

COMERÍO

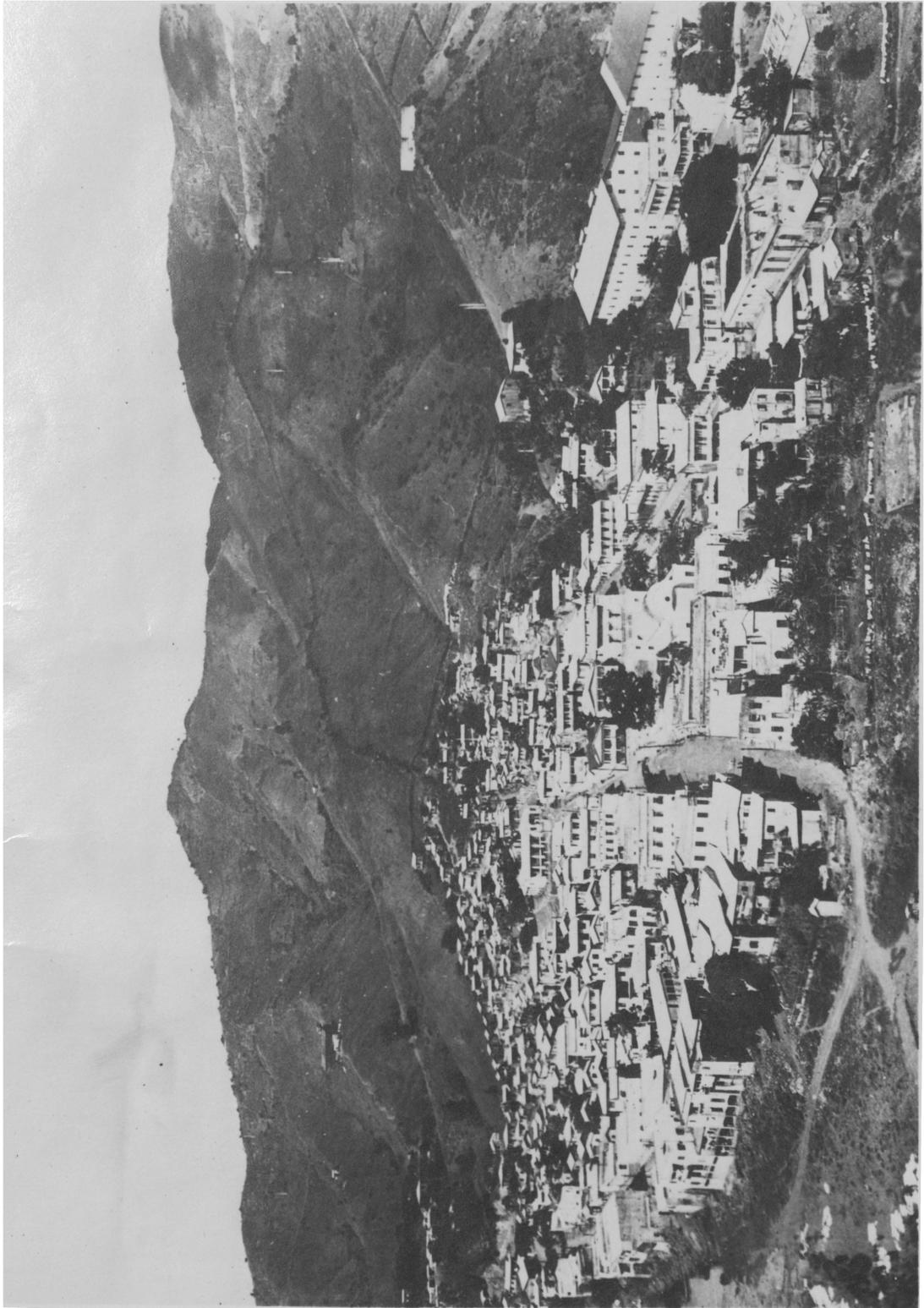
A Sociological Study of an Inland Puerto Rican Town

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of This Study

The purposes of this study are: a) to discover, describe, and indicate the significance of the more important traits in Comerieñan culture; b) to determine the ways in which these traits are related to, and tend to condition, each other; c) and finally, to present the general cultural background of the community, which may serve either as a point of departure for more comprehensive social studies, or as a basis for "practical" studies looking to the improvement of the social and economic conditions in this community.

#### Method

It was apparent that these objectives depended largely on the use of information procured directly from the people of the town of Comerío. The subject-matter of the study was to be the modes of living in Comerío itself, and this prescribed direct observation, interviewing of local residents, a limited use of questionnaires, and collection of available documentary data as the principal methods of the investigation.

Research Staff. No study of the type herein set forth could have been made without the direct assistance of many persons. The amount of information required, the comparatively limited time in which to gather it, and the nature of the data desired necessitated a staff large enough to accomplish the desired coverage and capable of obtaining both accurate and basic information.

The collaborators consisted of two types of individuals: those who were continually engaged in the inquiry, and those who gave special assistance from time to time. Three of the former were resident teachers of Comerío; two others were the director and his wife. Prior to the establishment by the director and his wife of residence in the town, several university students from the sociology classes of the director accompanied him on weekend trips to the town. These trips were made weekly for some three months. These students were given written instructions relative to the collection of data. After residence was established, all persons assisting with the study resided in Comerío.

The collaborators who were residents of Comerío were not only called upon to gather information, but were in themselves direct sources of information as Comerieños. Some of the more "personal" data contained in this study were the result of their direct cooperation. This Comerieñañ staff materially aided the director in making

personal contacts with those considered to be in position to give valuable information.

Early acquaintance with those who were most influential in the community was facilitated through the wife of the director. Her father had a large acquaintance in the town, especially through his political ties with the dominant local political party. By virtue of these connections local court records, vital statistics, and tax records were immediately made available for examination.

The selection of the workers, planning for their daily or weekly assignments, suggesting to them the methods to be used in gathering materials, recopying and classifying much of the material, as well as doing much of the actual field work, were some of the tasks undertaken by the director himself. His eight years of residence on the Island, during which time he was instructor in sociology at the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, have made him a participant observer of Puerto Rican culture and customs.

The wife of the director assisted in assembling materials, selecting subjects for interviews, and in making social contacts. Being herself a Puerto Rican, she proved an invaluable aid in obtaining information of the more intimate character and in translating and interpreting the data obtained.

Initial Study. After the subject was selected and the specific objectives decided upon, the subject was tentatively divided into chapters or topics which were to be the main outline of the study. This general outline evolved from preliminary surveys of the proposed field of study. A detailed outline was then prepared covering the essential types of information needed for each division of the subject.

While these outlines were being made, several trips were taken to the town in order to acquire a general familiarity with the conditions and the problems involved. Circumstances necessitated the gathering of some information on these trips. For example, Holy Week had to be covered, as it came only once a year. During this preliminary stage, a great variety of written materials relevant to the study were gathered.

After residence had been established in the town, and prior to any elaborate attempts to gather information, a list of questions was made out on the basis of the detailed topical outlines. This list included approximately five hundred different items. These questions served as a guide for each day's work. When it was felt that sufficient information had been gathered to answer satisfactorily a list of questions, those questions were checked off. The list of questions was frequently revised as circumstances demanded. This plan proved quite satisfactory.

It not only included a detailed outline of information desired, but also, since the questions were short and definite, suggested ways of getting the information. Suppose the question were: Who goes to church? The only way to find out was to go and see and count the people by age, sex, and class on several successive Sundays, and to keep a record of these counts. Or, if the question were, What does Mr. A do for a living? or How much does he earn? or How large is his family? or Who are the political leaders in town? the information had to be obtained mainly by direct questioning. If the question were, How many parents of students know how to read and write? the questionnaire seemed to be the best way of finding an answer. If brief case histories were desired, interviews were arranged and the information received was checked in conversations with friends.

It was soon discovered that a particular method of gathering a specific kind of information served not only that purpose but also as a lead into other types of questions that needed to be asked, which in turn would frequently suggest the use of another method or, not infrequently, a combination of other methods. If, for example, it were discovered that very few upper-class men go to church, the question immediately arose: Why don't they go to church regularly? The answer to this question seemed to demand a combination of methods: First, the upper-

class men were asked directly why they didn't attend church regularly; secondly, observation was made of their pre-occupations on the streets or elsewhere during church hours.

It was also discovered that any one method used to get a particular type of information not infrequently served as a cross-check upon the same type of information gathered by other methods. This demonstrated the value of the use, where practicable, of several methods in gathering one type of information.

It was soon found that, no matter how disarming may have been the approach and method of the interviewer and the type of question asked, the answer received often appeared to be either unreliable or incomplete. In many instances no formal method nor combination of formal methods usually employed in this type of study was found to give a satisfactory understanding of the particular situation and for the reason that the person responding to the inquiry was not aware of what controlled his behavior. Even in many cases where there was a consensus of opinion on a particular subject, the opinions often had only a surface significance that did not reach the real questions involved. Oral statements, no matter how convincing they may have seemed to be, were not often found to be completely satisfactory. It was found that there not only had to be a formal procedure employed in the gathering of information but also an informal one which was continuously carried on, during the whole time that the town was being

studied. The essential purpose of the informal method was to obtain genuine insight into the underlying causes of certain conduct.

This method may be called the "loafing method". Much time was spent in apparently aimless "loafing around". There was no plan as to where to go or what to do. This method often resolved itself into a following of the crowd and doing what others did. As the day or evening wore on, the observer might find himself at one of a score of different places or perhaps just standing alone on a street corner and watching people. Much valuable direct information was also picked up in this way, but, more importantly, this loafing helped, more than all of the formal methods combined, to give an insight into the ways in which the people lived and why they acted as they did.

The time consumed in loafing was well spent. No one can make a study of this kind without doing a great deal of it. Loafing, of the type described, is a method, and a most important one.

Human Aspect. No matter how sound the plans for the study of this town would have appeared to be on paper, they would have been useless unless the human side had been taken into account. Since a study of this type demanded that people be observed and talked to, a method (made as unnoticeable to them as possible) was employed in estab-

lishing the observer or interviewer and the human beings observed or interviewed on a mutual basis of understanding and sympathy. Such contacts, of course, had to be made by each observer for himself.

The general approach was as free as possible from mercenary interests or observable evidences of "policy." A wholly satisfactory adjustment was never completely made because the whole town knew "what we are here for" the first day that residence was established. But certain things helped to lessen the social distance created by this knowledge. The observer "seemed" to enjoy a cock fight, loafing, a dance, a visit, a glass of wine, watching a game of dominoes, playing a game of billiards, buying and sucking grapefruit on the street, and target shooting. Finally, did he not use his car to carry mourners in a funeral procession? The fact is that he did enjoy many of these things, which was all the better because it diminished the need of a simulated enjoyment.

This combination of methods was only a useful tool in the gathering of information. The information assembled could never have been adequate were it not for the fact that Comeriefios possessed such natural traits as frankness, hospitality, and a willingness, even an eagerness, to cooperate in procuring or furnishing the information needed. "We are at your service" meant more than lip service. It meant real service.

Samples and Generalizations. The various types of methods described above emphasize the more qualitative aspects of the study. Accuracy of information was assured by the care taken in the methods of procedure, as well as by the amount of data gathered for each particular subject. Thus, qualitative and quantitative methods tended to blend. Both were requisite to satisfactory generalizations. Accuracy of information was, of course, a "function" of the size of the sample, and vice versa. A recognition of this made it unnecessary to lay down any hard and fast rules as to the amount of data necessary in order to satisfy inductive requirements.

In some cases a small sample well selected and cross checked by various methods was more adequate than a large sample less well selected or a large sample on a type of subject matter in which, no matter how many informants expressed themselves, the trends of their opinions were not in accord with the logic of the situation. Large coverage not infrequently gave only partially satisfactory information, not so much because a conclusion was not feasible, but rather because the generalization based on this large coverage gave, at the most, only a superficial meaning to the phenomenon in question.

This does not mean that small samples were, in themselves, more satisfactory than large ones. All other

things being equal, the large sample proved more satisfactory. But other things were by no means always equal, because of wide variations in type of subject matter and diversity in types of approach. In view of these diversities, it is difficult to say whether generalizations made from small or large samples were the more accurate. It should be added that many seemingly small samples were not as small as they appeared on the surface. In fact, such samples were small only from the point of view of one method, but quite large when developed by more than one method.

But no satisfactory picture of the town could be obtained merely by making the coverage broad enough for adequate generalizations. It was not only found necessary to identify so-called norms of behavior, but also to make direct use of those elements in samples that were variations from the norm. In some cases these variations also lent themselves to generalizations. In some special instances they gave clear evidence of future trends. For example, this was noticed especially in rather large subgroups of people who believed in the practice of birth control. Even where generalizations could not be made because of inconsistency in the character of information given, the data were usually included as a necessary part of the whole picture. This seemed to be one of the more

important values of the large sample.

It was soon discovered that a large portion of the information necessary for adequate generalizations could not be procured by random sampling of the whole town. Fundamental differentiations in basic social traits were recognizable very early in the study. These differentiations had to be taken into account. For example, it was found expedient to subdivide the community by class and sex. Class differences were evident through the whole local cultural pattern. Sex differences so permeated the mores as to necessitate sampling on the basis of sex. Other differentiations were also found, but these two were by far the most important.

Because of the small membership of the upper classes, and especially what is designated as the Clase Primera or first class, the maximum possible number of any given sample for this class was small. This made possible a large coverage, ranging between seventy and ninety per cent of the total, especially for information pertaining to those phases of the inquiry in which the family was considered as a unit for study. This particular class includes about forty-five families, averaging 6.5 persons per family, or a total of about 295 members.

With a few important exceptions, the per cent of coverage in the lower classes was necessarily smaller because of the greater numbers. But the samples obtained from

certain limited areas in the lower-class sections of town were made large when birth and death rates were being estimated for these lower-class neighborhoods.

Where sex distinctions needed to be taken into account, efforts were made to get an equal amount of information from each sex, keeping in mind the fact that difference in attitudes usually had a common foundation in the sex mores of the community. Sample opinions of either sex were often found to be individual or collective rationalizations that had to be appraised on the basis of the uncritically accepted values of the community as a whole. This same fact was observed when sex distinctions in religious behavior were evaluated.

As has already been stated, no amount of specific quantitative data relating to a particular subject was sufficient in itself to give a satisfactory insight into that subject. Quantitative findings were never able to stand alone, but had to be interpreted in terms of the total situation as studied through a variety of methods.

### The Island of Puerto Rico

Location. The Island of Puerto Rico is the smallest and farthest east of the group of islands called the Greater Antilles. It occupies a central position in the chain of islands that connect Florida with Venezuela and

separate the Carribean from the Atlantic. It is 500 miles from Venezuela; 1,040 from Panama; 1,200 from Havana; 1,500 from New Orleans; 966 from Key West; 1,400 from New York; and 3,000 miles from Cadiz, Spain. Puerto Rico is located between 17° 55' and 18° 30' north latitude.

Size and Shape. Puerto Rico is rectangular in shape. It is a hundred miles long from east to west, and thirty-five miles wide. It has an area of 3,435 square miles.

Topography. "The topography of Puerto Rico is characterized by a central mountainous region running east and west and surrounded by coastal plains of varying width. Even in the highest places elevations are only moderate; the highest reached is about 4,400 feet in Los Picachos, southeast of Jayuya. Yet the presence of the mountainous region influences the climate, soils, and, consequently, land use."<sup>1</sup> "Its physiography presents a varied landscape of hills, peaks, and plains crossed by numerous rivers and brooks."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McCord, J. E., Serrallés, J. J., and Picó, Rafael, Types of Farming in Puerto Rico, Bulletin 41, Division of Agricultural Economics, June 1935, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Blue Book of Puerto Rico, p. 12.

The municipality of Comerío,<sup>1</sup> located in the East Central Mountain and Valley region, is characterized by "fine dissection, steep slopes, and high relief."<sup>2</sup> The relief in Comerío municipality ranges from 500 feet at the hydro-electric plant to 1200 feet in the foothill region four or five miles south of there. The significance of this variation in relief becomes clearer when it is realized that the area of the municipality is only 28.9 square miles.

Climate. "Latitude (17° 55' to 18° 55') accounts for Puerto Rico's tropical climate. In addition, because of the marine influence, seasonal or daily variations in temperature are not pronounced. Frosts have never been officially recorded in the island. Official records show that temperatures in the island have never dropped below 39°F. nor risen above 102°F."<sup>3</sup> "Mean annual temperatures vary from 80° to 76°F. up to 400 feet, to below 68°F. from 3,000 to 4,400 feet."<sup>4</sup> The hydro-

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<sup>1</sup> A municipality is an insular political division. Its relationships to the insular government are similar to those of an American county to its state. The municipality of Comerío contains the town of Comerío.

<sup>2</sup> This quotation is taken from a letter received March 19, 1936, from Dr. Howard A. Meyerhoff.

<sup>3</sup> Types of Farming, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

electric station at Comerío Falls, elevation 500 feet, has a mean annual temperature of 76.8°<sup>1</sup>F.

"In spite of the small area of Puerto Rico, rainfall is unevenly distributed throughout the island. Annual rainfall varies from 145 inches in the Luquillo Mountains to 26 inches at Ensenada, . . . The average annual precipitation at Comerío Falls [about three miles north of Comerío Town] is 79.22 inches. The driest month at this station is June, with a mean annual rainfall of 4.62 inches; the wet<sup>t</sup>est month is November, with a mean annual rainfall of 8.86 inches."<sup>2</sup> In spite of this high mean annual rainfall in Comerío, drouths not infrequently do serious damage to the tobacco crop as well as to minor crops.

"Hurricanes have been the most destructive and dreadful of all weather phenomena affecting the island. Since 1899 twenty-three hurricanes, mostly of moderate intensity, have crossed over some part of Puerto Rico . . . . The most severe hurricane the island has suffered occurred on September 13, 1928. Property losses were tremendous and were estimated at \$50,000,000. A hurricane, known as San Ciprián, of greater intensity, but more local in

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 49

<sup>2</sup> Data furnished by the U. S. Weather Bureau at San Juan

character, visited the Island on September 23, 1932, in which 225 persons were killed and 4,820 injured and property damages were estimated at \$30,000,000."<sup>1</sup> Hurricanes are especially destructive to tree crops. For example, the 1928 hurricane destroyed practically all of the small acreage of coffee trees in Comerío. These areas in the municipality of Comerío that were formerly devoted to coffee raising have not been replanted.

### Puerto Rican Culture

Many influences have combined to produce the present Puerto Rican civilization. The following is an outline of the most important ones:

Spanish. From the time of its discovery, in 1493, until American occupation in 1898, Puerto Rico was ruled by Spain. This long period of Spanish rule (over 400 years) was bound to have a profound effect upon Puerto Rican civilization. Along with Spanish rulers came Spanish colonizers who brought with them their national customs, law, language, economic traits, and the Catholic religion. Their superior power made possible the subjugation of the Indian population. Those Indians who temporarily survived as a race were compelled to cast aside their own traits and adopt those of their conquerors. This does not mean

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<sup>1</sup> Types of Farming, op. cit., p. 13.

that the Indian did not leave his cultural imprint upon the Spanish-Puerto Rican.

Among the phases of the Spanish culture that have stood out and still stand out in bold relief in Puerto Rican culture are the Catholic religion and Catholic customs. Wherever the Spaniard went, the Catholic missionary, priest, and church went. The founding of the town of Comerío, originally called Sabana del Palmar, is more or less typical of the pioneering role of the Catholic religion and church in the development of communities:

"The following gentlemen met in 1818: don José Rosa Carmona, don Eduardo Vázquez, don Domingo Díaz, don Bernardo Pérez, don Pasoual Sandiez, don Feliciano Matos, and don Fernando Rodríguez. They agreed that they must make up a jurisdiction with a town; the other towns being too far away for church-going, burial of the dead, and christenings. . . . In the year 1826 a second meeting was held to designate each one's part in the building of the church. It was also decided that the church was to be located on the site occupied by a pig sty. A third meeting was held a short time later and it was decided that certain men were to furnish materials for the church building. . . . Considerable difficulty was experienced in the transportation of the bells for the church. They were brought from San Juan, over narrow paths and through under-

brush, by a yoke of oxen. On the fourth day the bells arrived amid great rejoicing. . . .Opinion was stubbornly divided as to what name to give the town. Finally the committee decided to leave the naming of the town to don Pedro Alboy, the priest who had been very active in establishing the town. . . . Then the priest arose and in the name of God called the town Sabana del Palmar."<sup>1</sup> This Spanish-Catholic influence is still dominant although it has been lessened since these early years by many conditions.

The non-material traits in contemporary Puerto Rico are still predominantly Spanish.

Indian. Prior to Spanish occupation, scattered tribes of Borinquen Indians inhabited the Island. The contact of the Spaniards rapidly reduced these Indians to a position of subordination and resulted in their eventual disappearance as a distinct racial strain; although some traces of Indian blood still remain through miscegenation of early Spanish colonists with native Indian women.

The disappearance of the Indian from the Island did not mean that he had left no influences on Puerto Rican culture. The Spanish colonist, like the English colonist

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<sup>1</sup> This is an English translation from the original minutes of these meetings. The original document is in the possession of don Manuel Díaz.

to the North, learned through hard experience that he could not depend upon his mother country for everything that he needed. He slowly came to realize that he had to depend, to a considerable extent, upon his own resourcefulness and make use of what he could find in his new environment.

The Spanish colonist adopted the Indian's method of planting, harvesting, and preparing corn for human consumption. He learned from the Indian how to use indigenous fruits, seeds, and vegetables, such as the alligator pear, squash, beans, tomato, achiote<sup>1</sup>, and the like, and also how to use native plant fibers for the making of mats and hammocks. The maraca and güfcharo, native musical instruments made from gourd-like fruits, are also Indian in origin. In addition, the Indian language enriched the Spanish language with many names of places and things; for example, the two musical instruments just named. Many "home cures" still used, especially in rural communities of Puerto Rico, are Indian in origin.

Negro. The Negro was introduced very early into Puerto Rico as a slave. He rapidly became an important factor in the agricultural economy of the Island. While

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<sup>1</sup> Achiote, a small reddish-brown seed used for the coloring of food.

the Negro has influenced only slightly Puerto Rican cultural traits, his presence in large numbers and the comparative absence, from the time of his introduction, of strong racial prejudices against him have tended to produce considerable race mixing.

In a few communities where the racial traits of the Negro are still dominant and where there is still a "consciousness of kind," a few customs of their African ancestors can be found, as, for example, musical instruments and types of dances. The baile de bomba<sup>1</sup> is still practiced in the Negro communities in the coastal plains region to the east of Río Piedras. Possibly, but not probably, certain death-watch customs that prevail among the lower classes in the Island are African in origin. But these customs also have Spanish parallels. It is probably more logical to assume that they came from this latter source although there is no direct historical proof to this effect.

American. Spain gave Puerto Rico, in her 400 years of rule over the Island, the primary material and non-material traits that Puerto Rico had up to the beginning of American occupation. In the thirty-six years of American occupation, Puerto Ricans have experienced a

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<sup>1</sup> Baile de bomba, literally--drum dance.

modification of many traits in their culture, especially the material ones. The predominance of American business methods and of American manufactured goods may be seen anywhere. At least nine-tenths of the articles in any grocery, hardware, or dry-goods store are American made. Most of the staple foods in the Island are imported from the United States, such as rice, beans, codfish, flour, refined sugar, and the like. Out of the total of 130,152,360 dollars' worth of external trade (imports and exports) of Puerto Rico, 122,275,142 dollars' worth, or about ninety-three per cent of the total, was with the United States.<sup>1</sup> This illustrates the extent of the penetration of American business into the Island's economy. Side by side with this economic penetration there has been a considerable amount of American legal concepts and procedures incorporated into Puerto Rican-Spanish legal patterns, especially in corporation law.

Next in importance to American economic and business influence upon Puerto Rican culture has probably been the American educational system. Its influence has been remarkable in many ways. Throughout Spanish days formal education was primarily an upper-class privilege. Boys and girls were separated. Schools for girls were the

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<sup>1</sup>Report of Puerto Rico Policy Commission (Chardón Report), June 1934, p. 99.

exception. In Comerío, for example, there was no elementary school teacher until 1854. Grammar, arithmetic, writing, and Catholic Church doctrine were being taught to a few Comeríeñan boys in 1855. In 1863 the course of study for girls included reading, Christian doctrine, embroidery, sewing, penmanship, and virtue.<sup>1</sup>

In 1873 there were three schools in town.<sup>2</sup> From the minutes of the meeting of the school board of Comerío (Acta de Abril 2, 1897) it appears that there were four teachers in the municipality; but because of decline in enrollment and general disorganization of the schools, the board contemplated no action on petitions by the teachers for increase in salaries. What evidence is available shows a lack of any real educational policy.

Such conditions prevailed throughout the Island until American occupation. In view of the generally accepted notion that Puerto Rico should be Americanized, efforts were soon made to reorganize the school system along American lines. At present a Puerto Rican classroom and Puerto Rican educational theory and practice are essentially American.

Other American cultural traits, such as American "movies" (with Spanish sub-titles), American sports and

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<sup>1</sup>Information from Acta del 5 de junio de 1863. Archives of Comerío.

<sup>2</sup>Acta del 18 de junio.

games and American jazz music play an important role in Puerto Rican life. American "movies" have exerted considerable influence on Puerto Rican culture.

The degree of influence of these various American cultural traits varies materially with location. The entrepot city of San Juan and its immediate environs has been the most important gathering point and diffusion point for American cultural traits.

Material traits in the American culture have been most widely diffused throughout the Island. Excepting education and moving pictures, the non-material American traits are largely localized within the vicinity of San Juan.

There are several reasons for the generally successful diffusion of American cultural traits in the Island:

First, to the average Puerto Rican, American occupation of the Island was welcomed. It did not appear to be a conquest. Anything that Americans did or decided to do was "good for them." This attitude furnished a favorable setting for many Americanizing influences that would otherwise probably have been resented. When anti-American feeling did appear, as it has done on several occasions, it was too late for this to affect seriously the already well-rooted American traits, because they had become an accepted part of the Puerto Rican cultural

pattern and were no longer considered as American.

Second, with the exception of the English language, most of the American traits found in the Puerto Rican culture have been "practical" in their nature. Therefore, they have not run counter to prejudices that underlie their folkways. Such changes as have occurred in their folkways are largely the product of the adoption of these practical traits. The incentive for changes in the folkways was largely American in origin, but the subtle influences that brought about these changes were already established. This is also true of the lapse in many Spanish-Puerto Rican folkways.

Third, with a few exceptions it may be said that the Americans have not been officious in their methods. The leader of the Nationalist Party, the party favoring independence for the Island, once said, in effect: "Americans don't 'start anything' that will create a concerted resentment by the Puerto Ricans. It is difficult for us to organize a strong opposition to them." He might have added that most Puerto Rican business men, and many professional men as well, are in one way or another tied up with some sort of American influence, so that it has been difficult to get respected leaders to break with their American ties or experiences and launch themselves into a campaign against Americans and things that are

American.

Environment. Climate, topography, the types of natural resources, size of the country, and comparative isolation have combined to influence, in many ways, Puerto Rican culture. These influences have been limiting factors in many subtle as well as in many obvious ways. An observer once said, "Frequent hurricanes have been partly responsible for Puerto Rican fatalism"; and another said, "We live in perpetual fear of geographic cataclysms.... The heat prematurely ages us."<sup>1</sup> "Our uniform tropical climate gives us few stimulating variations."<sup>2</sup> "Our geologic structure extending into the air between two abysses--one to the south of the Island 15,000 feet deep, and another, seventy-five miles north of the Island 28,000 feet deep--is poor in mineral resources."<sup>3</sup>

### Comerio

Location. The town of Comerio is situated in the East Central Mountain and Valley region of Puerto Rico. It is almost exactly in the middle of the Island in a north-south direction, but it is four or five miles north of the backbone of the higher mountain ranges that cross

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<sup>1</sup>Pedreira, A.S., Insularismo, pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

the Island in an east to west direction. Comerío is approximately eighteen miles in a direct line from either the nearest north or south seacoast. San Juan, which is situated on the north seacoast, is north-northeast of Comerío. The distance by road from San Juan to Comerío is about thirty-five miles. This road is so winding that the average car-time between the two points is about an hour and a half.

Comerío lies at the bottom of a narrow mountain valley. Steep slopes and a winding river cut off its visibility from all directions. It is bounded on the north and east by the La Plata River, whose course hugs closely the city limits on these two sides. A steep hill rises abruptly at the rear of the town and completely cuts off the view to the south and the west. The narrow shelf, partly alluvial and partly a rock table, upon which the town is built, is pinched off on the river ends by steep hills that come up flush with the river bank. This shelf has an area of about 10.5 acres and is more or less coextensive with the town.

These geographic features give the town an isolated appearance. The river and mountain barriers that hem it in have been factors promoting the close spacing of the houses.

Communication. Geographically, Comerío appears isolated. This does not mean that it is, to any marked extent, culturally isolated. The trans-insular road that passes through Comerío is a main-traveled road. It is made of asphalt and is kept in good condition. Besides the constant use of it for truck and private automobile transportation, there is also bus service. Two busses leave Comerío daily for Caguas, two for Bayamón, two for San Juan, and one for Cidra. They carry in their daily trips an average of one hundred passengers. In addition, two through busses pass through Comerío daily in each direction. There are eighteen privately owned automobiles in town.

There are six telephones in town, including a public telephone. An average of about fifteen out-of-town calls are received daily, most of which are commercial calls. From two to three out-of-town calls are sent daily. San Juan calls cost from thirty-five to forty-five cents each. Between thirty and thirty-five telegrams are received daily. Most of these telegrams are commercial, but congratulatory telegrams to some friend or political leader are not uncommon. The postmistress reports an average daily receipt of 150 letters from out-of-town points. The Monday morning mail is usually about twice this large. Two mail deliveries are made each day.

Is Comerío a Typical Inland Town? One of the secondary purposes of this study might be stated as an attempt to contribute something to Puerto Rican rural sociology. If a single community were to be studied with this in view, it would be necessary to select one whose essential traits found would be similar to those found in others. Does Comerío, as an inland rural community, fulfill this requirement? A really scientific answer to this question would necessitate a careful study of several other communities. Variations would have to be carefully noted and evaluated as to their importance and their extent.

Scientific data of the type indicated are not at hand; so a more general and tentative answer will have to suffice. In the first place, inland Puerto Rican communities are ethnically and culturally homogeneous. They have had a common racial and cultural origin. They are all predominantly Catholic, which naturally means that Catholic customs still play a primary role in community life. (The inland Puerto Ricans are mostly Spanish in race, and totally Spanish in language). For 400 years they were all under the highly centralized religious control of the Catholic church with its uniformly administered religious services. For the same number of

years these inland communities were all under centralized political control and no opportunity was given and, as far as is known, no attempts have ever been made to establish politically autonomous localities.

In the second place, the small size of the Island and the rapid increase in the density of the population have militated against the growth of locally indigenous cultural traits, so that even though inland rural communities have tended to be geographically isolated from neighboring communities, there has always been a large measure of social intercourse with adjoining areas. So side by side with the central control of the church and state has grown up a dense rural population with increasing opportunity to develop social contacts even between the more isolated communities.

Towns in the inland communities are more sophisticated than are their rural environs. Roads, radios, telephones, and newspapers are found, to a certain extent, in every rural inland town. Since contacts of inland towns with the outside world come from the same source, their sophistication tends to be of the same type. Some inland rural towns are more isolated than others, but the difference in degree of isolation is not great enough to lead to much dissimilarity in their cultural traits.

Whatever differences are noticeable would probably be the result of difference in the size of the towns and such fortuitous factors as the character and importance of local leadership. These influences do tend to produce outward evidences of difference; but underlying whatever surface distinctions that exist is a basic similarity.

The chief differences found among inland rural communities are occupational in character. One inland community (rather, region) is primarily occupied with tobacco culture; another is occupied with coffee culture; and another with more diversified types of farming. Comerio, for example, is primarily interested in tobacco. This distinction is not as important as it might seem. Within any given region similar types of activities are carried on. No differentiations such as would appear in the growth of large-scale industrial activities, have appeared. And the occupational distinctions between regions have not been so powerful as to produce any clear-cut differences in the non-material culture. The underlying regional difference is largely due to diversity in the agricultural techniques used for various types of crops. This difference has not served to produce regional distinctions in non-material culture. The same religion, saints, and social customs prevail. More than this, all inland towns use American-made automobiles, radios, and household

articles. All tend to have the same basic social and economic problems.

Those informed Puerto Ricans who are acquainted with the inland towns of Puerto Rico are also of the opinion that Comerío, the town selected for this study, presents no marked exceptions to these generalizations.

## CHAPTER II

### POPULATION

#### General Observations

One of the first things that a traveler would notice on a visit to Puerto Rico would be the close spacing of houses. When a town in Puerto Rico is entered, no matter how small or large, the typical scene is a compact group of houses and huts that stand flush with the streets and are contiguous to neighboring houses. In the open country little huts dot, at short intervals, a relatively treeless and rugged landscape.

Puerto Rico's primary resource is the soil. Her principal income is from agricultural enterprise, yet the average Puerto Rican is not soil-conscious. His interest lies primarily in those values that have grown out of a dense population; out of the give and take of social intercourse made easy by the close spacing of people. Rarely is a Puerto Rican heard to say that his "first love" is a field of growing tobacco or sugar cane, or a herd of purebred livestock. His intelligence, energy, and interest are, first of all, directed to what he can get out of his social intercourse. No one, as far as is known, has gained much social prestige by being a good

farmer or a good stock raiser. Many have gained prestige by being skillful in social transactions.

In addition to the fact that social and economic adjustments are based on a dense population, these same social and economic adjustments are also based on a population that has been little influenced by emigration or immigration during the past eighty years.

Puerto Ricans in general are very much attached to their native land. They are not an emigrating people. What few concerted efforts have been made to establish Puerto Rican colonies in other lands, especially in Hawaii and Arizona, have been unsuccessful. It is not within the province of this study to discuss emigration as a solution of Puerto Rico's population problem. It is enough to say that the weight of sociological, economic, and nationalist arguments is against it.

However, population movements within the Island are important. A decided urban population trend has been noticeable, especially since 1928. This has been partly due to the combined influences of two hurricanes (1928 and 1932) and the depression which began in 1929.

#### General Population Conditions

Increase in Population. The following figures give population and increase since 1765, together with the per cent increase:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fifteenth Census of the United States, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 123.

TABLE I

Year	Population	Increase	Per cent increase	
			Census period	Yearly estimate <sup>1</sup>
1765 . .	44,883 . .	----- . .	----- . .	---
1775 . .	70,250 . .	25,367 . .	56.5 . .	5.7
1880 . .	155,426 . .	85,176 . .	107.0 . .	4.3
1815 . .	220,882 . .	65,456 . .	42.1 . .	2.8
1832 . .	330,051 . .	109,169 . .	49.0 . .	2.9
1846 . .	447,914 . .	117,863 . .	35.7 . .	2.6
1860 . .	583,308 . .	135,394 . .	30.2 . .	2.1
1877 . .	631,648 . .	148,340 . .	25.4 . .	1.5
1887 . .	798,565 . .	66,917 . .	9.1 . .	0.9
1899 . .	953,243 . .	154,678 . .	19.4 . .	1.6
1910 . .	1,118,022 . .	164,779 . .	17.3 . .	1.7
1920 . .	1,299,809 . .	181,787 . .	16.3 . .	1.6
1930 . .	1,543,913 . .	244,104 . .	18.7 . .	1.8

The figures from 1765 to 1887 are from Spanish census reports but are stated in the 1930 United States Census. The Census for 1899 was taken by order of the War Department just after American occupation. In many ways it is the most complete Census of all. An attempt was made to indicate the percentage increase of each census report over the preceding census. The census year 1877 marks the beginning of fairly regular censuses.

Some are of the opinion that American occupation marks the beginning of a rapid increase of population in Puerto Rico. But if the rates of increase indicated in Table I for the Spanish Census years be reduced to yearly percentages of increase and then compared to the yearly

<sup>1</sup>This yearly estimate was computed by dividing each estimate in the "Census period" column by the numbers of years that had elapsed since each previous Census.

rates of increase since 1899 it would appear that American occupation cannot be identified with an accelerated increase in population, even though American sanitary engineering activities have put under control many endemic and epidemic diseases.

Comparison of per cent of increase, in Puerto Rico and the United States, over preceding decades<sup>1</sup>:

TABLE II

Year	Puerto Rico	United States
1900 . . . . .	20.7 <sup>2</sup>	20.7
1910 . . . . .	17.3	21.0
1920 . . . . .	16.3	14.9
1930 . . . . .	18.7	16.1

These comparisons seem to indicate different trends for Puerto Rico and the United States.

The following table gives total population, number of increase, and per cent increase by decades for the municipality and the town of Comerío:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The figures for the United States were taken from the Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States for 1930, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>This per cent is computed on the basis of the 1899 Census for Puerto Rico.

<sup>3</sup>The figures for 1899 are taken from the Census of Puerto Rico, Report to War Department 1899, p. 211. Those for 1910, 1920, and 1930 were taken from the Fifteenth Census of the United States, Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 126.

TABLE III

Year	Total Population	Number Increase	Per cent Increase
<u>Municipality</u>			
1899	8,294	(a)	(a)
1910	11,170	2,876	34.7
1920	14,708	3,538	31.7
1930	16,715	2,007	13.6
<u>Town</u>			
1899	1,191	(a)	(a)
1910	1,908	717	60.2
1920	2,382	474	24.8
1930	2,502	120	5.0

(a) Figures omitted because the preceding census was taken in 1887.

Both the municipality and the town show a deceleration of increase. This slowing down does not appear in the Island as a whole. This deceleration in the municipality cannot be accounted for by exceptional changes in the birth or death rate. The only possible way to account for it is by an urban migration of considerable numbers of Comerieños.<sup>1</sup>

Density of Population. More striking contrasts in population increase by decades are indicated by increase in density of population:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See section titled, "Birth Rates, Death Rates, Population Increase."

<sup>2</sup> The figures for the United States were taken from the Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, p. 9; for Puerto Rico calculations were made from the United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 126.

TABLE IV

Year	Population per square mile		
	United States	Puerto Rico	Comerio municipality
1900 . . . . .	25.6 . . . . .	248.6 (1899) . . . . .	286.9 (1899)
1910 . . . . .	30.9 . . . . .	325.4 . . . . .	386.5
1920 . . . . .	35.5 . . . . .	378.4 . . . . .	508.6
1930 . . . . .	41.3 . . . . .	449.4 . . . . .	576.1

The areas of Puerto Rico and the municipality of Comerío are, respectively, 3,435 and 28.9 square miles. The town of Comerío has an area of 10.5 acres and in 1930 had a population density of 152,496 per square mile. In 1930 New York City had a population density of 23,178 per square mile.<sup>1</sup> For the same year the density in the rural area of Comerío was 491.8 per square mile.

Race. The 1930 Census reports the following race composition for Puerto Rico, Comerío municipality, and Comerío town:<sup>2</sup>

TABLE V

Race	Puerto Rico	Comerio	
		Municipality	Comerio Town
White	1,146,719 . . . . .	13,725 . . . . .	1792
Colored	397,152 . . . . .	2,990 . . . . .	710
Other Races	38 . . . . .	None . . . . .	None
Percentage of white:	65.3 . . . . .	78.2 . . . . .	60.9
Percentage of other than white:	34.7 . . . . .	21.8 . . . . .	39.1

<sup>1</sup>Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Fifteenth United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, pp. 136, 156, and 164.

Among the white population of the Island there were 2,160 Americans and 5,605 others that were classified as foreign-born white. Of the latter the majority were Spanish. In the municipality there were twenty-one classified as foreign-born white, of which seventeen were from Spain, one from Italy, one from another Atlantic island, and two from the Netherlands. Two Americans now live in the town of Comerio. Both are teachers.

The reason the municipality has a lower percentage of its population classified as colored than the Island as a whole is that most of the colored population is concentrated along the coastal plains where the Negroes originally worked as slaves on the sugar cane plantations. In the inland communities most of the colored population is concentrated in the towns. The inland rural population is mostly white.

The Census includes as colored both full-blooded Negroes and mulattos. A count of individuals was made on three separate occasions on the streets of Comerio of those persons who appeared to show physical signs of having colored blood. Among the three hundred counted, thirty-four per cent showed physical evidence of having colored blood. The assumption was that errors on one side would tend to balance those on the other. The Census report and the personal count are probably low because many who are known to have colored blood are counted as white. A

"white wish" was discovered among many which also would tend to make those on the border line in physical appearance state to the census taker that they belonged to the white race.

Because of the absence of a marked race prejudice and also because of the tendency to deal with those of color as a class rather than a race phenomenon, the community as a whole would be prone to reduce materially the percentage of colored and to classify many quadroons and octoroons as white.

The number of full-blooded Negroes in town is not accurately known. Probably there are from seventy-five to a hundred. They mix freely in the social life of the lower class whites, which also suggests the probability of miscegenation.

Age. A study of the numbers in given age periods throws considerable light on certain fundamental conditions of the population of the Island and the municipality. The matter will be made clearer if a comparison be made with the United States.

The age period, number, and per cent within each given age period in Puerto Rico, together with a comparison with the percentage in each age period in the

United States for 1930 are presented in the table:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VI

Age	Puerto Rico Total population	Per cent distribution	
		Puerto Rico	United States
All ages	1,543,913	100.0	100.0
Under 5	226,468	14.7	9.3
Under 1	54,773	2.9	1.8
5-9	224,022	14.5	10.3
10-14	199,337	12.9	9.8
15-19	186,150	12.1	9.4
20-24	149,336	9.7	8.9
25-29	99,780	6.5	8.0
30-34	94,740	6.1	7.4
35-44	164,904	10.7	14.0
45-54	103,163	6.7	10.6
55-64	56,418	3.7	6.9
65-74	25,828	1.7	3.9
75---	13,576	0.9	1.5

This table indicates a higher percentage of individuals in the younger age groups in Puerto Rico than in the United States. In Puerto Rico 14.7 per cent of the population was under five; in the United States 9.3 per cent. In Puerto Rico 54.2 per cent were under twenty as compared to 29.8 per cent in the United States. This large percentage in the younger age groups in Puerto Rico indicates a higher birth rate. The rapid decline in percentage as the older age groups are reached indicates a high

<sup>1</sup>For Puerto Rico, Fifteenth Census of the United States, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 137. This also includes the per cent age distribution for Puerto Rico.

For the United States, Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, p. 182.

mortality rate.

Up to the present the population of the United States has been described as young. If this is true of the United States, it is more true of Puerto Rico. Just what influence the high per cent of the population in the younger age groups has on Puerto Rican psychology and Puerto Rican culture cannot be measured accurately. The tendency among some Puerto Ricans seems to be to over-emphasize it. Puerto Rican culture as a whole shows no more, probably fewer, signs of youth than does American culture. Puerto Ricans sometimes call Americans hombres-niños<sup>1</sup> and credit themselves with being niños-hombres<sup>2</sup>. It is better not to attempt to correlate too closely physical age of the population with cultural traits. The sociological consequences of this age distribution will become more significant when birth and death rates are discussed.

The following table is a comparison of the age distribution of population for rural and urban Comerío for 1930.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hombres-niños, men who act like children.

<sup>2</sup>Niños-hombres, children who act like men.

<sup>3</sup>Fifteenth United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930: Rural Comerío p. 160; Urban Comerío, p. 164.

TABLE VI

Age	<u>Rural Comerío</u>		<u>Urban Comerío</u>	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
All ages	14,213	100	2,502	100
Under 5	2,455	17.3	322	12.9
Under 1	435	3.1	70	2.8
5-9	2,359	16.6	567	14.7
10-14	2,121	14.9	319	12.7
15-19	1,600	11.3	354	14.1
20-24	1,284	9.0	230	9.2
25-29	803	5.6	175	6.9
30-34	733	5.2	145	5.8
35-44	1,354	9.5	263	10.5
45-54	782	5.6	158	6.3
55-64	454	3.3	83	3.3
65-74	182	1.3	58	2.3
75---	74	.5	28	1.1

This table indicates, as did the previous one, the high percentage of individuals in the younger age groups. The town had 12.9 per cent of its population under five; while the rural area had 17.3 per cent of its population under five. The town had 54.4 per cent of its population under twenty and the rural area had 60.1 per cent under this age, which indicates an exceedingly high birth rate in the rural areas of Comerío but not necessarily a lower differential birth rate in the town. The rapid reduction in numbers in the older age groups indicates a high death rate. The age distribution of the population in town is more irregular. There is a larger percentage in the middle and older age groups in the town than in the country, which is largely the result of the attraction of

laboring classes to the local tobacco industries. This would seem to account also for the lower percentage of children in town.

Sex. In the United States there were 102.5 males per hundred females in 1930.<sup>1</sup> In the same year Puerto Rico had 99.95 males per hundred females; in the municipality of Comerío there were 101.87 males per hundred females, and in the town 78.80 males per hundred females.<sup>2</sup> The town not only had a higher percentage of middle and older age people, but also a higher percentage of women than the rural area. Most of those attracted to town are working women seeking an opportunity for labor in the tobacco establishments or work as servants in the upper-class homes.

