 1944, great emphasis has been placed on the promotion of both political parties and labor unions. This has, in fact, led Indians to fuller participation in the national culture (Adams 1957; Nash 1955, 1958). As Cancian (1967:295) has pointed out, the revolution brought about the election, rather than the appointment, of local officials. Political parties, in some areas based on unions, began to play more and more important roles in the power structure, replacing the traditional religio-civil hierarchy in some villages.

Nash (1955) has clearly demonstrated one case of this modern, "rational" political system completely undermining the power of the traditional leaders, the principales. No longer do men work their way to the top of the hierarchy by holding increasingly important religious and civil positions. Young men come to power with the aid of the parties, completely circumventing traditional procedures. Civil and social decisions are made without prior consultation with the principales. While older Indians may ignore the "new politics," younger ones are becoming involved (Siegel 1957:43).

Some political parties are composed of both Indians and Ladinos. Even if the political system is still dominated
by Ladinos, they are becoming increasingly aware of the need to consider Indian interests, and the Indian, whose political awareness was awakened by the 1944 revolution, is looking more and more toward this means of achieving certain goals. No longer able to affect the political system through traditional Indian institutions, the Indian today is forced to become part of the political party movement. The alternative is no voice in the political arena. If he is approaching this new role somewhat timidly, it is not too surprising, in light of his past experience with Ladino institutions.

Increased educational opportunities—in the form of more schools and of increased desire of Indians for education for their children—will obviously lead to greater expectations among Indian children. Although they may still be snubbed and ridiculed by their Ladino classmates, nevertheless they are acquiring skills that will allow them to move into the Ladino world. Education is not as important an integrative force as it might be expected to be; the educational systems of Mesoamerica leave much to be desired, and many Indians cannot afford schooling. But more schools are being built, and more Indians are overcoming their reticence to send their children, hoping that they might thereby obtain some of the material conveniences of the Ladinos.
Better roads and more buses enable Indians to travel further from home in selling their goods; improvement in communications have made them more aware of the complexity of their world. Laws protecting the rights of Indians have made the Ladino world seem less hostile (Cancian 1967:294).

Protestant missionaries have weakened the influence of the Catholic Church, and by emphasizing economic development, they have persuaded some Indians to spend their money on land, livestock, or learning a trade, rather than on alcohol and festivals. In addition, the traditional religious organizations have been threatened by the increased expense of holding a religious office (Cancian 1967:294). In the past, a man gained political power through holding a series of such offices; now, he must turn to non-religious organizations—political parties—to achieve this. The fact that leaders are now developing outside of religious activities further separates religious and political functions.

One wonders if Mesoamericans speak of a generation gap. Gillin (1952:218) believes that most ladinoization takes place with individuals under 25 years of age. It is the young who are most susceptible to new ideas and who feel the most economic pressure to find new means of support. Many of their efforts to move into the Ladino
world will be thwarted. But as the past has demonstrated, social change is an inevitable process.

One factor that may have to be overcome in some cases before an individual can move into the Ladino class is the self-image that has settled on an Indian. One of our informants in Ostuncalco possessed many of the qualities valued in Lados. He had acquired three years of education, and he was employed in a Ladino occupation. He was articulate and proud of what he had accomplished. Yet he insisted that under no conditions could he become a Ladino—he his intelligence was not great enough. His children might, but for him, no hope existed. He admitted the reality of change, but he could not imagine himself directly involved or affected. The importance of this factor is not measurable on the basis of any data that are available. Only speculation can be resorted to. But creating an awareness in an individual of his personal place in the process of change might be a crucial necessity.
CONCLUSION

Mesoamerica provides a classic example of the complexity of cultural change. The Spaniard arrived in the New World equipped with a technology overwhelmingly superior to the Indian's. In many cases, such as in the Caribbean, he succeeded in annihilating not only the indigenous culture but the indigenous population, as well. Yet in spite of the centuries of military and economic domination, the European invader failed to replace the Indian culture in Mesoamerica with one of his own making. In the process of "giving the Indian religion" and exploiting him economically, the Spaniard certainly succeeded in effecting change in the Indian life style. However, European culture did not remain untouched throughout all this. Perhaps the most obvious example of this two-way culture change is Catholicism, which has been forced to accommodate itself to indigenous beliefs. As practiced today in Mesoamerica, it might go unrecognized by a Vatican administrator.