#### Birth Rate

Crude Birth Rate. The following table indicates births by years and birth rates per thousand population:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abstract of the Fifteenth United States Census, 1930, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Fifteenth United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, pp. 148 and 156.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from Annual Reports of the Governor of Puerto Rico for the years following those indicated in the table. The number of births in the municipality, excepting the years 1931, 1932, and 1933, were taken directly from the Registro Civil de Nacimientos, of the municipality.

TABLE VII

Fiscal year	<u>Puerto Rico</u>		<u>Comerio Municipality</u>	
	Number of births	Rate per 1000	Number of births	Rate per 1000
1919-1920 . . .	50,729 . . .	39.0(a) . . .	641 . . .	44.7(a)
1920-1921 . . .	47,961 . . .	36.4 . . .	498 . . .	34.5
1921-1922 . . .	52,033 . . .	39.0 . . .	---(b) . . .	---(b)
1922-1923 . . .	50,348 . . .	37.2 . . .	621 . . .	41.1
1923-1924 . . .	51,722 . . .	37.4 . . .	--- . . .	---
1924-1925 . . .	54,556 . . .	39.0 . . .	824(c) . . .	53.1(c)
1925-1926 . . .	----- (b) . . .	---- (b) . . .	604 . . .	38.5
1926-1927 . . .	----- . . .	---- . . .	672 . . .	42.3
1927-1928 . . .	----- . . .	36.5 . . .	653 . . .	40.5
1928-1929 . . .	56,682 . . .	38.4 . . .	664 . . .	40.7
1929-1930 . . .	----- . . .	34.4 . . .	580 . . .	35.1
1930-1931 . . .	----- . . .	35.2 . . .	657 . . .	39.3
1931-1932 . . .	65,700 . . .	41.7 . . .	898(c) . . .	52.9(c)
1932-1933 . . .	66,430 . . .	41.5 . . .	854 . . .	49.8
1933-1934 . . .	61,655 . . .	38.0 . . .	759 . . .	43.7
1934-1935 . . .	----- . . .	---- . . .	785 . . .	44.1

- (a) Estimated rates per thousand except for census years.  
 (b) Figures not obtained for those indicated as blank.  
 (c) There is no known way of accounting for these "jumps" in birth rate figures.

These data give only a general indication of the rate of birth in the Island and the municipality. There is evidence that large numbers of parents do not report births of their children, as the law requires, because of isolation and/or indifference. The percentage reporting is undoubtedly considerably below the standard of ninety per cent required for those states in the United States Registration Area.

However, the material in this table suffices to show that birth rates are high both for the Island and the municipality, possibly between thirty-six and forty per

thousand for the municipality. Furthermore, the data are so fragmentary and conflicting that it is difficult to estimate, with any degree of accuracy, birth rate trends. One method of estimating birth rate trends in the Island would be to analyze the percentage of children under five for the census periods for which statistics are available for the Island.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VIII

Census year	Percentage of population under five
1899	15.6
1910	16.6
1920	15.4
1930	14.7

The figures in this table seem to show that there may have been a slight decline in birth rate in the Island since 1910. This evidence is strengthened by the fact that there probably has been an increasing practice of birth control among the upper classes. But Tables VII and IX, dealing with birth and death rates for the Island, can hardly be reconciled with Table VIII. There seems to be no way of demonstrating by means of birth and death rate figures that there has been a declining percentage of the population under five since 1910. There may have been a

<sup>1</sup> Computed from the United States Censuses of the Island for the years indicated.

declining death rate among older groups or an increasing death rate among those under five, either of which would account for this decreasing percentage of the numbers under five. But there is neither more nor less evidence to show that there is a declining death rate among those in the older age groups than there is evidence to show a decline in death rate among those under five. It is doubtful whether the change in the age composition of the population since 1910 is, to any marked extent, due to changes in death rates by age groups; but it is known that there is a sufficient urban trend in the population and that there has been an increasing practice of birth control among the upper classes. So even though there is no positive evidence to show a decline in birth rates for the Island, the "logic of the situation" would appear to indicate that there has been a slight decline. However, the question is still a mooted one.

Since no birth rates were reported separately for the town of Comerío, an effort was made to determine the number of births for the years indicated by examining the Registro Civil de Nacimientos for the municipality of Comerío:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Registro Civil de Nacimientos, Civil Register of Births for years indicated.

TABLE IX

Year	Births
1922	104
1925	80
1926	82
1927	75
1928	104
1929	81
1930	68
1931	86
1932	95
1933	62
1934	81

The average number of annual births for these eleven years is 83.5. On the basis of an average calculated population for the town of 2,450 people for these eleven years, the birth rate would be 33.2 per thousand.

Class Distinctions in Birth Rate. Because of greater convenience, parents in town are more likely to register the births of their children. Most of the upper classes live in town. For these reasons an attempt was made to estimate the difference in birth rates between the upper and lower classes. Even though the samples were small, some idea may be gained concerning birth rate differentials by class.

The birth records in the Registro Civil contain not only the barrio (political subdivision of the municipality) where the parents live but also the streets or the parts of town (given popular names) in which parents

reside. The number of huts in the poor sections of Cuba Libre and Cielito was counted. There was a total of 172. A count of the number of individuals living in 80 of the 172 huts was made and the average of 6.5 persons per hut was estimated, making a total estimated population of 1,118 for these two sections of town. (The streets in this section of town are about twenty feet wide. The average house is fifteen feet wide and twenty feet long and contains two and nine-tenths rooms. Only two of the 172 houses have two stories. These 1,118 persons live on an area of 2.74 acres, making the population density 252,452 persons per square mile.) Similar estimates were made in the better sections of town and 950 persons were counted in the areas where they were most concentrated. This number included about all of those in the upper class as well as most of those locally classified as being in a medium economic condition.

The births recorded in the Registro Civil for the five consecutive years from 1930 to 1934 inclusive were then examined and classified so that they corresponded to the areas investigated. A rough estimate was then made as to the rate of increase, using the 1920 and 1930 Censuses as a basis. On this basis the 1,118 persons of the lower classes were reduced to 1,100 in order to correspond a little more accurately to the average population over the

five-year period. The 950 people in the upper classes were reduced to 938. The average number of births in each of these two sections of town for the five-year period was then calculated and reduced to birth rate per thousand. The following is the summary:

TABLE X

Class	Population (estimated)	Average number of births for the five years	Rate per 1000
Lower . . .	1,100 . . . . .	48.2 . . . . .	45.8
Upper . . .	938 . . . . .	21.1 . . . . .	22.5

These computations were for live-births only. In a separate section of the Registro Civil, called the Acta de Nati-Muertos,<sup>1</sup> there appeared a total of thirty-six still-births for this same five-year period; but since these still-births were not registered for any designated place in town, they were excluded in the foregoing calculations.

These figures are not, of course, precise; but since this calculated birth rate per thousand for the lower classes in town closely corresponds to birth rate estimates for the municipality as a whole, and since this estimate corresponds even more closely to the rate per

<sup>1</sup> Acta de Nati-Muertos, Still-birth register.

thousand for the rural area, it appears to be reasonably accurate. The accuracy of the birth rate per thousand for the upper classes is more open to criticism because there is no basis for comparison, either in the municipality or the Island.<sup>1</sup> The number indicated for the upper classes includes about all of those in the municipality who may be considered as being in medium or good economic condition. An argument in favor of the lower estimate for the upper classes is the fact that the upper classes are known to practice birth control.

Other Birth Rate Differentials. Calculations on the basis of births per thousand females for the Island, municipality, and town for the census year of 1930 are:<sup>2</sup>

TABLE XI

	Puerto Rico	Municipality	Town
Births per 1,000 females . . .	79.8 . . .	81.5 . . .	48.0
Births per 1,000 females (Ages 15-44 incl.) . . .	173.7 . . .	190.9 . . .	---(a)
Births per 1,000 married women (Ages 15-44 incl.) . . .	308.6 . . .	316.3 (b) . . .	---(a)

(a) No data.

(b) This figure is for all married women.

<sup>1</sup> The areas occupied by the upper class also contain a good many poor people, possibly fifteen per cent.

<sup>2</sup> Calculations based upon Fifteenth United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions.

The low ratio of children in town per thousand females is explained partly by the unequal distribution of sexes; there were 78.80 men per hundred women. This low ratio is also partly explained by the fact that most of the upper classes live in town and have a relatively low birth rate. Were it possible to extend the figures in the town so as to include both married and unmarried women between the ages of 14 and 44 inclusive, corresponding lower ratios would be indicated.

Another method of indicating a birth rate, as well as indicating a high percentage distribution of the population in the lower age groups, is by considering the ratio of the number of children under five to: a) per thousand women between the ages of fifteen to forty-four inclusive; b) per thousand married women in the same age group. (For purposes of making a comparison, figures for the United States are also included.)<sup>1</sup>

a. Children under five per thousand women, ages fifteen to forty-four inclusive, for 1930:

United States . . . . .	391.3
Puerto Rico . . . . .	628.0
Comerio municipality. . . . .	785.0

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<sup>1</sup> Calculations for the United States are based on figures taken from Abstract of the Fifteenth United States Census. Those for Puerto Rico are based on figures taken from the Fifteenth Census of the United States, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions.

b. Children under five per thousand married women, ages fifteen to forty-four inclusive for 1930:

United States . . . . .	641.5
Puerto Rico . . . . .	1148.3
Rural Comerío (all married) . . . . .	1150.4
Comerío town (all married). . . . .	894.4

The high ratio of children under five in Puerto Rico to married women between the ages of fifteen to forty-four inclusive is all the more striking because only 56.3 per cent of the women within this age period are either legally married or "consensually" married (as in "common-law" marriage in the United States).

Children born of promiscuous sex relations are estimated to comprise 4.39 per cent of the total births,<sup>1</sup> so that the large number of children under five, per thousand married women within their reproductive ages, indicates a high birth rate among those women legally married and those who are living with men by mutual consent.

The figures for the town are influenced by the fact that there are probably more married women in the non-productive older age groups. Another factor of importance is that the upper classes, who are mostly town dwellers, practice birth control.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosario, J. C., A Study of Illegitimacy in Puerto Rico, p. 7.

## Death Rate

General. The high birth rate in Puerto Rico would be a study in itself. But more importantly, this high birth rate is indicative of such fundamental social phenomena as popular attitudes and practices, social and economic adjustments to large families, to a dense population, and to mores in opposition to controlled procreation.

The study of high death rates is no less important. Frequency of death in the family and community directly influences the value placed upon life. The generally low value placed upon life in this community is mainly the result of a high ratio of man to land, frequent deaths, and social, especially religious, attitudes that lay primary stress upon man's preparation for a life everlasting.

It is when death rates and, for that matter, birth rates are looked at as symptoms of certain fundamental social and economic conditions that these figures begin to take on their chief significance. High or low birth rates, rapidly or slowly increasing populations, and young or old populations are said to have a profound sociological significance. The problem is to show how these population conditions really affect social attitudes and values.

Crude Death Rates. The deaths for the Island from

1913 to 1933 inclusive and those for the municipality of Comerío from 1920 to 1934 inclusive, together with the estimated rates per thousand are:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE XII

Fiscal year	Island		Municipality	
	Deaths	Rate per 1,000	Deaths	Rate per 1,000
1913-1914 . . .	21,775	18.4	---	---
1914-1915 . . .	23,664	19.7	---	---
1915-1916 . . .	26,572	21.9	---	---
1916-1917 . . .	34,939	28.4	---	---
1917-1918 . . .	34,476	27.7	---	---
1918-1919 . . .	39,974	31.7	---	---
1919-1920 . . .	30,280	23.2	---	---
1920-1921 . . .	29,396	22.3	195	13.3(a)
1921-1922 . . .	30,098	22.5	---	---
1922-1923 . . .	28,533	21.1	---	---
1923-1924 . . .	25,886	18.7	---	---
1924-1925 . . .	31,350	22.4	291	18.7
1925-1926 . . .	----(b)	---(b)	205	13.0
1926-1927 . . .	----	---	365	22.9
1927-1928 . . .	----	20.4	320	19.0
1928-1929 . . .	40,890	27.7	339	20.8
1929-1930 . . .	----	25.3	262	15.9
1930-1931 . . .	----	18.6	248	14.8(a)
1931-1932 . . .	32,146	20.4	313	18.4
1932-1933 . . .	35,610	22.3	328	19.1
1933-1934 . . .	36,763	22.6	293	16.9
1934-1935 . . .	----	---	288	---

(a) Rates per 1,000 estimated on the basis of the census years of 1920 and 1930. All other estimates based on data from records.

(b) Figures were not obtained for those years appearing in blank.

The following are death figures for urban and rural Comerío:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These figures were obtained from the Reports of the Insular Department of Health. They were reported for fiscal years ending in June of each year.

<sup>2</sup> These figures were gathered from the Registro Civil de Defunciones for Comerío. Deaths were counted for fiscal and not calendar years so as to correspond to those for the Island and municipality.

TABLE XIII

Year	Comerio Town (deaths)	Rural Comerio (deaths)
1920-1921 . . . .	54 (22.7) (a) . . . .	151 (13.5) (a)
1924-1925 . . . .	61 . . . . .	261 . . . . .
1925-1926 . . . .	52 . . . . .	143 . . . . .
1926-1927 . . . .	23 . . . . .	342 . . . . .
1928-1929 . . . .	65 . . . . .	274 . . . . .
1929-1930 . . . .	49 . . . . .	213 . . . . .
1930-1931 . . . .	42 (16.8) (a) . . . .	206 (14.5) (a)
1931-1932 . . . .	47 . . . . .	266 . . . . .
1932-1933 . . . .	69 . . . . .	257 . . . . .
1933-1934 . . . .	44 . . . . .	249 . . . . .
1934-1935 . . . .	51 . . . . .	237 . . . . .

(a) No figures on death rates per 1,000 people were found in the records for the town and rural area of Comerio. The rates appearing in parentheses were computed on the basis of the 1920 and 1930 census years.

No satisfactory indication of death trends can be discovered. It appears that the rates for the Island as a whole are slightly higher than those for the municipality, at least for the years of 1931, 1932, and 1933.

It was previously remarked that there were noticeable year-to-year fluctuations in birth rates. These fluctuations are also noticeable in the death rates. Several possible factors may contribute to these fluctuations: a) changes in economic conditions (such as depressions) that, owing to a very low level of living, would be reflected directly in the number of deaths, especially infant mortality rates; b) the two hurricanes of 1928 and 1932 that might either directly cause a higher death rate or, indirectly, through the destruction of food-

stuffs cause a lowering of vitality, thus tending to make diseases more virulent; c) or these fluctuations may be the result of the smallness of this community as a sample. This last factor seems to be an important one because the fluctuations are more noticeable in the municipality than in the Island as a whole. Fluctuations in birth rates might influence fluctuations in death rates. A comparison of birth and death rates in the municipality will show whether high birth rates correspond to high death rates and vice versa:

TABLE XIV

Year	Births	Deaths
1920-1921	498	195
1922-1923	621	---
1924-1925	628	291
1925-1926	604	205
1926-1927	672	365
1927-1928	653	---
1928-1929	664	339
1929-1930	580	262
1930-1931	657	261
1931-1932	898	313
1932-1933	854	328
1933-1934	759	293
1934-1935	785	288

This comparison of the number of births and deaths shows no apparent correlation in the fluctuations. The largest number of deaths in this period occurred in 1926, which year showed only slightly more than an

average number of births. Moreover, the depression years since 1929 seem to show not only a marked increase in births, but also an increase in birth rates per thousand population. At the same time these depression years show no noticeable change in death rates that, theoretically, might be expected where such a large percentage of the population lives on such low incomes. But practically, these depression years seem to have worked much less hardship on the lower classes than might be supposed. Their normal economic condition is so low that they have become habituated to it and depressions that influence markedly the standard of living of the upper classes do not correspondingly influence the lower classes.

Nor does it seem that the hurricanes of 1928 and 1932 resulted in a noticeable increase in deaths in the municipality. The one of 1928 did have an effect on the Island as a whole; deaths for that year are the highest on record. The hurricane of 1932 was more destructive in local areas, but it did not have such a profound influence on the Island. There is another possible reason why these two hurricanes did not noticeably influence the number of deaths in the municipality. The month of September, when both of these hurricanes struck the Island, is not the growing season for the staple crop of tobacco in this community; nor were the minor crops, such as starchy vegetables, which are so vitally important for

the subsistence of the poor, seriously damaged.

Other partial explanations for these fluctuations in deaths would probably be found if it were possible to examine carefully the causes for deaths by years. For example, it is known that there were severe epidemics of influenza, whooping cough, and pneumonia in 1918-1919. Were figures available, epidemics would probably be found to be an important cause for these fluctuations. Diseases such as those just mentioned are very destructive of life when they visit a population that is normally low in vitality.

Death Rates in the Town of Comerío. The same fluctuations appear in the yearly death rates of the town that appear in the municipality as a whole. What information is available would seem to show a death rate per thousand in the town similar to that in the municipality. For example, the rates per thousand reported for Comerío town for fiscal years beginning with 1909 and ending with 1920 are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE XV

Year	Rate per thousand	Year	Rate per thousand
1909-1910	13.70	1915-1916	18.57
1910-1911	15.72	1916-1917	24.49
1911-1912	16.75	1917-1918	28.29
1912-1913	19.29	1918-1919	26.56
1913-1914	14.80	1919-1920	16.45
1914-1915	17.44	Average death rate	19.37

<sup>1</sup> Twentieth Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico, p. 135.

It would appear that death rates in the town should be lower than in the rural areas or in the municipality as a whole, because of the fact that most of the upper classes live in town. But the low death rate in this class is counteracted by a very high death rate among the poor. The poor sections in town, previously described, probably have the highest death rate of any group in the community; and the poor comprise approximately two-thirds of the population of the town.

Another factor that tends to increase mortality rates in town is the larger percentage of individuals in the middle and old age groups. Deaths common to old age are, therefore, relatively more numerous. The middle age groups in town, especially in the lower classes, are very subject to tuberculosis.

Death Rate by Class. At the same time that figures were being gathered for the making of an estimate of differences in birth rates by classes in town, figures were also gathered for death rates. The same methods were used. Following is a summary of the findings:

TABLE XVI

Class	Average number of persons in the two classes for five consecutive years	Average number of deaths for five consecutive years.	Death rate per 1,000 persons.
Lower . . . . .	1100 . . . . .	27.54 . . . . .	25.04
Upper . . . . .	938 . . . . .	11.18 . . . . .	11.92

The same criticisms offered for the calculations and conclusions for birth rates may also apply here. The figure of 11.92 as an estimate of the death rate per thousand among the upper classes is especially open to question; but since the birth rate figure per thousand population for the upper class seems plausible, the death rate figure is also presented for what it may be worth.

Deaths by Age Periods. An attempt was made, through an examination of the vital statistics of the municipality, to get an idea of the distribution of deaths by age groups. The following figures were compiled for the municipality:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE XVII

Age	1920	1925	1930	1934
Under 1	49	51	64	57
1- 4	39	39	53	60
5- 9	10	15	14	27
10-14	3	5	7	12
15-19	7	7	12	15
20-24	12	6	12	13
25-29	5	10	8	16
30-34	6	5	10	12
35-39	11	7	15	9
40-44	7	11	12	6
45-49	7	7	6	6
50-54	3	4	4	4
55-59	1	4	3	6
60-64	10	6	10	12
65-69	0	3	4	3
70-74	4	4	5	12
75---	21	21	22	18
Total deaths	195	205	261	288

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Registro Civil de Defunciones, for years 1920, 1925, 1930, and 1934.

In order to make an accurate estimate of the death rate by age groups, figures would have to be presented for at least ten consecutive years. The 1930 Census reported 505 individuals under one year of age in the municipality. In that same year sixty-four infant deaths are indicated. For that year the infant mortality rate would be 126.7 per thousand. The Governor's Annual Reports for the fiscal years of 1924-1925 and 1928-1929, giving the death rates for the municipality for the years of 1924 and 1928, indicated infant death rates of 125 and 123 respectively, per thousand.<sup>1</sup> The United States Census of 1920 for Puerto Rico does not report the population by age groups for the municipality. What figures are available would indicate an average infant mortality rate of between 120 and 125 per thousand. In view of the incompleteness of death figures in general, this appears to be a conservative estimate. The infant mortality rate estimate for Puerto Rico for 1925 was 148 per thousand.

Death figures were also gathered for the town of Comerío. The number of infant deaths for 1920, 1925, 1930, and 1934 were 13, 10, 14, and 11 respectively.<sup>2</sup> The 1930 Census reported seventy infants under one year of age, which would mean an infant mortality of 200 per

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<sup>1</sup> Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Governor of Puerto Rico, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Registro Civil de Defunciones for Comerío for years indicated.

thousand. This is excessively high; and it is probable that if more accurate calculations were possible, this rate would be reduced materially, perhaps to between 140 and 150 per thousand. The figures probably would not go below this even though both birth and death rates are considerably lower among the upper classes. The death rates in Cuba Libre and Cielito and a few other small areas in town are known to be excessively high. This condition would probably more than compensate for lower infant mortality rates among the upper classes and produce a higher infant mortality rate in town than in the rural areas of the municipality. This conclusion is also supported by some rather concrete evidence:

TABLE XVIII

	Town	Rural
Percentage of population under five in 1930 . . . .	12.9 . . . .	17.3
Ratio of deaths under five to total number of deaths for 1920, 1925, 1930, and 1934 . . . .	42.0% . . . .	49.1%

On the basis of this table, the ratios for the "town" and "rural" are, respectively  $\left(\frac{12.9}{42.0}, \text{ and } \frac{17.3}{49.1}\right)$ . If the "ratio of deaths under five to the total number of deaths" for the "town" and "rural" were equal, the equation would read,  $\left(\frac{12.9}{42.0} \text{ equals } \frac{17.3}{56.3}\right)$ . In other words, the

"ratio of deaths under five to the total number of deaths" for the "rural" (which is, according to the table, 49.1 per cent) would have to be raised to 56.3 per cent in order to balance the equation. This indicates a 7.2 per cent lower incidence of death for persons under five for the "rural" than for the "town". A fair deduction from this would be that the infant mortality rates for the "rural" were also lower for these years.

The Registro Civil de Defunciones for the municipality was also examined for the years 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1929 for deaths by age groups. The total of 1,446 deaths for these years was arranged into age groups and the percentage distribution of deaths calculated, with the following results:

Total deaths . . . . .	1,446
Per cent of deaths	
under one . . . . .	24.2
Per cent of deaths	
under five . . . . .	47.0
Average age of	
death in years. . . . .	21.7

The per cent of total deaths under five (47.0) for the municipality corresponds closely to the per cent of total deaths under five (49.1) as previously indicated for rural Comercio. The figures for the rural area should correspond more closely to those for the municipality because 83.8 per cent of the population in 1920 was rural,

while in 1930 the rural population comprised 85.1 per cent of the whole population.

The low average age of death is caused mainly by the high infant and child mortality rates. This would indicate a very low life expectation at birth for Comerioños. "The expectation of life at birth [for the United States] is now approximately fifty-seven years for males and sixty years for females."<sup>1</sup>

In the middle and older age groups, the age of deaths reported for consecutive years had wide fluctuations. This is a sample:

Age	Number of deaths	Age	Number of deaths
30 . . . . .	35	70 . . . . .	37
31 . . . . .	3	71 . . . . .	0
32 . . . . .	4	72 . . . . .	3
33 . . . . .	6	73 . . . . .	1
34 . . . . .	1	74 . . . . .	0
35 . . . . .	36	75 . . . . .	23

"Such irregularity in the decrease with advancing years is counter to all probabilities in the case. The simplest hypothesis that rises to explain it is errors in the reporting of age. When such errors occur, they reveal themselves in the large number of persons whose age is reported as a multiple of five or especially of ten. Hence, as a result of this tendency, quinquennial groups con-

<sup>1</sup> Recent Social Trends in the United States Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends, 1933, p. 605.

taining a multiple of ten are enormously swollen and the intervening groups are correspondingly diminished."<sup>1</sup>

While this observation was intended to explain irregularity of age found in the census reports, it is also applicable to the reporting of age of death to the municipal authorities, especially for the middle and older age groups. Large numbers of the lower classes do not know their exact ages. The easiest thing to do is to give the age in a multiple of five or ten. Unless required to give a specific age, as in making a report to a census taker, it is common to say something like this: "I was born before (or after) San Felipe" (the name of a hurricane).

Causes of Death. The following were the causes of death in the municipality for the years 1930 and 1934:<sup>2</sup>

TABLE XIX

Causes of death	1930	1934
Tuberculosis (all forms) . . . . .	40	.44
Gastro-enteritis . . . . .	29	.42
Pneumonia . . . . .	21	.16
Congenital debility. . . . .	20	.17
Acute bronchitis . . . . .	18	.16
Arteriosclerosis . . . . .	14	.29
Nephritis . . . . .	13	.14
Malaria . . . . .	10	.15

<sup>1</sup>Census of Puerto Rico, Report to War Department 1899, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Compiled from the Registro Civil de Defunciones of Camerío for these years.

TABLE XIX (Continued)

Causes of death	1930	1934
Influenza . . . . .	6	9
Hook Worm . . . . .	3	16
Cancer . . . . .	3	12
Endocarditis . . . . .	3	2
Suicid <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	3	0
Whooping Cough . . . . .	0	14
Brain Hemorrhage . . . . .	0	3
Accidents . . . . .	0	3
All other <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	78	36
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>288</b>

This is a most significant table. An examination of these causes, especially the first five, which are among the most important ones, is of particular importance because it immediately focuses attention upon the conditions that are behind these causes. Tuberculosis was the cause of 15.3 per cent of all deaths. The first five causes of death listed represent 47.9 per cent of the total deaths. The years 1930 and 1934 were not exceptional.

As far as the present state of the development of medical science and dietary knowledge is concerned, all but a possible six of these diagnosed causes of death could either be entirely eliminated (hook worm and malaria); or

<sup>1</sup>These were the only suicides discovered among about 2,500 death causes examined.

<sup>2</sup>Includes all deaths where the total for the two years is less than three.

practically eliminated (congenital debility, gastro-enteritis, and acute bronchitis); or controlled (influenza, pneumonia, and tuberculosis).

The health department lacks adequate facilities to cope with these conditions. But more important than this is the fact that the level of resistance is so low among the majority of the lower classes that ailments that would normally be thrown off prove fatal.

This classification of causes of deaths is indicative of the kind of economic and general cultural conditions under which the majority of the lower classes live. It should bring out more vividly than any other evidence cited in this study how an unfavorable economic condition is a predisposing factor for high death rates. Assuming that the diagnosed causes of death are reasonably correct, it must be borne in mind that most of them involve a series of complications. Many of these complications would appear under a different classification as contributing causes of death. This is especially true of tuberculosis and enteritis.

Causes of Death by Age Groups. For the purpose of making clearer the meaning of the previous table, the Registro Civil de Defunciones was examined for the same years, 1930 and 1934, and causes of death by age groups were tabulated. The following are some samples:

TABLE XX

Age	Cause of death	Number of deaths	
		1930	1934
Under 1	Congenital debility . . . . .	20	17
	Gastro-enteritis . . . . .	16	19
	Acute bronchitis . . . . .	12	7
	Pneumonia . . . . .	6	1
	Influenza . . . . .	6	0
	Whooping cough . . . . .	0	6
	Malaria . . . . .	1	1
	Umbilical hemorrhage . . . . .	0	1
	Tuberculosis . . . . .	0	1
All others . . . . .	5	0	
35-39	Tuberculosis . . . . .	12	4
	Pneumonia . . . . .	2	2
	Colitis . . . . .	2	0
	All others . . . . .	2	0
65-69	Cancer . . . . .	1	3
	Arteriosclerosis . . . . .	2	0
	Septicemia . . . . .	1	0

Gastro-enteritis, congenital debility, and acute bronchitis appear as the most important causes for infant deaths; gastro-enteritis and acute bronchitis are in the first places as causes for death between the ages of one to four inclusive; hook worm, pneumonia, and chronic nephritis stand first between the ages of five to fourteen inclusive. From fifteen to fifty-nine inclusive tuberculosis holds first place as a cause for death. It appears as a cause of death in all age groups up to sixty-five. Of all diseases it is the most uniformly distributed. All of the causes of death here mentioned are directly or indirectly attributable to economic conditions. At least economic conditions in one way or other account for their prominence.

Beginning with the age of sixty-five, the causes of death are those generally incident to old age, such as cancer and arteriosclerosis.

If death rates are high, then sickness is also prevalent. Whether sickness ends in death or not, it is just as important as is death. Sickness, like death, is a symptom. Sickness, like death in this community, is strikingly symptomatic of basic economic, educational, and cultural conditions. While the diagnosed cause of death is often the culmination of an acute attack, many such illnesses have a chronic background of a similar type of disease or a background of chronic types of complications. A large per cent of the poor have chronic ailments of some sort which develop in an organism that lives in a continuous state of mal- and under-nutrition. Their social attitudes and values cannot but be influenced by these conditions. Resignation, fatalism, and spiritual values of the sort that are so prominent in the community are encouraged by this biological situation.

Birth Rates, Death Rates, Population Increase. The population of the municipality was 16,715 in 1930 and 14,708 in 1920. There was an increase of 2,007 or an average of two hundred per year over the ten-year period. The population of the town was 2,502 in 1930 and 2,382 in 1920, or an increase of 120 in the decade. This is an

average addition of twelve people yearly to the population during the decade.

During six years within this decade for which deaths were reported, there was a total of 2,082 more births than deaths in the municipality. During seven years in this same decade for which deaths were reported, there was a total of 277 more births than deaths in town.<sup>1</sup> Were the records of births and deaths in the municipality complete for this decade, the excess of the total number of births over the total number of deaths would be increased. Even the inadequate data at hand are enough to show that the municipality is losing its population by migration. The total gain of births over deaths for the six years is greater than the population increase for the decade. A deceleration of increase in population has been noticeable since 1910. It cannot be accounted for by a comparable decrease in birth rates or increase in death rates.

The evidence indicates that Comerío municipality has been losing from a hundred to a hundred and fifty people a year, by migration, since 1910. Where are Comerieños going? There are four large towns within a radius of thirty miles of Comerío whose population increase from 1920 to 1930 may help answer this question:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Table XIV.

<sup>2</sup>Fifteenth United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 132.

TABLE XXI

Town	Population 1920	Population 1930
San Juan . . . . .	71,443 . . . . .	114,715 . . . . .
Caguas . . . . .	12,149 . . . . .	19,791 . . . . .
Bayamon. . . . .	10,411 . . . . .	12,986 . . . . .
Río Piedras. . . . .	5,820 . . . . .	13,408 . . . . .

In all these towns, especially San Juan, Río Piedras, and Caguas, "mushroom communities" are known to have sprung up within recent years, and especially since the hurricane of 1928. Río Piedras has been particularly influenced by this influx of people, most of whom are undoubtedly from rural areas. This migration from rural to urban areas in recent years is a factor of considerable social and economic importance. It is too recent a movement, especially if its present momentum be considered, to permit of any satisfactory conclusions as to what will be the general effect on birth and death rates in the Island as a whole.

Who is leaving Comerío to live in these larger towns? If the age distributions in the urban centers are an index, it would appear that the majority of those leaving Comerío are between the ages of fifteen and forty-four inclusive. Within this group, those between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four inclusive are the most numerous. The largest age group in the urban centers is between the ages of fifteen and nineteen inclusive. The typical migrant to urban centers from Comerío would appear to be a young unmarried boy or girl between the ages of fifteen

and twenty-four.

#### Summary.

a. The population of Puerto Rico has been little influenced, during the past eighty years, by emigration or immigration.

b. There appears<sup>not</sup> to have been an accelerated increase in the population of Puerto Rico since American occupation.

c. Since 1910 the municipality of Comerío has had a deceleration of increase, which is probably the result of urban migration.

d. In 1930 there were 449.4 persons per square mile in Puerto Rico; in the same year there were 576.1 persons per square mile in the municipality of Comerío.

e. In 1930 those under five comprised 14.7 of the total population of Puerto Rico and 54.2 per cent were under twenty. The town of Comerío had 12.9 per cent of its population under five and in the rural areas there were 17.3 per cent under that age. In the town 54.4 per cent of the population was under twenty and in the country 60.1 per cent was under this age.

f. The town of Comerío has a higher proportion of women than of men; but in the Island and in the municipality of Comerío, the ratio of sexes is approximately equal.

g. Birth rates are between thirty-eight and forty per thousand population for the Island and two to three points higher for the municipality.

h. Birth rates appear to be much higher in the lower classes.

i. Death rates per thousand population average between twenty and twenty-two for the Island. Rates appear to be lower in the municipality.

j. The municipality of Comerío appears to have not only a higher birth rate but a lower death rate than does the Island as a whole.

k. Death rates are considerably higher among the lower classes than they are among the upper classes.

l. Infant death rates are between 125 and 150 per thousand infants.

m. For a total of 1,446 deaths in the municipality the average age of death was computed to be 21.7 years.

n. Tuberculosis is the most common cause of death in the municipality; congenital debility, gastro-enteritis, and acute bronchitis are the primary causes of death in the lower age groups.

o. Unfavorable economic conditions seem to be the most important contributory causes of high death rates.

### CHAPTER III

#### ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF COMERIENAN LIFE

##### Basic Economic Conditions of the Municipality

A study of the economic life of the town of Comerío requires a more careful analysis of the adjacent areas contributing to its existence than any other cultural phase with the exception of politics. This statement is not meant to imply that the town of Comerío may be called a self-contained unit in all forms of social life excepting the economic and political activities, but it does signify that these other activities may be understood without reference to the surrounding areas. Even the municipality, which is a political division instead of an economic unit, is hardly adequate for the study of the economic life of the community. From the economic point of view, the study of Comerío is, in some ways, a regional one--a region whose bounds are roughly determined by the areas where tobacco is the major crop and is the primary source of income. This region is described as the East Central Mountain and Valley region and comprises eight contiguous municipalities, fifty per cent or more of whose income is derived from tobacco. Comerío and Albonito (the municipality lying just to the south and west of Comerío)

derive ninety per cent of their total farm income from tobacco.

In so far, then, as tobacco culture is the primary occupation in this region, it may be called a natural area. This, however, does not mean, for example, that non-material cultural patterns are, to any great extent, clustered around those economic activities that are primarily concerned with planting, caring for, harvesting, and processing of tobacco. No "tobacco folkways"<sup>1</sup> were discovered. Tobacco culture as a primary economic activity has become important in this community as a result of favorable climate and soil, plus outside influences. It has been added, so to speak, to a community of people old in traditions and rich in Spanish folkways, folkways which are basically uniform throughout most of the district and will probably continue to remain so because of lack of marked geographic isolation and because of the cultural lag that tends to characterize all folkways.

While the tobacco planter tends to consider the occupation from which he makes his living as the most respected one in the community, he has never allowed this to set him apart from other persons in the community whose income is derived from other sources, providing they belong to his social class.

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<sup>1</sup>For influence of tobacco on leisure-time activities see Chapter VIII, topic, "Economic Conditions and their Influences on the Use of Leisure Time."

He considers his profession the most dignified one in the community but not so dignified as to elevate him above and to decrease his respect for others. Most of the owners of tobacco plantations belong to the Clase Primera;<sup>1</sup> all but four or five of these planters live in the town. Were these planters to live on their farms, "tobacco folkways" would probably develop more rapidly, but living in town throws them into social contact not only with all classes but with others of their own class whose income is derived from other sources. It would be possible through intra-class marriage and close social contact to build up for the tobacco planters a social class heritage. Yet their class position is not specifically the result of their being tobacco planters. Even though the town is small the tobacco planters, as a result of their cosmopolitan ways of living--their mobility--have urban and not rural or plantation social traits.

Being a tobacco planter gives social prestige not so much because of the respectability of the occupation as because of the fact that the income from tobacco has usually been greater and more regular than from any other source. This income, in turn, makes it possible for the planter living in town to enjoy a higher standard of living, as well as giving him other advantages which are, in themselves, important criteria for social recognition. Mr. A, a rich tobacco planter, regularly

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<sup>1</sup>Clase Primera, first class. This class has the privilege of enjoying the social activities at the casino. It possesses social, political, and economic ascendancy in the community.

entertains visiting politicians and other dignitaries when they pay visits to the town. These acts are socially important not only for him but for the community. He and his kind are the only ones capable of sponsoring carnivals, which reflect favorably on himself as well as on the community as a whole. Comercio has been, and still is to some extent, known to the Island through the promotion of these festivals--festivals sponsored in the main by the wealthy tobacco planters. This situation should indicate that the social recognition of the tobacco planter accrues to him more from the income he receives and uses than from any dignity that inheres in the occupation.

Tobacco is of primary importance economically but comparatively unimportant with reference to the types of non-material traits that prevail in the community. As was said before, tobacco is the most important source of income for the municipality which is only a part of the tobacco raising area. It was suggested that tobacco culture should be studied in the broader sense; but these common economic interests and their attendant activities are primarily manifested in local production activities and local preliminary processing. It follows that there is not a marked interdependence in which each local community in the tobacco region performs a particular function with reference to tobacco culture. Rather,

all of these communities within this tobacco region tend to depend upon outside communities for a complete realization of their economic ends. It is because of this situation that it will be practicable to approach the economic study of the community by using the municipality rather than the tobacco region as a unit. This approach is facilitated by the fact that statistical data are gathered on a municipality basis. Moreover, the approach will be broad enough for a study not only of tobacco culture, but also of other important features of the community's economic life.

The purpose of the description and interpretation that follows is not only to develop a causal foundation for other cultural material that is usually considered more sociological but also to bring out the more important social factors in the Comerienan's economic life.<sup>1</sup>

#### Economic Resources of the Community

Agriculture. A line bisecting the municipality may be drawn from the northwest to the southeast. This line

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<sup>1</sup>Regarding the agricultural possibilities of this region, the "Chardón Report" has the following to say: "In some districts in the Island, like in the Caguas, Comerío and La Plata Valleys, tobacco is the main cash crop of the farmers. We do not know of any other paying crop that could take the place of tobacco in those sections; ...." Report of the Puerto Rico Policy Commission, June 14, 1934, p. 50.

roughly divides the municipality into two agricultural divisions. The southwestern half, comprising the Barrios<sup>1</sup> of Vega Redonda, Pifias, Río Hondo, and Palomas, is devoted primarily to one major crop, tobacco. This rugged tobacco terrain is made accessible by an asphalt road that intersects it in a north-south direction along the course of the La Plata river; by a wagon road running along two small streams that empty into the river near the town; and by foot- and horse-paths that form a net work that branches out into the most isolated regions of the municipality. The town of Comercio is centrally located in this tobacco section and it is probably because of this that the economic life of the town is so closely identified with tobacco industry.

The northeast portion of the municipality is much more inaccessible than the other and is dedicated primarily to frutos menores<sup>2</sup> and cattle grazing. A considerable portion of this region used to be devoted to coffee culture, but hurricanes have reduced it to brush and grazing land. This is the most rugged portion of the municipality and could probably never be utilized for any major crop except coffee or perhaps plantains and bananas.

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<sup>1</sup>A barrio is a minor political subdivision, somewhat similar to an American township.

<sup>2</sup>Frutos menores, minor crops, such as bananas, rice, yautía, plantains, and all kinds of vegetables.

The following statistical data indicate the acreage allotted to the several types of crops during the years of 1910, 1920, and 1930 and the amounts produced:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE I

Crop	1910		1920		1930	
	Acrea	Amount	Acrea	Amount	Acrea	Amount
Beans . . .	56	301 bu.	600	3,771	347	2,563
Coffee . . .	1,170	286,200 lbs.	1,448	468,085	136	24,262 (a)
Corn . . .	895	5,461 bu.	1,276	9,325	1,153	13,832
Sugar Cane.	32	713 tons	8	- - -	- - -	- - -
Sweet Potatoes and yams .	- - -	- - -	815	42,189	1,011	58,794
Tobacco . .	1,776	528,600 lbs.	3,435	1,724,273	3,418	1,931,841
Rice . . .	712	4,942 bu.	395	2,336	269	2,471
Yautía . . .	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	124	- - -
Cotton . . .	50	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -
Pasture . .	9,081	- - -	10,533	- - -	- - -	- - -
Timber and Brush . . .	4,847	- - -	2,320	- - -	- - -	- - -
Minor Crops	- - -	- - -	1,760	- - -	1,279	- - -

(a) The hurricane of 1928 ruined the coffee crop and also the coffee trees.

TABLE II

The land and farm area for the years previous to those just reported, as reckoned in acres:

	1909	1919	1929
Land in farms . . . . .	18,031	19,761	16,927
Improved land in farms . . . . .	15,767	16,528	12,084
Woodland in farms . . . . .	1,423	1,721	1,798
Other improved land in farms . . . . .	823	1,502	3,081
Per cent of farm land improved.	87.5	83.7	71.0
(Average acres per farm . . . . .)	43.3	52.1	47.7

<sup>1</sup>Thirteenth Census of the United States, Agriculture, Vol. VII, 1910. Report as of preceding year, p. 1006.

Fourteenth Census of the United States, Vol. VI, Part 3, 1920, p. 394.

Fifteenth Census of the United States, Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 233.

TABLE III

Correlation of population to land and farm areas:

	1910	1920	1930
Population of municipality . . . . .	11,170	14,708	16,715
Acres of all land in farms per person. . .	1.61	1.35	1.01
Acres of improved land in farms per person	1.40	1.12	.72
Average number of persons per farm . . . .	26.9	38.6	47.2
Area of municipality . . . . .	28.9 square miles		

TABLE IV

Total farm income for 1930 and per cent from different sources for Comerío:<sup>1</sup>

Total income . . . . .	\$531,704.00
Income per person . . . . .	\$32.00
Per cent income from:	
Tobacco . . . . .	90
Coffee . . . . .	1
Vegetables . . . . .	1
Fruits and Nuts. . . . .	2
Milk . . . . .	5
Eggs . . . . .	1

With the exception of the report on coffee acreage and production for the year 1929, these statistics will show the variations in land utilization, crop acreage, and yield per acre. In general it may be said that there has been no increase in yield per acre. Rather, the trend is probably towards a diminishing return. The year 1919 was a good corn year. The yield of corn was about twelve bushels per

<sup>1</sup>Types of Farming in Puerto Rico, op. cit., p. 54

acre. It was also a good sweet potato year, the yield being about fifty-eight bushels per acre. The hurricane of 1928 and the depression years that followed have tended to reduce the acreage in improved lands.

A fifty per cent increase in population since 1910 has accompanied a decrease of fifty per cent in acreage of improved land per person.

Under the AAA tobacco contracts 2,754 acres of tobacco were planted in 1934 and the crop, harvested in the following year was a fair one, being about 1,652,442 pounds. The price, with the government subsidy, was about twenty-six cents a pound. This fair crop and fairly good price were mainly responsible for the revival of the casino,<sup>1</sup> the preparing of a new social register for those "of society", and the putting on of the 1935 summer carnival. The three censuses that were used indicate no increase in production of live stock, poultry, fruits, or nuts.

The land that has gone out of active agricultural production in the last few years, owing to the depression and hurricanes, has mostly become either brush land or, as in the case of the rich land holdings of the American Tobacco Company, unused grass land.

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<sup>1</sup>The casino is the building in which those "of society" put on their dances.

The food supply of the municipality through the media of cash and subsistence crops has tended to decline relatively per individual.

#### Distribution of Wealth<sup>1</sup>

The total assessed valuation of private property in the municipality for 1934 was 2,465,625 dollars; 1,151,270 dollars of this is corporate property, 850,000 of which belonged to the American Tobacco Company which, at present, owing to the depression, represents non-producing capital. These holdings are said to be for sale. Most of the remainder of the private corporate property is divided between the Puerto Rico Railway Light and Power Company which owns two hydro-electric power units, and the American Cigar Company which owns a large tobacco processing establishment.

The remainder of the private property in the municipality, assessed at 1,334,355 dollars, was individually owned.<sup>2</sup> Of this amount about 295,000 dollars represents individually owned property in the town of Comerío.

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<sup>1</sup>Part of the subject-matter related to the distribution of wealth will be discussed under the heads of "Gaining a Livelihood" and "Standards of Living".

<sup>2</sup>This information and that which follows was obtained from the assessor's records in the Division of Internal Revenue of Comerío.

Approximately one-third of the agricultural land in the municipality appeared on the assessor's records as being owned by twenty-five individuals<sup>1</sup>, averaging 225 acres per person. About fifty per cent of the agricultural land located in the four tobacco-producing barrios appeared on the records as being owned by these same twenty-five individuals. Nineteen of these individual owners live in town and the other six live on their farms.

Assuming that the rural population is fairly equally distributed throughout the municipality, approximately 4,000 people live on the land of these twenty-five individuals, or, put in another way, each of these twenty-five individual land owners has approximately 160 people living on his land. This estimate applies to the municipality as a whole, and if similar estimates be made for the tobacco-raising barrios, about half of the population, or 3,220 people live on the land of these twenty-five individuals.

Of the 365 farms in the municipality, 315 were operated either by owners (302) or managers (13), which means that most of the inhabitants of these farms get their income in the form of wages paid by absentee owners.

This fact has not only economic but also social significance. The numbers of wealthy persons are so

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<sup>1</sup>This includes that owned by the American Tobacco Company which is about 1,000 acres.

small in the rural areas that class distinctions need not be considered. No "plantation folkways" prevail on these farms. The ties between these rural farm-labor families and the owners are economic and not social; the contacts between them are merely business and managerial. The attachment to the soil is most often determined by subsistence needs. The fealty and loyalty usually associated with the supplying of material needs and long cooperation are absent. Socially speaking, the rural family derives its response from neighboring families that belong in the same class category, and not to any extent to the sentimental attachment to the soil on which it lives and the man for whom it works. While the landowner gets his income from his farm, his social interests are elsewhere; namely, in the town. His interests are divided: economically he belongs mostly to his farm, socially he belongs mostly to the town.

The statistical information regarding the distribution of wealth in the town of Comercio is more accurate:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Data taken in June 1935 from the assessors' records from the Internal Revenue Office. These statistics do not include town property owned by the three corporations previously mentioned. The items included for assessment are: houses, garages, lots, business establishments, and automobiles.

TABLE V

Number of property owners	Where living	Assessed value of property
21 (comprising 12 families)	town . . . . .	\$160,920
41 . . . . .	town . . . . .	80,470
34 . . . . .	absentee . . . . .	53,610
132 home owners or municipally owned land	. . . . .	no assessment <sup>1</sup>
Total assessed value of urban property.		\$295,000

Omitting the three large corporations, 54 per cent of the property listed for assessment is owned under the names of twenty-one persons who live in the town, twenty-seven per cent by other individual residents and the remainder by thirty-four absentees.

On the basis of a conservative estimate it would seem that not more than sixty-two out of a possible three hundred and seventy-five families own sufficient property to be classified as assessable. This does not mean that none of these latter families own property elsewhere; nor that they may not have valuable chattel property that is not assessable; nor an income that will give them a relatively high standard of living. Only one of the 172 families

<sup>1</sup>Property valued at less than 100 dollars is not assessed. These 132 "home owners" do not include all home owners who live on municipally owned land and who do not have real property of their own worth assessing. There are possibly half as many more.

Most of the land located in the poor sections of town is owned by the municipality. Private individuals are allowed to build their own huts on this land. So to speak, they have a life estate in the land.

interviewed in the Barriadas<sup>1</sup> of Cuba Libre and Cielito<sup>2</sup> owned sufficient property to be assessed, even though 132 of them claimed that they owned their own huts.

Even though this information is not and cannot be absolutely accurate, it does indicate, in a general way, the distribution of wealth in the municipality both for the rural and for the urban areas.

About seventy per cent of the poor living in town own their own huts, but most of those who live in the country occupy huts belonging to their landlords. Family immobility and propinquity, in addition to a sense of ownership, give a neighborly character to the poorer sections of the town that is not as noticeable among poor farm-labor families. The poor in the town live in a community composed of classes, and even though their subordinate social and economic position tends to isolate them, their propinquity with its varied social contacts, plus opportunities to participate in many of the leisure-time activities of the wealthier class, give them a broader outlook than the farm-labor families.

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<sup>1</sup>Barriadas, popular subdivisions of a barrio. They are of no political importance.

<sup>2</sup>Cuba Libre and Cielito, mean respectively "Free Cuba" and "Little Heaven", names given to poorest districts of Comercio.

Sufficient evidence has been presented to show to what extent wealth is concentrated. The last three census reports indicate no marked change in the distribution of wealth. What figures are available, namely, those dealing with the number of farms classified by size, seem to indicate some trend toward a greater diffusion of land ownership between the years of 1920 and 1930.

### Gaining a Livelihood

The preceding discussion has dealt primarily with some general aspects of economic life from the point of view of the community as a whole. The discussion which follows will deal primarily with more intimate features of the economic life of the town.

Occupation and numbers employed by sex. The number of persons ten years old and over engaged in gainful occupations by sex and industry for the municipality of Comerio is as follows:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VI

	Male	Female
Gainful workers in all industries . . . . .	3,975	1,169
Agriculture . . . . .	3,107	347
Farm laborers . . . . .	2,692	328
Farmers (owners and tenants) . . . . .	327	19
Farm managers and foremen . . . . .	84	--
Building industries . . . . .	75	1
Cigar and tobacco factories . . . . .	257	469
Clothing industry . . . . .	--	6
Food and allied industry . . . . .	29	--
Auto repair shops . . . . .	4	--

<sup>1</sup>Fifteenth United States Census, Outlying Territories, op. cit., p. 173.

The last five items on the list would apply primarily to residents in the town and would indicate a total of 841 town residents who are gainfully employed. Most farm laborers reside in the country, while farmers, farm managers, and foremen usually live in town.

A more elaborate census of types of livelihood and the numbers gaining their living from those types of livelihood in the town was made by local teachers in the summer of 1933.

TABLE VII

## Occupational Classes in the Town of Comerío

Occupation	Number	Occupation	Number
Tobacco Industries		Drugstore clerks . . . . .	5
Tobacco strippers . . . . .	276	Restaurant managers . . . . .	4
Other tobacco processors . . . . .	50	Butchers . . . . .	4
Farmers (mostly tobacco) . . . . .	42	Hotel managers . . . . .	2
Professional Classes . . . . .		Skilled laborers	
Teachers and school superintendents . . . . .	23	Barbers . . . . .	6
Police . . . . .	5	Painters . . . . .	6
Pharmacists . . . . .	4	Masons . . . . .	6
Midwives . . . . .	3	Clothes pressers . . . . .	6
Engineers . . . . .	2	Horse shoers . . . . .	3
Priests . . . . .	2	Electricians . . . . .	2
Preachers . . . . .	1	Plumbers . . . . .	2
Dentists . . . . .	1	Telephone repairers . . . . .	1
Lawyers . . . . .	1	Mechanics . . . . .	1
Physicians . . . . .	1	Knife sharpeners . . . . .	1
Agricultural agents . . . . .	1	Tailors . . . . .	1
Nurses . . . . .	1	Bedspring repairer . . . . .	1
Musicians (semi-professional)	10	Typists . . . . .	1
Wholesale and Retail		Processors	
Business men . . . . .	19	Dress makers . . . . .	19
Business house clerks . . . . .	21	Carpenters and furniture makers . . . . .	19
		Cobblers and shoe-makers . . . . .	17



It will be noticed that twelve individuals are listed who claim as their occupation some sort of witchcraft.

The foregoing table includes classes of occupations and disregards social classes; but the list that follows is confined primarily to the Clase Primera and the Clase de la Orilla.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VIII

Occupation	Number	Occupation	Number
Farmers . . . . .	26	Clerks . . . . .	7
Teachers and school directors. . . . .	13	Retail business managers . . . . .	4
Relief directors. . . . .	4	Pension and relief workers (a). . . . .	1
Teacher-farmers . . . . .	3	Telephone operators. . . . .	1
Farmer-local business	3	Mayors . . . . .	1
Priests . . . . .	2	Bus owners . . . . .	1
Truck owners. . . . .	2	Rentals (a). . . . .	1
Pharmacists . . . . .	2	Restaurant keepers . . . . .	1
Farm-picture show . . . . .	1	Judges . . . . .	1
Managers of local cooperatives . . . . .	1	Physicians . . . . .	1
Rentals and sewing (a)	1	Health inspectors. . . . .	1
Hotel keepers . . . . .	1	Police chiefs . . . . .	1
Revenue collectors. . . . .	1	Rents and loans (a). . . . .	1

(a) These individuals secure their income, all or a part of it, from other sources than "occupations".

Approximately one-half of the upper class gains

<sup>1</sup>Clase de la Orilla, class on the border line to the Clase Primera. This class, together with the Clase Primera, composes the upper class. The Clase de la Orilla does not participate in the more exclusive social affairs of the Clase Primera; otherwise its position in the community is similar to that of the Clase Primera. For a more complete discussion of class terms, see Chapter IX, section entitled, "Terminology".

its living from farming and teaching, as the table shows; and this table also shows what occupations may be classified as "respectable". None of these occupational classes needs to do much manual work, at least not of the type that day laborers and servants are required to do.

A clearer insight into the economic life of the people of the town, with special reference to occupations, can probably be gained from a report of the cases of individuals who give information concerning their occupations:

#### A Tobacco Planter.

Mr. A is a farmer. He is the richest man in town. His tobacco land and town property are estimated to be worth \$250,000. He has no debts and is one of the three or four in town who have paid their taxes during the depression. He quit school after going through the fourth grade and started very young into business for himself, renting one-half cuerdal<sup>1</sup> of tobacco land. Crops were good. He saved his money and bought a small local commercial business where he brought and sold various types of commodities. His business enlarged and he continued to save money. He began to buy tobacco land and after twenty years he turned his local business over to a manager and devoted most of his own time to tobacco raising.

At present he owns about three hundred acres of tobacco land in the municipality and other land in neighboring municipalities, as well as about \$14,000 worth of property in town.

"The thing I enjoy to see most is a field of growing tobacco. I have bought and sold liquor for fifteen years and have never tasted a drop. I am now thirty-eight and if I were to lose my money I would start all over again just as I did before. During

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<sup>1</sup>Cuerda, .9712 acres.

the tobacco season I pay my farm help from thirty-five to fifty cents a day. This is about six months in the year. I don't know how many families live on my fincas<sup>1</sup>--possibly sixty."

Another Tobacco Planter.

"I left school when I was thirteen. My father got me a job in the store of my aunt. Father died when I was fifteen. My aunt paid me eight dollars a month and I saved fifty dollars the first year. I worked for three years in the grocery department of this store and was then transferred to the dry goods department, where I worked for fourteen dollars a month.

"In a few years I acquired an interest in the business and was paid thirty dollars a month, plus five per cent from the income of the business. In turn, I became buyer, first clerk, and accountant, at which latter position I spent twelve years. Then I became a full partner, buying and selling tobacco, coffee, merchandise, and the like. I quit the business and went into the raising, buying, and selling of tobacco. I suppose I have about \$80,000 worth of property.

"The labor bill on an acre of tobacco is from \$75 to \$80. The cost of insurance and fermentation is about \$2 a hundred weight. Shrinkage in weight is from 12 to 15 per cent in the curing process.

"In some years the leaves are classified; in others they are all sold together.

"Most tobacco land is mortgaged. Owners do not work on their farms, but merely manage them.

"I pay my help from thirty-five to forty cents a day. I give them a house, let them raise pigs and chickens, and give each family a small garden patch." (Only a few planters do this).

These two cases indicate briefly the typical career of the tobacco planter and the conditions under which tobacco is grown. Both of these individuals got their start in local commercial activities and as they

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<sup>1</sup>Fincas, farms.

made money they became interested in the raising of tobacco. In neither case has there been a long line of inheritance that would aid in the evolution of a plantation system with its concomitant clusters of social traits built around it. Both of them live in town and the character of their business throws them into contact with individuals of varying occupational interests. While their first economic interest is tobacco, it is not their only one.

These cases indicate the importance of tobacco as an industry. But since the rise of these men to local prominence has been through other means as important as tobacco and since their economic interests tend to ramify throughout the business life of the community, they indicate the absence of a closely circumscribed form of livelihood that is passed on from generation to generation and, therefore, show why class cleavages are not based upon the raising of the most important crop of the community.

(The second case is a Clase Primera case, the first is not).

Shoe processor and cobbler. Mr. S runs a local shoe factory and repairing establishment. He is sixty-five years old and has lived here twenty-five years. He has been married three times. All three wives are now dead. From these three wives were born twenty children, five of whom are dead. He employs four men. One of his sons runs errands.

The establishment is rented from the mortgagor, who has foreclosed. The business used to employ eighteen men and operated an expensive shoe machine, but he says its present condition is due to (a) high-priced materials, (b) low-priced imported shoes, (c) hurricanes, and (d) the low price of tobacco.

The employees receive the returns from twenty-five per cent of their work. They have no regular salary.

"We make about sixteen pairs of men's and women's shoes, slippers and boots a day and repair about four pairs daily. The price ranges from \$2.25 to \$0.75 a pair. I make about twenty-five per cent profit on each pair of shoes, most of which are sold to country people. The town people buy imported ones.

"Sole leather costs me about twenty cents a pound. Most of it comes from the Island. Prices of materials are as follows:

Best grade upper leather . . . . .	18 cents a sq.ft.
Cheap grade upper leather. . . . .	8 " " " "
Upper glase leather . . . . .	12 " " " "

This is the largest of the three shoe establishments in town. Its owner would be classed as of medium economic condition; he belongs to the Clase Segunda<sup>1</sup>--his occupation would not be classed as dignified.

Baker. Mr. X is the proprietor of a bakery. He has three employees. One works by day, the other two by night. He prorates their pay on the basis of \$2.50 for every 200-pound sack of flour that is consumed by the bakery and for which he pays \$6.75 a sack. He rents the establishment and baking equipment for \$90.00 a month and gives two pounds of bread a day to the owner. He buys his fire wood for the oven, 1000 sticks for \$5.00 and uses about 300 sticks a day.

He uses about one and a half sacks of flour a day. He makes bread, cakes, cookies, cocoanut kisses, and other pastries and sells them to grocery stores, street vendors, and over the counter.

(This man says he makes a fair living for his family of seven. He belongs to the Clase Segunda.)

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<sup>1</sup>Clase Segunda, second class; the class with a subordinate social, political, and economic position. As used in this study it applies to those people below the Clase Primera and the Clase de la Orilla in social, political, and economic position. (See Chapter IX, section titled, "Terminology".)

Casket and Cabinet Maker. Mr. Y is by profession a casket maker. He has been in this business for nine years. In late years, because the municipality and relief agencies make and furnish caskets free to the poor, he has been forced with his one helper to go into the furniture-making business. His caskets cost him from \$2.00 to \$12.00 to make and he sells them for from \$2.50 to \$60.00. He has them on display in a front room and often puts them in a display window, where any passer-by may see them. When a casket is purchased, he furnishes free a rubber-tired, four-wheeled push cart to wheel the casket and its contents to the cemetery. He says, "I take no part in the directing of the funeral. Many of the poor make their own caskets and, if the dead person be a child, carry it on their heads to the cemetery."

Dressmaker. Mrs. Z is a dressmaker. She sews from two to three dresses a day. On a \$2.00 dress she makes about 25 cents; on a 50-cent dress, 10 cents. She buys her cloth from peddlers who visit town with the back seats of their cars full of bolts of cloth.

Butcher. Mr. R. is a butcher. He buys his meat from the owner of a matadero<sup>1</sup> where one beef, usually a calf, and a hog or two are butchered each day. The meat is cut into chunks for soup and steaks. There are no other classes of cuts sold. Soup meat and steaks are sold for fifteen cents a pound. He makes around three dollars on a beef animal. The owner of the matadero usually gets the tenderloin. The butcher employs three men and pays the three combined forty dollars a month.

Street Vendors. The following is a list of street vendors, with a brief description of two or three vendors. This list was prepared Monday morning, June 3, 1935. Fruit vendors are most active and numerous on Monday mornings. The list covers fairly accurately the types of merchandise sold on the streets.

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<sup>1</sup>Matadero, slaughter house.

1. One fruit vendor was on this day selling grapefruit. He had about 150 grapefruit which he had bought from a man who had trucked them in from Bayamón, the grapefruit district. He pays on the average sixty to seventy-five cents a hundred for grapefruit and oranges in season and sells them out for a cent apiece. When mangoes are in season, he buys them for fifteen cents a hundred and sells them at the rate of three or four for a penny. Most of this fruit is bought and consumed on the spot.

2. Chewing-tobacco vendor. Mr. C wraps strips of tobacco leaves into long slim rolls, soaks the rolls in molasses, wets the outside and winds them up into large plugs. The best grade he sells for a cent an inch, and the poorer grades that are stale, at four or five inches for a cent.

3. Vendor with cart of grapefruit and mangoes.

4. Vendor with box having a glass top and containing pasteles<sup>1</sup>, which he sold for five cents apiece.

5. Vendor with cart covered with glass lid and containing bread, rolls, pastry, and eggs.

6. Vendor with cart containing bread, rolls cookies, and home-made candy.

7. Long cart containing various cheap articles such as pots, pans, shoestrings, cheeses, cloth, lace, and escapularios.<sup>2</sup>

8. Similar to number 7.

9. Chewing-tobacco vendor.

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<sup>1</sup>Pasteles, a food made by mixing cornmeal, Spanish beans, ground green plantains, raisins, and small chunks of pork with seasoning, then rolled into banana leaves and boiled; something like hot tamales.

<sup>2</sup>Escapularios are made of small squares of cloth sewed into a small pad. A two-inch square hole is cut in one side and a picture of the Virgin and Child inserted along with a written prayer to the favorite virgin. The escapulario is worn around the neck.

10. Mango vendor.
11. Grapefruit vendor.
12. Corn fritter vendor.
13. A woman selling cathartics wrapped in paper containers.
14. Pastry vendor.
15. Grapefruit and mango vendor.
16. Banana and pepper vendor.
17. Chewing-tobacco vendor.
18. Home-made cocoanut candy and bread vendor.
19. Chewing-tobacco vendor.
20. Grapefruit and mango vendor.
21. Cocoanut candy vendor.
22. Chicharón<sup>1</sup> vendor.
23. Charcoal vendor.

Street vendors crying their wares as they stand by their carts or walk along the streets carrying baskets in their hands or on their heads, are an important feature of street life in Comerio. Prospective buyers and onlookers clustering around these street vendors, along the two or three blocks that constitute Main Street, form a lively scene in the morning hours.

These vendors made from twenty to fifty cents a day; none were found who said that they made more than fifty cents. Such items as are sold by "small wares",

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<sup>1</sup>Chicharón, cracklings made of pig skin.

charcoal, and pasteles vendors are usually sold for more than a penny, but rarely for more than five or ten cents for each item. Most of the fruit, pastry, and candy is bought by the penny and consumed by the purchaser on the street. Some, of course, is taken home.

Prolonged hickering by all classes over the price of an article is common. Many vendors, especially fruit and tobacco sellers, complain that friends and relatives take their wares without offering to pay. One vendor said that twenty per cent of his fruit went this way. This situation indicates that there are individuals who satiate their hunger, either partially or wholly, by "sponging". The extent of this practice cannot be determined, but it is common among the poor.

Beggars. Approximately twelve individuals living in town gain their subsistence in whole or in part from house-to-house or street begging. The majority of these individuals are old and physically ailing. Two or three make a practice of begging throughout the week, but the others are most active on Saturday, this being the day that the beggar customarily makes his rounds. On this day he makes from ten to thirty cents, and rarely does he receive more than a penny from each donor.

Mr. A begs twice a week, Saturdays and Wednesdays, and makes from ten to twelve cents daily. He does not have any other income. He says he is eighty-five years old. He complains of pains in the back and

head, constipation, and is suffering from malaria and usinariasis<sup>1</sup>. He looks and acts as if he were afflicted with tuberculosis. When he receives his penny, he says: "Gracias, Dios y la Virgen la ayuden."<sup>2</sup>

In the foregoing sketches an attempt was made to show how certain individuals make their livelihood, and also to give an idea of how much they earn, together with an insight into their standard of living.

With the exception of the tobacco farmer, all of the occupations described pertain to the lower classes. The day laborer, constituting the most numerous occupational class, will be discussed in a description of The Cooperative.

The various types of economic activities within the town indicate an extensive division of labor and a considerable degree of economic interdependence. In general there is a pyramiding of numbers of individuals, with the farmers, professional groups, and a few skilled laborers at the top, and a large mass of unskilled labor at the bottom, willing to do anything to make a living.

The tobacco farmer finds a market for most of his goods outside the town. The other groups described find a market for their goods and services within the town and

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<sup>1</sup>Usinariasis, hookworm.

<sup>2</sup>"Gracias, Dios y la Virgen la ayuden", "Thanks, and may God and the Virgin help you."

contiguous areas.

Of all the occupational types mentioned, the economic interests of the tobacco farmer are most widely diffused. His business usually demands attention to his farm as a production unit; then to the town where he is interested in several of the preliminary processing steps, and where he may also carry on other types of business activity; and lastly, to the marketing of his semi-finished produce which may take him out of town and bring him into contact with tobacco brokers. However, with the development of a cooperative within the town in the past three years, his economic interests more often end with his final disposal of his crop within the town instead of following the above-indicated yearly cycle. But approximately half of the tobacco planters combine to operate independently and they continue to make social and business contacts in and out of town as well.

Next to the tobacco planters, the retailers and two operators of wholesale establishments have the broadest economic interests. But since their transactions are comparatively simple and confined mostly to the tasks of buying and selling of consumption goods, their economic interests are less varied and diffused. Another difference lies in the fact that the local wholesaler and retailer wait for the customer, while the tobacco planter seeks out his customer.

A greater degree of business acumen is required of the tobacco planter than of any other occupational group.

and this occupation tends to induce a greater degree of property-consciousness. It appears safe to say that the non-material interests of the tobacco planter are guided more directly by the nature of his occupation. His economic interests tend to influence more immediately and obviously his social conduct. He more often seeks friendships in and out of town and is likely to be anxious to retain those friendships for business reasons.

While the tobacco planter is more likely to cultivate friends for business reasons, the lower-income classes have proportionately more friends of their own social type. Stated in another way, the friendships of the tobacco farmer are often made and preserved for a purpose; while the laboring classes form their friendships spontaneously. Although the business of the tobacco farmer tends to make him more worldly and sophisticated than any other group, he is essentially genial and hospitable withal.

#### Economic Condition and Standard of Living

General Estimate of Economic Condition. By a series of questions put to the seventh and eighth grade students, the principal of the grade school of Comerio attempted to work out a classification of the economic condition of the parents of these children. She classified their economic condition as good, medium, and poor. On the basis of this classification it was estimated that sixty-

three per cent of the children's parents were poor, twenty-one per cent, medium, and sixteen per cent good. Her sample did not seem large enough nor representative enough for satisfactory conclusions. Therefore, a house-to-house check was made in company with two individuals who had lived in Comerío all their lives. On the basis of this check it was estimated that sixty-eight per cent could be classified as poor. Because of the numerous gradations, it was impossible to make any clear distinction between the good and the medium; but between the poor on one side and those in good or medium economic condition there was a clear line of distinction. (This distinction will appear in the schedule that follows). On the basis of the foregoing observations it may be concluded that seventeen hundred out of the total population of twenty-five hundred may be classified as poor.

Home. Probably the most tangible way of showing the difference in standard of living in the lower and upper economic levels would be to describe more or less typical homes and artifacts that they contain. Since a complete description of this sort would require a large amount of space, only one room will be selected, namely the parlor. Other reasons for selecting the parlor are as follows: socially and economically the parlor is the most important room in the house. It is the room that a visitor always sees first. Rarely would a visitor

be shown other parts of the house, unless he specially requested it. The family always takes greater pride in its parlor than in any other room and most, though not all, of really attractive objects the family possesses are found there. Therefore, distinctions in wealth and luxury are more noticeable there than they would be, for example, in the kitchen, which is rarely considered by any Comorian family as an important room.

The home selected as being representative of a family in good economic condition is neither the best nor the most poorly furnished of the examples obtained.

The home of the family classified as in poor economic condition is rather above the average sample for that class.

	Good (economic)	Poor (economic)
A. General		
1. Family		
Parents . . . . .	2 . . . . .	2
Children . . . . .	3 . . . . .	6
Dependents . . . . .	none . . . . .	4
Servants . . . . .	2 . . . . .	none
2. House		
Size of house . . . . .	30' x 40' . . . . .	22' x 16'
Number of rooms . . . . .	8 . . . . .	3 and kitchen <sup>1</sup>
Type of roof . . . . .	zinc <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	zinc <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A small shack about six feet square behind the house used for a kitchen.

<sup>2</sup>That is, corrugated iron; popularly called 'zinc'.

(continued)

	Good (economic)	Poor (economic)
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## 2. House (cont'd)

Construction materials . . .	wood . . . . .	wood
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(Note: Concrete houses in town		97
Wooden houses in town		344
Wood and concrete		33)

## B. Parlor

1. Size . . . . .	15' x 15' . . . . .	10' x 9'
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2. Material from which floor is made . . . . .	wood . . . . .	wood
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3. Type of covering for floor . . .	Linoleum for every- day use. Rugs on Sundays and feast days . . . . .	none
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4. Type of wall covering . . . . .	paint . . . . .	none
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5. Type of door . . . . .	Wood with shutters and curtain on inside	Plain door made out of 1' x 12' lumber
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6. Windows . . . . .	none . . . . .	none
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7. Artificial light . . . . .	Electric (beautiful ceiling lamp, wall switches)	Coal oil lamp and candles (placed on boxes)
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8. Built-in features . . . . .	Three built-in dish cabinets and two for books	'Box nailed on wall for clothes
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9. Furniture . . . . .		
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Table . . . . .	One (for flower vase and pictures) . . .	none
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## Chairs

Rocking . . . . .	4 . . . . .	none
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Straight . . . . .	2 . . . . .	none
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## Stools

Fiano bench . . . . .	1 . . . . .	none
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Others . . . . .	- . . . . .	One stool made of a box (to sit on)
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Sofa . . . . .	1 . . . . .	One small trunk (used to sit on)
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1. Were there windows, they would be protected with shutters.  
There would be no glass or screens on them.

(continued)

	Good (economic)	Poor (economic)
10. Covers . . . . .	Crocheted doilies for center table; linen doilies, embroidered and having drawn work patterns; used for festive days; crocheted piece for piano	None
11. Pillows . . . . .	Two silk ones on sofa with hand work	None
12. Clock . . . . .	Small, mantle	None
13. Pottery and vases . . . . .	Two silver vases on piano; crystal vase on table	None
14. Photographs and pictures	One photograph of daughter, wearing dress in which she was crowned May Queen. Ten pictures of members of family--three are tinted. Four oil paintings and four cheap chromos	Picture of Virgin Mary and Child, hanging above door.
15. Books		
Poetry . . . . .	5	None
Fiction . . . . .	100	None
Biography . . . . .	2	None
History . . . . .	10 (school)	None
Religion . . . . .	7	None
Science . . . . .	12 (school)	None
Art . . . . .	1	None
	(Note: next to that of the Catholic priest this is probably the largest library in town)	
16. Newspapers . . . . .	<u>La Correspondencia</u> and one Catholic weekly	None
17. Periodicals . . . . .	<u>Agricultor Puertorriqueño</u> <u>Revista de Puerto Rico</u>	None
18. Telephone . . . . .	None	None
19. Radio . . . . .	One	None

(continued)

	Good (economic)	Poor (economic)
20. Musical instruments . . .	Piano . . . .	None
21. Other items . . . . .	None . . . . .	A hammock made of flour sacks hangs from the ceiling

Distinctions between the poor and the wealthier are also apparent in the varieties and quantities of food consumed.

	Wealthy	Poor
Number of dishes most commonly prepared in Comerío . . . . .	65 . . . .	28 . . . .
Dishes in which proteins appear (including fish and meat) . . . . .	58 . . . .	14 . . . .
Dishes in which meat or fish appear in some form . . . . .	43 . . . .	11 . . . .

This table is based on proteins, because foods that have a fairly high protein content are usually the most expensive ones; such as, meat, eggs, and the various legumes. The dietary distinction lies not only in the greater amount of protein that the several dishes contain, but also in the frequency with which protein-containing foods are served. In general a soup prepared by a poor family will contain no more than a penny's worth of meat. Meat sells for fifteen cents a pound. In other protein-containing dishes this dietary element is reduced to a minimum.

Other distinctions in menu are found in the use of leafy vegetables. Most leafy vegetables, such as cabbage, lettuce, water cress, and the like, are brought in from other parts of the Island and are, therefore, rarely found on the tables of the poor. Fruits, such as bananas, oranges, grapefruit, and mangoes are comparatively cheap and large quantities are consumed by all. Starchy foods--sweet potatoes, rice, yautia<sup>1</sup>, and bread--form the main part of the poor man's diet.

Emphasis has been placed on the protein aspect of the diet, not only because it demonstrates the difference in standard of living between the poor and the wealthy, but also because it has a direct bearing on health differentials between classes. The local physician reports that the diet of the poor is very deficient in proteins.

Of course, only a small number of these dishes appear on the table at any given meal. Therefore, a description of a more or less typical meal in a poor and wealthy man's home, respectively, will bring out more clearly the difference in diet and the quantity of food consumed.

The following schedule compares the meals as

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<sup>1</sup>Yautia , starchy tuber.



The foregoing schedule of meals represents a reasonably accurate account of types, quantity, and prices of food. Among the wealthier there may be considerable variation in price but for the poor family of six the price and cost of the day's food is reasonably accurate. Neither schedule includes food, such as fruits and pastries, quantities of which are usually consumed at home by the wealthy and on the streets by the poor who are always hanging around vendors, buying or "picking up" a grapefruit or mango. Poor men who happen to be loafing around town frequently buy a penny's worth of pastry or perhaps a cracker or a piece of bread from a vendor, eat it, and return to their leisure-time activity without going home to a meal.

Among none of the economic classes is the preparation of food and the eating of it a primary social trait. Recipes are not passed about. Food and its preparation is rarely an important topic of conversation among the women of any class. The wealthier women hire cooks to do most of the kitchen work. Among the poor the menu is so simple and standardized that the woman concerns herself very little with it.

The following case shows the typical reaction of a poor woman who has been accustomed to a frugal and unvaried diet:

"The Federal government gives us nasty food that causes indigestion. When meat is canned for a long time, it gets nasty. (This refers to the government beef canned in 1934.) The corned beef smells rotten. Canned milk is colored. It turns my stomach and gives me diarrhea. I take it to the store and trade it for rice."

All classes buy their food in small lots, usually in the morning, and most of the food bought is consumed during that day. "Left-overs", if there are any, are thrown into the garbage can.

Mrs. A was very anxious to go to the States. She saved her money and went to visit her sister who lived in New York. She said she got sick and had to come back, because they had fed her warmed-over beans two days old. "Imagine those Americans frying potatoes that had been boiled the day before." Her garbage can contained a lot of food that had been thrown away from dinners.

Pantries are never found with large stores of food, even canned goods that might be kept and that are used frequently. Those few (between twenty and twenty-five) who have refrigerators use them primarily to cool water or bottled beverages, sometimes for fruit, and infrequently for a few eggs or similar food. With the exception of spices and seasoning, such as salt, onions, garlic, red pepper, and achiote, the larder is practically free of edibles. Food purchase and consumption among all classes is a day-by-day affair.

Penny Buying. The observations and statistical evidence previously cited indicate that items, especially food, are bought in small quantities. But more specific

data will now be presented.

The following is a list of articles bought by individuals with the prices paid at a grocery and general store between the hours of 4:00 and 5:00 p.m., June 1, 1935. The numbers preceding the items represent individual purchasers:

1.	4 lbs. lard . . . . .	.20	9.	1 lb. rice . . . . .	.04
2.	lard . . . . .	.02		cooking ham . . . . .	.03
3.	1 lb. potatoes . . . . .	.02		pork fat . . . . .	.02
4.	1 nail (spike) . . . . .	.01	10.	6 lbs. rock salt. . . . .	.06
5.	1/2 lb. lard . . . . .	.08	11.	1 lb. shelled corn. . . . .	.02
	1 lb. macaroni . . . . .	.05	12.	coal oil. . . . .	.02
6.	1 lb. rice . . . . .	.04	13.	cheese . . . . .	.02
7.	1 small can sardines. . . . .	.08	14.	cheese . . . . .	.05
	lard . . . . .	.02	15.	crackers. . . . .	.01
	2 garlic eyes . . . . .	.01	16.	coffee. . . . .	.03
8.	2 lbs. rice . . . . .	.07	17.	candy ksses. . . . .	.01
	1 stick fire-wood . . . . .	.01		1 cigarette . . . . .	.01
	pork fat . . . . .	.02	18.	candy . . . . .	.01
	2 small onions. . . . .	.02	19.	cookies . . . . .	.02
			20.	candy . . . . .	.01

With the exception of fire-wood, shelled corn, coffee, and cookies, all of these items were imported. Lard, macaroni, rice, cigarettes, crackers and cheese, and candy are produced in Puerto Rico, but none of them in adequate amounts to supply the demand.

Individual purchases at a drug store on the morning of June 5, 1935:<sup>1</sup>

1.	citrate of magnesium . . . . .	.10	7.	aspirin (one) . . . . .	.03
2.	mercurochrome. . . . .	.05	8.	writing paper . . . . .	.02
3.	epsom salts . . . . .	.05	9.	zinc oxide . . . . .	.05
4.	leaves of sen. . . . .	.05	10.	belladonna. . . . .	.05
5.	citrate of magnesium . . . . .	.10	11.	mercurial pomade . . . . .	.05
6.	bottle of milk of magnesium . . . . .	.15	12.	borated vaseline . . . . .	.05
			13.	powder puff . . . . .	.05

<sup>1</sup>Each number represents a separate purchase by a different individual.

14. crepe paper . . . . .	.10	25. citrate of magnesium . . . . .	.25
15. soap . . . . .	.05	26. leaves of eucalyptus . . . . .	.05
16. comb . . . . .	.05	27. seili (cathartic) . . . . .	.05
17. alcoholado (bottle) . . . . .	.15	28. magnesium . . . . .	.05
18. pencil . . . . .	.02	29. almond oil . . . . .	.05
19. 5 cod liver oil pills . . . . .	.05	30. iodine . . . . .	.05
20. box face powder . . . . .	.25	31. mana (cathartic) . . . . .	.05
21. box face powder . . . . .	.10	32. manito " . . . . .	.05
22. cotton . . . . .	.05	33. cod liver oil . . . . .	.05
23. Luden's pills . . . . .	.05	34. castor oil . . . . .	.05
24. grape salts . . . . .	.15	35. cold cream . . . . .	.50
		36. mercurochrome . . . . .	.05

All of these items were imported except the milk of magnesium and the alcoholado.

"Conspicuous Consumption". Income is not the only criterion of the standard of living. The standard of living is also determined by the manner in which income is used, namely how the budget is balanced--methodically or otherwise--and the proportion of the income used for necessities and luxuries. The way in which the income is used is not dependent alone upon the amount of the income or upon the thrift of the individual, but also on the social forces that influence it. Social recognition does not come to him who budgets his income so as to provide barely the life necessities. Rather social recognition comes to him who spends his money more conspicuously. One of the richest men in town lives frugally, but this handicaps him socially.

Miss A is the servant of Mrs. X. She gets four dollars a month, also board and room, and is given some of Mrs. X's cast-off clothing. Her parents barely eke out an existence, yet her wardrobe contains the

following:

dresses . . . . .	25	nightgowns . . . . .	2
pañties . . . . .	3	stockings . . . . .	3 pairs
slips . . . . .	6	shoes . . . . .	3 pairs

(Note: Most of her money is spent on clothes).

Her consumption standards are not governed by the pressure of necessity but rather by the fact that she knows her own class expects that each appearance in public requires a change in dress. She is not blind to the fact that these changes in attire give her recognition by the male sex. She is expected to have a sweetheart and ultimately to marry, and thus she rightly assumes that her chances are increased if she publicly displays her rather elaborate wardrobe.

Mr. B received two hundred dollars compensation for an accident to his hand. He took his friends to San Juan and came back "broke" the next day.

Mr. C lavished his money on parties for his friends. He was called a "good sport" and received homage from the "high and low" in the community. No one admonished him to be more careful with his money. He was the most generous man in town and, as aforesaid, generosity is a socially-prized virtue. Now he is "broke" and cannot entertain his friends; so he stays away from social functions.

Ten wealthier families spent on an average of \$68.75 for clothes that were primarily for use during the two weeks' carnival. One family of seven spent \$172.00, which was the highest expenditure; another family of two spent \$56.60, which was the lowest among the ten.

Dress, especially of women, seems to be the most

common form of conspicuous consumption. Next come festivals, gambling, drinking, and to some extent, house furnishings in the upper-class homes. The eighteen privately owned automobiles in town are used partly for "joy rides", but principally for business purposes. There is little evidence of ostentatious display in lavish dinners.

Since severe economic limitations are imposed on the ability to possess and use material goods for display and attainment of social position, social recognition tends to operate more on a non-material level; namely, through those socially meritorious virtues, such as honor, affability, congeniality, conformity to the mores, individuality, aptness in the give and take of debate and discussion, political leadership and professional services, particularly in medicine and teaching. These professions are socially recognized more for their humanitarianism than for their income. Conspicuousness of an individual, subject to the presence of economic handicaps, is more the product of an aggregation of socially recognized personality traits than it is of income per se, or the display of material belongings. A person with wealth is at a social advantage, but he has also to demonstrate that he can command community respect through expression of personality traits that

need not be identified with wealth. The four most highly respected men--the four whose influence is recognized by all--are not included among the ten wealthiest members of the community.

Social pressure for ostentation cuts across class lines. All classes feel its pressure, but in proportion to their income the poor probably give greater weight to this display than do their wealthier brothers.

#### Collective Means of Promoting Economic Welfare

Organized Form: The Cooperative. A few years ago the tobacco farmers were in such poor economic circumstances that they held a meeting and proposed to organize into a tobacco producers' association. The Insular Government, operating through the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and with the assistance of the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank, cooperated in the movement.

The Cooperative began with a capital of \$10,000. Since the establishment of the Cooperative, the business has increased until around 25,000 quintals of tobacco are now handled in the building and valued at \$214,891.51 in 1935. The cost of tobacco fermentation is about \$2.70 per quintal.

Tobacco goes through three processes in the

local tobacco establishments: First, the farmers bring their tobacco to the warehouse, where it is weighed. It is then stripped, classified into three grades, and tied into little bunches. Next it is stacked in ricks in the barn and allowed to ferment from February to June. Finally, it is packed and sold to the General Cigar Company.

In the summer of 1935 there were a hundred women and twenty men working there. In good seasons from 120 to 150 women are employed. These women get fifty cents a day and work from seven in the morning to four in the afternoon. Men get from sixty to seventy-five cents a day and work from seven to five. All applicants for jobs are required to have health certificates. The General Cigar Company employs about a hundred laborers for weighing and packing the tobacco.

The foregoing facts represent the extent of co-operative efforts of the tobacco growers to promote better prices through collective dealings with the large tobacco companies. Some claim that they have benefited, but the fact remains that the largest tobacco raisers prefer to operate alone.

In addition to the Cooperative just described, there is also a Consumers' Cooperative which handles seed, fertilizer, and local produce.

Organized Labor. "There was a strike a few years ago among the tobacco strippers, most of whom are women. They were to get twenty-five cents for every six pounds of tobacco that they stripped. They went on a strike when they discovered that they had been getting 'short weight.' Instead of six pounds as they had agreed to, the scales were set for seven or eight pounds. The leaders of the Socialist party aided them and they succeeded in forcing the tobacco company to adjust their scales properly."<sup>1</sup>

This is the only case of a strike recorded in recent years. Most of the women workers are Socialists and appear to be more militant and active than the men. With the organization of the Cooperative, they say they have been treated better. Ventilation is better, and toilets, water for washing, and similar facilities are provided.

About three times as many persons apply for work as there are positions to fill. A local leader of the Socialist party reported this as the most important reason why there are no labor unions. He also said that there was a general apathy among the working classes towards affiliating with a labor party. The Socialist leaders themselves showed marked reticence in discussing

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by manager of The Cooperative.

labor problems, even hesitating to say that they themselves were members of the Socialist party. One said hesitatingly, "Yes, I am a Socialist, but don't publish the fact to the world. You know this town is traditionally Liberal and I work for one (a Liberal)."

The Socialist party offers little direct or indirect help to the laborer, judging from reports.

Public Relief. There is no satisfactory way of ascertaining how much permanent, seasonal, and intermittent unemployment there is either in the town of Comerio or in the municipality as a whole. On the basis of the economic conditions that prevail among the poorer classes, a conservative estimate would be that three-fifths of the employables are either continuously or intermittently out of work. The local relief worker estimates that seventy-five per cent in the town are unemployed. The majority of those seasonally employed would be out of employment from one-half to three-fourths of the time. In the rural areas a conservative estimate would be that four-fifths of the employable population is out of work at least half of the time. Of course, it must be remembered that these are merely rough estimates.

The Public Relief Administration gave the following information for the municipality as of June, 1935:

170 families, cash relief--\$1.50 per family per week  
 1,356 families, food and clothes relief .

500 families, work relief

2,026 families on relief, or about seventy per cent of  
 the total population getting some form of relief bene-  
 fit.

The following cases illustrate the type of family  
 that is in need of relief:

"We were married in 1900. Seven children were born to us, one boy, and six girls. The oldest daughter went through four grades; then she began to work as a dressmaker. She was married in 1926, and two years later, died of tuberculosis. Our only son died in 1928 of acute intestinal infection. The third daughter died giving birth to a child. Two other children contracted tuberculosis and were sent to the sanitarium in 1932. A Mrs. M is helping the youngest girl through the University." The social worker says that this family needs at least five dollars' worth of food a week.

"My husband has no work now. He works about two months a year in the tobacco fields. When he works he gets about fifty cents a day. I make about fifty cents a week as a laundress. We have two children and a grandchild to take care of."

"I work in the local Cooperative two or three months a year for fifty cents a day. I am a tobacco grader. I take care of my wife and child, and also my parents."

Unorganized Aid; Neighborhood. Organized means of promoting economic relief of the poor is of secondary importance in comparison to the material benefits and comforts that are the result of neighborhood cooperation. Family activities and functions are diffused in no small

way into the neighborhood. This observation is no less applicable to subsistence interests. Even in a neighborhood where the population pressure upon food supply is so great as to produce a narrow survival margin, there is usually found one or two families who for various reasons are more fortunate. Other families of the neighborhood are the beneficiaries of their good fortune. These family fortunes may tend to shift from one family to another, but the fact that one or two families are more fortunate tends to raise the level of the group. In fact this shift in fortune is important in order that the cooperative acts may possess a mutual character. Mutual aid probably would not continue as a primary neighborhood trait among the poor were it true that one or two families continued to remain in a more advantageous situation economically. Those other families who are beneficiaries of the more fortunate could not continue to render services sufficient to compensate adequately for the material aid that accrues to them. A continuance of the more fortunate condition of these few families in the neighborhood would tend to create a social distinction. Mutual aid is an intra-class, not an inter-class phenomenon. The economic importance of mutual aid among the poor cannot be over emphasized.

An equitable climate that makes unnecessary

elaborate expenditure of income for food, clothing, heat, and housing; the prevalence of leisure time and the extent of loafing that minimize the need for the consumption of quantities of energy-producing foods make possible subsistence on a low-income level. But while these conditions are of fundamental importance with regard to maintenance, they cannot in themselves explain how, for example, it is possible for a family of six to live upon twenty-three cents' worth of food a day, or often much less; or how it is possible for a family to live on fifty cents a day which is earned for only three or four months a year, even where a little money may be earned occasionally at odd jobs.

A careful inquiry into this condition leads to the conclusion that the survival of large numbers of families is dependent upon aid received from neighbors. The extent of mutual aid is shown by the following data. An effort was made to select these data as typical for the poor as possible. Out of the twenty-six cases studied, twenty stated that they were either helping or being helped by their neighbors.

"We are just like one big family here; when we have something our friends do not have, we share it with them and our friends do the same with us."

"We have many friends. We help our neighbors and, in turn, they help us."

"I do little odd jobs for my neighbors and they give me food."

"When we get an egg, we divide it among our neighbors. An egg is a luxury."

"Three families live in this house. We practically live and share together."

"We protect each other when there is no work."

"My friends gave me money to bury my wife."

"I have one good friend who comes and helps me when I am sick."

"Among the remaining six, four reported, "Our friends are as bad off as we are; so we can neither help them nor they help us."

Two said that they neither gave nor received aid.

Familial Aid. Another form of aid, that is probably as significant as mutual aid, prevails among the neighborhood groups of the poor. This is familial in character. Data indicate the frequency with which persons other than parents and their offspring are included as members of the family.

Among more than a hundred families of all classes interviewed and from whom a part of the information gathered dealt with dependents, approximately seventy-five per cent reported such information as the following:

"Grandmother and two nieces live with us."

"We are taking care of two grandchildren."

"We live with my wife's family."

"My brother-in-law lives with us."

"An aunt lives with us."

"I take care of my three grandchildren and live with my daughter who works in a restaurant."

"I help my mother and my brother's widow who lives with us."

"When I get hard up, I send my family to my wife's folks who live in the country."

Outside aid to relatives who do not reside in the home is not uncommon among the wealthier.

Only two families out of a possible hundred were discovered who seemed to show marked concern for the future care of their children in case of death of the parents. One father said that he did not know what he would do with his four children, as his wife was dying of tuberculosis. A poor mother stated that her husband had just died and she did not know what in the world would become of her three babies. But the majority of parents viewed this problem with complacency. They would say, "If we die, some relative will take care of our children; if the children of a relative become orphans, some of us will care for them just as if they were our own."

Conclusions. Organized means of promoting economic welfare are most effective among the wealthier, as shown by the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative, which has the active support of the Insular Government and the Federal Land Bank.

Public relief is administered to the poor through local relief agencies and in case of Federal relief through

the activities of the Public Relief Administration.