The changes in cultural practices initiated in Mesoamerica by the Spaniards were not the first. Long before they arrived, Indian tribes met in battle and trade, leaving the encounters with ideas for a new weapon, perhaps, or a new grain to cultivate, or a new pattern of pottery decoration. But the rate of change certainly accelerated with
the arrival of the Europeans. And, as can be seen in an examination of present-day life, the process of change has not yet run its course.

What is occurring in Mesoamerica is important in its own right, for it affects nearly 30 million people. Yet widespread social and cultural change has been a universal phenomenon since the European powers embarked on their course of imperialist expansion. Africa, Asia and the Americas were conquered and European institutions and traditions imposed. This century has seen many of those impositions lifted. Yet there can be no return to pre-Colonial days. The pressures not only of foreign invaders but of industrialization and the population explosion are forcing a reorganization of social structures all over the world. The movement of people—from the countryside to cities, from tribal villages to urban ghettos—is without precedent. The effects on existing cultural institutions are profound. If, as some anthropologists suggest (Steward 1951), there are cross-cultural regularities, then what is happening in Mesoamerica has implications for billions of people all over the world. Examining Mesoamerica in this context, what have we found?

That Mesoamerica is important as an area rich in cultural interaction becomes apparent in even as cursory a study as this one. Even before the arrival of the Spaniards, movement of tribes, such as the Aztec migration
to the Mexican Plateau, resulted in exchanges or impositions of differing ideologies and technologies. And when two cultures touched, although one was dominant, the demise of the conquered group and its values was not a certainty. For as Spicer (1962:567) points out, the survival of the native group has been the most common result of successful conquests. Such was the case following the Spanish Conquest of Mesoamerica. The Indian cultures, to varying degrees, were ravaged, but they were not obliterated.

Current patterns of interaction between Indians and Europeans have resulted from four centuries of contact. No attempt has been made here to render an historical account of this evolution. Rather the emphasis has been on providing the reader with general background information, followed by a description of the general characteristics of Indian-Ladino relations, explanations for the present-day social structure and the occurrence of upward social mobility.

The area of study was restricted to Mesoamerica for three reasons: (1) a high population density, now and at the time of conquest; (2) the virtual annihilation of the Indian population in southern Central America during the Conquest; and (3) the occurrence of few historical interactions in areas still inhabited by Indians, such as northern Mexico.

Whetten's definitions of Ladino and Indian are
based on dress, language, attitudes and customs. The Indian has retained elements of the indigenous culture; the Ladino is a non-Indian. The distinguishing differences are primarily cultural, not physical.

Indians differ not only from Ladinos, but also from each other, an observation which has led Whetten to divide them into two groups. The traditional Indian closely follows the indigenous life style. On the other hand, the traditional customs are being abandoned by the transitional Indian, who is acquiring the attitudes and behavior patterns of the Ladino. Most Indians, to varying degrees, appear to belong to this latter group, since various factors have led to an increasing exposure to European ways. Because of improved transportation facilities, the Indians are traveling more in pursuit of trade. Others return home from military service. Improved communication has resulted from the introduction of transistor radios. Foreign goods are sold in Indian markets. Exposure has led to acceptance, at least of the material items of western culture.

The general, overriding feature of Indian-Ladino relations, wherever they occur, is the superiority accorded the Ladino by the Indian. This is manifested in the situations in which the two ethnic groups typically participate jointly, situations which Tumin (1952:173) has found are characterized by one or more of the following conditions:

1. Ladinos and Indians are mutually dependent for the success of the effort about which the situation is constructed.
2. One of the groups needs the other and profits from its participation without the latter incurring any loss or feeling especially "used."