Laboring classes are not unionized and their chief weapon, the strike, is practically unknown. The Socialist party is under the influence of leaders who seem disinclined, because of their business connections with men of wealth belonging to the Liberal party, to build up an esprit de corps among the laboring classes. Other influences, such as individualism and the lack of financial resources, also seem a handicap to them.

Mutual aid within the family and neighborhood groups seems to be prevalent and a most significant feature of the economic life of the poor. In many instances, this informal cooperation among the poor seems to be the factor that makes possible the maintenance of a subsistence balance.

#### Evaluation of Economic Factors

Agricultural Practices and Soil Erosion. No evaluation of economic cause as an active determiner of the nature of Comerian cultural patterns and the social and economic problems that prevail would be complete without an important place being given to land use and especially the manner in which man has disturbed nature's balance in this community.

Even to an untrained eye excessive soil erosion is apparent, and several experiences in the community so

impressed the observer that a letter was written to Dr. Howard A. Meyerhoff of the Department of Geology in Smith College, who has done a great deal of geologic research in Puerto Rico. The letter received from him is significant and merits an extended quotation:<sup>1</sup>

"One of the more valuable documents which I have in my possession, and which may provide one kind of answer to one of the questions you raised, is the rate of sedimentation in the reservoir up-stream from the Comerío dam. I will endeavor to locate the figures. [The following data were transmitted to him by the Porto Rico Railway Light and Power Company: total impounding capacity of dam in 1914--214,238,700 cubic feet; in 1930--104,584,255 cubic feet; meaning that the impounding capacity of the dam has been about halved.] I believe that the figures for the silting up of the reservoir are reliable, although I suspect that [the] guess on the amount of overflow [of silt] in flood water is exaggerated. . . ."

"The figures indicate a tremendous amount of erosion in much of the country up-stream from the reservoir; and practically every physical factor is favorable to the rapid sheet wash of the soil. In the first place, the relief is very high--ranging between 800 and 1200 feet in the immediate vicinity of the Rio Grande de la Plata; and the texture of the drainage is fine; by that I mean that the streams are closely spaced and the amount of fluvial dissection approaches a maximum. With fine dissection, steep slopes, and high relief, all seventy-eight inches of mean annual rainfall count."<sup>2</sup>

"Sheet wash has been furthered not only by the character of the rocks, but also by the effective

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by permission from Dr. Howard Meyerhoff.

<sup>2</sup> Most of this rain falls in the form of heavy convectional showers. The run-off is very rapid. Gullies are quickly formed in newly worked soil.

cutting of the tree vegetation.<sup>1</sup> . . . If protected by permanent arboreal vegetation, the rate of soil removal would normally not exceed the rate of decomposition, but as mentioned above, the wanton destruction of the vegetation has left these fine soils unprotected and a prey to local conditions of run-off and topography.

"I should say, after a rather general study of the soil erosion problem, in this section of the Island, that the cultivatable soils of the Comerío district will have a short life. . . . Farming on the slopes is especially destructive to the soils, for it loosens the otherwise cohesive clay, and in its loosened condition it is readily removed. I doubt that another generation of peons will be able to raise a living from the steep slopes of this district. . . ."

In the "Report of the Puerto Rico Policy Commission", June 14, 1934, known popularly as the Chardón Report, the authors on page fifty-one summarize the causes of the distress among tobacco farmers:

- "1. The collapse of the price of leaf tobacco in the New York market during the year 1932.
2. The lack of credit facilities for crop financing and the lack of proper marketing agreement with dealers.
3. Mortgage encumbrance on the tobacco farms.
4. Low production per acre due to soil depletion and mosaic disease.
5. The great destruction of farm buildings--mostly drying sheds--brought about by the hurricanes of 1928 and 1932.
6. Lack of appropriate technical research for improved varieties and cultural procedure."<sup>2</sup>

The Meyerhoff letter and the Chardón Report give

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<sup>1</sup> That which follows is a description of geologic formations.

<sup>2</sup> The last three items are of particular importance here; however, the first three are significant in themselves as well as making possible an appreciation of the importance of the last three.

sufficient data to show the character of the fundamental economic and agricultural problems with which the Comerioño is faced. Deeply rooted in these problems are the workings of nature often abetted by the hand of man. The broader social significance of these problems cannot be fully appreciated unless they be given a social setting: an increasing population, a declining ratio of land to man, and--for want of a better term--a deeply rooted social inertia that hampers problem-recognition and problem-solving capacity.

Health. Doctor Caso reports that seventy per cent of the poor are anemic, the primary cause of which is deficient diet. He says that this dietary deficiency, especially in protein foods, is caused by an extremely low income. This anemic condition is the result of both mal- and under-nutrition which, he says, exist side by side. The poor, therefore, have a low vitality which makes them susceptible to pathogenic infections. With this lowered resistance, the attacks of diseases are apt to assume a virulence that would otherwise not be likely. This virulence of diseases is aggravated by the fact that the same conditions that promote their virulence also favor complications. Doctor Caso says that the diagnosed causes of death which appear in the vital statistics as the proximate cause are as a general rule associated with a series of complications.

For example, tuberculosis appears as the most frequent cause of death between the ages of fifteen and fifty. The typical concatenation of conditions that results in death from tuberculosis may be described as follows: A child, born of an anemic mother who is incapable of nursing her infant sufficiently and who is too poor to buy milk, is forced soon after birth to adapt itself to an adult diet--a diet which is deficient even for adults. If the child survives this regimen, his vitality has been so taxed that he is left a likely subject to a variety of attacks, such as acute bronchitis, hookworm infection, other parasitic infections, weakened kidneys and general anemic condition. This is the type of human organism in which tuberculosis thrives and the disease is likely to terminate disastrously.

Indeed a large per cent of the individuals born are incapable of resisting this ordeal. Twenty-four per cent of those born do not live to see their first birthday, and forty-seven per cent do not live to see their fifth birthday.

Approximately eighty-five per cent of infant deaths, not including still births which comprise about seven per cent of the total births, appear on the death records as being due to the following causes, the items

being given as nearly as possible in their order of frequency: gastro-enteritis, congenital debility, acute bronchitis, and whooping cough. "These", the Doctor says, "are so virulent because of poverty, defective nutrition, and general anemic condition of both mother and child."

In addition to these economic factors affecting health negatively, there are others that may influence it. Congestion in living conditions causing greater liability to infections and prevalence of superstition and ignorance due to lack of education are among such influences.

Economic Versus Religious Causes for Larger Families. Approaching the problem from another angle, economic conditions may be considered as a base upon which is developed factors making for the high birth rate among the poor. Superstitions, religious values, and social attitudes that favor large families do not persist merely because of social and religious sanction for them. These influences are active because general living conditions, low level of health and vitality, and habituation to a low subsistence standard make the poor in the community, both collectively and individually, insensitive to their disadvantages. In short, poverty, high birth and death rates are not generally recognized

as pathological: they are not generally regarded as problems demanding immediate action. These conditions are normative: the folkways are adjusted to them, and they are adjusted to the folkways.

Since the community takes these conditions as a matter of course, an observer is likely to get the impression that the church and its creeds are primarily responsible for high birth rates and the resulting congestion, when as a matter of fact, it is just as much the passive attitude that results from the low level of living that has been the background for the emergence of a life philosophy that harmonizes with living conditions. Religious causes for large families appear more active and significant than they really are; active religious sanctions for unlimited child births are probably less basic as causes than are the economic patterns themselves.

Mitigation of Economic Causes. It is not only possible to attribute too much to religious attitudes that are based on the premises that "God sends," "God provides for the morrow," and "God saves" as causes for over-population and adverse social and economic conditions; but it also appears that economic cause itself needs to be evaluated in terms of "non-economic" attitudes and "non-economic" social adjustments. It is not safe to assume that a low level of living, which means a narrow

survival margin, preceded all of the non-material aspects of the culture. They grew up together. They are inter-related. Thus causes and results are indelibly blended into a powerful social inertia as a predominant trait in both economic and non-economic adjustments.

Another factor that tends to diffuse and probably to mitigate the importance of economic causes is the noticeable absence of sharply differentiated economic activity. Livelihood activities are of paramount importance, but, because of the prevalence of leisure time, they are interspersed continuously with non-economic intermissions. The individual has neither the inclination nor the opportunity to spend a prolonged and intensive period of his working day concentrated solely on one type of interest. These rapid shifts in interest prevent both the economic and the non-economic from assuming the importance that they would otherwise have. This trait tends to prevail among all classes, but especially among the poor.

Limitations in natural resources and density of population are basic factors restricting the possibility of amassing large fortunes. Social adjustments are dependent on these basic factors, producing traits which minimize considerably the importance of wealth, profit, and competition as conspicuous economic traits. The

number that has any considerable wealth is so small that poverty traits may be considered as dominant over wealth traits. If Mr. A loses his fortune, his misfortune does not run counter to social values that are primarily identified with a low standard of living. People will say, que pena,<sup>1</sup> but he will not lose class nor will respect for him be seriously affected, providing he has desirable social traits; such as generosity, courtesy, and responsiveness in social situations. Even though he has not experienced fluctuations in his own fortune, he knows that shifts in fortune have been the experience of many of his friends. Economic insecurity, even among the wealthier in the community, is a common life experience; but social evaluations prevail that tend to compensate for it so that loss of property rarely brings on a crisis in the life of the individual; witness the fact that only two suicides have occurred in eight years and that psychopathic cases are conspicuous for their absence; that crimes against property and litigations arising out of economic conflicts are comparatively rare; and finally, that labor is indifferent to organization and has only used the strike once in recent years.

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<sup>1</sup> Que pena, "That's too bad."

### Summary

a. Tobacco is the central trait complex in the economic life of the community; economically, the tobacco farmer is the most important individual in the community; but those who command the greatest community respect are not tobacco farmers.

b. There are no "tobacco folkways".

c. The tobacco farmer is identified with an urban social milieu.

d. Land is the primary resource in the community; agriculture is the primary occupation.

e. Ninety per cent of the total farm income is from tobacco.

f. Most of the wealth in the community is distributed among three corporations, a few local residents, and a few absentee owners.

g. From 1910 to 1930 there was a decrease of fifty per cent in acreage of improved land per person. Two factors have produced this: a) a decrease in amount of improved land; b) increase in population.

h. Approximately one-half of the people living in town gain their living from tobacco.

i. Manual occupations are not considered dignified.

j. About sixty-seven per cent of the people living in town are poor, according to the standards of living that prevail in the community. By American standards, the poor would be on a poverty level of living, the medium would be on a poor level, and the good on a medium to good level.

k. The differences in standard of living between those in good and poor economic condition have been illustrated in the home furnishings and the food consumed.

l. Food is bought by all classes day-by-day and in small lots.

m. "Conspicuous consumption" is of considerable social importance.

n. The Clase Primera collectively promotes its economic welfare by organized and unorganized methods; the Clase Segunda collectively promotes its economic welfare by mutual aid.

o. Soil erosion and unskilled agricultural practices are recognized by a few as fundamental problems in the economic welfare of the community.

p. Economic conditions are closely related to the general anemic condition, mal- and under-nutrition, general low level of health, and high death rates among the poor.

q. Economic conditions are as much the cause of a high birth rate as are religious influences.

r. Complex social and economic conditions operate to lessen the importance of economic patterns as a dynamic factor in Comerian life.

## CHAPTER IV

## COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, AND FAMILY LIFE

## Courtship

The First Sweetheart. The average age at which the mother in Comerio had her first sweetheart was fifteen; the father, seventeen.<sup>1</sup> The Principal of the secondary schools of Comerio reported many love affairs among students in the seventh and eighth grades and one engagement of a girl at the age of twelve.<sup>2</sup>

There is a close correlation between the average age at which parents had their first sweethearts and the average age at which high-school students went to their first dance. Dancing is an important inter-sexual form of recreation. The dance floor is the only place where personal contacts between the sexes are openly allowed; it may therefore be assumed that the dance floor is the source of many love affairs.<sup>3</sup> When the girl goes to her

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<sup>1</sup>These observations are based on a questionnaire answered by 156 parents of high school and seventh and eighth grade students.

Questionnaire information is never referred to in the text unless it is supported by observation and ~~for~~ interviews of a considerable number of cases.

<sup>2</sup>The average age of the students of the seventh and eighth grades is fourteen.

<sup>3</sup>This statement also helps to explain why dancing plays such an important rôle in the social life of the girls.

first dance, she is introduced to society and thereafter is ready to meet boys and to form friendships with them.

Stability of Love Affairs. It is not considered proper for a girl to have several love affairs. Society disapproves of young girls who shift constantly from one boy friend to another. For this reason love affairs, when once started, usually end in marriage. Thirty-eight out of sixty wives had only one sweetheart--the man they later married;<sup>1</sup> eighteen of the sixty husbands had only one sweetheart.<sup>2</sup> This comparison probably indicates that the girls had taken their love affairs more seriously and that the men had had little flirtations that they themselves did not consider love affairs.

Duration of Love Affairs. In the Clase Segunda, love affairs that terminate in marriage last on the average of about one year.<sup>3</sup> In the Clase Primera, love affairs that terminate in marriage last longer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fifteen wives had had two, five wives three, and two wives four.

<sup>2</sup>Twelve husbands had had two, six husbands three, two husbands four, five husbands five, and eighteen had had "many".

<sup>3</sup>Fifty cases interviewed. The shortest courtship, one month; the longest, five years.

<sup>4</sup>Fifty cases interviewed. The shortest, six months; the longest, ten years.

Frequency and Place of Visits. Out of 76 cases, 55 women had received visits from their sweethearts from one to two times a week.<sup>1</sup> Out of the same number of cases, 20 men visited only at the girls' homes; 51 visited either at the girls' homes, or at social affairs, or in walks accompanied by an escort; 5 paid visits clandestinely.<sup>2</sup>

Romance. The typical form of courtship is the visit of the boy to the home of the girl under the watchful eye of the chaperon.<sup>3</sup> As the love affair progresses, he becomes a more frequent caller at her home and will occasionally serenade her at night. If he himself is not musical, some of his friends who are will gladly accompany him on these serenades.<sup>4</sup> There are occasions when words of affection may be passed between the two out of hearing of third parties, either at home or at the dance. Strolling along secluded lanes or roads is rare. Almost all strolling takes

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<sup>1</sup>Twenty-nine visited once a week, 26 twice a week, 10 three times a week, 1 five times a week, 5 daily, 2 more than seven times a week, 1 rarely, 2 never.

<sup>2</sup>These clandestine courtships belonged to the Clase segunda. In all of these cases the parents objected to their love affairs.

<sup>3</sup>Provided that the parents approve of the young man.

<sup>4</sup>When he serenades, he does not enter the girl's home.

place in public places usually in the company of one of the girl's friends.<sup>1</sup>

Only three out of thirty women of the Clase Primera admitted that they had kissed their sweethearts before marriage; eight out of thirty of the Clase Segunda women admitted kissing.<sup>2</sup> The following case shows how these kisses are usually occasioned:

Miss A is eighteen and a Senior in High school. Her girl friend is fourteen and in the eighth grade. They belong to the Clase Segunda. Both have sweethearts who come to visit them on week-ends from San Juan. They enjoy telling others that their boy friends are from the "big city". The mother always insists that they visit at home where she can watch them. Every chance they get they steal a kiss, but they say, "We can't make them long and deep like they do in the movies."

It is not a common practice for a boy to present candy, flowers, and the like to his girl friend.

The Chaperon. The chaperon is one of the most important of the courtship traits.

The following information, which covers all classes, was taken from a questionnaire given to the high school

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<sup>1</sup> A check was made on three separate occasions. On each occasion only two girls out of fifteen walking with their boy friends were without an escort.

<sup>2</sup> Boys say that they do not kiss their girl friends because they respect them, and also they say what one boy can do others can also do.

students of Comerio. It indicates how extensively escorts are required for both boys and girls:

TABLE I

Kind of recreation		Girls	Boys
1. Swimming . . . .	With escort . . . . .	19 . . . .	7
	Without . . . . .	0 . . . .	22
2. Athletics . . . .	With escort . . . . .	32 . . . .	38
	(Director present)		
3. Dancing at home	Parents always present		
4. Public dances . .	With . . . . .	48 . . . .	15
	Without . . . . .	1 . . . .	18
5. Picture show . .	With . . . . .	45 . . . .	19
	Without . . . . .	3 . . . .	30
6. Automobile rides	With . . . . .	43 . . . .	14
	Without . . . . .	1 . . . .	22
7. Strolling . . . .	With . . . . .	16 . . . .	2
	Without . . . . .	2 . . . .	14
8. Horseback riding	With . . . . .	26 . . . .	13
	Without . . . . .	4 . . . .	20
9. Cock fights. . .	With . . . . .	12 . . . .	2
	Without . . . . .	1 . . . .	17

The results of these tabulations show that there is much less chaperonage of the boy than of the girl. But the common notion that the boy can always do as he pleases is also disproved by the foregoing evidence.<sup>1</sup> This table also shows that many parents do not allow their children to participate in certain forms of recreation, such as cock fights. Even paseos<sup>2</sup> are forbidden to many daughters.

<sup>1</sup> Two mothers were found who chaperoned their young sons just as carefully as any mother in town chaperones her daughter.

<sup>2</sup> Paseos, evening promenades.

At a paseo the chaperon is usually a friend of the girl and of the same age. At dances and fiestas the chaperon is usually one or both of the parents or some older and trusted relative.

Cases on Courtship: Clase Segunda. Mrs. A and her husband had been sweethearts for only a month before they were married. He visited her at her home. Her parents liked him. Mrs. A said that she would let her daughter go out alone with her boy friend provided that he behaved himself, even though her own parents would not allow her this privilege.

Mrs. C was married in the Catholic church at the age of fourteen. She had been in love for two years. At first her parents objected and treated her badly. Later she took her boy friend to her home. The parents soon came to like him and consented to her marriage. She said that it was bad practice to let girls go out alone with boys.

"I was a cook in one of the best families in Comerío and received four dollars a month. I used to go every evening to the Plaza to meet my gentleman friend. I always tried to be alone with him, because we were planning to elope. In order to escape supervision I left my home and went to live with my sister. Later a Catholic Sister told me not to go with this man as he was married and had two children, but I was too much in love with him to quit him. He never held my hand nor kissed me before we were married."

Mrs. X, before marriage, became enamoured of a young man two years her senior. When her aunt learned of her love affair, she immediately demanded that the boy pay his calls to her at the home.

Mr. J is eighty and his wife forty-five. They first met in Bayamón. In a few days he asked her to marry him. He said he did not believe in wasting his time in love-making. At first the girl's parents disapproved, but it did them no good. The couple was married two months after they had first met. Mrs. J said that she would never let her daughter go out alone with her sweetheart, but Mr. J said that he had no

objections. But he added, "If either of them were to act in the wrong way, I would see to it that things came out all right no matter what methods I might have to use."

Cases on Courtship: Clase Primera. Miss A belongs to one of the best families in Comerio. Her parents are very strict with her. Her parents will only let her walk with her sweetheart along the street in front of the house.

"My parents had no influence over my marriage. There was no romance in our courtship. I married this man just because he was a Spaniard and had money."

Mr. C's courtship lasted two years. His wife's parents opposed their marriage because he was very poor. He said he never had a chance to kiss her or to hold her hand and says that is the reason why they don't get along very well together now.

Mrs. D had no romance in her marriage. She married because she thought her prospective husband was rich. When she first met him, the price of tobacco was very high. He showed her a fine new car and invited her to many social affairs.

Mr. A is forty-four; his wife thirty-two. They have no children but have taken care of several nephews. Mrs. A does not believe in chaperons because, she says, "Whenever any one wants to do something, he does it no matter how vigilant the chaperons are."

Mr. X is much respected in town. He has two young daughters and says that when they get old enough to have intimate friends of the opposite sex, he will expect them to conform to whatever customs prevail at that time. If society approves of greater freedom than the girls now have, he will let them have that freedom.

From the cases chosen it will be seen that the majority approve of chaperons. Even where the attitudes of one or both of the parents are favorable to greater

freedom for the girls, all classes, as far as practice is concerned, conform to the established usages.

It is sometimes said that the girls of the Clase Segunda may do about as they please in their courtship relations with boys, but the evidence proves the contrary. There is very little more transgression of courtship customs among these girls than among those of the better class. The class differences in courtship are based, not so much on the presence or absence of close parental surveillance of the behavior of the girl, as upon such influences as are imposed by difference in economic conditions.

Mr. X, a poor father belonging to the lowest scale in the Clase Segunda, heard that his daughter, who was working for a wealthy family in town, was going out alone with boys in the evenings. He went to her employer and told her that if she caught his daughter doing this any more, he expected her to spank her.

### Marriage

The Proposal. The boy usually makes his proposal to the girl in person and they enter into an informal engagement, which may continue for months. If the boy is not influential or happens to be a little timid, he may get one of his friends or a friend of the girl's father to go with him to ask the father for the hand of his daughter. But he usually goes alone. When the consent

of the father is obtained, the engagement is formally announced provided that the parties are "in society." The formal announcement is usually not made public if the betrothed belong to the Clase Segunda. At the time when the boy asks the father his permission to marry his daughter the father arranges the date for the wedding. The mother is not consulted in this matter, nor is her consent to the marriage necessary.

Preparation for the Wedding. The preparations for the wedding are usually very elaborate and expensive, provided that the parents are wealthy. If the parents be poor, many sacrifices may be made in order that the wedding come up to the best accepted standards.

Some time before the wedding takes place the boy is supposed to select a padrino<sup>1</sup> and the girl a madrina.<sup>2</sup> The padrinos<sup>3</sup> are supposed to be the most intimate friends of the boy and girl, but care is usually taken to see that the padrinos selected are wealthy and generous so that the couple will be given a good wedding present. This qualification of the padrinos is regarded as so

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<sup>1</sup> Padrino, godfather.

<sup>2</sup> Madrina, godmother.

<sup>3</sup> Padrinos, godparents.

important that the prospective bride and groom may scarcely know their padrinos.

The Wedding. On the evening of the wedding a committee is formed consisting of the padrinos, relatives, and friends of the couple. This committee forms a procession that marches to the Catholic church.<sup>1</sup> The bride enters on the arm of her father, followed by the padrinos. When she reaches the altar, the groom appears from some secluded side-entry and takes his position beside the bride. The groom takes his position on the right of the altar and the bride on the left. To the left of the bride stands her father and the madrina; to the right of the groom, the mother and padrino. After the ceremony is performed, the bride and groom proceed down the aisle, followed by the father and god-parents.

A dance then takes place at the home of the bride's parents, where liquors and foods are served. The bride and groom receive felicitations, dance, and visit friends for awhile, then take leave for their honeymoon.

The Catholics of the Clase Segunda conform to the same wedding customs, except that the ceremony and

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<sup>1</sup> All of the Clase Primera in this community belong to the Catholic church; the church wedding is, therefore, the rule in this class. The church is considered the proper place for a wedding.

fiesta that follow are less elaborate, and likewise very few of them can afford a honeymoon.

Marriages in the Methodist church are simple in ritual and unostentatious. There is no dancing afterwards and, since all but one or two members are very poor and the church creed prohibits dancing and elaborate display, the social aspects of the wedding are comparatively unimportant.

The ceremony in civil marriages is still less elaborate, but as yet only a few of the very poor and irreligious resort to the civil marriage procedure.

#### Sex Mores

Chastity and Fidelity. When the Comerieñan girl marries, she must be chaste:<sup>1</sup> courtship customs, especially insistence on the chaperon, guarantee that she will be chaste. The man she marries knows that he will be the first man to have sex relations with her. The bride-to-be is also aware of the fact that if she has "sown her wild oats" before marriage she will be immediately deserted or sent back to her parents, disgraced by her husband's accusation. He would consider an unchaste bride as a most severe affront to his honor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unless, of course, she is a widow or a divorcee.

<sup>2</sup> Honor means honor as in English. But it is a much more important word in the Comerieñan vocabulary.

She is not only governed by these social controls over her sex conduct, but is also aware of the fact that marriage means, for her, future security and social recognition. She tends uncritically to accept these social controls over her pre-marital chastity and rationalizes their presence. It is not important to know whether the male sex was originally responsible for the mores of female chastity, but it is important to know that these mores are sanctioned by the community as a whole, not by the male sex alone.

It is the general opinion that fidelity of the wife to her husband is even more insisted upon than chastity of an unmarried daughter. Mr. X was given a sentence of thirty days in jail for calling a married woman a prostitute. This shows the strong feeling of the community against infidelity of the wife.

Much of what might be described as harmless social intercourse for the young girl, such as the forming of inter-sexual friendships, is denied to the married woman. Many married women will not dance with men other than their husbands. Comparatively few will even walk along the street with a male acquaintance who happens to be going in the same direction. Only one married woman was observed habitually loafing on the

street, and she was criticized for this untoward behavior. It is unthinkable for a married woman to go alone with a male friend in a car.

The foregoing description is more strictly applicable to the daughter and wife who belong to the Clase Primera than it is to the lower classes. But since the Clase Primera sets the moral and social standards for the community, the observations presented above are more or less applicable to the women of the lower classes.

The Clase Primera is not so insistent that the lower classes conform to its codes of sex conduct. Said in another way, the Clase Primera does not impose its sex mores on the lower classes, even though its superordinate social position would make this possible; rather the lower classes tend to adopt the sex mores of the Clase Primera uncritically.

The moral codes of the Clase Primera tend to set the standards for the lower classes because the lower classes are anxious to be recognized by the Clase Primera. This means that the direction of diffusion is a vertical one which begins at the top of the social scale. Recognition of a lower-class girl by the Clase Primera is most likely to be gained through her fidelity

to Clase Primera sex mores. It follows, then, that the more distant socially the lower-class girl is from the Clase Primera, the less she feels the need of complying with their sex standards. But never does her sex conduct approach licentiousness, because her own active social and moral milieu, to which she is expected to conform, is only slightly less restraining than that of the Clase Primera. This means that diffusion of moral traits from above is only of secondary importance.

Since the Clase Primera is fairly stable, that is, does not change its membership rapidly, its sex mores are perpetuated through its own social heritage. The digressions from the prevailing sex mores that were noticeable in two or three cases, and reflected as well in the attitudes of many Clase Primera women, are not diffused from below. A Clase Primera woman never admits, and justifiably so, that her digressions from the norms of general sex conduct are the result of her contacts with lower-class women who do tend to practice to some extent and believe quite commonly in greater sex freedom. But these digressions are described as being the consequence of outside contacts. She will say, "I got these ideas from my visits to San Juan or New York, where I observed that women behave differently."

Q. Why do you take walks with your girl friend without a chaperon?

A. You see we were both raised in New York, and we think it silly to have a chaperon watching every move we make.

Q. Why do you continue to loaf on Main Street when you know people criticize you?

A. My husband doesn't care; he went to an American University. I was raised in San Juan where girls are much freer than they are here.

Q. Why do you believe that Comerican women ought to have greater freedom.

A. When I go to dances in San Juan and see the boys go alone with the girls, and they seem to have such a good time, I see how much I was cheated when I was a young girl.

It may be assumed that if the mores of chastity and fidelity are so rigidly enforced upon the Clase Primera girl and wife, the Clase Primera man would also have his sex conduct closely circumscribed--aside from relationships with loose women. But such is not the case, and primarily because his sex relationships are not exclusively confined to his own class. His sex behavior may cut across class lines, owing to his wealth and/or his social position. The lower-class girl may feel honored if a Clase Primera man displays affection towards her, even though she knows that he may never legally marry her. These advances by him may make it possible for her partially to fulfill her own wish for an advance in economic position. She can receive his attentions without seriously prejudicing herself with her own class and suspend, so to speak,

the rules of sex propriety laid down by her own class.

The girl of the lower class is then, to some extent, in a dual position. Within her own class, she conforms to its sex codes, which in turn are similar to but not identical with those of the Clase Primera; but at the same time she is a potential subject for advances made by a Clase Primera man. If these attentions deepen and she, perchance, becomes his querida<sup>1</sup>, her economic position will be improved and her social position within her own class will not be prejudiced. This does not mean that she will probably rise in the social scale up to the plane of her paramour.

Aside from her personal appeal, the married woman of the Clase Primera has little bargaining power over her husband's conduct. However offensive to her may be the sexual delinquencies of her husband, she tends to acquiesce in them because restricted economic opportunity allows her no satisfactory means of escape. Even though she may complain about his delinquencies, she usually accepts him "for better or worse" and finds herself unconsciously accepting and openly defending those rationalizations which the husband so often uses

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<sup>1</sup>Querida, literally means 'dear'; but as here used it means concubine. Concubines may be permanent or more or less temporary.

to justify his own conduct. She will say that men are naturally more immoral, that they are stronger physically and mentally, and less liable to fall victims to temptations, that mothers need to be more moral and religious than fathers for the sake of their children, and finally she usually gets some comfort in feeling that, after all, her own husband is loyal to her alone, even though she "knows" others' husbands are unfaithful.

Attitudes towards the Sex Mores. "I am of the opinion that sex misconduct is natural. The only trouble is that men don't seem to know when to stop. Sex misconduct is not a sin in itself. Before marriage a man may do as he pleases; after marriage, no. My husband says that sex misconduct is not a sin. He says the only thing to do is to be cautious and respect society so as to maintain one's dignity in the group."

"We do not believe that sex misconduct is a sin. It is a physical necessity; although each individual can control himself some."

"Any bad thought or wrong-doing against the Ten Commandments is a sin, including sex misbehavior. My husband does not think so. He thinks it is a necessary pleasure. His psychology is this: I am married, but it doesn't matter; I can have adventures with other women just so I am cautious about it."

The opinions of the two sexes on the subject of sex mores may be summarized as follows:

Neither sex is of the opinion that girls ought to have much more freedom than they now have. This opinion is also maintained by all classes. The attitudes regarding the position of women are, therefore,

closely in harmony with the prevailing sex mores. A few high-school girls, however, favored more freedom for their sex, especially in courtship, but none of these girls would justify the type of sex behavior for girls which they admitted was practiced by the boys.

With reference to the sex behavior of the boys and men, attitudes were considerably divided along sex lines. The men stood solidly behind sex freedom for their own sex and solidly against that same freedom for the opposite sex. These attitudes are consistent with the prevailing practices. Opinions among women seemed about equally divided between freedom and restraint for boys and men. About half of the women seem to agree with the prevailing practices and either tacitly imply or openly admit inferiority of women. The other half seems to be in favor of more or less the same social control over the male sex that now prevails over women.

#### Promiscuous Sex Experience

The Pre-Marital Sex Experience of the Boy. Familiarity with the subject of sex is common to children of both sexes as far down as the lower grades. A competent observer remarked that one of the most common disciplinary problems in grade schools was that of dealing with frequent indecencies. There is good

reason to believe that even those girls whose actions are so carefully safeguarded are pretty well acquainted with popular information on subjects of sex.

Only three Clase Primera boys above the age of seventeen were found who had not had actual intersexual experience. Boys, on being interviewed, were very frank in giving information relative to this subject. They did not hesitate to admit the extent of their own experiences and several of them stated that the above-mentioned boys were just as carefully guarded as were any girls in town.

When a group of married men were asked the age at which a boy ought to have had sex relations, the usual answer was between the ages of sixteen and seventeen. The inference from these two sources of information is that boys do begin to have sex experience at about these ages.<sup>1</sup>

The boy's first experience is either with a local prostitute, or, if he happens to have a little extra spending money, he may go to a larger town nearby, where the women are said to be more attractive and where he is unknown.

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<sup>1</sup>Local prostitutes report frequent visits from young boys.

Vulgar words alluding to the sex parts of the body were heard very often on the street in the conversation of lower-class boys and men.

The difference between the Clase Primera boy and the boy of the lower class does not lie in the age of the first sex experience or in the numbers that have had sex experience. It is rather that the lower-class boy, being poor, cannot afford to pay visits as frequently nor go to women that are said to be as clean as can his wealthier brother.

It is not uncommon for an unmarried boy of the Clase Primera to have a temporary querida, a woman he can, for the time being, claim more or less as his own and visit her when he chooses. The querida is sometimes known to continue in his affections after marriage, thus producing marital relationship that will be described later.<sup>1</sup> The temporary querida is primarily a sex trait of the wealthier boy. His poorer compatriot cannot afford one.

Prostitution. "Prostitution in Comercio is not an organized business. Between fifteen and twenty women make their living this way but purely on their own initiative."

"OH! there are many prostitutes in town. You can find them any place. They charge various prices.

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<sup>1</sup>See section titled, "Forms of Marriage".

You can get some for a cigarette, others for a quarter. The best ones charge about a dollar and a half. All are dirty."<sup>2</sup>

The five prostitutes from whom the following information was obtained were interviewed in the local jail:

Two sisters, both prostitutes, were walking along the street, late one evening. They succeeded in picking up a man who looked as if he might be "good pay". They took him to their room. He selected one. The other, a little intoxicated, accused her sister of stealing "her man". An argument followed in which three other prostitutes who lived near by took part. The argument turned into a terrible racket that ended in a free-for-all fight. One of the sisters was severely cut with a Gem razor blade. The police intervened and took them all to jail. They were all sure that they would be released soon, as some one would go their bond in payment for a "visit".

The following are brief case histories of two prostitutes:

"I was married in New York when very young. My husband worked as a sailor on the steamship-----. I needed a man 'on ground' and not 'on water'. I started having relations with men and they would pay me. I was surprised how easily money could be made this way; so I left my husband. I like to make money and the only way I know how is this way. What's the use of slaving all day long as a servant when money can be earned so easily by this means. I would recommend this occupation to

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<sup>1</sup>These two reports probably overestimate the number of prostitutes. However, one man said that there were at least twenty-one. The best evidence seems to indicate that there are probably no more than five or six.

any poor girl.

"I have visits as often as I can each night, usually two or three times, occasionally five or six. I don't enjoy this much now, but I used to. Before having relations I always examine men for infection. I always insist on being paid first; as some men have gone away without paying me. I am a Catholic and an orphan. I drink and smoke."

"When I was thirteen, a chauffeur seduced me. Now I am nineteen. All of us prostitutes are friends. An old prostitute living near here washes our clothes. We use permanganate, lysol, sublimate, and gunpowder as antiseptics with which to wash ourselves after sex relations.

"Here they pay three or four dollars a month for servants. We sometimes make that much in a night. If we have bad luck getting clients, we lower the price to as little as fifteen cents. Men pay more for plump girls than they do for thin ones. Sometimes those that own stores give us credit there in payment for visits. All of us are taking salvarsan."<sup>1</sup>

These two cases describe fairly well the habits of this class. Most of their patronage is received from Clase Segunda men. The wealthier patronize more often girls in other towns. Some of these girls rent rooms for two or three dollars a month; others go in with ex-prostitutes. Among the poorer classes from which these girls come there is not a strong social prejudice against them. One prostitute was found to be a most

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<sup>1</sup>The mother of this girl had had thirteen children, of whom seven are dead. She said that her daughter was in "bad business", but otherwise she is a very good girl. One sister is in the house of correction for robbery; another sister was a prostitute but died of gonorrhoea. The mother said the only way to cure this girl is to "bury her alive".

useful and respected girl in her neighborhood. She was the guiadora de los Rosarios<sup>1</sup>. Friends say that they could not conduct these Rosarios without her.

These girls change residence occasionally, but the cases reported had been in residence in Comercio for at least three months.

### Forms of Marriage

Concubinage. Several of the married men of the Clase Primera now living in Comercio have or have had *queridas* during their period of married life.

"It has been said that many of the upper class live in concubinage. It should not be understood that the town is, therefore, immoral. On the contrary the parents jealously guard the virtue and honor of their children, but they often have to tolerate this type of matrimony, . . . ,"<sup>2</sup> because the *queridas* of most of these men are country girls of the lower classes whose parents live on the farms of the girls' paramours. The owners of these farms in turn live in town with their families. The *queridas* are provided for, not luxuriously,

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<sup>1</sup>Guiadora de los Rosarios, one who conducts an assemblage of persons who recite the Rosary and offer prayers in promise to a saint.

<sup>2</sup>Statement by a local observer.

but their economic condition is above the level of the country folk who do not happen to have daughters with Clase Primera connections.

With the exception of one or two cases, the concubinate relationship of wealthy men who live in town is carried on outside of town, while their de jure wives and families live in town.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. X has a large income. He built a home for his *querida* out of town. He says he doesn't see why his legal wife should complain as long as he gives her everything she needs.

"The man I live with is already married, but he was so nice to me that he conquered me."

Influences that make possible these sex practices do not prevail to any extent among the poor. Lower-class men usually do not have the wealth or the social prestige that would make possible freedom of sex relationships either before or after marriage. Four cases of concubinage were found in the Clase Segunda, but all four men in these cases were getting good wages.

"A man who has a concubine is not looked upon as acting against the mores. A common attitude of the wife is expressed in her saying that she does not interfere with what her husband does outside, so

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<sup>1</sup>Two exceptions were found, but there are probably others.

long as he is good to her at home. . . . The actual number of cases where a man has a concubine is very small, as economic conditions do not allow for such behavior."<sup>1</sup>

While this generalization refers specifically to country folk, general observations bear out its validity for the town of Comerío. There is a little more sex sophistication in town. Concubinage is undoubtedly more common in town because most of the wealthy men live there. There is also evidence that legal wives are more resentful of this relationship than the quotation would indicate.<sup>2</sup>

Even though concubinage is not commonly practiced by the male population as a whole, the fact remains that the practice is present. The social attitudes towards it are usually characterized by indifference or a mildly humorous reaction. This attitude, plus the presence of rationalizations justifying the practice, is enough to indicate that the practice of concubinage is in the Comeríean mores.

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<sup>1</sup>José C. Rosario, The Development of the Puerto Rican Jibaro and His Present Attitude Towards Society, pp. 84-85. (This is a publication of the Insular Government, 1935.)

<sup>2</sup>See section titled, "Family Tensions".

Consensual Marriage<sup>1</sup> According to the last Census report, there are 647 males fifteen or more years of age in the town of Comerío. Of this number 263 are legally married and 65 are consensually married. There are 847 females fifteen or more years of age. Of this number 294 are legally married and 66 are consensually married.<sup>2</sup> This means that about nineteen per cent of the total married population of the town of Comerío is living in consensual wedlock. For rural Comerío the percentage is about twenty-two.<sup>3</sup> The lower percentage of consensual marriages in town is probably due to the following: a) greater activity of clergy in seeing to it that the members of their church who live in town are married; b) townspeople have easier access to the legally constituted authorities for having the ceremony performed; c) the town, being less isolated than the country, has probably

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<sup>1</sup> Consensual marriage is defined in the Fifteenth Census of the United States, Report on Outlying Territories and Possessions, p. 134, as: "Living together as husband and wife by mutual consent." Consensual marriage is similar to what Americans call common law marriage.

<sup>2</sup> Fifteenth United States Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, p. 164. See also: Jose C. Rosario, A Study of Illegitimacy and Dependent Children in Puerto Rico, 1933, pp. 30-31.

<sup>3</sup> Fifteenth U. S. Census, Outlying Territories and Possessions, p. 164.

helped to break down a not uncommon lower-class notion that legal marriages bring ill luck; and finally, d) the lower percentage of consensual marriages in town would be partially the result of the fact that the upper classes, practically all of whom are married, live in town.<sup>1</sup>

The following illustrates a more or less typical ceremony which ends in a consensual marriage:

Mr. A courted his sweetheart at the Plaza. They were usually alone during their courtships. One day while they were talking alone at the Plaza, he invited her to take a walk with him. They walked along a dark side street until they came to a little house, which they entered. He showed her a room that he had prepared for her. The next day the girl went to her original home, got all of her belongings, and took them to her new home.

Instead of meeting his sweetheart at the plaza, a man may meet her at a dance. After a few dances they will disappear. In either case the disappearance of the girl is socially recognized as signifying that she has gone to make a new home.

The following show the attitude of the lower classes towards consensual marriage:

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<sup>1</sup> The lower percentage of consensual marriage reported in town may not be an accurate index of the difference. Town folk, who are consensually married, seem to be a little more self-conscious about it and would therefore probably not report as accurately about it as their country brothers.

"We are both about twenty-two years old. We have been living together consensually for about two years. We expect to get married legally sometime."

"We have three children. We live together but are not married. This way I can do what I please without being punished if I don't support her."<sup>1</sup>

"I had four children from my first man. I have never been married and am too old now to think about it."

"After I got a divorce I went to live with another man without marrying him. I don't have time to get married."

"Mr. A, my friend, got married in the Catholic church. He and his wife had violent quarrels that ended in a separation. I have lived happy with my wife without being married, for ten years. You see they had bad luck, because they were married in the church."<sup>2</sup>

Three facts stand out in the consideration of consensual marriages: a) Consensual marriages are almost exclusively poor men's marriages.<sup>3</sup> Many poor people cannot afford the costs that are entailed in having the ceremony performed by legally constituted authorities. Also the custom of making the legal wedding

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<sup>1</sup> Three cases of this kind were found in town. They indicate an awareness of the fact that without legal union the man may, at his own whim, more easily escape marital responsibility. This attitude, however, is more of a rationalization used to justify this form of marital relation, than it is indicative of the justification for desertion.

<sup>2</sup> This attitude is more common in the rural areas, but it is still found in town also.

<sup>3</sup> Only one man of the Clase Primera was found to be living with his wife consensually.

an elaborate social event, even among the poor, is a prohibitory factor. b) Just as most of the legal marriages are monogamous, so also are most of the consensual marriages monogamous. In fact the evidence seems to show that there is a higher percentage of monogamy among those consensually married than there is among those legally married, and for the same reasons that make consensual marriage economically expedient in the first place. c) The fidelity of consensually married couples to each other and their devotion to their children is about the same as if they were legally married.

"The children of consensual marriages are labeled as illegitimate, although for all practical purposes their parents are married until 'death do them part.' The children of these unions are very little handicapped socially and do not constitute a social problem. They are only legal illegitimates increasing the figures on illegitimacy in the Island to an enormous degree."<sup>1</sup>

This quotation not only implies that consensual marriages are not socially stigmatized to any extent, but it also indicates that children born in consensual wedlock are not socially stigmatized.

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<sup>1</sup> Study of Illegitimacy, op. cit., p. 27.

"Social Polygyny."<sup>1</sup> "I live more or less regularly with three women without being legally married to them. I have three children, one from each, almost the same age. Marriage does not make any difference anyway, as I take care of them just the same whether I am married or not."

"I live more or less regularly with two women, I am too busy to get married. I have four children from one and five from the other."<sup>2</sup>

This form of marital relationship means about the same to a few of the Clase Segunda as concubinage of the type just described does to the Clase Primera.

Illegitimacy. If children born of concubines, of women consensually married, of women living in socially polygynous wedlock, or in promiscuity are all included as illegitimate, then the illegitimacy rate in

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<sup>1</sup> "Social Polygyny" as here used means that a man has two or more socially recognized wives, but is legally married to none.

<sup>2</sup> These were the only two cases found. In both of them the men were receiving good wages. These individuals were interviewed in the presence of half a dozen men. The first one told his story with some pride; the second was a little more reticent. The auditors were indifferent or took the matter as a joke. When these two men left, the rest of the group substantiated their statements.

the town of Comerío is twenty-four per cent.<sup>1</sup> But if only those who are born of promiscuous sex relationships are considered as illegitimates, then the rate is reduced to about four and a third per cent.<sup>2</sup> This latter percentage is the more significant one in view of the fact that children born in all of these marital relationships, whether legal or not, are socially recognized; that is, there is no social stigma placed on them.<sup>3</sup> Even children born in promiscuity are not, to any extent, stigmatized.

Conclusions: By far the most prevalent marriage form is monogamy, of which there are two kinds,

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<sup>1</sup> Illegitimacy in Puerto Rico, op. cit., p. 7. This may be called the "crude illegitimacy rate."

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Rosario calls this percentage the "Socially illegitimate."

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to compare the "crude illegitimacy rate" in town with the percentage of women that are consensually married, which is 18.33%. The illegitimacy rate is 23.70%. The comparative ratio is 18.33% to 23.70%. But if 4.39%, the proportion of socially illegitimate, be deducted from the percentage of crude illegitimates, the ratio becomes 18.33% to 19.31%. This shows a close correlation between the percentage of women consensually married and the crude illegitimate rate, when corrected by deduction of the socially illegitimate. If the illegitimate children of mothers living in concubinage could be accurately estimated and also deducted, the correlation would probably be closer. All of this assumes that the birth rate per married woman is not influenced by the form of marriage that she lives in.

legal and consensual. Of these two, the legal is the most common. The difference between these two is formal, not factual. Legal marriage, of course, is both legally and socially sanctioned; consensual is sanctioned socially. Legal marriages are not sanctioned by the Catholic church, unless they are performed by the priests. Consensual marriages are not religiously sanctioned.

Concubinage is not uncommon among the wealthier of the Clase Primera. The legal wife and family usually live in town and the concubine in the rural area, often on the farm of her paramour.

Occasionally the better off of the Clase Segunda have a form of marriage which has been called consensual polygyny.

No type of illegitimate child is socially stigmatized, with the possible exception of the child born of promiscuous sex relationships; even this child is not seriously isolated.