3. Both groups are compelled by a force or custom external to and compulsive upon both of them to participate jointly.

4. The joint participation is unavoidable and of short duration, even though it may be regular in its occurrence.

The first condition is typified by the circumstances of joint economic participation—(1) seller-buyer, (2) landowner-tenant, and (3) employer-employee. In spite of the fact that the Indian is an integral part of the economic system throughout the region, and the Ladino's success depends on him, the Ladino still occupies the superordinate position. Most stores are owned by Ladinons, and they are the skilled craftsmen. Some Indians have small shops in their homes, but they handle only a small portion of the retail trade. In the public market, on the other hand, most of the vendors are Indians, and they produce most of the items sold. While there is not total agreement among researchers, the general conclusion must be that in the market, as elsewhere, the Indian is abused and exploited by the Ladino.

Inequitable land distribution provides the basis for the social system in Mesoamerica. In spite of their greater reliance on the land, the Indians own smaller and less fertile plots than the Ladinons. This pressures many Indians into renting land, usually from a Ladino; others turn to part-time or seasonal employment. Accusations are
voiced here, too, when the Indian must work for a Ladino. Indian employees are paid less than their Ladino counterparts and are given more demanding chores. Only rarely do Ladinos stoop to work for Indians.

The second set of conditions described by Tumin includes the (1) godparental system and (2) relations between Ladino men and Indian women. While the godparental relationship, the compadrazgo, is basically of a religious nature, it has social and economic aspects, as well. As a result, although the compadrazgo does cross class lines, it is not a reciprocal relationship. Indians rarely, if ever, serve as godparents for a Ladino, for there is nothing to be gained socially or economically by Ladino parents. Here again, the situation is one in which the Ladino is in control.

This dominant role is also played by Ladinos in sexual relations. Interethnic sexual relations occur almost exclusively between Ladino men and Indian women, and are sometimes accompanied by force. There is disagreement on how illegitimate offspring fare at their father's hand. Siegel found that the father generally ignores them. Tumin, in contrast, reports that the children may receive small favors from their father and perhaps be taken into the home as a servant. However, these children, even though raised by Ladinos, as Ladinos, are rarely accepted as such by the Ladino population. Indians are divided in their opinion
on the status of illegitimate children of mixed parentage. Some feel that the class of the father determines the status of the child, others that training is the crucial variable.

Interrmarriage is rare and is discouraged by both groups. The Ladinos cite differences between Indians and Ladinos as cause for disapproval; Indians fear Ladino mates would not have the work skills necessary to aid an Indian spouse. The status of the children of a mixed marriage is once again uncertain. Indians in Ostuncalco believe they would be Ladinos; most Ladinos state that the child assumes the father's class.

Instances of joint participation in (1) Ladino religious affairs, (2) political matters, and (3) the educational system characterize the third condition described by Tumin. In spite of claims to the contrary, Indians and Ladinos do not mingle in church in Ostuncalco, and they maintain separate religious organizations throughout Mesoamerica. Ladinso deride the Indians' "pagan" beliefs, while the Indians feel Ladinos lack religious fervor. Ladinso may attend private religious affairs, such as baptisms, held by Indians, often as godparents; Indians are present at Ladino functions usually only as servants.

Although Indians sometimes share responsibility for governing with Ladinso, this is generally of only token importance. Ladinso control the political system even in
villages where they are the minority. The legal system, too, is generally dominated by Ladinos.

Schools bring Indian and Ladino children together, but only in a superficial way. In some villages, such as Ostuncalco, the children play together in school but not at home; in others, they do not play with each other at all. Teachers, almost exclusively Ladinos, are accused of discrimination against Indians and a lack of sympathy for their adjustment problems. The Indian children frequently do not know Spanish and, for social and economic reasons, receive little encouragement from parents.

Encounters on the roads, the public streets and plazas and inside public buildings constitute Tumin's fourth situation. The characteristic common to all is the unreciprocated deference paid the Ladino by the Indian. This extends not only to social and business courtesies but to manners of address, as well. Organized athletic events, games, and many public dances, are restricted to Ladino attendance.