#### Sex Equality

Although many women of the Clase Primera do not admit a role inferior to their husbands, they are, nevertheless, generally reconciled to a subordinate one in practice. Their limited economic opportunity, and the

fact that they accept marriage as a necessary economic and social adjustment which accomplishes at once two things, economic security and social recognition, signify an inferior role in fact.

Almost every Clase Primera man says that women are "naturally"<sup>1</sup> inferior mentally, emotionally, and physically. They are, therefore, inferior socially and economically.

The case for inferiority of women is not so strong among the lower classes. Poor women, more than their wealthier sisters, are likely to co-operate with men as breadwinners for the family. They, as well as their husbands, are more likely than are the Clase Primera woman and man to look upon the relative position of the two sexes in the family situation as often being determined by such practical considerations as the following:

"My wife doesn't know anything, therefore I am the boss."

"My husband is the boss because I am illiterate."

"My husband knows more than I; he is superior to me."

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<sup>1</sup> "Naturally" probably means inherited, meaning here that there is no remedy for it.

"We have mutual freedom. I don't know what you mean by being inferior. You see he went through the second grade, and I went through the third year high school. I am the boss."

"I am superior to my husband because I make candy to sell in order to put my children through school."

"I am superior to my wife, because when I was eighty I started to learn to read and write, but my wife is a 'bruto.'"<sup>1</sup>

"Do I help my wife in the house? What do you think I am!"

"My husband thinks I am equal to him, even though we are consensually married."<sup>2</sup>

These quotations are not intended to suggest that lower-class wives are considered equal to their husbands; for in spite of these opinions the prevailing practice among the lower classes is the same as that described for the Clase Primera. But the cases as a whole show a less pronounced feeling on the part of both sexes regarding the question of feminine inferiority. They show a noticeable absence of "naturalistic" rationalizations that justify feminine inferiority, which rationalizations are so prevalent in the Clase Primera. Instead, opinions as to the degree of equality that prevails between the sexes are more often based on some practical attainment of one

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<sup>1</sup> "Bruto," a rough, ill-mannered person; an ignoramus.

<sup>2</sup> Twenty-five cases were collected from the Clase Segunda.

sex or the other. For example, the amount of formal education seems to be an important basis for judging questions of equality, because it was found in eighteen out of the twenty-five cases obtained. Who is making a living was a criterion that appeared five times. Neither of these criteria was mentioned in the Clase Primera cases, excepting among the local school teachers.<sup>1</sup>

These attitudes as well as the observed habits of the relations between the sexes probably indicate that the lower-class woman is less often considered inferior in her family role to her husband than is true in the Clase Primera.

Mrs. A, who belongs to the Clase Primera of Comerio, takes a practical and accurate view of Puerto Rican husbands:

Poor Puerto Rican husbands! Every one, especially women, seems to be against them, but every woman wants one. It is true that this is a man's country, as Mr. A says. Men enjoy all liberties which are denied to women. Can we blame them for this?

Simply because Puerto Rican husbands do not wash the dishes, scrub the floor, or take care of the babies, one should not consider them bad. Their attitude towards this kind of work is due to tradition and, above all, to economic conditions. We can hire a maid or a boy servant for even two dollars a month. Why should our husbands do the work?

Because Puerto Rican husbands are jealous, go

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<sup>1</sup> But one of the best educated of these women teachers considers her husband superior.

out alone at night, and do not allow certain freedom to their wives, one should not consider them bad. Due to tradition, men regard women as treasures to be kept at home. During the Spanish regime and even twelve or fifteen years ago, no woman went outside the home to earn a living. The emancipation of women is a novelty in Puerto Rico. It is a recent movement; so men are not yet used to it.

It is true that American husbands stay at home more in the evening. The wife takes a book and the husband a magazine. They do not even say a word to each other. Do you not think that they are as far apart as is the Puerto Rican husband at the botica<sup>1</sup> and his wife at home?

Because some Puerto Rican husbands keep mistresses one should not say that all of them do. This custom is, in part, one of Spanish origin. Studying some old Spanish documents in Comerío, I found a letter from the municipal doctor attacking the Mayor of the town on the ground that the Mayor was keeping a mistress right in front of his own wife's house. In reply, the Mayor answered that the Doctor was keeping three instead of one. Some of our men are not faithful to their wives, but no one can change in a day the customs and traditions of two or three centuries. . . .

Defend Puerto Rican husbands? Why, they are just a product of environment.<sup>2</sup>

### Domestic Discord, Desertion, and Divorce

Tensions between parents seem to increase as the social and economic scale is ascended. Among the twenty Clase Primera families studied, only four showed evidence of complete harmony between the parents. "Another

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<sup>1</sup> Botica, drug store.

<sup>2</sup> The author of this theme has lived in Comerío for many years. It is here reproduced with her permission.

woman" appears as a cause of discord five times; in-laws, four times; drinking and gambling, four times each. In some cases each of these is considered as the sole cause, in others as contributory causes for parental incompatibility. Other causes of domestic tensions were: one likes social life, the other does not; parents were born and reared in different environments; mother disciplines children too severely; husband deceived wife before marriage into thinking he was rich; and there is too much difference in education.

"We have been married for six years and have never quarreled."

"My husband is impulsive. He likes to gamble. I know he runs around with other women. We have quarrels about this sometimes."

"I cannot stand my husband's relatives. When they visit us, I treat them as inferior. We quarrel over this."

"When we were first married, we used to live with my husband's folks. That brought on many difficult problems."

"We have different likes, because of difference in education."

Among the lower classes, fifteen out of twenty-five cases reported an absence of parental discord. Four out of the remaining ten reporting unhappy domestic relations gave "another woman" as the chief cause. Two said that their husbands were lazy and useless. Other

causes for domestic tensions were found to be: husband spanking the wife because she would not have intercourse with him; chasing loose women; and drunkenness.

There are not only a smaller number of causes for discord given among the lower classes, but there was also noticeable a less tendency to enumerate a chain of causes.

"When I was a young married man, women used to like me. Now I am 'flojo'<sup>1</sup> and am very loyal to my wife."

"I am very happy with my husband, even though he has given me fifteen children. He is a little jealous. He used to drink but not now."

"My husband was a 'sinvergüenza'<sup>2</sup>. He was always chasing loose women. I quit him."

"I don't really love my husband. I am sorry for him. He treats me badly and says he doesn't love me. He is always drunk. He won't let me go any place."

"My husband deserted me and went to Santo Domingo. He says he is not coming back because I have tuberculosis."

The foregoing evidence, together with other personal observations, indicates that the husband-wife relationships of the Clase Segunda are on the whole more congenial than those of the Clase Primera. This is

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<sup>1</sup> "Flojo," "slow," or inclined to be impotent.

<sup>2</sup> "Sinvergüenza," literally, "without shame." This term is insulting to the Islander.

probably due to the simpler living conditions which prevail among the lower classes.

It is probably true that most of the family tensions of the Clase Primera, such as those cited in the foregoing cases, are not so serious as to cause major family problems. In general, relationships between husband and wife are quite congenial among all classes.

Desertion and Divorce. Both desertion and divorce are rare in the Clase Primera. Most Clase Primera women are economically dependent, the community is dominantly Catholic, and Comorian upper-class society frowns upon any form of separation.

Divorces are also rare among the lower classes, but desertion seems to be common. Of the twenty-five cases of the Clase Segunda considered under the head of "Family Tensions," ten stated that they had had domestic difficulties. Seven of these ten said that they were living apart, and two more stated that they had divorced their husbands.

When domestic discord occurs between lower-class parents, they are likely to separate. This is not because they are less religious than upper-class people but rather because they are farther down the

social scale, which means that they are farther removed from the more active social controls and public opinion that prevail in the Clase Primera. In addition, marriage among the lower classes is probably entered into more lightly, and, finally, the lower-class woman has comparatively less to lose economically and socially by separating from her husband.

The divorce figures for a period of years in the municipality of Comerío, which had a population in 1930 of 16,715, are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE II

Year	Number of Divorces	Year	Number of Divorces
1900	1	1929	0
1908	1	1930	2
1925	1	1931	0
1926	1	1932	0
1927	1	1933	4
1928	2	1934	1
		1935 (to July)	3

The number of divorces is so small that there is no safe way of judging whether or not they are increasing. Most of these divorces probably occurred among the residents of the town of Comerío, where all but four or five of the better-class families live.

<sup>1</sup> These divorce statistics are taken from the Municipal Court Records.

Population Aspects of Comerioñan Families

General Marital Condition. The following statistics indicate the general marital condition in Comerio town, rural areas, and the municipality for the year 1950:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE III

Males	Town	Rural	Municipality
Fifteen years old and over . . . . .	647	3,741	4,388
Single . . . . .	289	1,530	1,819
Married . . . . .	263	1,682	1,945
Consensually Married . . . . .	65	402	467
Widowed . . . . .	—	—	151
Divorced . . . . .	—	—	5
Unknown . . . . .	—	—	1
<u>Females</u>			
Fifteen years old and over . . . . .	847	3,537	4,384
Single . . . . .	357	1,104	1,461
Married . . . . .	294	1,703	1,997
Consensually Married . . . . .	66	431	497
Widowed . . . . .	—	—	410
Divorced . . . . .	—	—	19

In the municipality as a whole the sexes are approximately equal in numbers, but there appears to be approximately two hundred more women than men in town. This discrepancy cannot be accounted for in terms of larger numbers of women reported as single, married, and consensually married. Were the Census report to

<sup>1</sup> Fifteenth Census, Outlying Territories and Possessions, p. 143.

show the numbers by sex of widowed and divorced in the town, this discrepancy would probably be accounted for.

The higher percentage of widows than widowers probably indicates that the latter remarry much more frequently and also probably shows a rather strong social prejudice against the widow. Her desirability as a marriage partner is lessened by having once been married.

The ratio of married to single for persons fifteen years old or over for town and rural areas is indicated as follows:<sup>1</sup>

	<u>Town</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Male . . . . .	50.7%	55.7%
Female . . . . .	42.5%	50.3%

The table indicates that a higher percentage of people from rural areas are married than in town. This is at least partially explained by the fact that there is a considerable number of transient laborers in town working irregularly in tobacco establishments.

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<sup>1</sup> These percentages also include persons reported by the Census as consensually married.

Marriages by sex and age groups for the fiscal year  
1928-1929<sup>1</sup>

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Under 20 years . . .	11 . . .	49
20-30 years . . .	76 . . .	43
Over 30 years . . .	8 . . .	3
Total marriages . . . . .	.190 <sup>2</sup>	

The data in the table seem to indicate that men are most likely to marry between the ages of twenty and thirty, and that as many women marry under twenty as above twenty.

Neither civil nor ecclesiastical records yield accurate information on the age at which parties marry because many marry in the church after having lived together consensually for a period of time. Many others, especially of the lower classes, do not know their exact ages.

Size of the Family. According to the 1930 Census there were six persons in the average family in the municipality. In 1899 the Census reports 5.8 persons per family, an increase of 0.2 in thirty years.

The average number of persons per family in the

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<sup>1</sup> Governor's Annual Report on Puerto Rico 1928-1929, p. 546.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 547.

tobacco-growing regions of Puerto Rico is 6.68<sup>1</sup> But since only about one-half of the municipality of Comerío is devoted to the raising of tobacco, an occupational group in which economic conditions seem to be better and families larger, it would seem that the other half of the municipality would have smaller sized families.

A sample of seventy-five families in the poorer section of the town of Comerío seems to indicate that the number of persons to a family is slightly under six.

A sample of thirty-three out of the forty-five families that appear on the social register as belonging to the Clase Primera in Comerío showed an average of 6.3 members per family. The families of twenty married school teachers living in town averaged 3.4.

The following is a summary of statistical information on the family gathered in a house-to-house survey in 1935:

TABLE IV

Class	Teachers	Clase	
		Primera	Segunda <sup>2</sup>
		(a)	(b)
1. Number of families studied . . . . .	20 <sup>3</sup>	33 <sup>4</sup>	35 <sup>5</sup> . 40 <sup>6</sup>
2. Total number of children living . . . . .	30	146	133 . 160

<sup>1</sup> José C. Rosario, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> (a) and (b), appearing under Clase Segunda are separate figures gathered from two adjoining poor sections in town.

<sup>3</sup> All.

<sup>4</sup> Out of 45.

<sup>5</sup> Out of 47.

<sup>6</sup> Out of 125.

TABLE IV (Continued)

Class	Teachers	Clase	
		Primera	Clase Segunda (a) (b)
3. Number of children alive per family . . . . .	1.5 . . .	4.4 . . .	3.8 . 4
4. Average size of family . . . . .	3.4 . . .	6.3 . . .	5.7 . 5.9
5. Total number of children dead . . . . .	3 . . .	26 . . .	.103 142
6. Average number dead per family . . . . .	.15 . . .	.8 . . .	2.9 . 3.5
7. Number of families having no child deaths . . . . .	17 . . .	16 . . .	8 . 6
8. Number of childless families . . . . .	9 . . .	2 . . .	0 . 5
9. Average number of years married . . . . .	9.2 . . .	20.9 . . .	----- . 22.1
10. Average age of mother . . . . .	35 . . .	41 . . .	43 . -----
11. Age at which mother was married . . . . .	24 . . .	20 . . .	21 . 20.5
12. Number having one parent dead . . . . .	2 . . .	3 . . .	3 . 11

Factors Influencing the Size of the Family. What are the factors that cause the differentials in family size?

A. Age. It was indicated in the table that married women of the Clase Primera and Segunda have about passed through their reproductive period. The age of marriage is nearly the same for both classes so that the time factor has not materially influenced the difference in size of the families of these two classes.

But among the married teachers the length of time married is about half as long, and the women have married approximately four years older. These two

influences may partly explain the smaller size of the families of married teachers.

B. Death. Age is not as important a proximate cause in determining the difference in size of families within the two social classes as is the differential death rate. The lower child and also parental death rate among Clase Primera families makes it possible for this class to have slightly larger families, even though the birth rate is considerably higher in the Clase Segunda. About forty-five per cent of the children born in these lower-class families have died, while the percentage is fifteen for the Clase Primera.

C. Economic Condition. The Clase Primera has the highest standard of living and apparently the largest families. The married teachers, the only relatively large professional class in town, have the next to the highest standard of living and the smallest families. The group having the lowest standard of living appears to have slightly smaller families than that class which has the highest standard of living. But if the death rate, which is the positive factor here, be correlated with economic conditions, the reason for the apparent reversal of the generally accepted premise of small families correlated with high standard of living will become apparent. If, for example, the death rates in these two classes were equal, the

Class Primera families would be smaller than those of the Class Segunda. An inverse correlation between size of family and standard of living becomes apparent if the death rate be equated between the two classes.

The low standard of living of the Class Segunda influences directly health, which in turn is correlated with mortality rate.<sup>1</sup> Economic conditions are, then, remote causes, but of primary importance in explaining the smaller size of the Class Segunda family.

The small size of the families of the married teachers can only be partially explained by a relatively high standard of living. Other explanations will have to be sought elsewhere.

Conscious Effort to Control Size of Family. It is apparent that there are other factors than age, death, and difference in economic standard that control the size of families, especially those of the teachers and the Class Primera. The questions to be asked and answered are as follows:

a. Is there evidence to show that lower-class families are consciously controlling their numbers? If not, what influences prevail that negate the possibilities of employment of conscious effort?

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II, section titled "Death Rates."

b. Is there evidence to show that the upper class could have larger families if it so desired? Does the average size of this upper-class family indicate the employment of conscious means of controlling the size of the family?

The average woman of the Clase Segunda has borne seven children during a married period of about twenty years. This would probably indicate that there is comparatively little effort to control births in that it is probably about the limit of fertility of a mother with as low a health and living standard as the Clase Segunda mother possesses.

Among the seventy-five cases studied in this class, only one woman stated that she deliberately tried to control birth. (This does not mean that others are not making conscious effort to limit the size of their families, but it does seem to indicate a general lack of familiarity with the subject of birth control.) This woman stated that she used to work as a maid in a better-class family and one evening overheard her employers describing the latest contraceptive devices.

In seventy other cases five admitted that they were practicing birth control. Those who happened to have small families or have no children at all ascribe this fact to luck. They said, "God so willed," which is

the same explanation used by those who had large families.

All seem to understand that procreation requires physical participation of both sexes. But they also recognize that, when a couple is once married, "God wills" sexual intercourse. God also determines the presence or absence of children, their sex, whether they will be still-born or born deformed. There appears a complex mixing of biological and supernatural forces, with the latter dominant.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of these people, then, is: When a couple is once married, there is nothing that can be done about the procreative consequences of that marriage. Dio Manda.<sup>2</sup>

"I asked a poor woman, again pregnant when her last child was only three months old, and she had three other children, how she felt about having so many children and her sole answer was, "I cannot change God's will. He will give food for twelve the same as he does for one." If procreation happened as the result of sex relations, that was beyond her control. It was "God's will".

"I have tried to find out the reaction of some women towards the use of artificial means of birth control and one of them, apparently very much embarrassed, told me: Cuando Dios no quiere Santos no pueden, meaning that it's God's will that she should have relations with her husband and that no matter what she did she would have the number of children that God, in the consummation of His Will, assigned to her . . . .

"I have also found among men the same kind of belief. If it were not God's will, then wives would not conceive during their relations. For them, the

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<sup>1</sup>No one was found who believed in entirely miraculous conception.

<sup>2</sup>Dio Manda, God so orders.

physical necessity exists, but it is God, or a force beyond their control, that determines the results of the satisfaction of that necessity."<sup>1</sup>

Dios Manda, signifies not only supernatural power over births, but also it signifies that He will "give food for twelve the same as he does for one." This implies a further religious sanction and justification for uncontrolled numbers. In addition, the following rationalizations were found:

"I do not believe in birth control because I need the semen to lubricate me so I won't get cancer."

"I do not avoid children. I am a Pentecostal. It is a crime. God will punish the man who wastes his seed."

These attitudes are rationalizations for large families. The majority of them are rooted in religion and superstition and tend to give a strong supernatural sanction and traditional religious authority for large families, as well as furnishing the church with a moral theology ostensibly consistent with its own interests.

The local leaders of the Catholic church recommend the exercise of "extreme caution" in the dissemination of birth-control information. They say that only in the most "dangerous situations" where, for example, the life of a mother is seriously endangered is there justification of the giving of contraceptive information. This attitude of "extreme caution" also extends to the more recent devel-

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<sup>1</sup>This interpretation was made by I.I.B., a public Health Nurse, with a wide experience on this subject.

opments, such as the theory of the "Sex Rhythm."

Dios Manda is probably a normative Clase Segunda attitude towards large families. But there is evidence that a large minority is conscious of a more naturalistic approach which has, in many cases, developed to the extent that there is clearly observable a "wish" for smaller families and a realization that something practical can be done about controlling the size of the family.

The following cases may be considered as representing transitional attitudes which, while they are not in harmony with the prevailing practice of having large families, do show the presence of a wish that is in conflict with the prevailing sentiments:

"I don't want children. Economic conditions are too bad. Don't say this to anyone else."

"We don't want children. Conditions are too bad. If God is willing, we won't have any."

Mrs. B. says she would like to know how to avoid children but doesn't know how her husband would feel about it.

"Please tell me how to avoid children. Don't tell my husband about this, because he thinks this knowledge would be a crime."

"Sure, I would like to know how to avoid children. I am only twenty-five and already have four. My husband? I'm not sure. Es 'caliente.'"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Es 'caliente', He is sensuous.

Religious sentiments, public opinion, and especially fear of husband's reaction are the main grounds for uncertainty among women who, personally, seem to have a wish to know how to avoid children. The last three quotations show that some husbands are opposed to having small families while their wives are in favor. Just as there are popular rationalizations based upon theological conceptions in defense of the large family, so also there are rationalizations by husbands that tend to justify large families, the claim being that any artificial device hampering free sex relations is "biologically deleterious", and thwarts the "ecstatic pleasure of the sex act."

But a majority of husbands, whose wives are desirous of controlling the number of children, agree with their wives.

"I am seventy; my wife is forty-six. I would give a million dollars not to have any more children. The mission of the poor seems to be to have unlimited numbers of children. I went all over town trying to get information about avoiding children; no one would give it to me."

"If I knew a way to avoid them, I would do it right now. I have three and am four months pregnant. My husband wants me to abort this one."

"For goodness' sake, tell me how because I am dying. I have had nine." Husband: "I should say so! That would be my salvation."

"Sure, tell me how to stop having children. I don't want any more. I have had six. One died. My husband is inclined to anything that will help us."

Twenty-two cases of this sort were gathered in front of the health clinic and, therefore, are somewhat selected as a group. For this reason they probably do not represent a true cross section of the opinion of the poor on this subject. But these cases probably do represent a rather numerous minority that is conscious of the burden of child-bearing--a burden aggravated by low vitality, which in turn is largely the result of insufficient food. A study of these cases shows that economic factors, such as a feeling that the standard of living may be raised in case the families are smaller, are no more important as a background for birth-control wishes than are considerations of health and the strenuous effort involved in the bearing of and caring for large numbers of children. The poor mother, undernourished as she is, is aware of the drain on her health and of the labor involved in rearing a large family. This is a part of her concrete experience and probably less foreign to her thinking than would be more intangible economic influences.

The factor affecting most vitally the question of the size of the poor family is not so much the presence or absence of a wish for smaller families, but rather a general attitude of inertia and indifference to any general life problem that demands more than lip service for solution. This attitude has been nourished for generations out of a background

of low health and living standards that have tended to dull the individual physically and psychologically. It is comparatively easy to picture an individual who has been accustomed to mal- and under-nutrition since birth to have a more or less active wish for a small family, but it is difficult to see how this inclination can be converted into a "will to act", especially when he is familiar with and accepts freely a social and religious philosophy bordering on fatalism, which philosophy is in accord with his habits of playing a complacent rôle in life situations. This means that economic conditions tend automatically to produce types of social situations that make the poor indifferent to the size of their families, rather than producing among them social and economic conditions that stimulate planned effort to limit the size of their families.

The prevailing opinions in the Clase Primera are in favor of large families. When opinions of individuals are expressed in public, the explanations offered are much the same as those of the Clase Segunda. But Clase Primera statistics both on the average size of their families and the average number of births per family, indicate that their opinions are not in harmony with their practices.

The average length of time that the Clase Primera mother has been married is about twenty years. Within that time she has born on the average five and two-tenths children.

She is probably no less fertile than her lower-class sister. The inference, then, is that she is employing methods that are resulting in smaller families. This is further borne out when mothers and fathers of the upper class are given the opportunity to express themselves confidentially.

"We have had just the number of children that we want--a boy and a girl. It is much worse to have them and not be able to take care fo them. We want to maintain and take care of them decently."

"We practice birth control. We have two children and don't want any more. We want to give the ones that we have a good education. We would like to have a girl but are afraid to try."

"I used to avoid children when I was a Catholic. When I joined the Pentecostal church the preacher said that avoiding children was a crime. My husband doesn't want me to have any more children because he says that I never look clean when I am pregnant."

"We have decided not to have any children until economic conditions are better."

Among a total of fifteen cases reported, eleven were or had been using one means or another to control the size of their families. One woman said that she did not know how and would not practice birth control in case she did know how. Another said that her small family was the result of her physical condition. Another said that she had had no family because she refrained from having sexual intercourse. Four of the eleven said that they did not know how to avoid children until the later part of their married lives.

The size of the families of the married teachers, as

well as information gathered directly from them, indicates that they are deliberately controlling the size of their families.

Conclusions. The majority of the Clase Segunda do not make a conscious effort to limit the size of family. A system of rationalizations based upon religion and superstition and natural biological influences prevail in opposition to conscious effort to control size of family.

In some cases there is a wish for fewer children among the poor, but it is in conflict with religious teachings and public sentiment. Some husbands object to the practice of birth control for hedonistic reasons.

A large minority of the poor have a consensus favorable to limiting the size of family, but owing either to unfamiliarity with methods or to general social inertia they are incapable of converting their wishes into practice.

Most of the Clase Primera know how to control the size of the family, and even though they publicly oppose this practice they privately indulge in it. The married teachers in the community consciously limit the size of their families.

Family Stability and Family Relationships. One of the factors promoting intimacy within the family and a strong sense of "belonging" among Comeriños is the high degree of immobility found among most of the families. Thirty-four of the

forty-seven seventh and eighth grade students stated in a questionnaire that their parents had lived in Comerío all their lives. Only two reported that their parents had lived there less than one year. All of the remainder reported that their parents had lived in Comerío six or more years. House-to-house questioning gave even more striking evidence of family immobility. Thirty-seven out of forty parents reported that they had lived in Comerío all their lives. This immobility among poor families is to be explained to a large extent by the town and set aside for their use. On this land they have built their little huts.

Family stability in the Clase Primera is not quite so apparent. Owing to greater mobility, out-group marriage has been more common, at least in recent years. Nevertheless there is a large measure of stability as indicated by the fact that eight names of persons with relatives living in town at present, out of seventeen of the present leading family names appeared in the slave Census taken in 1867 and three additional names appeared among those who founded the town in 1820. This stability is also shown by the marriage grouping of these seventeen leading families in the town.

These seventeen families may be divided into three groups within each of which cross-cousin marriage ranging from first cousin to second cousin has been frequent. This group includes the following names: Sariego, Espina, Cobian, Rivera, and Carmona.

The Espina family consists of the mother and her three sons and two daughters. The father is dead. The brothers and sisters are married, except one, and most of their children are of high-school age. This family group has not lost its strong affection ties. It is active in inculcating in its offspring the family traditions. The community calls the Espinas a buena familia.<sup>1</sup>

Pepita Sariego married her uncle, Pedro Espina who had been "best man" at the wedding of Pepita's parents. When Pepita Sariego married Pedro Espina she retained her maiden name as well as taking the name of her husband, as follows: Pepita Sariego de Espina. Their four children are primarily Espinas. They may or may not use their mother's maiden name. If they do they are called Espina Sariego.

Pedro Espina is at once a part of three family systems:

- A. The Pedro Espina family which consists of Pedro, his wife, who was a Sariego, and their four children.
- B. The Espina-Rivera family which includes Pedro Espina, his mother, his two brothers, and his two sisters.
- C. The Cobián-Espina, Cobián-Rivera, Rivera-Carmona families that form an intermarriage and cross-cousin group to which Pedro belongs.

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<sup>1</sup> Buena familia means here not only a Clase Primera family but also a "good family," i. e., one that is highly respected in the community.

These blood and marital groupings do not always serve to promote a family esprit de corps. There have been evidences of defections and potential schisms within these family groupings. But these defections are most apparent where the marriages have been out-group rather than in-group ones, especially where the out-group ones are the out-of-town type. But when inter-family group disputes arise, or when difficulties are introduced from outside sources, these family groupings tend to unite and form a solid front. It is on the basis of this fact that an outsider becomes aware of a larger meaning of the family in this town.

#### Evaluations of Family Functions

Procreation. Among the lower classes efforts to limit the size of the family are in their early stage of development, but there is evidence that these people are becoming increasingly children-conscious. This is demonstrated by the tendency of a large minority away from supernatural conceptions of child birth and an increasing awareness of the fact that the control of the number of children is within human possibility.

Many think that the "wish" stage will not become a "will" stage until economic and educational conditions improve sufficiently so that concrete material values will reveal the practical advantage of limiting the size of the family.

It is assumed by many that general education undermining prejudices of all kinds and especially those that hamper the free diffusion of the knowledge of birth control will have to precede practices resulting in smaller families.

But in spite of the tendencies noted, the procreation of large numbers of offspring still remains an outstanding family function.

Economic. Economically Comerio is a specialized community. No Comerioñan family approaches self-sufficiency as a primary production-consumption group. The average Comerioñan family consumes only a small proportion of that which it produces. It is, therefore, organized on the basis of the exchange of goods and services. This applies to all classes.

The father is, with few exceptions, the primary provider for the Comerioñan home. Neither social attitudes nor economic conditions make it practicable for large numbers of women to accept employment outside of their homes. The most important exceptions are the teachers and a large number of women employed in local tobacco establishments. In the latter case it often happens that the woman is the sole provider for the family.

Among the poor, even where both parents happen to contribute to the family income, the standard of living is

very low. The family as a primary economic group lacks the opportunity and incentive to give an outstanding place to the material things of life.

"We are one big family in this neighborhood" expresses a sentiment that also has its bearing on the economic importance of the family. "When I am out of work, my friends help me; when I have work, I help them." This attitude is widely diffused among the poor and further tends to lessen the importance of the family as a primary economic group.

Among the wealthier families economic values are more meaningful and play a more elaborate part in the formation of family patterns. Opportunity to command and enjoy material goods, to get with money what it cares to is an important family function. But since community respect for an individual is not always correlated with that individual's wealth, family attitudes towards their wealth and standards of living are materially affected so that an outsider is not always impressed with the fact that wealth is the outstanding life attainment.

It must not be assumed that the family is an unimportant economic unit. The purpose rather has been to show that quantity of wealth and size of income have a controlling significance in terms of the attitudes that

family and community have towards wealth and income.

Summing up the points that have been made in this section, it would seem that while the average Comeriefian family may be classified as a primary economic group, yet among all classes there are social and economic influences operating that tend to diffuse and lessen the importance of the family's economic functions.

Affection and Response. Comeriefios will sacrifice to the utmost for the sake of family welfare, especially the health and education of their children. There are many instances that demonstrate this. They range from the one extreme of the poor mother who goes from house to house selling pastry in order that her children may have a high-school education and, if possible, a musical one, to the hundreds of dollars that are gladly spent by the wealthy family which sends its son to New York or Europe for treatment of tuberculosis.

The mother of the family is a greater recipient of affection than is the father, and since her role is primarily that of wife and mother, her interests are more closely confined to the home and concerned with family welfare. The gratification of her wishes for affection and response come largely from her family's appreciation of her efforts.

With regard to emotional difficulties, the family

is still of primary importance in solving its own problems. Witness the low divorce rate and the fact that if tensions result in family breaks among the lower classes, they will solve them in their own way without recourse to legal means.

The family is a primary affection and response group. There are no fully developed supplementary means affecting the primacy of the family in this respect.

Education. The Comericeñan family is a comparatively important primary group in the transmission of social heritage from parent to child. But in spite of the fact that the child's first contacts are with his parents, he is soon drawn outdoors. Thereafter most of his primary contacts are with children on the playground. The proneness to outdoor life is of primary importance in the transmission of social heritage throughout the whole period of youth. The playground may be a more important transmitter of social heritage than is the family.

The personality of the average Comericeñan child is probably developed more through his continuous and persistent neighborhood contacts than in the home. This is true, in particular, of those personality traits that ultimately come to define more succinctly his character in adult life. This applies to all phases of the social

heritage, such as moral, political, economic, and philosophic values.

But the girl, from the beginning of adolescence to marriage, is much more continuously and carefully controlled by mother contacts and, therefore, tends to be more subject to family tradition than does the boy. But even she probably acquires more of her social experience outside the home than inside.

Wealthy tobacco planters have built up a tradition of respect for their occupation that probably gives it a dignity above any other in the community. Yet their sons do not acquire respect for and familiarity with their fathers' occupation to any large extent through father-son companionship. Indeed fathers rarely make their sons partners in business and pleasure. If and when sons ultimately take over the tasks of the father, they are more likely to have acquired whatever familiarity they may have with their fathers' occupation from the community as a whole, or at least that part of the community whose interests coincide with those of the father. Sons acquire their business knowledge through diverse sources and not from specific contact with their fathers. Since daughters are more closely confined to the home, they are more likely to acquire skills and insight into problems of the home directly from their mothers than are the sons to acquire similar skills from their fathers.

There were only a few instances discovered where parents consciously instruct their children with relation to the responsibilities of life that they would ultimately assume. In these instances education tends to take on a disciplinary character, especially with the daughter. One father said that he lectured his son on business, on what his responsibility would be as a man, how he should keep his heritage intact, and how to deal shrewdly in business relations. But there was found only one example of such paternal attention.

There was discovered no case where parents instructed their children on the subject of sex.

Corporeal punishment for infraction of the social codes or for the commission of minor delinquencies around the home is not uncommon.

#### General Summary

- A. The chaperon is a primary courtship trait among all classes. Sex distinctions in courtship are more noticeable than are class distinctions. Chastity and fidelity are primary moral values for girls and women.
- B. The sex mores in the Clase Segunda are not as strong social controls as they are in the Clase Primera. The sex mores of the Clase Primera set the standard for all other classes.
- C. Monogamy is the prevailing marriage form. Consensual marriages are common among the poor. Modified forms of monogamy are not socially condemned, nor is illegitimacy seriously stigmatized.

- D. Family tensions tend to increase as the social scale is ascended, but adjustments tend to be made in the Clase Primera without resort to divorce or desertion. Among the lower classes desertion is not uncommon, but divorces are practically non-existent.
- E. Woman in general is considered inferior to the man, but as the class scale is descended sex inequalities tend to disappear.
- F. Large families are the general rule in Comerio. The Clase Primera, excepting that part which includes about half the teachers, has the largest families. The Clase Segunda has the next to the largest families; teachers the smallest. The wealthy consciously limit the size of their families; the poor, rarely.
- G. The average Comerieñan family was born and reared in the community. There is much in-group and cross-cousin marriage. The family is a flexible group, and often develops to include large familiar relationships.
- H. The family actively performs what are usually called primary group functions. But many things make its performance far from being complete or autonomous.

## CHAPTER V

## POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS

## Municipal Government.

The Municipal Assembly. The municipal assembly is composed of nine members. They are elected by popular vote at the general elections that take place every four years.<sup>1</sup> This assembly passes ordinances that are purely local in character (Articulo 7, Leyes 1931), such as traffic and sanitary regulations. One ordinance prohibits swimming in the river within the city limits, because the stream is infested with filaria;<sup>2</sup> another ordinance requires that the city water be shut off except for one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon because the reservoir is too small for all-day service.

Administrative Council. The administrative council is an ex officio body composed of the mayor, treasurer, school director, secretary, auditor, and director of poor relief. This council has the following duties:

- a. Arranging and administering public sales.
- b. Designation of banks of deposit for all classes of municipal funds and the transfer of these funds,

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<sup>1</sup>Insular elections fall on the same date as presidential elections.

<sup>2</sup>Filaria, a serious parasitic infection that causes swelling of the legs.

in whole or in part, from one bank to another.

c. Approval of expenditures from ordinary funds or from those earmarked for public instruction.

d. Transfer of credits between local disbursing agencies on account of regular funds or of those set aside for public instruction.

Mayor. The mayor is the municipal executive. He is elected by popular vote under the same conditions as the municipal assembly. He is the representative of the municipality and, in this capacity, appears and prosecutes every class of action before any functionary or tribunal of justice or other public functionary.

The present incumbent says that his most active duties are validating recommendations by barrio<sup>1</sup> commissioners for poor relief.

The government of the municipality is autonomous only in local affairs. The auditor of Puerto Rico audits the local accounts and the Insular Commissioner of Instruction appoints local teachers and supervises the disbursal of local school funds (Organic Law of Puerto Rico). Police are appointed by the insular chief of police, and their salaries are paid from the insular treasury. The insular chief of police has power to transfer police

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<sup>1</sup>Barrio, a minor political subdivision.

from one municipality to another. It is customary to change them every two years, but in the smaller municipalities, such as Comerío, they often remain indefinitely. Revenue officers are also insular government officials.

There is a local prison for the incarceration of those sentenced not to exceed thirty days.

The insane are sent to the insular Insane Asylum at Río Piedras. The municipality pays fifty dollars a year for the admission of each insane person who is insolvent.

Government of the Barrios. Barrios are minor political subdivisions. Their constitutional significance is very small. Each barrio is represented by a commissioner. Commissioners are appointed by the mayor and serve ad honorem, that is, their appointment is the result of political service. The law says nothing about the necessity of these functionaries. The mayor assigns to them whatever duties he considers convenient. Usually they are local advisors to the mayor and administrators of poor relief.

Municipal Officials. The officials of the municipality and their annual salaries are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This list does not include the municipal apothecary.

Mayor . . . . .	\$ 720.00
Treasurer . . . . .	720.00
Municipal Auditor . . . . .	900.00
Statistical Officer . . . . .	482.14
Municipal Physician . . . . .	2,100.00
School Clerk . . . . .	566.40
Justice of Peace . . . . .	370.00
Justice of Peace (Secretary)	370.00
Municipal Nurse . . . . .	480.00
Jailer . . . . .	300.00
Medical Assistant . . . . .	240.00
Garetaker of Prisoners . . . . .	65.00

The foregoing is a brief outline of the functions of the local government. It will be seen that the government is centralized and that the functions of the local municipal government are primarily administrative. The system is similar to the Napoleonic systems on the continent of Europe. Discretionary powers of the local functionaries are closely circumscribed by the Federal Organic Acts and also by statutes of the insular legislature.<sup>1</sup>

#### Political Parties and Their Activities

The centralized form of government--the dominance of the insular over the local government--influences local

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<sup>1</sup>The Jones-Costigan and Forakers Acts, of the Federal Congress, are the organic laws for the Island. The centralized system of government that prevailed during the Spanish regime was not materially changed after American occupation.

party organization as well as the character of the issues. The activities of local leaders who are responsible for the maintenance of party organization are also influenced by this centralized system.

Parties. The dominant party in the municipality is the Partido Liberal<sup>1</sup>, to which most of the influential people of the municipality belong.

This party, during the political regime of Muñoz Rivera, went under the name of La Unión<sup>2</sup>. Later the party, under its present leader, Don Antonio Barceló, joined with the Partido Republicano<sup>3</sup> and was called the Alianza<sup>4</sup>. This coalition was maintained until just prior to the election of 1932. Then the Republicanos split off and joined the Socialists. Since then, the Liberales have functioned as a single party.

The Partido Republicano was organized and lead until 1925 by Don José Celso Barbosa. Don Martínez Nadal, upon the death of Barbosa, became the leader of the Republicanos. They united, as just indicated, with La Unión. The two adopted the name, Alianza. A break

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<sup>1</sup>Partido Liberal, Liberal Party.

<sup>2</sup>La Unión, Union Party.

<sup>3</sup>Partido Republicano, Republican Party.

<sup>4</sup>Alianza, Alliance.

between the two factions threw the Republicanos into alliance with the Socialists, from which union was born the present party, La Coalición<sup>1</sup>.

El Partido Socialista<sup>2</sup> has risen into political prominence during the past fifteen years under the leadership of Santiago Iglesias. The Partido Republicano and the Partido Socialista under the allied name of La Coalición constitutes, at present, the dominant political grouping in the Island. It controls the two legislative chambers as well as most of the important political appointments. But this Coalición has not been a winning combination in the municipality of Comerío because of influences that will be explained later.

Another faction that has attracted a small following, especially among the younger generation of high school and college students and even a few others in Comerío, is the Partido Nacionalista<sup>3</sup>, led by Albizu Campos. This political group has, up to date, refused to take part in elections.

Party Organization. Local parties are organized as branches of insular party organizations.

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<sup>1</sup>La Coalición, Coalition Party.

<sup>2</sup>El Partido Socialista, The Socialist Party.

<sup>3</sup>Partido Nacionalista, The Nationalist or Independence Party.

The administrative policy and political strategy of each insular party is determined by a central committee, the chairman of which is the party boss or leader. Local party leaders cooperate with the insular board of strategy and are responsible for the maintenance of local party solidarity. They act as agents for the calling of local meetings and keeping the local party informed on the program of the central committee.

The activities and political importance of the local party leaders depend, in the main, upon the relative strength of the party in the municipality; upon the social and economic ties that bind those who are influential in one party to those influential in another party; and upon the proximity of the election period.

Interest in Politics. During election intervals a small nucleus of active party members continues to maintain a more or less active interest in politics. The rank and file of men and women voters remain, until the election period, comparatively indifferent to political happenings. Mr. A was noticed each morning reading aloud the political news in his El Mando, but he is an exception to the rules. High-school boys discuss politics some, but no political discussions or disputes of more than passing importance were observed during the three months' residence in the town. This

condition is in marked contrast to the intense political activity that goes on continuously in the vicinity of the Capital. Local party leaders give two reasons for this: first, the municipality is traditionally Liberal in its party sentiments, mainly because ex-Senator Muñoz Rivera, the man who ruled this party for many years, was born and had spent his early years in Barranquitas, a neighboring municipality that is included in the senatorial district with Comerío. Comeríenses claim him as their "favorite son", and the ruling classes there, which usually means the wealthiest, have traditionally professed allegiance to him, his party, and, to some degree, to his political tenets. The affiliation of the ruling class with him has tended to bring and keep in line sufficient voting strength to give this party a dominant position in local politics since American occupation. Second, the habitual dominance of one party, along with the traditional loyalty of the men of influence in the municipality to it, has tended to overshadow the activities of the other parties and their leaders to such an extent that they are more or less resigned to a condition of political impotence. This has not only tended to create an indifference on the part of the leaders and followers of the minority factions but has also encouraged an attitude of complacency on the part

of the majority party.

The most common view that is heard among Liberal party leaders in Comerío is that the problems of Comerío are economic, not political. Incidentally, this attitude may be due in part to more intimate contact with economic realities in a rural community than would be found in a dominantly urban one, such as San Juan; but primarily, this attitude of the Liberal Party leaders reflects their dominant position in the community. As a result of this political security, the party leaders direct attention to the acuteness of economic problems.

But local Liberal leaders state that the present election interim has been more interesting and active politically than usual because of the fact that, even though their party won locally and succeeded in electing the district senator and representative, it was defeated in the Island as a whole. Local Liberal leaders have, as a result of this, been more interested in political activities in the Capital, San Juan, and have, more often than is customary, called meetings of their local central committee.

This present interest of local Liberal leaders has also been accentuated by the insular political struggle between the Liberales and Coalicionistas to control the administration of Federal Relief funds in the Island as well as to dominate the new reconstruction program.

The effort of the Liberal Party has been sponsored most actively by Luis Muñoz Marín, Liberal Party leader and son of the late Muñoz Rivera.

Local Liberals also are proud of the fact that the most respected man in the community is not only a local party leader but also a member of the Junta central<sup>1</sup> of the Liberal Party.

Another factor that produces political lethargy among the minority factions is the fact that the leaders of these factions, as well as their followers are, in one way or another, economically subservient to the wealthier classes. Mr. X, a local Socialist leader, prefers to discuss problems of the Socialist party and the laboring classes in the back room of his employer's store. Mr. Y, another Socialist leader, operates an independent business. He hesitated to admit his Socialist affiliations and warned that discretion be used in talking about Socialistic subjects in public. He rents the lower floor of a store which belongs to a Liberal. The first Socialist leader mentioned belongs to the Clase Primera; the second belongs to the Clase Segunda.

The most active Socialists noticed in the town were not the leaders but a few followers who worked in

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<sup>1</sup>Junta central, Central Committee.

the local tobacco cooperative. They were women tobacco-strippers who did not hesitate to give voice to their opinions in a rather militant manner. Local Socialist leaders said that they had called no meeting since the election of 1932.

Finally, it may be noted that the municipality is considerably isolated, politically, from San Juan which, being the Capital, is the seat of political activity. The participation of local leaders in insular politics is largely vicarious, that is, through newspapers which do not tend to stimulate animated face-to-face contacts that are so noticeable in the Capital and its surrounding areas.

If, then, the conditions that stimulate political activity in the community of Comerío be balanced with those that tend to discourage active politics, the conclusion appears to be that active political behavior is not a dominant trait in the average Comerieño's daily life--at least during election interims.

Local Party Leaders. There are no professional politicians among the party leaders in Comerío. All of them make their living in other pursuits and give their services free to the party.

This does not mean that political leadership is unimportant in the community. Just as the leader tends to stand out and personify his party or political faction

in insular politics, so also does political leadership in Comerio stand out more clearly than do party issues. Even in Comerio where political activity is not so apparent, the personality of the man and the valued role he plays in the community is always more significant than what he may or may not stand for. The average Comeriero is, first of all, interested in personality: witness the fact that the long since deceased Muñoz Rivera determines at present, by a sort of surviving prestige, Liberal Party allegiance and strength in the community even though new issues and new leaders had subsequently arisen that might be considered as demanding recognition in their own right.

Another thing noticeable is the absence of friction between and among the leaders of the local parties and groups. The compactness and neighborliness of the people of the community as a whole and the social and economic bonds that tend to produce an interdependence among all leaders in their non-political pursuits have meant a camaraderie and respect for the leaders of one party or group by those of another. All are submerged in an intimate social and economic environment that discourages initiation and continuation of schismatic political conditions. All political leaders are, first of all,

Comerisefios and secondly, party politicians. They tend only to "swing into action" on a politically partisan basis when preparing for, and conducting, an election.

Mr. A, a Socialist of the Clase Primera, works for his brother, a Liberal of the Clase Primera.

Mr. B, a Socialist of the Clase Segunda, rents his business quarters from a Liberal of the Clase Primera, and his business requires that he cater to the wealthy.

Mr. C, a Republican, belongs to the Clase Primera, and most of his business ties are with wealthy Liberals.

An influential Liberal gives informal audiences to all party leaders even though his most congenial friends are Liberals.

All local party leaders hold their position by merit. They have risen to their present political position because they possess such qualities as geniality, organizing ability, active political interest, and finally, ability as stump-speakers. This latter quality is especially important among the leaders of the Coalición.

Issues. The planks that the local leaders of the insular parties stand upon are not local in their character. Local issues do not exist. Issues are determined by the party's central committee. Local leaders give voice to them. This is in keeping with the centralized form of government. One of the important planks in the Liberal Party's platform is independence for the Island. This

has nothing to do with local conditions. The demand for independence is one with which local Liberal leaders say there is much local sympathy; and it is said that with the waning influence of the American Tobacco Company in the community, the sentiment for independence is growing among the wealthier.

In opposition to this plank is that of the Republicans who stand for statehood. This plank is supported by their political allies, the Socialistas. But the Socialists appear more actively interested in improving the economic and educational well-being of the laboring classes. They are not, at present, concerned with any basic socialistic program.

Liberal leaders say that their platform is important because local sentiment is for independence, but they intimate that this plank in their party platform is the result of a "political accident", namely, that the Coalición Party is in power in the Island. The implication is that were it not for this fact, this issue would be of no practical concern. The reasons for this will follow:

The Voter. All males twenty-one years old and over, subject to restrictions pertaining to nativity, felonious acts, and the like, have the privilege of voting. In

addition to such restrictions, a literacy requirement is imposed on female voters which eliminates approximately thirty-five per cent of the women who are of voting age.

Local leaders estimate that approximately ninety per cent of the voting population inherits its party affiliations. There are comparatively few independent voters in the community.

Other factors enter in to control the vote. In the first place, Liberal leaders say that votes are not bought because their party is dominant. Victory is sure for them. Then, most of the monetary contributions, they say, go into the coffers of the party to be used where most needed, for instance, where party strength is more equally divided.

The Coalition Party in Comerio is poor. Because of the greater wealth of the Liberal Party, the Coalition Party prefers to use its resources elsewhere--where chances of victory are greater.

While Liberal leaders admit that no votes are bought outright or that resources are used directly to influence voters, they do admit that certain economic conditions, "by the nature of things", work in their political favor. These leaders are conscious of the political results that accrue to the Liberal Party, from the fact that approximately

one-half of the voting population either lives on the farms of the wealthy Liberals or works in some local business that is owned by a Liberal. It was previously shown that this had its influence on Coalición leaders and to no less a degree it influences the rank and file of voters. They say that there is no need for cajoling or for direct material inducements, "It is enough," they say, "if a 'Liberal truck' goes to the country on election day, collects thirty men who work on the tobacco ranch of a Liberal, and brings them to the polls." Perhaps it is "proper" for a local boss to suggest casually where to put the cross in order to vote the ticket straight.

These little attentions are considered sufficient and even flattering to this class of voters. There is another vote-getting device, the efficiency of which is tacitly admitted. All members of the community know that municipal poor relief, free drugs, and free medical service are locally administered by the Liberals. The Liberals run the local government. The rendering of these public services tends, then, to be identified with the Liberal Party. The least Mr. A can do, in return for Liberal humanitarianism, is to give his vote to that party. Thus, "voting right" is a moral obligation in the eyes of many. When asked whether there was partisan

discrimination in the dispensing of free medical service, the answer was: "No, all are treated alike. The leaders wouldn't stand for favoritism. Anyway, we know our party is safe as far as this municipality is concerned."

Voters in the town are not so amenable to these influences. What strength both groups of the Coalición Party has in the municipality is found mostly in town. Voters are somewhat more independent and more enlightened on political subjects; but, from the point of view of voting strength, the rural vote is always the deciding factor. Those in town, or in the country for that matter, who are too contentious or who show signs of being "political infidels" can be effectively dealt with by the simple political expedient of ignoring them. That, in itself, is a most effective way of controlling the lower class voter, because those receiving attention exert social pressure.

But opposition is not always easily squelched. The chief of police reports that the police sometimes have difficulty quieting unruly groups during the election period. Nevertheless, a combination of such influences as party heritage, economic dependence, "free medicine", indifference to and unfamiliarity with issues, impulse to conform, and the desire to be on the winning side make the voter quite easily controlled.

Class, Wealth, Party. All but four or five of the Clase Primera belong to the Liberal Party. With the exception of about the same number, all of the wealthy individuals in the community belong to the Clase Primera. The social, political, and economic ascendancy tends to be lodged in one group. More precisely, those who count in the community hold the superordinate position because they possess ascendancy in these three ways.

However, there is a closer correlation between class and wealth than there is between political alignment and either class or wealth. As just stated, all but four or five of those who are wealthy and who belong to the Clase Primera also belong to the Liberal Party. Only a small percentage of those with Liberal Party leanings belong to the Clase Primera. This is because party lines cut across wealth and social position. Political expediency necessitates a lessening of social distance between classes in order that the most important end of the party, namely, victory, be attained. But political power does not begin in the lower classes and ascend. It, like moral values in the community, is lodged in the vested interests at the top. Thence it descends to control and condition the political interests of those in the lower social levels. Therefore, the controlling fact remains,

in spite of the diffused character of party affiliations, that political power is lodged in the same class as is the economic power.

### Law and Order

The Police. "I have lived here five years, and there has been no serious trouble. Sometimes we have difficulty in handling partisan crowds during elections. Most of our arrests are made for minor disturbances of the peace, such as fighting and drunkenness. No one has resisted arrest during my residence here. We have four policemen in town, besides myself. I get ninety dollars a month and the other four, sixty."<sup>1</sup>

Crime. The following is a list of minor and major law violations and convictions taken from the municipal court records for the fiscal year of 1934-1935:

#### A. Misdemeanors:

Offense	Number convicted.
Weights and measures . . . . .	1
Assault with intent to commit . . . . .	1
serious injury . . . . .	1
False representation . . . . .	7
Carrying concealed weapons . . . . .	23
Assault and battery (fighting) . . . . .	92
Sanitary ordinances . . . . .	39
Automobile laws (license, driver's permit, etc.) . . . . .	50
Disturbing the peace (drunkenness, quarreling, etc.) . . . . .	95
Petty larceny . . . . .	18
Abandoning minors . . . . .	8
Malicious damage to property . . . . .	6
Prohibited games (shooting craps, etc.) . . . . .	85
Abuse of confidence . . . . .	4

<sup>1</sup>Statement by the local chief of police.

Blue laws (closing stores on Sunday) . . .	10
Infraction of public service regulations (public vehicles carrying too many passengers) . . . . .	40
Tobacco and alcohol revenue laws . . . . .	18
Violation of traffic laws. . . . .	1
Regulation of sports and games . . . . .	2
Fleeing from seat of crime . . . . .	1
Infractions of municipal ordinances (water, sanitary regulations, and the like) . . . . .	19

### B. Felonies:

Offense	Number Convicted.
Seduction. . . . .	2
137 Act Justice (obstructing justice). . . . .	1
Mayhem . . . . .	2
Burglary . . . . .	1
Assault with deadly weapon . . . . .	3
Habitual criminal act. . . . .	3
Homicide . . . . .	1

The following table presents the types of offense and number of convictions for six months in the years 1934, as shown by the municipal court record for the fiscal year 1934-1935:

Offense --	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Total
Disturbing peace	8	8	1	--	5	5	27
Violation of liquor laws	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
Traffic violation	1	5	2	3	4	--	15
Assault and battery (fighting)	6	7	2	6	4	20	45
Abandoning minors	--	--	--	--	1	1	2
Code 553 (fleeing from seat of crime)	1	--	--	1	--	--	2
Violation of lottery	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
Petty larceny	--	--	--	1	3	1	5
Drunkenness	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
False representation	--	--	--	--	3	1	4
Carrying concealed weapons	--	--	--	--	5	--	5
Sanitary violations	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
Games prohibited	--	1	5	16	21	--	43

(Continued)

Offense --	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Total
Seduction	--	1	--	2	2	--	4
Rape	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
Malicious acts	--	2	2	1	--	1	6
Internal revenue	--	--	--	3	--	--	3
<b>Total offenses by months</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>168</b>

The foregoing tables seem to indicate that approximately one-half of the arrests and convictions grow out of drunkenness and fighting. If violation of gambling laws be included, approximately two-thirds of the offenses would be covered. The remainder include violations of municipal ordinances and insular codes, and crimes against property. The two broad types of offenses that cover most of the infractions of the law are crimes against persons and against regulatory acts.

This table might also indicate that there is a seasonal fluctuation in the total number of crimes committed. March, April, and May are the busy agricultural months. June and July, the months that had the highest crime rates, are, agriculturally, the most inactive ones.

These data cover the municipality as a whole. It is probably true that many misdemeanors occur in the rural areas, such as fighting and drunkenness, that are

never apprehended by the police. The chief of police says that no major crime has been committed, since his incumbency, in which the perpetrator has not been detected. His observation is probably correct.

The frequency of fighting is apparent from the tables. This is surely a most common occurrence among the lower classes. It is a local custom to have personal disputes settled with a fist fight "down by the bridge," which is just outside the city limits and out of the beat of the police, but not outside their jurisdiction. Five fights were observed here. No one was arrested.

The other day Mr. A, a jibaro,<sup>1</sup> became slightly intoxicated and started arguing with a fellow. The upshot of the argument was a fight in which Mr. A knocked down his opponent. His friends complimented him on his prowess. This "went to his head."<sup>1</sup> The following Monday he again came to town and stopped at the bridge. This time he was more intoxicated and was more vociferous about his own prowess. His brother-in-law, who ran a small fruit stand, gave him a knife and told him to go out and "get" some one. He flourished the knife and commenced calling an onlooker vile names. Mr. B intervened and tried to get the knife away from him. He succeeded only after he had threatened to call the police. Insulting talk continued until a young husky man, who appeared to be the fistic hero of the neighborhood, took it upon himself to pacify him. Mr. A was knocked down (or shoved down) twice. His diminutive wife appeared on the scene and by pushing and pleading managed to get him to go home. The young man had added one more laurel to his fistic prowess. He walked proudly away with a group of admirers trailing after him.

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<sup>1</sup>Jibaro, native Puerto Rican, usually a poor tenant or farm laborer, who lives in the open country.

The data also show that premeditated crimes are uncommon and that the majority of offenses are committed impulsively or as a result of negligence. There is no organized crime. The municipal judge reports that all of these crimes were committed by the lower classes. He also reports that civil actions, contract or tort, are rare.

It might appear that crimes against property would be more common in view of the prevalence of poverty, but the data show the contrary.

Sociability, frequency of personal contacts, and the disposition of the lower classes to use, intemperately, intoxicants that cause emotional instability are the primary causes of frequent offenses against persons.

Courts. A morning in the Justice of Peace Court:

Defendant was hired to paint plaintiff's house. The paint disappeared, and defendant was charged with taking it. The defendant undertook to prove that that he had spilled the paint and has paid \$1.60 for it. He satisfied the judge and was acquitted.

Complaint: two charges--assault and disturbing the peace. Two men quarreled over a fifty-cent debt. They called each other vile names and were arrested for disturbing the peace. They were put in the local jail, in the same cell. A fight ensued while in their cell, for which they were each given fifteen dollars or fifteen days.

On the first charge one of the litigants had hired a lawyer to defend him. He was acquitted. The other could not afford one and received thirty dollars fine or thirty days in jail. The policeman that had arrested them said that they were both guilty but that the lawyer had "doctored" the witnesses.

Charge: Carrying a concealed weapon (black jack) and assault. The one charged with carrying a concealed

weapon undertook to show, through his lawyer, that the policeman who had arrested him found the weapon on a chair and had apprehended him illegally, because he had peeked through the lattice in the door instead of entering directly.

Both of these men had been working for a local carpenter, who appeared as a witness for both. On had a swollen eye, which the policeman on the witness-stand said had been caused by a blow from the black jack. The injured party denied this and said that he had fallen down. The testimony of the carpenter acquitted both of them. He wanted them both to go back to work for him. The policeman said, privately, that they were both guilty.

Speeding: defendant charged with going forty-five kilometers<sup>1</sup> an hour down Main Street. Convicted and fined fifteen dollars or given fifteen days in jail. Driver's license and automobile tags taken from him.

Charge: assault and battery. Police arrested two men for fighting in the street. Complainant stated in his written complaint that he had been assaulted and that the defendant had smashed his nose badly.

When complainant took the witness-stand, he denied his original complaint and said that his nose had been smashed in a fall. Complainant sentenced to fifteen days in jail for perjury. The defendant, who was the aggressor, was given a ten-dollar fine or ten days in jail.

Contempt of court: when case number two was disposed of, a man watching the proceeding through a window laughed aloud. Judge ordered his arrest for contempt. He was sentenced to fifteen days in jail but was released in three days.

Four other cases of a similar nature were disposed of during the morning. All ten of these cases were misdemeanors. The district judge presided over the court without a jury in any of the cases.

The District Court holds sessions in the municipality once a month and has original jurisdiction over all felony

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<sup>1</sup> Kilometer, about two-thirds of a mile.

cases or misdemeanors as well as civil cases where the amount involved is more than twenty-five dollars.

The Justice of Peace Court (Municipal Court) has original and concurrent jurisdiction over minor offenses but cannot impose fines of more than twenty-five dollars or jail sentences for more than twenty-five days.

The Jail. The municipal jail is located in the alcaldia<sup>1</sup>. There are three medium-sized concrete cells, one of which is usually assigned to women. The concrete ceilings are high. There is plenty of natural light and ventilation. There is one showerbath, a wash room, and four narrow cots. The cells are equipped with electric light fixtures, but the municipality cannot afford to use any light except candles. There is also a concrete "bull pen" with high walls open to the sky. Parallel bars of concrete reinforcing run across the top and are bedded into the top of the concrete wall.

During the daytime prisoners are allowed freedom of the premises. They may lounge in a hammock in the patio which is shaded or may loaf on the front steps of the alcaldia. They may also cross the street, unescorted, to buy tobacco.

When the municipality can afford it, it allows each

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<sup>1</sup>Alcaldia, Town Hall.

prisoner twenty cents a day with which he may purchase meals across the street. His bill of fare is usually a cup of coffee for breakfast (five cents); rice and beans for lunch (eight cents); soup and coffee for dinner (five cents); and the rest is usually spent for tobacco.

### Public Health Administration

The most important public service performed by the municipal government is the administration of public health. Prior to the advent of the Federal Relief Administration, poor relief was of equal local importance, but this function has been largely taken over, temporarily at least, by the Federal Government.

The municipal health personnel is composed of a physician, a medical assistant, an apothecary, and a public health nurse. This staff ministers to the health needs of a municipality of 16,715 people. The municipal physician also has a small private practice among the wealthier people in the community.

Examination and Treatment. During the first five months of 1935 the Department of Health reported the following medical examinations and medical treatment:

Ailment	Number examined	Positive	Treated
Malaria . . . . .	118 . . . . .	33 . . . . .	33
Syphilis . . . . .	138 . . . . .	27 . . . . .	27
Tuberculosis . . . . .	139 . . . . .	61 . . . . .	61
Hookworm . . . . .	241 . . . . .	103 . . . . .	103

During the same period 1,699 were inoculated for typhoid fever.

First Aid. In addition to medical examination and treatment, large numbers of individuals come to the municipal physician for first-aid treatment. For example, on one Monday in June, 1935, there were eighty-eight treatments for tumors, cuts, skin infections, and burns. The infected or wounded areas are cleaned with a disinfectant and covered with gauze.

Prescriptions. The work of the local physician and his assistant also include the giving of large numbers of prescriptions. The municipal apothecary reports that an average of 200 persons receive free medicine on each Monday, 190 each Saturday, and 90 each Tuesday. People come to town on Mondays and Saturdays for three things: to see the physician and/or get free medicine; to visit the local Federal relief agency and get provisions; and to visit the church for confessions and mass.

The most common types of medicines dispensed and the ailments they are supposed to cure are:

Quinine and strychnine--general anemic condition.  
 Bismuth -- diarrhea in children.  
 Spirits of nitrous ether -- bronchitis.  
 Bicarbonate and mint -- indigestion.  
 Luquinine -- malaria in children.  
 Sal sosa -- as a physic for hookworm infection.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The term, Anemia, is often used locally to describe the physical condition of a person who is infected with hookworm.

(Two doses are taken each week until cured. Usually, it takes four doses. About 300 doses are given each Monday).

Quinina -- fever in babies.  
 Zinc oxide -- white precipitate, for sores.  
 Castor oil -- indigestion. (Three to four gallons weekly),  
 Aspirin -- about 240 each Monday.  
 Sloan's linament -- rheumatism.  
 Citric acid and potassium bicarbonate -- vomiting.  
 Phenacetine -- for grippe.  
 Uritropine -- kidney infection.  
 Tolu and cocillana -- colds  
 Poción brasileña -- indigestion.

Iodine, mercurochrome, cresol, gauze, and cotton are sent to those needing first aid in the rural areas who cannot come to town to get relief.

Home Treatments. The apothecary listed the following home treatments used by country people. Most of these are tree and herb extracts taken from native flora:

Verdolaga -- refreshment.  
 Malva -- prickly heat.  
 Yerba Luisa -- indigestion.  
 Aguacate<sup>1</sup> -- pain in the stomach.  
 Orange juice -- general debility.  
 Tuna (fruit) -- plaster for pain in the chest.  
 Tautua -- indigestion.  
 Saúco -- catarrh.  
 Escoba blanca -- hemorrhage.  
 Yagua quemada -- to stop bleeding.  
 Apio -- for sleeping.  
 Higuera (fruit) -- physic.  
 Tobacco seed -- to induce abortion.  
 Tobacco leaves -- swollen legs.  
 Chewing tobacco -- sores, sore throat, and bee stings.  
 Tomato leaves -- to ripen tumors.

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<sup>1</sup>Aguacate, Avocado or alligator pear.

Other Home "Cures":

Goat's dung and olive oil -- burns.

Mother's milk -- sore eyes and ears.

Soak rags in milk and hang in sunshine -- to dry up milk of mother whose baby has died.

Make a prayer and massage the afflicted part simulating the cross in the movements -- for indigestion, rheumatism in a joint, or any other localized ailment.

Rum and chicken guts -- swollen glands.

Leaf tea -- to dry up umbilicus.

According to the municipal physician, the chief obstacles to the promotion of an efficient health service are:

a. Deficiency in personnel and inadequacy of physical and medical equipment.

b. Prevalence of superstition and "quack cures"-- especially among country people. "I have a better cure than the doctor gave me."

c. Inability, due to poverty or indifference or ignorance, to continue treatment as prescribed. "The physician prescribes milk and other nourishing food before I take a hookworm treatment. I can't afford to buy milk."

The physician complains that many take medicine home and throw it away, or get tired of using it, or forget to use it. "Many," he says, "will come to town to get an infected wound treated and bandaged. When they go home, they become careless and get it infected again. This is why tetanus is common."

Midwives. The sanitary department, under the direction of a trained nurse, is instructing twenty-seven

country women in midwifery. They meet once a week. The nurse demonstrates, with a rubber doll, the method of delivery. All of these women in the school are illiterate. If they do not attend the school, they are arrested. They are each given a bag containing scissors, tweezers, gauze, cotton, mercurochrome, lysol, iodine, and silver nitrate.

They are requested to discourage all superstitious practices and to wash their hands carefully before delivering a baby. Instruction is continued indefinitely. It was customary among the country people to sever the umbilical chord with a machete<sup>1</sup> and put a little dirt on the umbilicus. During this year, there has not been a death from tetanus caused by umbilical infection.

Midwives get from two dollars to twenty-five cents for each delivery. Many times they get nothing. When any difficulties in delivery are encountered, the midwives are supposed to visit the mother three days after her delivery. The public health nurse supervises the work of the midwives and also gives lectures and demonstrations for the benefit of pregnant women.

The foregoing describes the organization, character, and amount of public health work done, and the chief problems of the local health service.

Many influences combine to create an extensive health problem in this community. Complacent social

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<sup>1</sup>Machete, corn knife.

attitudes; superstitions, both religious and non-religious, density of population; and, above all, a low level of income combine to produce a low average health level.

Habituation to a low average health standard seems to have similar social consequences to habituation to a low income level. Social attitudes tend to be adjusted to the level of both. Religious values furnish a sort of an escape adjustment. Those used to higher health and living standards might call the health and living conditions among a large majority of poor Comorian families pathological; but from the point of view of this community, these conditions are so prevalent, and the attitudes toward them is so complacent, that the condition may be described as more or less normal.

Wherever these conditions are recognized as really pathological, the individual and social dissatisfaction that is manifested is largely the result of extraneous influences, such as campaigns for good health, good food, and a higher level of living.

A visitor to a poor community is beset with an unending variety of complaints. As soon as he goes his way, the complaints tend to disappear in a neighborhood atmosphere that operates on a level of geniality and of gossip whose context again becomes chiefly the commonplace happenings in a seemingly problemless environment.

However, if ill-health continues to be a cause of complaint, it does not tend to create a misanthropic personality, or a fatalistic attitude. Complacency covers over such conditions as ill-health and poverty. It makes an individual who "ought" to be sad and problem-ridden appear essentially happy. "After all, what matters here?"

#### Summary

a. The government of Puerto Rico is centralized. The local political units (municipalities) are subordinate to the central government. Local governments deal with purely local affairs. Their discretionary duties are closely circumscribed by Federal Law and insular statutes.

b. Local parties and party organization are subordinated to central party control. There are no local issues.

c. The Liberal Party has controlled the municipal government since American occupation; the Coalition Party at present controls the insular government.

d. Local political leaders report that politics usually is of little importance during election interims. Interest, they say, has been sustained during the present election interim as a result of the Coalition's control of the insular government and the active efforts of insular parties to control, through political appointments, the Federal relief funds.

e. There are no professional politicians in the community.

f. The majority of voters inherit (socially) their party affiliations. Voters are easily "handled" because of their economic dependence upon wealthy Liberals.

g. The most influential members of the Liberal Party are the wealthiest members in the community. Most influential Liberals also belong to the upper classes.

h. Most crimes committed in the community are offenses against the person and minor infractions of local ordinances and insular statutes.

i. There seems to be some seasonal fluctuation in the amount and type of crimes committed. There is no difficulty in guarding criminals.

j. Public health administration is the most important function of local government.

k. The general level of health is low. The primary obstacles to a successful health service are: insufficiency of personnel and material resources; prevalence of superstitions and "quack cures"; poverty and indifference.

## CHAPTER VI

## EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## General Characteristics

Centralized Educational Control. Public school education, like political institutions, is centralized. The control of the educational system of the Island resides in an Insular Department of Education. The Department is headed by a Commissioner of Education who is a Federal appointee. The Commissioner of Education appoints school superintendents who are administrative officers for each municipality. Directly under the municipal school superintendents are the school principals of both high and grade schools, who in turn are responsible for their teaching staffs.

General educational policies for the Island come under the jurisdiction of the Insular Department of Education, as for example, in the decision that English is to be taught as a language and not as a medium of instruction for all other courses. The hiring and removal of teachers, as well as the determination of salaries, are also under the supervision of the Department, subject to the fact that recommendations of local school officials, if influential with the Department, have considerable weight in the decisions.

It might seem that with a centralized system such as that indicated politics and local influence would be unimportant, but the reverse is true. The Department of Education is susceptible to political pressure. In Comerio, for example, those teachers who are in the favor of senators and representatives of that district are in an advantageous position. On several occasions teachers have gone over the heads of their immediate superiors and attained their ends through direct appeal to the Department.

Although Comerieños, under this centralized system, ostensibly have little to say about the educational policy of the local schools, evidence shows that it is important for the teachers to be well-liked in the community. In the first place, community respect for a teacher lessens his problems as a teacher and this favorable attitude is also important if the teacher is to become a part of the community; in the second place, community respect is important because public opinion in the community is able to exert pressure upon local political representatives who, in turn are known to use their influence with the Department of Education.

While centralized control of public education may tend to remove the public schools from the more obvious local and political influences, it is nevertheless true that currying local favor is of importance for the local

school teacher. The teacher, if he cares to remain influential in the community, cannot escape from these influences. The successful local teacher plays his political "game" just as actively as he devotes himself to his profession.

The Unique Role of Public Education. Public education as an institution in the local culture pattern is unique because, when describing the educational system of Comerio, an institution is being described that has not had a natural evolution in local culture. Public school education of the American type has only been identified with the community since the beginning of the present century and therefore cannot properly be considered an indigenous part of the social heritage.

Public school education is the only institution as a whole in the community in which the system, including the chief traits within the system, and the philosophy that underlies it, is the result of organized diffusion from a strange country with an alien culture. The element of coercion, which tends to underlie all organized diffusion, has not resulted in any marked resentment that would bring on a culture conflict. The present educational system was not grafted onto a pre-existing, large-scale educational pattern. It was and is primarily an addition to a culture which did not, prior to the diffusion of the new system, contain as an active part

of its institutional pattern a public system of education or, for that matter, any very active agency of formal education. Thus, the present educational system was transplanted into a cultural milieu that did not take active cognizance of the importance of formal education.

So its induction did not create serious problems even though the system did not harmonize with the indigenous culture. Herein appears to lie the secret of its success and the rapidity of its assimilation. The problems it has created tend to be outside of the area of conflict and the process of assimilation.

The only other foreign institution that approaches education, from the point of view of its success, is the economic. But the differences are more fundamental than the similarities. In the first place, the diffusion of economic traits has been piecemeal, as in the introduction through ordinary commercial intercourse of a large variety of foreign consumption goods, such as building material, automobiles, radios, refrigerators, new kinds of food, and household furnishings. These are material traits which have identified themselves with the Comerioño's standard of living, but which, owing to the ways that wealth is distributed, are enjoyed only by a few. On the other hand the establishment of a public educational system that is American in origin has tended to

out across class and economic lines. The acquisition of an alien educational pattern, therefore, tends to have a broader community significance than does incorporation into the standard of living of specific material traits.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, these material traits continue to retain, even after a considerable time, a limited meaning. They do not seem to have such general value as do the educational traits which appear, by their nature, to be more accessible to all classes. The comparison may be somewhat arbitrary, but the principle involved in the understanding of Comerioñan culture is fundamental.

#### Statistical Aspects of Comerioñan Education

Illiteracy. The following United States Census reports on illiteracy will show the trends in the municipality during the past generation:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter I, topic "American" in section titled "Puerto Rican Culture," contains a brief explanation of reasons for the generally successful diffusion of American traits to Puerto Rico. This topic also includes remarks on education in Comerío prior to American occupation.

<sup>2</sup> These statistics are taken from the following censuses: Census of Porto Rico taken under the auspices of the War Department, 1899, p. 75.

Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1910 and 1920, Vol. III, p. 1210.

Fifteenth Census of the United States, Volume entitled, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 156.

TABLE I

Year	Population	No. 10 or over	No. illiterate	Per cent illiterate
1899	8,294	1,015 (21 or over)	788	77.6
1910	11,170	7,300 (estimate)	5,548 (estimate)	76.0
1920	14,780	9,657	6,217	64.4
1930	16,715	11,212	5,785	51.6
1930	2,502 (Town)	1,813 (Town)	531 (Town)	29.3 (Town)

There has been approximately a twenty-five per cent decrease in illiteracy from 1910 to 1930 for the municipality as a whole. Notice the contrast between the town and the whole municipality. The rural area of Comerio had, according to the 1930 Census, an illiteracy percentage of 55<sup>1</sup>. The difference in illiteracy between the town and rural Comerio is probably the result of the fact that most of the wealthier classes live in town and also because the town schools are more accessible to students.

Literacy of parents of seventh and eighth-grade students:<sup>2</sup>

TABLE II

Parent	Reads	Does not read	Per cent illiterate
Father . . .	25 . . . . .	14 . . . . .	35.8
Mother . . .	28 . . . . .	18 . . . . .	39.7

<sup>1</sup> Fifteenth Census of the United States, Outlying Territories, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> This table is the summary of a questionnaire given to seventh and eighth-grade students.

This indicates that about 37 per cent of these students' parents are unable to read. Illiteracy is slightly higher among mothers than fathers. About forty-five per cent of these parents live in the country.

An idea of the amount of education that parents of high-school students have had, which is more representative of the better classes than is the foregoing table, is shown by the following table. This table also indicates the prevalence of illiteracy:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE III

Grade attended	Number of parents
Grade School	14
No schooling . . . . .	14
First grade . . . . .	6
Second . . . . .	8
Third . . . . .	12
Fourth . . . . .	12
Fifth . . . . .	2
Sixth . . . . .	8
Seventh . . . . .	4
Eighth . . . . .	7
High School	
First year . . . . .	0
Second . . . . .	1
Third . . . . .	1
Graduate . . . . .	1
College	
Second year . . . . .	1
Graduate . . . . .	1

<sup>1</sup> This table is the summary of a questionnaire given to high-school students.

There are 17.8 per cent of the high-school students' parents with no schooling; five out of the seventy-eight have gone beyond high school; twenty-six out of the seventy-eight have gone beyond the fourth grade.<sup>1</sup>

School Age, Enrollment, and Attendance. The 1930 Census reports on age periods, number attending, and per cent attending within those age periods, are as follows for the municipality as a whole:

TABLE IV

<u>Year periods</u>	<u>Total number</u>	<u>Attending school</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
7-13 (incl.) . . .	3,616 . . . . .	1,738 . . . . .	48.1
14-15 (incl.) . . .	848 . . . . .	237 . . . . .	27.9
16-17 " . . . . .	700 . . . . .	88 . . . . .	12.6
18-20 " . . . . .	1,389 . . . . .	56 . . . . .	4.0

The legal school age for required attendance is from seven to thirteen inclusive. During the school year of 1930 about fifty-two per cent of those of school age were not attending school.

Total enrollment in the elementary school of the town of Comercio in May, 1935, was 793. Of this number, 161 were from town and 632 from the country.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Census, Reports on Outlying Territories and Possessions, 1930, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Figures computed from Public School Records.

The ages for those enrolled ranged from six to nineteen inclusive, with thirteen as the average for the eight grades.

The enrollment in the Comerio High School for the years from 1927 to 1934 by grades is as follows:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE V

Year	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	Total
1927-1928	32	24	22	18	96
1928-1929	37	24	19	20	100
1929-1930	33	19	24	12	88
1930-1931	34	26	20	22	102
1931-1932	43	27	29	21	120
1932-1933	35	31	27	21	114
1933-1934	34	33	17	23	107
1934-1935	62	33	29	14	138
Total	310	217	187	151	

Eleven are enrolled from other municipalities. The percentage of individuals in the town of high-school age who are attending high school cannot be accurately estimated because there is considerable overlapping in age with those in the upper grades; and also because there was no record of those attending high school from the rural areas.

There appears to be approximately a fifty per cent decrease in enrollment between the Freshman and Senior years. Judging from the data at hand, this is greater than

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the High School Record.

that between the first and eighth grades. This is probably explained by the fact that most of those of high-school age are not in the compulsory school-age period. It is also true that many in the older age groups withdraw from school for economic reasons of one form or another. Ordinarily, many high-school students drop out in the Freshman and later years because of inability for or lack of interest in the work.

Comparison of age distribution of elementary and high-school students:<sup>1</sup>

TABLE VI

Elementary		High School	
Age	No. of students		No. of students
6	13		--
7	73		--
8	72		--
9	89		--
10	125		--
11	102		--
12	116		1
13	86		9
14	72		15
15	48		23
16	27		33
17	13		28
18	1		10
19	1		8
20	---		5
21	---		5
24	---		1

<sup>1</sup> Taken from grade and high-school records.

The average age for grade-school pupils is eleven years and one month; for high-school pupils it is sixteen years and three months.

The Principal of the elementary schools said that, according to the standardized grade-age, about sixty-two per cent are one or more years over age, and about three per cent are under age. She stated that poverty and ill-health are the primary causes of this high ratio of over-aged pupils. The average age for the high-school student in Comerio coincides closely with the standard for the Island. These students, in the main, represent a cross-section of the better economic class and as a rule are not worried so much as the lower classes by economic handicaps, nor do they have as many health problems. For this reason, there is a considerable age overlapping between grade and high-school students.

The average daily attendance for those regularly enrolled in the elementary schools is 93.3 per cent. The chief causes for absence as given by the principal are: ill-health, helping in the home, truancy, and floods that make it difficult for some who live in the country to cross the river. The principal reports little seasonal fluctuation in attendance.

The following reasons were given for leaving elementary school:

TABLE VII

Cause	Number
Poverty . . . . .	10
Lived too far . . . . .	3
Went to work . . . . .	3
Changed residence or transferred. . . . .	28
Illness . . . . .	12
Misconduct . . . . .	4
Truancy . . . . .	1
Total	61

Economic conditions, according to the principal, have been the cause of about half of the withdrawals.

#### Public School Teachers

Number and Salaries. The elementary school in town employs sixteen teachers--five men and eleven women. Fifteen of these teachers are married. The high school employs eight teachers, five of whom are married. The average number of students per teacher in the elementary school is fifty; in the high school there are seventeen students per teacher. The congestion is so great in the lower grades that the classes are divided, part of the students attending in the morning and part in the afternoon. Not until the fifth grade is it possible for students to attend school both morning and afternoon.

The superintendent states that Comerio needs twice as many teachers as well as much more room and equipment

in order to handle effectively the number of students enrolled in the elementary schools.<sup>1</sup> This understaffing does not exist in the high school, and there appears to be adequate room, too.

TABLE VIII

Monthly salaries of grade-school teachers:

Principal (does no teaching) . . . . .	\$90.72
Special English teacher. . . . .	95.00
Eleven teachers . . . . .	81.22
Three teachers . . . . .	64.50
One teacher (rehabilitation) . . . . .	60.00

The average salary of the high-school teachers is 112 dollars a month.

Academic Training of Teachers. The academic training of the forty-nine teachers in the municipality is as follows:

College graduates . . . . .	5
Two years' normal course. . . . .	9
High-school graduates and one year professional work. . . . .	11
High-school graduates . . . . .	11
Teachers who are not high-school graduates . . . . .	13

Three of the five college graduates teach in the high school, and two teach in the elementary school in town.

<sup>1</sup> This is a common condition throughout the Island.

All thirteen of the teachers who are not high-school graduates teach in the rural schools.

The Department of Education, in cooperation with the School of Education at the University, is at present making efforts to raise the academic standards of grade- and high-school teachers. But local teachers say that they are handicapped by a heavy teaching load plus a low salary that makes difficult matriculation at the University Summer School.

Disciplinary Problems. The high-school principal reports no disciplinary problems during the school year and only one during the preceding year which ran something like this:

One of the high-school students wasn't getting his lessons because he said he could not afford to buy a textbook.<sup>1</sup> A warning card was sent him which he refused to sign even though ordered to by the principal. The principal sent for the father, and the father ordered the boy to sign which he did. The father promised to buy textbooks.

The following afternoon his grandmother (mother dead) called on the principal and asked whether her grandson would pass if books were bought for him. She said his father was earning only a few cents a day and there wasn't much use of buying books anyway as she was going to die next year and there would be no one to take care of the boy.

The university students went on a strike two years ago in protest against the appointment of a certain man to the board of regents. They sent several telegrams to the high-school students of Comerio calling upon them to go on a sympathetic strike. Each

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<sup>1</sup> Elementary school textbooks are free.

telegram that was received was taken to the principal for his advice. The principal left the problem to the students. They called a meeting and voted against the strike even when many other high schools in the Island had voted to join the university students.

The most common disciplinary problems in the grade school have to do with occasional fights and vulgarities. Insubordination is rare. Parents take sides with their children in the early stages of the difficulties; but when called in to talk matters over, they usually swing to the side of the teacher. Some teachers state that modern theories opposing corporeal punishment make student discipline more difficult.

#### Interest in Education

Students. The Superintendent of the Schools in Comerio said that students seemed to be very much interested in social sciences because these subjects were, to some extent, new. Students are also interested in the elementary sciences. He also reported that when he first came to Comerio he had considerable difficulty in getting students interested in carpentry, but now they like it. The same was true of athletics for girls and of agricultural and horticultural subjects. He stated that the change in favor of these subjects is the result of a like change in the attitudes of the community towards these subjects which, in turn, has influenced their children.

It would appear more probable that the change in sentiment came through the establishment in the curriculum of manual art courses. Students have grown to like these subjects and, in turn, they have influenced their parents. The speed of this change in student attitude may be partly, at least, attributable to the fact that activities in a school room tend to be carried on collectively. The collective performing of manual tasks in coöperation with an instructor, which are generally looked upon by the community as socially degrading to those who claim to belong to the upper classes, does not tend to cause ridicule. If a student were to do the same thing alone, either in or out of school, he would be the butt of ridicule, which is one thing he heartily dislikes.

The domestic science teacher reported that girls in her cooking classes were undoubtedly interested in their subject--girls who would not be seen following culinary pursuits in their own homes. One teacher said: "Students like manual activities in school but it is mostly to please the teacher, because they won't do anything at home." The teachers wanted some girls to make tablecloths and napkins at home, and it took all kinds of cajoling to get them to do it. It appears that these girls may really like domestic science in the school but be self-conscious about the same

type of work at home.

The question, "Why don't high school graduates care to work with their hands?" was asked in a high-school class in civics and social studies, and all fifteen actively participated in its discussion. None said that a high-school graduate ought to have to work with his hands. They gave four reasons:

"A high-school graduate rates more decent work because he is more educated."

"Agricultural labor is 'low' work for a high-school graduate."

"If I carry a box up the street, people will look 'funny' at me."

"Our parents and their parents did not work with their hands, why should we?"

Not all of these students belonged to the Clase Primera, but they undoubtedly felt that their schooling was a stepping-stone to a decent occupation. Those of the Clase Primera had their class traditions to depend on for their authority. The others could follow the widely accepted view that a high-school education was a means to "be somebody." El que no sabe no vale nada<sup>1</sup> is a principle that is deeply imbedded in Comerleñan attitudes. To go to school is to know something.

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<sup>1</sup> El que no sabe no vale nada. He who knows nothing is worth nothing.

Two movements seem to be in operation: first, schooling is a means by which the individual may fortify his present position in the Clase Primera or, for those below this level, raises their hopes of getting into a profession that will result in social recognition; second, a democratizing influence prevailing in the public school environment where all social classes are thrown together on the same level of interest and activity. The first movement is more vigorous and bids fair to continue so indefinitely under the stress of economic and population conditions that make for class distinctions.

For the same reason the student plays a dual role: a class conscious one out of school and a fairly democratic one in school.

Local teachers say that poor students in general, even though they have to overcome serious obstacles that make them backward in school, usually take their school work more seriously and are more likely to be interested in the practical results of education. It is not uncommon to notice in case of local high-school students of the better classes that the primary motive for going to school is because it is the "right thing to do."

Community Interest. It would be incorrect to assume, because the average Comericeñan parent knows little about what goes on in the classroom, that the community

is uninterested in its schools. The average parent's real interest is reflected in the fact that he cooperates financially in school activities or sacrifices to the utmost in sending his children to school. Parental interest in school is promoted through interested children. The school life of the children seems to be a dynamic factor back of parent interest, in school and especially where the educational level of the parent is not high. Lessons taken home to study, ideas on health and hygiene inculcated in the child during school hours and passed on to parents, a daughter who incessantly narrates at home what the teacher said and did, may even in their aggregate appear to be comparatively trivial influences in face of the lifelong life habits that are alien to the child's school experience, yet cases are not infrequent where this child-to-parent diffusion has had a marked influence on parents. Parents' notions as to how to avoid hookworm infection and contagious diseases have come mostly from their children. Evidence shows that at least a minority of parents have converted the suggestions of their children into practice:

"Most of the adults in night school have children in day school. This is one way children have influenced their parents."

"On Health Day pupils visit homes of classmates. People are proud to have their homes clean on these occasions."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. B says that he has noticed an increase in reading by people in the community. He attributes this to the influence of the schools.

The interest of poor parents in the education of their children is shown by the fact that they sacrifice much to send children to school. Many parents are half-starved. Still they will send their children to school. Education, they say, is a mark of superiority. The literates are the blancos.<sup>2</sup> Some of the pupils come many kilometers over mountain paths. People will sell pigs, chickens, anything they have, to keep their children in school. One mother sold the only cushion she had in the house in order to buy a book for her child. One mother said, "If you will enroll my child in school, I will give you my largest pig." Mrs. L, the Principal, adds that parents of poor children visit school much more frequently than do wealthier parents.

Community coöperation and interest is shown more directly when schools arrange for social events, such as

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<sup>1</sup> These two statements were made by the grade-school principal.

<sup>2</sup> Blancos, the whites--the people who count for something.

veladas,<sup>1</sup> rifas,<sup>2</sup> picture show benefits, school dances in which queens are selected, and athletic events, especially basket ball. Graduation exercises are social events of great importance to the community. In these activities the schools are closer to the community than they are at any other time, because the schools, on these occasions, express the leisure-time patterns that are most characteristic of the community. More than this, it is no mean experience of the poor parent to see, with pride, a son or daughter taking part in school programs and graduating exercises alongside others who outrank them socially. For this parent these are occasions when social position seems submerged in an atmosphere where merit in scholastic attainment is paramount. It is an opportunity and an end worthwhile in itself even though nothing of additional value comes of it. The diploma is framed and hung on the wall.

#### School Hygiene and Medical Service

There is no nursing inspection of students. There are two janitors in the building of fifteen rooms. Each morning they clean toilets, wash bowls, and clean the principal's office. In the afternoon they sweep the floors,

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<sup>1</sup> Veladas, evening entertainments.

<sup>2</sup> Rifas, raffles.

police the school ground, and empty the contents of the waste baskets into a large garbage can. The garbage is collected by the city every Tuesday and Saturday. Sometimes it has to be burned because there is no room for it. Every other week the floors are scrubbed and spider-webs removed from the walls.

The municipal government provides the school with brooms, soap, floor-cleaning material, and kerosene but the materials provided are not enough to clean the establishment thoroughly. Because the municipal government is poor, oil for the floors is rarely provided and often the teachers have to buy the brooms and soap, as well as the chalk and ink.

Some of the houses of La Aldea (a poor barrio adjoining the school grounds at the rear) dump their garbage on the school grounds. Occasionally, the local health inspector visits the school and complains about the poor condition of the toilets and about the lunchroom which has no sink and no screens for its windows. There is no running water during school hours. There are no water fountains and the pupils have to get their drinking water somewhere outside. Some children bring bottles of drinking water to school. While there is no regular health examination, the municipal physician examines all pupils that the principal sends to his office. During the year,

fifty students were examined for anemia and eight took the Wasserman test.

The Junior Red Cross has paid for the examination and treatment of eighty-one students with defective eyesight. Thirty-one have been given glasses, and the rest medical treatment. Twenty-eight students have been sent to the dentist for extractions. All pupils are immunized against typhoid and small pox.

The school program provides for a period of twenty to thirty minutes three times a week for instruction in health topics. The Department of Education provides the course of study. The subject-matter deals with problems of practical value, such as cleanliness, food, prevention of common diseases, first aid, and mental hygiene. At the beginning of each school year the teachers make a survey of the most common health and hygiene needs of the students and plan their instruction accordingly.

Health education is combined with physical training activities. Physical training is included each day in the school program for the students in the lower grades and twice a week in the upper grades. Activities include games, motion songs, and mimetic exercises in the lower grades. Basketball, baseball, and volley ball are played out of school hours.

### Other Educational Activities in Town

In addition to the grade and high schools, two other educational agencies have been in operation during the past year: one the night school for illiterates, the other the Nursery School.

Night School for Illiterates. This school has an enrollment of sixty-eight, but only thirty regularly attend classes. Reading, writing, and some arithmetic are taught, and also some hygiene and civics.

The instructor states that ten have learned how to read and write well in less than a year, but students do not on an average learn as rapidly as do regular students. Most of them have defective vision. Many of them, especially the women, are making a considerable sacrifice because of their household duties.

All of them are poor working people. The men come to the classes with their working clothes on in order not to be late. There are thirteen men and seventeen women attending. The average age of those attending is between thirty and thirty-two; the oldest one is forty-six and the youngest eighteen.

Instruction is carried on five nights a week for two hours a night. When the teacher is satisfied that the pupils know how to read and write, diplomas are given to them at regular graduating exercises. To most of them,

this is a significant occasion. This school is conducted with Federal relief money.

Nursery School. The municipality furnishes the house, kitchen utensils, and medicines for this school. The tables, beds, clothing, food, and salaries of the employees are furnished by the Federal Government. Two teachers are employed for sixty dollars a month. The physician, nurse, cook, and janitor get respectively 175, 50, 30, and 20 dollars a month. Since its establishment, the school has occupied the Casino.

The age of admission to the school is from two to four years. Children are selected according to the need of the parents. Children, on admission, are given a physical examination and, while the mother is at work, children are left in charge of the nurse and teachers.

They are given regular medical attention and are fed a diet consisting of such foods as vegetables, milk, eggs, and graham crackers.

Parents are instructed twice a week and shown the good habits in cleanliness, respect for elders, and use of good language that their children have acquired.

All of the twenty-five enrolled showed a negative test for malaria; for diphtheria nine were positive; for scarlet fever twelve were positive. All were immunized

against small pox and typhoid.

Parents are very anxious to have their children accepted, but only twenty-five are admitted.

The nurse reports that a few months of this environment completely transforms these children.