Explanations for the existence of the current social structure differ between Ladinos and Indians. Indians attribute the social separation to ignorance of each other's ways; Ladinos assert that the Indians are different from themselves. But the differences are not between equals— to the Ladino, the Indian's inferiority is inherent in his differences. This belief in Ladino superiority is cul-
aturally conditioned and, in fact, is necessary if the Ladinos are to continue to dominate the economic life.

The Indian who aspires to Ladino status has a difficult task, but not an impossible one, ahead of him. "Passing" does occur. Most Indians believe that acquiring an education, learning Spanish, possessing more land or a trade, and wearing western dress would open the door to them. Only a minority of Ladinos share this viewpoint; three-fourths of them insist that a change in class membership is impossible. One reason given by many is racial differences. Yet in spite of the Ladino's insistence on the reality of biological differences, Indians apparently do become Ladinos. Various qualities necessary for acceptance in Mexico are fluency in Spanish and acceptance of Ladino dress and customs, or working in a factory or living in a city.

With rare exceptions, however, investigators in Guatemala have found that "passing" is successful only if the individual leaves his native village. De la Fuente concludes that a caste system limiting ease of "passing" appears with increasing rigidity as one proceeds further south in Mesoamerica. Differences in governmental Indian policy in Mexico and Guatemala is one explanation proposed by Colby and van den Berghe for the differential ease of "passing." A second is the greater number of Indians in Guatemala, a fact which tends to accentuate ethnic differ-
ences. Mexico, with its small, scattered Indian population, is much more homogeneous.

Regional differences are seen when the characteristics of "passing" are examined. While van den Berghe found in western Guatemala that children who serve in or are adopted into a Ladino household are accepted, Tumin finds this not to be the case in eastern Guatemala. The regions differ also with respect to interethnic marriage and concubinage. Van den Berghe describes that as one means of acceptance into the Ladino world; Tumin does not. Both authors, however, found that moving from the home area is a facilitating factor in ladinoization.

Others factors affecting social mobility in Mesoamerica are industrialization, plantation employment, improved communication and transportation, changes in occupations, changes in the political system, the decreasing importance of the traditional Indian hierarchy and the Catholic Church, and greater access to education. These appear to primarily affect individuals under 25 years of age. It is the young who are sensitive to new ideas and the pressure to find new means of financial support.

One obstacle to social mobility that must be overcome is the Indian's self-devaluation. Acquiring an education, a Ladino trade, western dress, and fluency in Spanish appear to be necessary conditions for ladinoization, but are they sufficient? While there are no data pertinent to
this point, it may be necessary for Indians to acquire more positive self-images before they can thrust themselves into the Ladino world with confidence and success.

The similarity between different areas in Mesoamerica is striking. Control of economic resources allows Ladinos to dominate social, governmental, political, judicial, and sometimes religious institutions. The Indians seem to counter this not by strengthening their own positions as Indians through the political process, but by adopting the material culture of their oppressors. The Indian population has been declining proportionately over the years, as census data show, a process which van den Berghe attributes to Indians "passing" as Ladinos. Whether this trend will continue is uncertain. One factor that will undoubtedly be important is how equitably the "good things" of life—health care, education, adequate housing, civil rights, land, nutritious food—are distributed. If past and present patterns of distribution continue, it seems probable that Indians will seek a more comfortable life through ladinoization. The question that is never answered, or even asked, is, "Are Indians accepting western dress, language and attitudes because they see them as inherently superior to their own or because they perceive acceptance as the path toward a more comfortable life and higher status?" Would an Indian be happy as an Indian if that did not mean accepting a higher infant mortality rate, a
shorter life expectancy, a lower standard of living in general? Can the Indian culture retain its integrity? Or does the acceptance of Ladino material culture inevitably lead to the acceptance of Ladino attitudes, as well? Future research must answer these questions. The responsibility rests on the Mexican and Guatemalan governments to improve the lives of the Indians without forcing them to sacrifice those aspects of their culture that have given them their incredible resiliency and dignity. Thus far, the Mexican policy has been to assimilate the Indian population as quickly as possible; the Guatemalans, on the other hand, scarcely acknowledge the existence of nearly two million Indians. Both courses seem destined to destroy the Indian, with the only remains of his once great cultures to be found in museums.
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