#### Evaluation of Educational Factors in Community Life

In order to understand adequately the influence that public education has had and is having upon the cultural patterns of the community, there would be a need to compare the attitudes and values of children with those of their parents. Then if marked changes in the cultural pattern were noted, the question would arise as to whether these changes were attributable in part or in toto to educational influences.

The broader aspects of this problem are not deeply implicated in this study, but certain influences of education may be precisely gauged; discussion of the rest will need to take a tentative form and wait for a study whose interest lies primarily in social processes.

There has been a marked decline in illiteracy which is surely the result of the establishment of the public school system. New contacts have been made; a new communicative agency has been added to the repertoire of a large number of Comericanos. How effective is its use is another question. Reading is more prevalent than it used

to be, but it is still confined largely to the upper classes. The large numbers who are poor and can read reasonably well have a valuable tool, but its use is only sporadically possible owing to the lack of economic resources. The culture obtained from increased literacy is largely nominal.

The practical values of increased literacy are, to some extent, apparent. These values are not so much the result of the fact that increased numbers of the community know how to read, do read, and get constructive ideas that are put into practice: for the masses of the poor in the community are illiterate and, whether they know how to read or not, the net effect tends to be the same. Their information is mostly gained through auditory channels, because reading material is not available to them.

The important fact, then, is that some can read and do read; but still more important than this is the fact that a few children in the community are continuously going to school. Accordingly, these children belong to both a school group and a neighborhood group, with the former, because of its innovative character, tending to be more dynamic. It is at the time that the child is attending school and being ingrained with new experiences that he is most effective as an agent of diffusion in

neighborhood life.

It is in this sense that the presence of a school in the community is most important because when the child leaves the school the neighborhood influences again become dominant in his life. He again tends to play a passive role.

Many townfolk as well as teachers remark that the course of study offered in the local schools is impractical. What is the use, they say, of spending so much time on English when practically all of the reading that is done in the community is in Spanish? Or of what practical value are most courses, since they do not teach students an attitude and method that will help them understand community life, see its problems, and furnish ways of ameliorating the conditions. This criticism is fundamental. Its prevalence indicates a very strong insistence that education needs to be made more practical.

The lower classes are probably more strongly influenced by this practical outlook than are those better off whose social and economic position is already secure and who are satisfied with schooling as a cultural attainment.

Questions still remain--questions which can only be tentatively answered. Does democratic education have a firm hold on the community? Is the community imbued

with a democratic educational philosophy? If so, how may this philosophy be reconciled with absence of social democracy in the cultural pattern? Or does it need to be reconciled?

Theoretically, it would seem that it would be impossible to graft successfully in thirty years an American educational system, with its philosophy, onto a culture whose folkways are still dominated by Spanish traits; but if the view taken in this chapter is an answer to this problem, then it appears safe to say that the grafting process has gone beyond the accommodation stage and is well into the stage of assimilation. The question as to whether the schools have been efficient would seem to be beside the point, because the same question could be raised where the system has grown out of and alongside its own indigenous American culture.

One consideration may help to explain the rapidity of this assimilation, and it is a practical one. People of this community have seen several of their members (not many) go through the local schools and on to college and finally become successful men in professions or business--members who would otherwise probably have no particular importance in the community. The public schools appear to be a factor in this rise to prominence. It is not a rejoinder to say that this only happens one out of a hundred times. The ninety-nine are forgotten

and the one remembered--and "he came from our neighborhood." The same psychological process involved in the persistence of outworn folkways, works to promote and perpetuate a newly acquired educational pattern. The Comeriedañ says that he who knows nothing is worth nothing.

### Summary

- a. Public schools in the Island are centrally administered and controlled.
- b. The primary traits in the educational system are American.
- c. The assimilation of an alien educational pattern has not resulted in any noticeable cultural conflict.
- d. Illiteracy has declined approximately twenty-five per cent in the municipality between the years of 1910 and 1930.
- e. Twenty-six out of seventy-eight parents of high-school students have gone beyond the fourth grade.
- f. Fifty-two per cent of the persons of school age in 1930 did not attend school.
- g. Grade schools are under-staffed and the school-rooms are crowded.
- h. Five out of the forty-nine teachers in the municipality are college graduates.
- i. In spite of popular depreciation of manual and domestic art courses, students have shown marked increase of interest in these subjects.
- j. To be educated is to "be somebody".
- k. The public schools have inadequate medical and health service, because of the lack of financial resources.
- l. The school child has considerable influence on the neighborhood in which he lives.

## CHAPTER VII

## RELIGIOUS LIFE

## Basic Features in Religious Life of the Community

As the town of Comerío is approached from a northerly direction, two large structures may be seen on the right. One of these is the elementary school building; the other is the high school. These two buildings taken as a unit may be considered tangible evidence of the public-school system of Comerío. They are new and the institutional activities they represent are also relatively new in this community, having existed in their present form for not more than a generation.

A few yards down the road on the same side and just on the edge of the densely clustered huts, houses, and stores that make up the town proper, are two very large structures. They are owned by tobacco corporations and house a series of activities carried on by employers, managers, and employees, all connected with the processing of tobacco. Together these two buildings represent the primary economic activities of the community. The industry which these buildings accommodate is approximately a century old in this community. But more than this, these buildings are manifestations of a modern version of economic life: corporate enterprise, differentiation of

capital and labor, and specialization.

To the right and over the tops of a row of stores, the roof of a large edifice with a bell tower is visible. This is the Catholic church. It houses priests, congregations, complex rituals, and numerous holy objects. This structure is the most important material manifestation of the religious life of the community. That which it represents is as old as Christianity itself.

As is customary in all towns on the Island, the Catholic church stands in the center of the town and faces a plaza. The matter of its location has more than a physical significance; it also exerts an influence as a cultural center in the institutional life of the community.

By some chance factor that no one was able to explain, the business section of town runs along the main road connecting the Island from north to south. This main road is Main Street and is behind the church. In all other towns of the Island that have been visited, the church occupies one side of a square, and the business district, the other three sides. This variation from the general plan of cities and towns of the island has a social importance. Figuratively speaking, the church does not get to watch the evening social life that goes on along Main Street.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VIII, topic, "An Evening on Main Street."

To the average Comerieñan the school buildings denote the more or less logical arrangement of a modern world--a world of science, experimentation, and classification. As they themselves would say, this arrangement represents "brains" and "culture." There young boys and girls learn how to adjust themselves to the exigencies of society and nature. The two tobacco establishments would typify strenuous livelihood activities--a way to gain a living; the complexity of modern economic life. The church would typify peace with God and escape from vexing everyday problems--the sordid conditions found in worldly activities. The end is primarily spiritual salvation--a preparation for spiritual life after physical death. These three differentiations would represent the trichotomy of spirit, mind, and body that is believed in by the average Comerieñan. He would say that the church represents an eternal, an absolute value; the other two, transitory or worldly values. The Comerieñan is a Platonist.

The Catholic church and Catholic religion stand out as the dominant religious pattern of the community. Broadly speaking, Comerieñan culture is Catholic culture. "Almost all of the inhabitants of Comerío are baptized in the Catholic faith." The priest estimates that approximately ninety per cent of the people of Comerío are so baptized, but he adds, "Through Protestant propaganda, some have deserted the Catholic faith." "Many," he says,

"do not actively participate in the religious life because of ignorance and/or indifference."

But those professing other faiths are in the minority. Those who are indifferent are unconsciously a part of the Catholic heritage which permeates Comeriefian culture. It is in this latter and broad sense that Catholicism stands out as a dominant cultural pattern. Whether or not the individual is devout or makes his confessions regularly and adheres faithfully to the dogmas and ritual of the church, the fact remains that a significant part of his non-rational action is rooted in Catholicism and its ideology (creeds). This is shown in the important influence that Catholic customs, built around the principal episodes in the life of Christ, have on community life. It is also shown among individuals of dissenting sects who openly profess belief in different religious faiths but who unconsciously conform to a wide variety of religious traits that are Catholic. These individuals were either once Catholic themselves, or are surrounded by Catholic relatives and friends. Even the most vehement anti-catholic is undoubtedly affected by this Catholic cultural heritage.

The Catholic church is a most active community center. It is the one institution that gives the community as a whole a primary group character. The collective activity that functions in and around it is of such

a nature that different classes, races, sexes, and ages collaborate for the consummation of a common devotional end. This does not mean an absence of discrimination in religious life, but rather, a larger measure of community coöperation than is found in any other institutional form of life, with the possible exception of the school.

The local Catholic parish is coextensive with the municipality. Its services and religious rites attract country folk from miles around. They walk barefooted along mountain paths as they come to attend the Masses and Processions or to have a child baptized. In turn, these persons are visited by the priests who administer to their "spiritual and temporal needs."

#### Church Organization and Activities

Catholic. The local Catholic parish belongs to the diocese of San Juan. Its two priests coöperate in the performance of the various tasks devolving on them in the religious life of the community.

The local Catholic parish has no rural chapels; although the priests state that they are badly needed. Two doctrinal schools are conducted weekly in rural communities and one in town.

Regular services in the Catholic church are held twice daily. On week days these services occur at six-thirty and seven-thirty in the morning; on Sundays and

días de preceptos<sup>1</sup> the services are held at seven-thirty and at nine-thirty in the morning. Every night prayers to the Virgen<sup>2</sup> (Letanía)<sup>3</sup> are offered.

There are eight Catholic societies. Their function is almost exclusively devotional in nature:

The Most Holy Rosario. There are 275 members. They attend holy communion each three months and hold prayers and sanctifying rituals weekly.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus. There are 85 members. They hold devotional services to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and attend holy communions.

The daughters of Mary. There are 175 members. They come to the first services of the month for confessions. Some of them teach the church doctrine to country children.

Sociedad de la Vida de la Milagrosa.<sup>4</sup> There are 150 members. Members of this society receive images of the Virgin in their homes and offer special prayers

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<sup>1</sup> Días de preceptos are days set aside for the teaching of the Ten Commandments.

<sup>2</sup> Virgen, Virgin.

<sup>3</sup> Letanía, supplicatory procession in honor of the Virgin (Mary).

<sup>4</sup> Sociedad de la Vida de la Milagrosa, Society dedicated to the life of the Miraculous Virgin.

to her.

The Congregation of Saint John. There are 40 members who offer devotional services to this Saint.

Society of the Most Holy Sacrament. This society dedicates itself to morning communion services commemorative of the Last Supper.

The Sweet Name of Jesus. The 23 men and boys in this group aid the priests in their parish activities. Christ is the patron saint of Comerío.

These societies may be considered the backbone of the Catholic church.

In addition to the regular congregational services, the two priests officiated in the following personal services in the years 1932 and 1934:

	1932	1934
Communions and confessions . . . . .	11,500	17,160
Baptisms . . . . .	462	493 <sup>1</sup>
Burials . . . . .	160	155 <sup>2</sup>
Attending the sick (administering extreme unction). . . . .	107	128
Marriages. . . . .	28	54
Confirmations . . . . .	none	none

<sup>1</sup>Of these, 450 were babies; 125 were illegitimate, that is, born of parents who had been married without benefit of clergy.

<sup>2</sup>Of these, 15 were babies.

Methodist. The Methodist pastorate of Comerío serves a congregation in town and three in the country. There are four temples (churches) and two pastoral houses. The town church is in charge of a minister and an assistant.

The Methodists hold three regular services each Sunday: 6:00 A.M., Consecration Service; 9:30 A.M., Sunday School; and 7:30 P.M., Preaching services. Ten Sunday-school classes are held, classified according to age and sex.

The week-day services are: Monday, Instructions for beginners; Tuesday, Women's society; Wednesday, Bible Class; Thursday, Open-air services; and Friday, Youth's and Children's society. Communion is celebrated once every three months. "All those faithful members who consider themselves spiritually prepared may partake of the bread and wine."

The Methodist societies are: Youths' Epworth League, Children's Epworth League, Women's society, and Men's Evangelical society.

In addition to the regular services, the Methodist minister officiated in the following during the year 1932:

Baptisms . . . . .	70
Marriages .. . . .	15
Burials . . . . .	10

Pentecostals and Spiritualists. These Protestant sects have no local pastorates or church buildings. Their services are conducted either by self-appointed individuals.

or mediums in the community, or by representatives who sometimes come from other towns to conduct their meetings.

### Fiscal Aspects of Local Pastorates

Catholic. "Sixty per cent of our income is derived from outside the Island.<sup>1</sup> No one in town gives tithes. The largest donations are from seven to eight dollars annually. We receive about 400 dollars from baptisms. Collections from ordinary Sunday services are from three to four dollars. It is customary for the poor, as well as for those having more money, to put in a silver or nickel coin in the collection box and take out change, when they do not have a smaller amount. On special occasions the collection amounts to about six dollars.

"Quotas from religious societies are allotted when and in the amount that circumstances permit. The end of the service is the best time to pay religious debts; because devotion ought to be a stimulus to draw nearer to God and our brother, the Saints of heaven." "The income from these societies is used to defray the costs of annual religious festivals. When the Society of the Miraculous Virgin convenes after regular services, each member contributes five cents. Only the more well-to-do go to these services."

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<sup>1</sup>From Catholic foreign missions.

"Last year the church spent for itself 800 dollars. The income from baptisms is for our own living. Three-fourths of the income from marriages, officiating at funerals and the like is for us. The rest is for the church. This church is very poor as the result of its disestablishment after American occupation, and the widespread poverty that prevails in the community."<sup>1</sup>

The church property consists of the pastoral house, two vacant lots in town, a small plaza, and the church structure and grounds.

Methodist. The annual expenses for keeping up the religious work in the local pastorate are 2,000 dollars. American missions contribute 1,400 dollars; the local church provides the rest through subscriptions and voluntary contributions.

#### Sectarianism

sectarian minorities have been very active in recent years in the community. As a result of these movements, Catholic leaders have been much concerned about religious stability of the community. The most important of these minority Protestant groups, in point of numbers and activity, has been the Methodist. The minister reported the following

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<sup>1</sup>Statement by the Catholic priests.

number of Methodists for the year 1932:

Active . . . . .	275
Passive. . . . .	75
Professing the faith . . .	200
Probationists. . . . .	<u>180</u>
Total .. . . .	730

He adds that since that date a hundred new persons professing the faith have been added through active proselyting. The distinction between these four classes of members is at times confusing. Many included in this list are classified as Methodists merely because they are not Catholic, or because on some occasion they had exhibited a preference for Protestant tenets. Within this membership there is also included a possible one hundred who are more actively concerned in the teachings of such sects as the Pentecostal and Spiritualist. These last-named groups have been recruited largely from among the Methodists and constitute a problem for the Methodists much as has the growth of Protestantism for the Catholics. The rather unusual nature of their activities stands out more clearly in the face of the more sedate religious life of the Catholics. It has tended to create a lively community interest in religious topics--an interest out of proportion to the numbers affiliated with these sects. Catholic leaders blame Protestant propaganda for this sectarian movement which resulted in the desertion

of numbers of Catholics from their former faith.

Accepting the Protestant faith originally meant affiliation with the Methodist; because this was the first sectarian church established in the community. But the Methodists have also had trouble in holding their congregations. Schisms within the Methodist congregation have meant the growth of Protestant sectarianism. All of this indicates a tendency to individualize religious beliefs that are in marked contrast to the hierarchical control and religiously complacent congregations of the Catholic church. These sectarian movements have disturbed an otherwise serene religious atmosphere.

The large Catholic church built of reinforced concrete, symbolic of the eternal, stands on one side of the plaza; the smaller wooden structure, symbolizing a "usurping sect", "temporal" in nature, stands on the opposite side. At the same time that the Catholics are observing their morning Mass in the soothing presence of holy objects, the Methodists are singing their congregational hymns with gusto. The contrast is striking.

Why Are You a Catholic? "I was born a Catholic, baptized a Catholic, and am going to continue to be one." This is a Catholic's complete answer. Protestants cannot answer in this way because most Protestants were born Catholics and were originally baptized Catholics. "I am a Catho-

lic by tradition," is another way of saying the same thing. Mr. A is a Catholic because he "feels it". Mr. B is a Catholic, because the priests have taught him to be one.

"I am a Catholic, because my parents imposed this religion on me. I find it the only true religion."

"The only religion in the world is the Catholic. The others are sects." (Third year high-school student)

"I am a Catholic, because I believe in God, in the Saints, in the virginity of Mary, in confession, communion, and all the dogmas of the Catholic church." (A poor woman about twenty-five years old.)

Why Don't You Go to the Protestant Church? This question was asked of thirty Catholics. The answers bring out reasons for being a Catholic, rather than for not being a Protestant. The answers given were in general of more vindictive nature and more indicative of a deep-seated bias than than was true of those received from the question, Why are you a Catholic? Many covered their faces in a protesting manner and made the sign of the cross as much as to say: "God protect me from ever thinking of such a thing!"

"I am a Catholic, because no person can have two religions."

"Protestants seem to have the devil in them."

"The first thing the Protestants do is to put your name in a book. On Judgment Day you will be the first to be called by the devil."

"Protestants have the devil in them; because they sing too loudly." (Another Catholic said the same thing)

"The Methods the Protestants use in teaching morality are not effective."

"Los Protestantes son muy 'flojos'."<sup>1</sup>

Three of the thirty Catholics questioned did not adhere to such views as the foregoing:

"I am a Catholic by tradition, but I do not believe in criticizing any religion. I will go so far as to say that the Protestant preacher has more influence over the community than the priest."

"Even though I am a Catholic, I often go to the protestant church; because it is good to know about different religions, so I may know how to defend my own."

"I am an active Catholic, but I consider the Protestant minister a gentleman, because he gives his time and services free."

Why Are You a Protestant? Several Protestants said they became such because of incidents like the following:

"I went to the Catholic church to have my sick baby baptized. The priest said that he wouldn't baptize my child, because I didn't have a dollar; so I had the Protestant minister baptize him. Now I go to the Protestant church."

"We asked the priest to marry us, but he wouldn't because we had no money to give him. We were married by the Protestant minister and now go to the Protestant church."

Some that were interviewed complained of the mercenary character of the local priests. It may be recalled here that voluntary fees for officiating at baptisms and marriages form a large part of the personal income of the priests.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Los Protestantes son muy 'flojos', Protestants are very "slow", or uninteresting.

<sup>2</sup> See supra topic, "Fiscal Aspects of Local Pastorates".

On the other side there are those who admit that the priests have baptized their children or performed marriage ceremonies without remuneration. The priests themselves also affirm this.

Another personal matter that some claim has turned them against the Catholic religion and particularly against the priests is the not uncommon assertion that the priests will not baptize illegitimate children.<sup>1</sup> Others assert that this is untrue; to support this contention the priests state that they had baptized 125 illegitimate children in 1934. The weight of evidence seems to be more in favor of the Catholic officials, although they do, on occasion, appear to exert pressure upon the recipients of their official services for remuneration. These complaints have significant underlying causes, such as individual indifference to the Catholic religion and the active proselyting efforts of the Protestants.

Why Don't You Go to the Catholic Church? "I used to go to the Catholic Church, but I had a little difficulty with the priest."

"I would prefer to attend the Catholic services regularly, but my husband is a devout Protestant and he makes me go with him."

"I like to sing the Protestant hymns; that's why I to to that church."

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<sup>1</sup> An illegitimate child is defined by the Catholic church as a child born of parents who have not themselves had their marriage solemnized by the Catholic ritual.

"I wouldn't think of attending the Catholic church. The Bible forbids the worshiping of idols. The Catholics use the part of the Bible they like and ignore the rest."

A young woman said: "I am a Protestant and go to the Methodist church, because the Bible presents to me, in all its pureness, the fundamental teachings of Christ in my own language. I can also ask any questions about the Bible that I please. The Protestant church withholds no mysteries from us. To be Evangelical is not to preach, but to live the best one can, according to the teachings of Christ."

The Protestant minister in a sermon to a congregation of 180 stated his reason for being a Protestant: "The Catholic people go after God. God comes to the Protestants." At the conclusion of this remark there was a chorus of Amens.

Why Are You a Pentecostal? In addition to the foregoing attitudes that indicate movements away from Catholicism and reasons for renouncing the Catholic faith, there are also sectarian developments among the Protestants. In proportion to the numbers of Protestants, these schisms are more marked than those between Catholic and Protestant:

"The Methodist minister bossed us too much. We resented his assertion that we were disorganizing his congregation. We have joined the Pentecostal group. Now we can sing more and wear a white costume and blue pin and do as we like. The minister says that when we shake our heads so violently, we don't have God in our hearts; that we are just nervous. The minister told us that he wouldn't care if he were to lose half of his congregation, as there were too many anyway. This attitude of his has caused his church to lose many members."

"Two of my children and my mother sometimes get the spirit of Christ in them and begin to tremble all over. I guess God is calling them to be Pentecostals. Sometimes I feel an impulse to shake.<sup>1</sup>

A Spiritualist. An interview with a medium. "I am fifty years old. Twenty-seven years ago I began to believe in Spiritualism. I have practiced it for twenty years. When my step-mother died, she told me a spirit would soon come to speak to me. One night I asked the spirit's advice as to how to overcome a problem. 'Lie down and listen to me', said the spirit. I began to feel an enormous weight in all my body . . . . .

"Then for six consecutive days, I heard the spirit saying that he who spoke was Christ. The spirit said, 'Heaven is on earth. Mary lives on the first floor and Christ on the second. No one must envy the life of another. On the day of judgment a great whirlpool will come and end every thing.' I saw the whirlpool . . .

"I direct the meetings. I have the Book of Prayers and the Evangélio.<sup>2</sup> I don't know how to read. Another member does that. We first read a chapter in the Evangelio and then the prayers of the Guardian Angel; then the prayer that begins, 'We ask God Almighty to send us good spirits to help us . . .' Then follow the spirits communicating through our mediums. The mediums are persons who have developed spirit faculties . . . . .

". . . Sometimes there are sixty people in these meetings. I cure persons afflicted with malevolent spirits by a magic ritual and baths in the fluids taken from plants . . . . I also go to the country and have cured many persons there who have been afflicted with the devil . . . . .

"A man was shot in the leg. He was cured going to our meetings, because an evil spirit had shot him.

"I am a Catholic and believe in Saints. I am an Apostolic Catholic, not a Roman Catholic. I have many saints in my home . . . I fasted twenty-four days, because the spirits orderéd it. I only took two drinks of water when I was hungry. Every two or three days I ate pigs' intestines and drank red wine with olive

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<sup>1</sup>Those professing to belong to the Pentecostal church are popularly known as "Shakers."

<sup>2</sup>Evangélio, Book of Gospels.

oil; because the spirit ordered it. The last thing I did was to do penance for five days in order that God pardon me for my sins. I pleaded to Christ with open and clenched hands for pardon of my husband who had insulted me . . . . "

Sectarianism and the Home. Sectarian movements have created many confusing religious conditions in homes. Were it not for the fact that underlying these movements is a strong religious tolerance, these family differences would result in much domestic discord.

"We were both married and baptized in the Catholic church. Three and a half years ago my wife was baptized a Methodist. She talks in tongues. Our nine children are baptized in the Catholic church."

"My husband has spanked me several times, because I go to the Pentecostal meetings. He is a Catholic. He is always drunk but he was the drunkest that I ever saw him during the Easter procession, when he was carrying the Virgin Mary."

"We were married in the Catholic church. My husband has become a fanatical Protestant. I would like to go to the Catholic church more often, but he won't let me. Anyway, we don't quarrel about it."

"I am a Protestant. All the rest of the family is Catholic."

It has not been the purpose of this section to show that sectarian movements are the dominant features in the religious life of the community, nor has it been the intention to show that Protestant sects are of paramount importance. Sectarianism is an interesting and dynamic feature of local religious life, and it has its place in this study, even though the community is dominantly Catholic.

The study of minority religious groups is one way of understanding not only the chief characteristics of the majority religious group but also the nature of local religious problems. It indicates that the dominant religious pattern has on its periphery a considerable number of "indifferentists" and others who consider unsatisfactory personal experience with the Catholic leaders as sufficient cause for a break with their socially inherited faith. Within the peripheral area of the Catholic congregation the Protestants have done their most effective work.

The sectarian movement is a Clase Segunda movement. None of the Protestant cases reported in this section belong to the Clase Primera. There are no Clase Primera families who profess the Protestant faith. Only two or three families may be classed as de la orilla. Still the great majority of Clase Segunda are Catholics. Protestant inroads have not markedly changed the percentage of Catholics.

The sectarian movement is primarily a town movement, although the Protestants have been active in the rural areas of the community. Two small sections located in the poorest part of town were discovered to be "hotbeds" of Protestantism. The more pronounced sectarianism in town may be attributable to greater activity of the minister there; greater amount of general sophistication; increased cultural mobility; and the feeling that a Catholic disbeliever in town is not without a sympathetic companion to give him confidence in the fact that his own belief has social strength.

### Differential Aspects

General. There are noticeable distinctions in degrees of religious indifference by place, class, sex, and age. In order to understand satisfactorily the religious life of the community, these factors need to be analyzed.

Who is a devout Catholic? "All who are baptized in the Catholic faith and who attend services regularly are Catholics in the fullest sense. They are what we call practical Catholics." This was the answer of the priest. He estimates that there are about two thousand individuals in the community who meet these requirements, or approximately one-seventh of the total number of baptized Catholics. When asked whether there was an "inner circle" of the most faithful, the priest said, "No, all of those mentioned above are good Catholics". The groups in the Catholic church that most nearly approach in devoutness what Protestants call an "inner religious circle" are probably the Daughters of Mary and the Sociedad de la Vida de la Milagrosa. Both of these societies are composed mainly of upper-class women.

Perhaps a more accurate criterion of interest is attendance at the regular Sunday services. The priest estimates that approximately four hundred attend the two regular Sunday masses. Counts on three separate occasions correspond very closely to his estimate. This would include duplicates--several regularly attending both Masses. Approximately a fifth of those the priest defined as "Catholics in the fullest sense" actually attend regular Sunday services, or approximately

one thirty-fifth of the Catholic population of the community.

Whether the priest's estimate or that of attendance at regular Sunday services be used as a means of determining religious interest, the fact remains that a large majority are nominal<sup>1</sup> and not practical Catholics.

It is apparent, then, that the Catholics have, within their religious circle a large number of individuals who, for one reason or another, do not have an active interest in their religion, or whose interest is confined to special religious occasions. These special occasions will be analyzed later.<sup>2</sup>

In the table given on a previous page the Methodist minister estimated that there was total of 730 Methodists;<sup>3</sup> of these, he estimates that 275 are active church members. This is thirty-seven per cent or about two and a half times as many active members in proportion to the total membership as the Catholics possess.

Attendance in the morning Sunday school service averages about 175. Counting many duplications, the three regular Sunday services averaged, on three separate occasions, 295.

A comparison between the Methodist and Catholic shows

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<sup>1</sup>Nominal, Catholic in name only; baptized, but not actively participating in Catholic religious activities.

<sup>2</sup>See infra section, "Catholic Festivals and Customs."

<sup>3</sup>See Supra section, "Sectarianism."

a much higher percentage of active adherents to this Protestant sect than is found in case of the Catholics.

It is probably not difficult to discover the underlying cause of this marked contrast in difference of degree of devoutness of the two congregations as a whole. Protestantism is a new movement. Its adherents, as a whole, are fired with a deeper religious zeal. They consider themselves the protagonists of a new faith and many of them have become Protestants through personal conflicts with the Catholic regime. These conflict situations have tended to intensify their fervor for their own religious beliefs. This may also help to show that even though Protestant groups are minority religious groups, their importance in the whole religious pattern is out of proportion to their numbers.

Urban and Rural. Both of the priests stated that country people were more religious than town people. In the town there is little education in religious matters. In the country there are more doctrinal schools. "Country folk", they said, "are more isolated from sophisticating influences and have more of the simple religious faith. Many of the townspeople do not have strong religious convictions. Many of them loaf about the town completely indifferent to the House of God." Twenty persons interviewed on the street, without distinction of class, also stated that country people were more religious. In spite of the fact that most country people

are inconvenienced by isolation and poverty in their regular attendance at church, approximately two-thirds of those attending the regular Sunday Masses are from the country.

One possible danger lies in an uncritical acceptance of these conclusions. All of those interviewed asserted that country people were not only more religious but also more superstitious than townspeople. Is there, then, not a possibility that religious behavior and superstitions may have been confused? But this confusion is more apparent than real if the prevailing definition of what is religious and what is the sanctioned use of holy objects, such as images of saints, be accepted. Catholic usage is the criterion of what is and what is not legitimate religious conduct with reference to any given type of unreflective behavior.<sup>1</sup> Tentatively, at least, the conclusions of those interviewed will be accepted: country people are both more religious and more superstitious.

Class Distinctions. The priests are of the opinion that poor are more religious than the rich. Ninety per cent of those who attended High Mass on three consecutive Sundays were poorly dressed, and eighty-five per cent were poorly dressed at the early morning Masses on those same Sundays. But atten-

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<sup>1</sup> For a more complete analysis of this subject, see infra, "Saints".

No Protestant data were gathered on the material that is included in this section.

dance is not an accurate index, because those ten or fifteen per cent who are well dressed would be relatively as high a per cent of the wealthy as the eighty-five to ninety per cent is of the poor. So, an answer to the question whether the poor are more religious than the rich, most of whom belong to the Clase Primera or the Clase de la orilla, will have to depend upon the observations of the priests--observations of and conversations with all classes in the community. The conclusions of the observer are the same as those of the priests, namely that the poor, the Clase Segunda, are more devout in their religious conduct than are the better classes.

With the exception of two or three well-to-do Protestant families, all Protestant sects are homogeneous from the point of view of class; therefore, class differences in the degree of devoutness are of no practical importance in case of these sects.

Sex Distinctions. The priests say that men are less devoted to things religious than are women. Sex differences in attendance are probably accurate criteria in determining whether women are more, or less, devout than men. The sex distinctions in attendance at three consecutive 9:30 A.M. masses are here reported:

date	men	women
May 5, 1935 . . .	55 (No men of Clase Primera)	160
May 12, 1935. . .	20 (Three Clase Primera men)	175
May 19, 1935. . .	35 (Five Clase Primera)	180

There is good authority for assuming that in the more personal aspects of religious conduct, such as confessions, the distinction between sexes is just as marked.

Why don't men go to church as regularly as women? The priests say, "Because men are more indifferent to and ignorant of religious values; also, because they are usually more perverted."

Thirty-three answers to the question, Why don't men attend church regularly? were obtained from men loafing on the street at the time of the 9:30 Mass.

Reasons for not attending church	number
"Religion is for women (Es cosa de mujer) . . .	15
"Can't miss the cock fights" . . . . .	9
"Have to work" . . . . .	3
"Tired and wanted to sleep late" . . . . .	3
"Live too far from the church". . . . .	3

All Clase Primera men (seven) gave reason number one; the Clase Segunda men distributed their reasons among the five.

Fear of ridicule by friends, even if there is a strong tendency to be devout, is a social force working against regularity of attendance by men; but its importance can be exaggerated. In many instances, fear of being laughed at because religion is a "thing for women", is a popular male excuse used to justify participation in various diversions, such as cock fights, loafing, card playing, that are not considered proper for women.

"You must remember," someone said, "that women have more time to be religious and need to be more religious for the sake of the children."

If regularity of attendance and active cooperation in the more important Catholic church societies are criteria of religious interest, then Clase Primera women are probably the most devout of any differentiated group. Next to the priests, they are the most important Catholic leaders in the community.

The sexes are much more equally represented in the Methodist church services; the ratio being about four men to six women. The men have been active in leading the movement away from Catholicism and continue this activity in their devotion to Methodism. Also the Protestant movement is a more modern movement, which means its organization reflects less the traditional class and sex distinctions. Clase Segunda men as well as women who played a passive role in Catholic church activities find opportunity on a more or less equal sex footing to play a leadership role in Protestant church life.

Age Distinctions. High-school students were asked in a questionnaire whether they were more, equally, or less interested in religion than their parents. Fifteen of them, fourteen of whom were boys, said that they were less interested; fifty-six claimed equal interest, twenty of whom were boys; twenty-five claimed more interest, and seven of these were boys. Of the total of ninety-six who answered, forty-

one were boys.

If this questionnaire means anything, it is that the average high-school student has about the same interest in religion as his parents have. But the question arises, Did the boy or girl who answered this query tend unconsciously to identify his answer with his mother's or with his father's attitude? In view of the apparently greater interest in religion possessed by the mother, it would seem that the attitude of the children would be likely to be colored by her opinion. Considering the prevalence of sex distinctions in the cultural pattern, the supposition would be that their answers follow sex lines; the son is answering in terms of his father, the daughter in terms of her mother. Thus the young of each sex would probably acquire the degree of religious interest that prevails in the adults of its own sex. But among those claiming less interest, fourteen are boys. It is easy to see that they might have less interest than their mother, but less understandable why they should have less interest than their fathers. So the questionnaire seems to leave the matter where it was in the beginning-- it is necessary to turn to church attendance on the basis of age for an answer.

Approximately three-fourths of those who attend the Methodist and Catholic services belong to the older age-groups. About half of the total population is under twenty or in the younger age-groups. Students of high-school age were conspic-

uously absent. No more than five girls and two boys in this age-group were observed at any of the services. Grade-school students, except in the Methodist Sunday schools, were just as scarce. It is evident that the young people in the community are less interested in religion than the older people. The priests concur in this opinion.

### Preferential Features in the Religious Pattern

General. Distinctions may be made according to the data presented in the previous section. They may also be made on the basis of what religious trait or cluster of traits has the greatest appeal. Does the religious pattern appeal as a whole? That is, do the participants in the religious life of the community enjoy indiscriminately all features of their religion, or do the majority show preference for one feature or another? The answer to these questions should bring out the basic features in local religious behavior.

The Catholic religion seems to provide such a diversity of appeals that most individuals who are religiously inclined can find some feature that gives them a real religious experience. They may be indifferent to, or even resentful of, some feature; yet some other phase of the religious pattern may have a strong "holding power." This breadth of non-logical appeal is not found among the local protestant sects. The

Catholics seem to have three or four means of attracting an individual to each one possessed by the Protestants. It is the purpose of the following analysis to bring out the comparative importance of these various appeals and briefly indicate their meaning.

The Holy and the Righteous. Holy objects are all of those material traits of the Catholic church, such as the church building, images of saints, altars, robes of the priests, incense, palm leaves, holy water, and the like that have been blessed by the priests.<sup>1</sup> This blessing gives them a mystical religious significance. They become sacred by this priestly act. A Holy Act is an act showing reverence toward holy objects or persons. It is the prescribed religious behavior (ritual) in the presence of these holy objects or persons.

Righteousness is right conduct of man towards his God, his fellow man, and himself. It includes holiness as the right way to God, but it also includes right conduct in a social milieu.<sup>2</sup> Righteousness is treated of in the last six of the Ten Commandments. The distinction between the Holy and the Righteous is partly one of degree. But a more precise distinction, one based on the character of religious activity,

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<sup>1</sup>The word 'Holy' of course, includes the hierarchy of church officials.

<sup>2</sup>'Right,' here means as prescribed in the Catholic ethics, and not in the mores.

is a behavior and object distinction. Holiness is more clearly based upon material traits in the religious pattern and proper behavior in their presence; Righteousness is more clearly based upon the non-material traits and presupposes a broad, religiously sanctioned, ethical background. These distinctions are necessary to the analysis that follows.

The Holy aspects of the Catholic religion are more appealing to the average Comerioñan Catholic than are the Righteous aspects.

The sermon topic of the priest on June 5, 1935, was: "Christ said, 'Peace among all!'" The sermon dealt with the unchristian character of war. "Christ taught peace among all nations." The congregation was noticeably restless and inattentive, as much as to say, "what does this mean to us--why bother us with this?" But when the sermon was ended and the ritual was resumed, a concentration of attention and religious fervor among the congregation was apparent. In the sermon the congregation was receiving ethical exhortation; in the ritual the congregation was actively participating in or devoutly observing mystical rites. This latter had meaning. It elicited a deep emotional response as evidenced by facial expression and general personal demeanor. What was the sermon about? None of the twenty asked could tell . . . One had an inkling that it was about war--"We don't want to fight Germany." All of those asked belonged to the lower classes. What did the ritual mean? "I felt it." I Felt as if I were in the presence of God." There was no need that he be more articu-

late than this.

Only two Catholics out of thirty-one interviewed stated that they preferred the sermons to any other part of the services. (The sermon here is used to illustrate the righteous aspect of the service.)

Why didn't you like the sermon? (The question was asked in this way because many did not seem to be interested.) A variety of "good" reasons for not being interested were given: "The priest talked too fast." "He talked over our heads." "It was too hot." "I went to a dance the night before and I was too tired to pay attention." However, these same persons stated that they had enjoyed some other part of the service, and all the other parts of the service were predominantly holy in character. The real reason lies in the fact that the holy aspect of the service, which consumed about three-fourths of the time, was considered the most impressive--the most replete with religious feeling--and, therefore, to them, the most religious.

Additional evidence that the holy part of the service possesses more religious value for the average Comerleñan Catholic than the righteous, is indicated in the difference in degree of resentment shown on the one side in the reaction to the desecration of the Holy, and on the other, the commission of a Pecado.<sup>1</sup> Desecration of holy objects is

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<sup>1</sup>Pecado, sin.

not uncommon. They range from such venial acts as expectorating on the church floor and inattention to the ritual, to the ridiculing of the garb of the priests, to making use of saints and amulets irreligiously, and finally--the most unholy act of all--questioning the authority of the priest when acting *ex cathedra*.

The priests state that one of their chief concerns has been how to keep superstitious country people from making unholy use of sacred things, such as saints and miniature replicas of saints that are worn on the neck as amulets.

The more devout Catholics as <sup>a</sup>group showed most positive perturbation when asked why they did not attend the Protestant church.<sup>1</sup> Their response was based on holy and not on ethical grounds.

The church authorities "tread cautiously" upon the mores of the community. "We cannot afford to meddle too actively in every day moral conduct, even though we know it is within our province to do so. We know that 'immorality' is one of our chief local problems. Christian ethics is incompatible with many local practices. But we must take our time." This is another reason why, in actual religious practice, the practical emphasis is placed upon the Holy instead of upon the Righteous.

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<sup>1</sup>See supra, topic, "Why don't you go to the Protestant church?"

Finally, compare the length of time devoted to the ritual with that devoted to the sermon. In a morning Mass not more than fifteen minutes in an hour's service are dedicated to preaching. A very small percentage of the total time devoted to the weekly masses is consumed in the inculcation of ethico-religious values. Twenty per cent would probably be an overestimate. If all of the special religious occasions were included, the time consumed in "moralizing" would be further reduced, since these occasions are almost exclusively ritualistic.

The holy is less important among the Protestants. The simplicity of their services, in which preaching plays an important part, has tended to shift the emphasis more toward the Righteous aspects of their religious life. To them drinking, smoking, and gambling are irreligious; to the Catholic they are unreligious. All of the Protestants interviewed speak of the importance of right conduct as being basic importance in their religious behavior. As far as was ascertainable, they were making efforts to practice what they considered Christian ethics. But in this community the chances of the survival of a denomination that makes its point of emphasis ethical conduct, is a moot question; witness the growth of sectarianism among the Protestant congregations--sectarianism of a type that shows a strong inclination to give a new and more emotional direction to, and a

reemphasis of, the holy aspects of religious life.

Saints. The distinguishing feature around which the most active and significant Catholic religious life of the community is centered, is the saints. Around this nucleus cluster complex rituals or holy acts, commemorative days, religious festivals, creeds, and theology. Interwoven with these religious values, with the saints at the center, are social, dramatic, aesthetic, and ostentatious values. The whole may be denominated the Saint Pattern. The word 'saint', then, connotes the cluster of religious and non-religious activities, both social and individual, whose central trait is the Saint.

Other religious traits may carry a similar array of complex meanings; but in none of them is the meaning so dynamic and overly manifested as it is in the Saint Pattern. The Saint Pattern is the most holy, most aesthetic, most dramatic, and most ostentatious of all Catholic religious patterns in the community.

The Saint is the focus of Catholic ritual within the church; the focus of outdoor religious customs, such as processions and festival days; and the focus of primary manifestations of religious life in the home. The Saint is all-pervasive. He is found in the church. He leads the street processions, and even the nominal Catholic is not unmindful of his importance. Indeed the Saint's image graces the walls of the homes of practically all Catholics.

Even the professed "indifferentist" or agnostic seems often uncertain of himself; so he will frequently be found with a medal--a replica of his patron saint--hanging around his neck, for the sake of "safety".

The summer carnival is in commemoration of a saint's day. Its success is said to depend upon a good tobacco crop, but in the last analysis, it is commemorative of Christ who is the patron saint of health of Comerío.

A large number of persons in Comerío are named after saints. They celebrate their onomásticos<sup>1</sup> instead of their birthdays.

Twenty out of thirty-one interviewed stated that they preferred the saints to any other feature in the religious pattern; five of the rest preferred those religious activities that had to do directly or indirectly with saints; four said that they had no preference and two preferred the sermons.

The Saint Pattern is not only preferred by most Comeríensians who are Catholics, but also the cases show that there is usually a preference for particular saints. Some cases were found where persons were jealous for their favorite saints and always insisted that they be kept in a conspicuous place, both in the church and in the house.

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<sup>1</sup>Onomásticos, saints' days.

What Do Saints Mean? "Both of us believe in saints. Saint Anthony is my favorite. I pray to him and everything I ask I get."

"My favorite saint is the Miracle Virgen. In the month of October I celebrate a feast in her honor. I collect money from my friends and have a Novena. Nine nights we have religious songs and prayers. On the ninth night the Salve<sup>1</sup> is given and on the Virgen's day there is a Mass followed by a procession. Girls go dressed in white and all confradías<sup>2</sup> attend the procession."

"Saints are intermediary between us and God. They must be respected." (Many gave this interpretation.)

"I wear my pretty clothes in honor of the saints in the procession."

"Saints are all-important for me. If we have faith in them, they will have power over demons, misfortunes and the like."

The above-quoted samples were taken from Clase Primera women. Twelve of the thirteen interviewed believed in saints; eight of these women stated that their husbands did not believe in them. Three others who also stated that their husbands did not believe in saints added that their husbands wore medals that were replicas of saints. In none of the thirteen cases could the significance of the saints be said to extend much beyond the prescribed religious functions of saints and include non-religious behavior.

The general belief is that saints are intermediaries.

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<sup>1</sup>Salve, special prayer to the Virgin, appealing to her for protection.

<sup>2</sup>Confradías, saint believers.

This is a theological interpretation. It is doubtful whether the lower classes could grasp this interpretation. Their religious behavior is direct and complete in the presence of images of saints. This would apparently indicate an absence of a consciously mediated feeling. Moreover, their behavior is not a response to a symbolic saint-image, but a response to a saint.

The borderline between the religious and non-religious use of saints appears when members of the Clase Segunda were interviewed:

"I love the saints. I ask them to give me money so that I can pay my debts."

"I have Santa Cruz<sup>1</sup> in my house and ask his help every hour of the day. When I ask help, he always gives it to me."

"I adore Santísimo.<sup>2</sup> I have saints in my house. I put flowers on them and ask them for things. I also wear escapularios<sup>3</sup> in order to live tranquilly."

"I have all kinds of saints, amulets, escapularios<sup>3</sup> and charms that I worship."

In these cases there is an inclination to give a non-religious meaning to saints, especially in the last case where saints are indiscriminately made use of along-

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<sup>1</sup>Santa Cruz, The Holy Cross.

<sup>2</sup>Santísimo, Christ.

<sup>3</sup>Escapulario, miniature picture of the Virgin framed and worn on the body. An escapulario usually contains a short prayer to the favorite saint.

side of other objects that may or may not have a saintly character. Among the lower classes the saints are depended upon more as mediators in the solution of many types of problems. This profuse use of them automatically leads to their misuse; that is, a use beyond that which is religiously sanctioned--beyond what may be called good Catholic usage. The general rule seems to be that as the social scale is descended and as life problems become increasingly difficult of solution, appeal is more often made to the saints for assistance. This not only helps explain the greater degree of religiosity among the lower classes, but it paves the way for the next step, namely, making unholy use of the Holy. The Holy comes to be identified with such desecrative conduct as is found in superstitions, magic, conversion of holy objects into fetishes, and what might be called by an intelligent Catholic, mere flippancy and jesting. In the later stages of this development the process is really a simplifying one. Holy objects lose their religious meaning and acquire a naively superstitious significance.

"If you throw away a piece of bread, the devil will laugh and the Virgin cry. You must kiss the piece of bread before you throw it."

"Take a plate of water on Saint John's day and put two needles in it. If the needles lie side by side, you are going to marry."

"If you swear at some one when the noon bells<sup>1</sup> chime,

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<sup>1</sup>Noon Bells, alluding to the call to High Mass.

you will undoubtedly fall from grace."

"On the evening of Saint John's day the country people tie rags around fruit trees so they will produce fruit more rapidly."

"Many of the country folk believe that if a tree is cut during Holy Week it will ooze blood."

"When the clock is striking twelve, it is bad luck to make the sign of the cross on the first stroke."

"When it thunders,<sup>1</sup> tie a blessed palm leaf around your neck so the lightning won't strike you."

(The underlined words refer to the holy element in these superstitions.)

The illustrations show the use to which the holy has been put. Since these uses exceed the prescribed religious functions, and at the same time contain as a nucleus a religious trait, this class of beliefs may be called religious superstitions.<sup>2</sup>

It is not necessary to attempt an objective definition of superstition, but it scarcely seems fair to assume that saint and amulet patterns are necessarily superstitious in character, even though both are unreflective forms of action and have many mystical and functional elements in common. If the meaning and use of holy object is defined as religious in character, then it is religious and not something else. The point of view taken here is that of the Catholic

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<sup>1</sup>Several more-intelligent upper-class Catholics seemed to believe this too.

<sup>2</sup>For tendency towards superstitions among the Protestants, see supra, topics titled, "Why are you a Pentecostal?", and "A Spiritualist".

church. The last list of cases quoted illustrates superstitions properly so-called. These cases represent the type of conduct that the local priests are most concerned with, when they state that they have difficulty in keeping many of their member, especially the more illiterate country members, from desecrating holy things of the church.

Aesthetic and Dramatic Appeal. Aesthetic and dramatic elements dominate the Saint Pattern. Other trait complexes in the Catholic religion possess these qualities, but none of them compare aesthetically and emotionally with the impressive ritualistic observances that are built around the saints. These two qualities are blended into one situation of deep feeling. The beautiful is dramatic; the dramatic is beautiful. To the Comorian Catholic the two are synonymous.

Did you think the services beautiful this morning? All answered, "Yes." The altar was beautiful. Its beauty was enhanced by the solemn ritual, the incense, and the incantations of the priest. "I could gaze at this picture all day." Another said, "I never tire of this service. It puts me in tune with God. I feel Him." Still another said, "This is the only opportunity I have to enjoy such beautiful things."

The dramatic picture is visualized in holy panorama. It is further made perceptible by the subtle odor of incense; by the taste at Communion of His "blood and flesh"; by the

auditory appeal of the Word of God and musical chants; and by the touch of His holy things. All of the primary senses receive their appropriate emotional stimuli; all sense windows are open to the reception of stimuli that result in a complete religious experience. This experience is not mediated or symbolized in any way. It is real. It is God. This is the way the devout Comerieñan Catholic feels in the House of God while sitting with neighbors and friends.<sup>1</sup>

In the Methodist church religious experience is gained through congregational singing, prayer, the sermon, and discussion of the Sunday school lessons. The ritual, being comparatively simple, has little dramatic or aesthetic appeal. The distinction between Methodist and Catholic may be indicated in this way: In the former the aesthetic and dramatic cluster around ethical manifestations; in the latter, these qualities tend to be centered around holy manifestations, which gives to them a more concrete foundation with opportunity for fuller religious and emotional experience.

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<sup>1</sup>The dramatic appeal will be considered further in the description of a religious procession. Other appeals than the non-religious will also be discussed then. Also compare this paragraph with dramatization of response as a primary Comerieñan personality trait, Chapter VIII, topic, "Dramatization of Leisure-Time Response."

## Personal Appeal

Most of the description and interpretation that has been presented in the preceding sections has been based upon observation of congregational action in the regular religious services. This section will deal with those traits in the religious pattern that appeal directly to the individual and control his conduct.

Baptism. Individualized religious values are best indicated by those religious patterns that tend to conform to primary biological life crises. For every particular life crisis there tends to be a religious pattern to match it--a ritual that gives each transitional stage in the individual's life history a new religious meaning. The baptismal ceremony is matched with birth and infancy; the First Communion usually takes place in the pre-adolescent period between the ages of seven and thirteen; the marriage ceremony sanctions the procreation of new life; extreme unction prepares the individual for the eternal, with benefit of clergy; the burial services signalize the departure of the soul and the last rites for the mortal remains. This does not mean that every Catholic in the community receives benefit of clergy in these crises, but as a general rule, every good Catholic does observe the religious aspects of each of these crises. The biological crises may lag behind the ritual.

For example, forty-three out of the 493 baptisms in the Catholic church for 1934 were not babies; but on the other hand, 450 were babies.

Baptism is the basis of the claim that ninety per cent of Comerieñans are Catholic. Even though the Catholic receives no other personal religious attention, his baptism makes him a nominal Catholic, provided that he does not renounce his Catholic faith by a baptismal pledge to another faith. Baptism is the irreducible factor of a professed Catholic. The performance of this ceremony is a prerequisite to the exercise of the rest of the personal religious attentions of the priest. No matter how religiously intentioned a person may be, he is not a Catholic until he is baptized. This is one reason why the pressure in favor of baptism is so great, but there are other reasons that are just as important.

The urge to baptism is also strong because of the generally accepted belief that an unbaptized child is a potential subject for supernatural condemnation, which will become real in case the child dies. This urge is probably intensified by the fact that about fifteen per cent of the babies born in Comerio never live to see their first birthday. Some parents baptize their children as a matter of course and without regard to any danger that may beset them. But other, even those nominal Catholics who are

themselves indifferent to religious values, hasten to assure themselves of the spiritual well-being of a child who is sick. Approximately a third of the thirty mother interviewed stated that at the time of baptism their children were sick. "I was afraid he was going to die," is a fear that brings many parents post haste to the church. Another said, "Baptism saved my child from death." Thus baptism comes to be regarded as a "cure."

In addition to concern for the child, strong social pressure is brought to bear upon the parent. An unbaptized child is religiously stigmatized. The irresponsible parent is not only religiously but also socially stigmatized, a fact of great personal significance to the mother. Many mothers stated that they feared social ostracism if they procrastinated too long in the baptism of their babies. "My neighbors won't speak to me." The cases of two poor mothers illustrate this social pressure:

"I have been married seven years. I have four children. The oldest is five. I have no time to go to church myself, but I send my children, but it is difficult to get padrinos to pay the dollar for the baptism of each one. Personally, I am not interested in baptism but I couldn't stand to have my neighbors point their accusing fingers at me."

"I have had eight children--the oldest is about ten. All of them are sickly. The four youngest have no clothes. I don't go to church or the processions. I have to stay home and take care of the children."

My husband works at odd jobs at starvation wages. This little baby (pointing to a baby not more than three months old) is not baptized. How could such a sweet innocent little thing like that go to hell even though he is not baptized! But I will have to baptize him soon; as already the neighbors are criticizing me. If I do not baptize him, my neighbors won't let me live here."

Baptism is in the mores. There are undoubtedly very strong religious and social sanctions back of it although its importance is only secondary in the religious pattern to the Saint Complex. Baptism and the saints, literally and figuratively, "bring the Catholic religion home" to practical as well as to nominal Catholics. Its influence is apparent at the center as well as on the periphery of the Catholic congregation.

First Communion. First Communion is to be distinguished from regular communion services. It is the first time the pre-adolescent child receives his communion. This particular communion is not discussed here because it adds anything of importance to the understanding of religious patterns themselves, but rather because it, more than any other religious event, except the carnival commemorative of the patron Saint of Comercio, is dominated by the social element.

Preparation for the First Communion is elaborate. Special clothes are made and all kinds of attentions are bestowed upon the young girl or boy in order that he may appear attractive. His young friends, all dressed in their

best clothes, accompany him to the church. After the service is performed, pictures are taken and in the days to come, those pictures have first place in the family album. They are always shown to visitors with deep parental pride.

The First Communion is primarily a Clase Primera occasion, because of the expenses entailed. All upper-class girls have their First Communion, and most of the better-class boys are also beneficiaries. This combined religious and social event is the one occasion in the religious cycle in which the upper-class youth is the primary participant and focus of social attention.

Confessions. In the church records the number of confessions and communions are listed together. The Catholic church records for 1934 show a total of 17,160 confessions and communions. Since First Communions are primarily Clase Primera affairs, and the number who participate in the regular monthly communion services is probably not more than 600 during the year, it is safe to say that at least seventy-five per cent of this total, or about 12,870 are confessions. The majority of these confessions are doubtless made by the 2,000 practical Catholics; but even among these there is a wide range of frequency, from as low as once or twice a year to as high as once or twice a week, by a few of the most devout of the upper-class Catholic women. A practical Catholic probably averages from five to seven confessions a year.

The priests, however, stated that excessive religiosity was not, in itself, religion. They took the Platonic point of view that temperance in religion was just as necessary as in other things. Devoutness could be nullified if it resulted in the neglect of practical everyday duties.

In general the more religious country people confess less often than the townspeople who are more religious, even though the country people as a class are considered more devout. Isolation, poverty, care of children, and being ashamed to appear in public places shabbily dressed, keep many away from regular church attendance as well as from regular attendance to confessional duties. Even with these handicaps the confessions that are actually made by the poor are a real part of their religious life. Whatever may be the content of the confession, the confession is one time when the person feels <sup>1</sup>alone with his God. This "aloneness" is in marked contrast to the essential sociability of the Comorian and, for that reason, the contrast is probably the thing which makes the confession all the more impressive to him.

The one class and sex that practically ignores confessions is the Clase Primera man. His indifference to other phases of religious life on this important occasion becomes markedly selfconscious. He may not openly admit this attitude but his behavior is revealing.

The Saint Pattern with its broad social and religious meaning; the Baptism Pattern that has its personal significance

and lies at the roots of Catholic religious life, as well as being a powerful feature in the mores; and, finally the Confession Pattern, which has less powerful social sanction than the other two, all fill a role that cannot be ignored in the understanding of Comeriefian religious life.

### Religious Festivals and Customs

General. The religious life of the average Comeriefian Catholic is immeasurably enriched by festivals and religious customs, most of which center around episodes in the lives of saints. The nominal Catholic is usually little interested in the regular church activities, confessions, and the like; but on special religious occasions, which are frequent, he is likely to become either an interested observer or an active participant. It is these special religious occasions, more than ordinary church-going, that give to Comeriefian culture, broadly speaking, a religious character that is Catholic.

Religious festivals and customs, more than any other primary religious trait complex, cut across, place, age, class, and sex lines and give an undifferentiated character to this particular religious behavior. The community seems to become a religious and social whole--a primary group in a more real sense.

Methodist religious festivals and customs are not

so replete with ceremony, nor so frequent in occurrence. In general they are elaborations of the regular services and are held within the walls of the church; while the climax events in the Catholic festival cycle are published to the world. They dominate the whole vicinity--they are staged in the church, on the streets, and in the homes of Comercio, and the festival spirit is spread far into the country.

Methodist Religious Festivals. The Methodists have special religious services at the following times: Christmas, Holy Week, Mothers' Day, Children's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the anniversaries of the several Methodist societies.

These show not only Protestant but also American influence. Many of the Protestant ministers are trained in American-controlled missions and under the influence of American moral standards. These borrowed religious traits, with their comparatively simple ceremony and emphasis on ethical values, cause many Comerienses to consider Protestantism alien to their culture.

Catholic Festivals and Customs. The following is an outline of the more important of the religious customs observed by the Catholics:

January 1. On New Year's Day two Masses are celebrated, the second being a very solemn one. The church is crowded and every one wears his best clothes. Street vendors congregate in front of the church. A photographer is always present to take picture to sell to the poor country folk.

January 6. Día de los Tres Reyes.<sup>1</sup> Two Masses are held. After the Masses the congregation files past the altar to kiss the child Jesus. A table is prepared in the altar and on this are placed images of Saint Joseph, Mary, the Christ Child, goats, cows, Three Kings, and the Shepherds. Above all is placed the Star of Bethlehem. Many of the Clase Segunda stay all day singing Rosarios. They make promises and pray to the Three Kings, promising they will pay with Rosaries. Many of the poor also fix altars in their homes and neighbors congregate to assist in prayer; food and drink are served.

February 5. Saint Blas' Day. Saint Blas is the patron of the drowned. One Mass is held and after this Mass the priest blesses some candles. As the congregation files through the locutory, the priest places one end of the candle on the throat of each person and says a short prayer. If one's throat is blessed, his throat will not become infected.<sup>2</sup> After Mass the candles are sold for five cents each and are used when some one is dying.

March 19. Saint Joseph's Day. A Triduum<sup>3</sup> is celebrated

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<sup>1</sup>Día de los Tres Reyes, Three Kings' Day.

<sup>2</sup>To the Catholic, this is not a superstition, but a holy rite.

<sup>3</sup>Triduum, Three days of prayer in preparation for a saint's day, or in asking for a saint's intercession.

on the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth of this month, and as in the Novena, a Rosary is prayed, ending with the sacrament.

Holy Week. The most important religious events that take place during this week are: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday,<sup>1</sup> Holy Saturday, and Resurrection Day.

June. During this month the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is celebrated. The date varies. (Also on the first Friday of each month there is a Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart).

June 13. Saint Anthony. A Triduum is celebrated. On the thirteenth a solemn Mass is held, after which the president of the congregation distributes blessed bread. The altar is decorated with white lilies, Saint Anthony's flower.

July 16. Saint Carmen's Day. A Triduum is celebrated. After Mass the escapularios are prepared.

August 6, Christ's Day. Since Christ is the patron saint of Comercio, the procession is the most elaborate of the year. The week following is also Carnival Week, which has been discussed elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup>See infra, topic, "The Catholic Procession on Good Friday."

October. This whole month is dedicated to the Virgin of the Rosary. There is a Rosary each night and prayers are offered in church. The first Sunday is the feast day.

November 1. All Saint's Day. The Priests and the people of the town, especially the better class, go to the cemetery. The priests pray for the departed souls in front of the tombs. If a requiem is sung, they charge fifty cents; if prayed, twenty-five cents.

November 27. Day of the Miracle Virgin. On the three previous days a Triduum is celebrated. Two Masses and a procession take place on the twenty-seventh.

November 8. Immaculate Conception. The Daughters of Mary are in charge of the feast. An out-of-town priest is usually brought on the last day of the Novena.

December 16. On December 16th the Misas de Aguinaldo<sup>1</sup> begin. These Masses are held at five o'clock in the morning. The church is usually crowded, especially with school boys and girls who attend; because after Mass they take paseos, go to dances, or sip coffee in some private home. There are nine of these Masses which terminate at high noon, December 24th.

December 24. On this day the Manger containing the Infant Jesus is prepared in the front altar. During Mass the choir sings Christmas carols.

December 25. Two Masses are held.

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<sup>1</sup>Misas de Aguinaldo, literally, Gift Masses; there is no good English translation.

The Catholic Procession on Good Friday. Holy Week

is the most important week in the Catholic calendar. Next to the celebrations that take place on the Patron Saint Day of the town which falls on August 6th, the Masses and Processions that occur on Good Friday are the most important social and religious events in the community.

The processions and Masses on Good Friday are the climax occasions of Holy Week. They epitomize in a single day all of the basic religious values; they summarize the versatility of Catholic religious appeal; they bring to a focus the dominant Catholic religious patterns of the community; and they represent a relative absence of most of the differential factors that characterize ordinary religious services.

Early Friday morning, as early as four or five o'clock, country folk begin their pilgrimage to town, following mountain roads and paths. They are dressed in their best clothes, and many women make dresses especially for the occasion. Black dresses with black veils are worn by older women; the young girls dress in white. Occasionally other colors are worn by the poor. Country men prefer conspicuously colored shirts and, if they have coats, they are always worn. The men either wear, or carry their shoes, if they possess any. Those carrying their shoes, put them on as soon as they enter town, and frequently take them off when they start home in the evening. (Most country people go barefooted the year around and any shoes,

no matter how large, hurt their feet.) The wealthier women in town prefer dresses of silk with veils to match. Like their country sisters, the young or middle aged wear white; if old, black. The men and boys of the better class wear their best street clothes. They always wear a coat and usually a vest, no matter how hot it may be. Many young boys not more than ten years old march in the procession wearing what is probably their first pairs of long trousers.

At two o'clock in the afternoon begins the Sermon of the Seven Words given by Christ on the Cross. Following this, the Procession commemorating His interment takes place. The procession begins at the church. Double files are formed on the street south of the plaza with the children in the lead, and the priest reciting the obsequies in the center. The older people, carrying the banners that are the insignia of their various Catholic societies, fall in behind the children. Next in the procession is a group of men carrying the cross mounted on a platform with four projecting arms long enough so that this platform supporting the cross, may be carried on the shoulders. Men of all classes aid in carrying the Cross. A few paces behind the Cross is a glass coffin containing the image of Christ recumbent and bleeding. The coffin is decorated with artificial wreaths and is carried in the same manner as the Cross. Since the Christ image is the central feature of the procession, all of the men grouped around Him are very solicitous in lending a hand in bearing the burden.

A drummer, flutist, and cornetist follow the Christ, playing a dirge. A little girl, dressed in white and with cheeks rouged, and carrying a silver-colored crown, follows. A yellow cloth canopy, supported by four pedestals and carried by four men, is held over her head. Near the end of the procession is the Virgin Mary, kneeling and veiled, and carried in the same manner as the Cross. The procession is brought up by a miscellaneous group of individuals of all ages and sexes, but mostly of the lower classes. In this order the procession marches slowly west to Main Street, then turns and follows Main Street to the side street that runs past the church. It continues along this route until the church entrance is reached, when it gradually disperses.

On this occasion the better classes appeared more numerous at the head of the procession, but there seemed to be no class discrimination among the men. A larger proportion of upper-class people carried the images in the procession. Of the approximately 700 that participated, three-fifths were women. Age groups were equally represented.

The procession is a most dramatic religious event. To any one who has been immersed in these religious folkways all his life as most of these people have, an emotional response seems inevitable which becomes most acute when the bleeding and suffering Christ is slowly borne along the street.

Good Friday is also an important social occasion.

Friends meet and visit, "talk shop", compare clothes, while those taking part in the procession have an opportunity to satisfy their wish for recognition. They are seen at their "very best,"

This opportunity to satisfy the wish for recognition is not confined to the rank and file of church members. It is one of the few days of the year when the priests are the dominant figures in the community. They are the living officials, the representatives on earth, who are the primary mediators in these holy rites.

#### Religious factors in Social Attitudes and Values

Death. Thirty-two out of thirty-five interviewed believed in the future life. The three who did not said, "Everything ends here."

"Both of us believe in the future life."

"Religion prepares the soul for the other world. There is a great and wonderful unknown after we die."

"Religion prepares the person for the present and future life. Here it gives us courage and consolation. In the future life all friends will be together."

"Religion prepares the soul for heaven. It gives us confidence in a life everlasting and makes us look upon death as the best thing for the soul."

"It is necessary to be a Catholic to console us in sadness and prepare us for the future life. My husband says that all ends here." (Two other men agreed with him.)

With very few exceptions, all Comericeños believe implicitly in a future life. This applies to all sects, sexes, ages, and classes; to the nominal as well as to the

practical Catholic. This belief is not superficial or merely a verbal profession, conforming to public opinion. It is a belief replete with assurance.

Mourning Attitudes. The belief in a future life is impelling. It acts as a strong sedative in worldly situations. Even those who have committed major sins believe they will ultimately be forgiven and will find their everlasting resting place in heaven. This belief probably does much to temper the sadness caused by the departing of a friend or relative. The Comerieño's essentially religious disposition, even though he may not be a practical church member, is shown in his attitudes towards lost ones.

"I mourn for a lost one, because it is customary. I would not mourn for any one except a relative."

"I do not lament when relatives die, because the parting is only temporary. Mourning makes the soul of the deceased suffer."

"We do not believe in mourning. I wear mourning in order to avoid public criticism."

"Mourning is a good way to show our sadness, providing it is sincere. But most Comerieños who mourn are not sincere."

"I mourn because of public opinion, not because it does any good to the dead person."

Mourning at funeral services is rare. Many consider it undignified. No one was observed crying in any of the five funeral processions that were observed. Funeral processions of the better classes are solemn, but facial signs of

intense grief were not observed. This does not indicate that the death of a loved one does not have a profound emotional influence. On the contrary, the lower classes make death and the funeral procession a social as well as a religious occasion. The death watch is an occasion for eating and drinking and general merriment. Talking and laughing, smoking and chewing, and carrying on repartee with onlookers are common occurrences in their funeral processions.

It is not uncommon for a poor father to make a coffin out of a box, put his child's body in it, and carry it on his head a mile or two to the cemetery, dig the grave with his own hands, shovel earth over it, make the sign of the cross, return home, and promptly forget the incident.

Underlying this general spirit of levity is the belief that "crying does the departed soul no good"; rather it makes the soul unhappy. Happiness, or at least a simulation of happiness, is favorable to the soul of the departed. A sympathetic liaison prevails between the soul of the deceased and the attitude shown by relatives and friends. This magical, or semi-magical pattern of behavior exercises a strong social control over good conduct in death situations.

The origin of this attitude is somewhat uncertain. Sometime, perhaps, the soul of a deceased relative may have appeared in a dream and complained to the dreamer that he was unhappy, because his friends on earth had shown too much grief on his departure.

But another and more practical condition underlies Comeriefian mourning attitudes. Social habits are the product of certain life conditions that have tended to discount the value society places on life. A dense population, prevalence of sickness, and high death rate have lessened the value of the individual: To paraphrase, What difference does one man, more or less, make to us? Social adjustments have shifted the responsibility for life onto the shoulders of the Maker and Taker. Greater religious sophistication, more infrequent deaths, higher social value of the individual cause the upper classes to show more signs of distress upon the departure of a loved one.

Religion as an Escape Adjustment. The essential religiosity of the average Comeriefian is shown not only in the attitudes towards death but also in the attitudes towards everyday life conditions and problems. The hand of God is omnipresent. Tomorrow is in God's hands:

"I don't worry about tomorrow, because I know God will save me when I die."

"God gives me strength, even though I have had nothing to eat all day."

"God always helps me, whether times are good or bad."

"I have black coffee for breakfast and a little rice for dinner. When I go to bed I ask God to give me something for tomorrow and then I go to sleep in peace."

"I have been four months without work, but I know

God will save us."<sup>1</sup>

The unreflective influences, especially the religious, are remarkable for their breadth, similarity, and persistence in most life situations. This condition has tended to produce a unity, to give a meaning to the functions of life, and a naive religious philosophy comprehensible to all and, under the social and economic conditions, satisfying and adequate. The Comerieñan tends to live of, by, and for his Creator. Even though most Comerieños may be classified as nominal Catholics; even though many seem to show indifference to religious things; even though some desecrate the Holy with superstitions and magical practices, the great majority find God as the Alpha and Omega of life. There may be a noticeable undercurrent of sadness and resignation in the life of the average Comerieñan, especially among the poor, but his fate is in the hands of God and he is essentially happy.

Religion and the Mores. The dominance of the Holy over the Righteous in the Catholic pattern has been continuously emphasized in this chapter.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Compare these quotations with those in Chapter VIII, topic titled "Identification of the Foregoing Personality Traits with Basic Social Attitudes."

See also Chapter IV, topics titled "Dios Manda"; and Chapter III, topics titled "Familial Aid" and "Neighborhood Aid."

<sup>2</sup> See supra, especially topics titled "The Holy and the Righteous".

Some persons say that the Saint Complex is a form of idolatry that violates the Second Commandment;<sup>1</sup> But this criticism appears to come from without rather than from within. The Saint Complex is deeply entrenched in the religious mores and consequently is generally recognized as having real religious significance. It is based on theology.

A few Comerieños give equal value to the ethical mandates of the last six Commandments and are of the opinion that the right way to God is dependent upon the right way toward a neighbor. For example, several say that any form of sex misconduct is a sin, and similarly interpret other acts that may be sanctioned in the mores. But, as said before, the tendency of the church is to tread cautiously upon the mores.<sup>2</sup> From the religious point of view, this is not saying that the mores are any more or less ethical than they are in other places. But it means that there is a noticeable trend not to take active religious cognizance of the mores. This laissez-faire policy on the part of the church has not in itself resulted in a low plane of community morality nor in what may be called a degenerate mores. Sex mores, as well as all other mores patterns, are the product of practical social interactions in an everyday world. Even though the Comerieño

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<sup>1</sup>"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above....." (Deut. Ch. V; Exodus Ch. XX).

<sup>2</sup> The Protestants are more aggressive in this matter than are the Catholics.

were to admit that his sex mores are not as they should be, he could answer those who are overcritical that he rarely kills, or steals, or bears false witness, or covets his neighbor's house or his neighbor's wife.

Within his economic limits, the average Comerieño is genial and generous and respects his neighbor. His town is his primary group, and in spite of his prejudices, his mores operate on a level of deportment that is not far from Christian ethical standards. His religion has not brought this about as much as the practical conditions under which he lives.

Even though he tends to separate his religion from his everyday habits of conduct, this conduct is essentially religious, and his religion has a practical and essential place in his life.

### Summary

a. The Catholic religion is the dominant religion in the community.

b. Over half of the church expenditures in the community come from foreign-(American) missions.

c. The growth of sectarianism has been fairly rapid in recent years. Schisms among the Protestant sects are also present, as evidenced by the Pentecostal and Spiritualist movements that have sprung from the Methodist congregation.

d. The Protestants as a group are more devout than the Catholics; rural people more devout than the town people; Clase Segunda more devout than the Clase Primera; women more

devout than men; and the old probably more devout than the young.

e. The Catholic religion and church provide a greater variety of appeals than do the Protestant sects.

f. In the general religious pattern, the Holy is more appealing than the Righteous.

g. The Saint Pattern has, within the religious pattern, a primary social appeal.

h. The dramatic element underlies the Holy aspects of Catholic religious life in the Community; the aesthetic appeal is blended with the dramatic.

i. Baptism has a strong religious and social sanction. It is of primary importance in the cycle of religious practices that center around the life crises of the individual.

j. The social element is strong in the First Communion.

k. The Catholic religious festival is a dominant religious trait that, more than any other trait, cuts across place, age, class, and sex differences in religious behavior, and, more than any other feature in community life, gives the community a primary group meaning.

l. Confessions isolate the individual physically from social contacts and the regular Comeriñan confessor describes his experience as being "close to God." The Confession appeals especially to country people and upper-class women.

m. The average Comeriñan believes in a future life. Life problems and death are but transitory, mundane incidents.

n. Most Comeriñans consider moral values as distinct from religious values. Sex and sin are not synonymous. Religious teachings are not responsible for the mores. The mores are social adjustments that have grown primarily out of actual group situations.

## CHAPTER VIII

## LEISURE TIME

## Basic Conditions Influencing Leisure-Time Activities

Amount of Leisure Time. An observer is likely to be impressed with the large amount of leisure time that seems to be at the disposal of the average Comerioño. Large numbers of both sexes and all classes seem to be using much of their time in non-gainful pursuits during that portion of the day that is customarily assigned to gainful employment.

There is an absence of occupations that might necessitate irregular working hours. The customary working day usually falls between the hours of seven in the morning and six in the evening. The inference that the average Comerioño has a large amount of leisure time is, therefore, based upon the large amount of time spent in non-gainful activities during the working hours and not on the leisure-time pursuits that may go on before or after these hours.

The amount of leisure time is, in the first place, determined by the amount of work to be done, or the amount that geographic and climatic conditions make feasible. Seasonal changes, especially in rainfall, determine when

and what kinds of crops can be raised with profit, thus influencing not only work adjustments in the rural areas but also, to a large extent, work adjustments in the town which is closely identified, economically, with the whole community.

By far the most important natural resource in this community is the soil. Agriculture is the dominant occupation. The factors of soil, climate, and rainfall that furnish a favorable geographic setting within, and of economic influences working from without, have combined to make tobacco culture the controlling agricultural interest.

Since Comerio is essentially a one-crop community the amount of work to be done is governed by the seasonal demands of the one crop. The town of Comerio is directly influenced by this fact in that many of the preliminary steps in tobacco processing are performed within the town.<sup>1</sup>

Climatic and geographic conditions, occupational patterns, and density of population tend to thrust a

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<sup>1</sup>The tobacco season tends to coincide with the sugarcane season along the coastal plains, so that there is little possibility of labor shifting from one specialized crop region to another. Nor would there be much need for movement of labor in case the seasons differed because there is an abundance of labor always present in each specialized crop region.

large amount of leisure time on the average Comeriefio.<sup>1</sup>  
 The leisure time that is so apparent during the time of day when the people of Comeric are most often found at work is mainly the result of necessity and not of choice.<sup>2</sup>

Economic Conditions and Their Influence on the Uses of Leisure Time. The price, quantity, and quality of the tobacco crop are often said to be the barometer of Comeriefian social life. If the crop and price of tobacco are good social life in Comeric, especially that of the Clase Primera, becomes more lavish and ostentatious. A common topic of conversation among the wealthier, especially when talking to an outsider, is reminiscing on the "good old days" of high-priced tobacco, when the carnivals, dances, and other social events were so lavish as to attract

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<sup>1</sup>Evidence seems to show that most of the unemployed are willing, even anxious, to work. Comeriefios are not "naturally lazy". Of course certain habits of life are formed out of long familiarity with non-productive pursuits that influence attitudes towards work when work does come. They may tend to take on an indifference towards their work and quit jobs on seemingly trivial provocations. Nevertheless, the controlling fact seems to be that if opportunities for work were present work attitudes would rapidly replace leisure-time attitudes.

<sup>2</sup>Long enforced use of leisure time probably tends to influence not only leisure-time attitudes but also general philosophy of life. It may help explain the strong tendency towards fatalism that pervades so much of the philosophy of life of the average Comeriefio.

many visitors from over the Island.<sup>1</sup>

The Casino lapsed as a social and dancing center during the depression. With improvement in economic conditions, it is again being reorganized as an institutional center for Clase Primera leisure-time activity.

The Fiesta del Cristo,<sup>2</sup> commemorative del Patron de Comerio,<sup>3</sup> which consumes about two weeks in the month of August in a carnival period of dancing, horse-racing, machinas,<sup>4</sup> and picas,<sup>5</sup> was revived in 1935 after several years' lapse. This carnival always attracts large numbers of people of all classes, both in and out of town.

Mr. and Mrs. A took a three weeks' vacation this summer to the States spending about two thousand dollars.

Mr. and Mrs. B went to the seashore for a short stay in a cottage they had rented.

"There has been a noticeable increase in the number of jiras,<sup>6</sup> seashore parties,<sup>7</sup> and Sunday treks to el Yunque."<sup>8</sup>

Mr. C paid a hundred dollars for a fighting cock.

<sup>1</sup>Historical facts seem to show that there is some truth in this statement.

<sup>2</sup>Fiesta del Cristo, Christ festival.

<sup>3</sup>del Patron de Comerio, of the patron saint of Comerio. Christ is the patron saint of Comerio.

<sup>4</sup>Machinas, merry-go-rounds and ferris wheels.

<sup>5</sup>Picas, gambling concessions of all kinds.

<sup>6</sup>Jiras, picnics. Frequently a local dance orchestra is taken along.

<sup>7</sup>Primarily to swim, visit, and bask in the sun.

<sup>8</sup>El Yunque is a mountain peak and reservation located on the east end of the Island that has been recently reserved for recreational purposes.

These three out-of-town forms of recreation are always popular among the members of the Clase Primera.

Mr. D bought a saddle horse for his family.

Messrs. E, F, and G bought new radios.

The spending of money for such diversions would probably not have taken place were it not for the fact that 1935 was a good tobacco year. For example, the wealthier would have stayed at home more often and used for another year old radios.

A good tobacco crop does not influence so noticeably the ways in which the poor use their leisure time. The slight increase in wages and employment does not produce an income margin above a subsistence level. The net result is an inelastic and stereotyped use of leisure time among the poor that is in definite contrast to that of the wealthy. Since the ways of using leisure time are more constant among the poor, leisure-time habits become more deeply fixed and satisfying on a level that is far less varied and lavish than that which the wealthy are used to.

The leisure-time interests of the wealthy seem to promote types of activities in which the wealthy are the primary beneficiaries and participators and to create for the poor new scenes that they may enjoy as onlookers.

A dance at the Casino is for the Clase Primera but the large number of onlookers that linger to

the end on the outside are mostly the poor.

The carrera de sortija,<sup>1</sup> one of the important events of the Fiesta del Cristo, is for the Clase Primera. Most of the hundreds of witnesses are of the lower classes.

There is an exception in that those who patronize the machinas and picas, (that are always a part of every carnival) are mostly the poor:

Mr. A lost twenty-five cents, all he had earned that day, at a dice table.

Mr. B spent all he had in his pocket, about forty-five cents, on the "horse races".<sup>2</sup>

Mr. C did not have a cent in his pocket. He borrowed five cents from a friend and lost it.

Mr. D spent twenty cents on chips that he placed on numbered squares. He won a bar of soap with the last penny.

These cases illustrate the leisure-time results of a good tobacco crop. In most of the carnival activities the poor are onlookers but they freely patronize the picas and machinas. Other examples which show how economic conditions influence the way in which the poor use their leisure time are listed below:

Mr. P is a jolly, good-natured fellow, who says he would spend his last dollar going to a dance,

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<sup>1</sup>Carrera de sortija, ring race.

<sup>2</sup>A mechanical device with wooden horses that are numbered. Bets are placed on numbers. The machine is spun and the horses set in motion. The horse stopping nearest the winning line is the winner.

serenading a good-looking girl, or drinking with his friends, but unfortunately his dependent mother and small wages make it impossible for him to derive the fullest enjoyment.

"My husband likes horse races and movies. He cannot enjoy the former because he is too poor. He regularly attends the movies because he works there and gets in free."

Mr. R is a horse-race "fan". Even though he is only twenty-one, he has been interested in horse-races for several years. He has been a jockey. He never bets on the races himself because he says he doesn't have enough money to afford the "luxury of losing". His greatest pleasure is offering, free of charge, his opinion on the merits of horses.

"I love cock fights. I used to have a good cock and bet on him, but now that employment is not steady and wages are low there is nothing to do but stand around and talk. It takes money to keep a fighting cock and what does a cock fight amount to if you can't bet money on your favorite? Now that I have no money to bet I go to church."

"I go to church because it is the cheapest form of entertainment."

"My children all have ambitions to become musicians, but I don't see how in the world I can ever afford to give them a musical education."

"I would like to smoke and gamble more, but I don't have any money."

"I don't have any money to visit 'putas'."<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing quotations illustrate the diverse ways in which poverty restricts the uses of leisure time.

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<sup>1</sup>"puta", vulgar word meaning prostitute.

These illustrations also probably show what would be done with some of the leisure time in case the poor had more money.

Most sports and games enjoyed by men lose much of their meaning unless they afford an opportunity to gamble. To many, talking and idling about are preferable to sports and games indulged in merely for pleasure's sake.

Many poor people say that going to church is a form of leisure-time activity. Many say, and others imply, that their church-going is the result of inability to play the horses, cocks, or seven-oleven<sup>1</sup>

There is another way in which economic conditions influence the use of leisure time. For lack of a more appropriate term this may be called the "work-play" way. The work of a large number of entrepreneurs of small businesses, located on and alongside Main Street, such as fruit, vegetable, "notions", pastry, and candy vendors and owners of small tiendas<sup>2</sup>, is not very exacting. Time not devoted to the service of customers is spent in visiting, joking, and talking with those who tarry a moment. A

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<sup>1</sup>seven-oleven is the local name given to crap shooting. It is merely a simplification of "seven-come-eleven".

<sup>2</sup>tiendas, general term for stores.

business man does not simulate a hustler for the sake of impressing his patrons with his fidelity to his task. He usually has time to talk to "hangers-around"--to enjoy the company. This alteration between work and play may happen a score or more times a day. The result is that the two interests tend to merge into each other, giving the whole business set-up a leisure-time character. Even the hickering on the price of a commodity that usually takes place before a purchase is made is often done in a leisurely fashion.

Place Factors and Their Relation to Leisure-Time Activities. The wealthier, being less restricted financially, are much more mobile and frequently spend their leisure time out of town. But they have a habit of attending pretty closely to their business, which may take them to their fincas<sup>1</sup> and to other towns. These trips are rarely protracted ones. They, like the poor, tend to take their leisure time where they find it. They find it most frequently and conveniently in Comerio.

The poor are unable to buy those goods and services that would make possible a broader geographic range for their leisure-time activities.

An equable climate throughout the year, with temperatures that rarely go above 90°F. in the summer and

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<sup>1</sup>Fincas, farms.

below 65° in the winter, absence of prolonged rains, even during the rainy season, a high ratio of sunshine to cloudiness, and long days all help to make outdoor life attractive.

Restricted living conditions, meager furnishings,<sup>1</sup> open construction of the houses, and the fact that all houses in town, with only a few exceptions, front directly on the street and almost touch neighboring houses, tend to push people outdoors--to make the outdoors easily accessible.

Spatial Limits to Outdoor Leisure-Time Activities.

Since twenty-five hundred people live on ten and a half acres and spend much of their leisure time outdoors in that area, they are necessarily confined to very restricted open places.

The high and grade schools have a joint playground the dimensions of which are about fifty by sixty yards. With the exception of such events as basketball and volley ball, its use is restricted to school children during school hours.

The Plaza, recently reconstructed with Federal Relief money, has about the same dimensions as the school

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<sup>1</sup>This applies to the poor, not to the wealthier.

playground. It is open to all but so far is confined to a small per cent of the Clase Segunda some of whose members take their evening promenades there and loaf and visit and court on the concrete benches.<sup>1</sup>

Adjoining the Catholic church on the west, and belonging to it, is a small fenced-in Plazita<sup>2</sup>. Several of the more devout Catholic ladies take care of individual flower gardens here. There are little benches around a central fountain. At the north end of the Plazita is a glorieta<sup>3</sup> under which there is a table and several long benches. People occasionally come in, stroll among the flowers, especially before and after Mass, or enter in the evening with a guitar and play and sing for a few minutes.

The school yard, plaza, and plazita are the only three outdoor places that are dedicated exclusively to leisure-time activities. But because of their restricted areas--restricted by rules or by the nature of the areas themselves--the uses to which they may be put are comparatively

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<sup>1</sup>The Plaza would probably be patronized more in the daytime were there shade. The reconstructed plaza was expected to be used in the place of Main Street for the evening promenades. There is as yet no sign that there will be such a substitution; and there probably will not be because the plaza is half a block from Main Street and, therefore, out of the stream of life.

<sup>2</sup>Plazita, little plaza.

<sup>3</sup>Glorieta, a shed-like structure open on three sides and having a thatched roof.

few. In addition, and perhaps more important, social habits tend to direct most of the leisure-time activities to places that, even though they allow no more diversity in the use of leisure time, are nevertheless more acceptable socially.

Where, then, are leisure-time activities most observable? The answer is, On the streets of Comercio. The street as a community center has a deep significance. It is not only a traffic artery and a locus for businesses and business activity, but serves as the concentrating area for the use of leisure time. It would be difficult to say which of these three functions is the most important.

The children of all classes play on the streets much of the time. The streets are the place where many people loaf and talk and mix business with pleasure. This not only applies to street vendors but to business men and country folk. When the latter come to town to buy provisions they loaf awhile before returning home. Most of the carnival activities also take place on the streets. Religious processions use the streets. Each Monday scores of persons, from country and town, congregate in front of the physician's office and municipal medical dispensary to wait for medical attention and to visit with friends. The same happens when the Justice of Peace courts and District court hold their sessions. No week passes but that some patent medicine vendor or itinerant preacher draws a crowd on some street corner. Perhaps more important than any of these is the fact that the regular evening promenades take place on the streets. And

Main Street is the concentrating point for most of these activities.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the fact that the streets serve other functions as important as leisure-time pursuits, a bird's-eye view of the street as a whole with its multifarious activities would undoubtedly attribute to it a dominant leisure-time character.

The average Comerieño spends much of his leisure time outdoors, in Comercio, on the streets, and particularly on Main Street.<sup>2</sup>

Place Factors with Special Reference to Age, Sex, and Class. Children of both sexes and all classes spend a large amount of their leisure time on the streets. Among the poor the houses are too small and the children too numerous for them to be able to romp, play games of tag, and "play ball" indoors. Among most of the wealthier, the house

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<sup>1</sup>All of the activities mentioned above take place either on Main Street or on one short side street leading up to the Alcaldía (city hall).

<sup>2</sup>Married women, especially of the Clase Primera, are an exception to this rule. This point will be discussed later.

The reader must not conclude that the places mentioned are the only ones where leisure-time activities may be found.

is not considered the proper place for children to play.<sup>1</sup> As children grow into adolescence, the girls come more closely under parental control than boys. Young girls are required to be off the streets and home from their promenades by about nine o'clock. Boys may stay out longer, but even they rarely allowed to stay out "all hours".<sup>2</sup> But up to the end of the promenade there is no appreciable difference in the number of girls and boys on the streets.

Sex distinctions as to the places where leisure time may be enjoyed increase with age. Men seldom spend their leisure time at home. Women, especially married women of the Clase Primera, are almost always at home. Rarely is a married woman of the Clase Primera seen on the streets, either during the day or in the evening, except for some practical reason. Only one married woman of the Clase Primera was found who occasionally loafed on the streets. Lower-class women spend more time on the streets, but they too are usually found at home or in the home of a neighbor.

A study of street life will be seen, therefore, to be of great importance in the study of leisure-time activities of the young of both sexes and the older of the male sex, but it will reveal little as to what, for example,

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<sup>1</sup>The upper-class home is kept very clean and orderly and is usually crowded with all sorts of objects that interfere with the play of children.

<sup>2</sup>The Clase Segunda controls its children somewhat less.

wives and mothers do with their leisure time. Among the wealthier, servants do most of the housework. Even at that, the matron is kept quite busy managing the house, looking after the children, and assuming other responsibilities. Among the poor, cooking and other household duties are reduced to a minimum. Because of poverty, the poor mother probably has less leisure time than her wealthier sister. When she works outside, as a servant or in the tobacco factory, she has practically no leisure time.

The balcony is a common architectural feature of most better-class homes. It provides for married women what the streets do for the rest of the population. Most of the better-class homes along Main Street are located on the second floor. Balconies three or four feet wide extend across the front of the house and jut from the second floor out over the sidewalk. On the side streets the balconies may be located either on the first or second floor or both, or perhaps a porch may take the place of the balcony.<sup>1</sup>

The balcony may be frequented by all ages and sexes, but it is most important as a leisure-time place for the old-

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<sup>1</sup>Three or four better-class homes have patios interiores, i. e., house gardens or patios open to the sky.

Where the poor homes have no balconies, a step or doorway may have to suffice.

er and married women. While sons and daughters take their evening promenades, mothers and their friends are often noticed leaning on the balcony railing watching the street life below. This goes on at all hours of the day provided the balcony is shaded. It is not uncommon to notice a woman appear from the house, lay a small pillow on the railing of the balcony, lean on it for a few minutes, return into the house a few minutes, and again return to the balcony. These going and comings may recur a dozen times a day.

The balcony or porch is often a place for paseitos.<sup>1</sup> Girls and occasionally mothers will be seen walking back and forth on the balcony.

Chairs may also be placed on the balcony and visitors entertained there, but the parlor is the usual place for the entertainment of visitors. Una visita<sup>2</sup> is an outstanding leisure-time occasion. More than any other social event, it best manifests the graciousness, solicitude, and hospitality of the host and hostess.

On one occasion the home of a poor family was visited. The only means of hospitality that seemed to be at the disposal of the poor mother was one egg. She ordered her daughter to boil it and serve it. This was the only bit of food in the house; yet for the guest to plead that this should

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<sup>1</sup>Paseitos, diminutive paseos.

<sup>2</sup>Una visita is a general term for both formal and informal calls.

not be served would have offended.

Seven better-class homes were visited in succession during one afternoon. The first two served bottled German beer with pretzels; the next two, wine with pastry; and the last three, medium-sized glasses of rum, to be taken straight. To refuse would have been a mild offense.

These characteristics of the visita run with equal sincerity through all classes. The visita is one time when all members of the family are gathered together, providing of course that it is not merely a "drop-in" visit. "Drop-in" visits are very common, especially among the women. The visita means just what the word implies: it is a visit. The conversation tends to be adjusted to the interest level of all. All tend to participate actively. The visita is probably the best illustration of social intercourse that cuts across age and sex lines, but not across class lines, because a visit is a class affair.

Sewing. Sewing pretty things for the home, such as curtains, bedspreads, decorative pillows, doilies, table spreads, and couch covers, consumes a large amount of leisure time of the women of the Clase Primera. Making or altering party dresses may also be considered a leisure-time activity. With the poorer women, sewing is a quasi-leisure time activity, or more often an economic necessity. Among women of the Clase Primera, sewing for friends is a gratuitous service.

Siestas.<sup>1</sup> During the early part of the afternoon, when there is a general lull in all forms of activity, most of the women repair to their bedrooms for their regular afternoon siestas. The siesta is largely the result of habit, but women say, "We need to rest, and reclining for an hour or so in the heat of the day is a 'beautifier.'"

Clubs. There are no social or literary clubs in town. The two churches sponsor religious organizations which are primarily interested in religious matters. Two years ago Mrs. A of the Clase Primera tried to organize a bridge club. A few meetings were held, but a dispute among some of its members caused its abandonment. Since then no attempt has been made to organize social clubs.

#### Description and Interpretation of Some of the More Important Leisure-Time Activities

Cocks and Cock Fighting.<sup>2</sup> "I love fighting cocks.

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<sup>1</sup>Siestas mean roughly, afternoon naps. The difference between a siesta and a nap lies in the fact that siesta is a socially approved custom. Even a man may habitually take his afternoon nap without being "laughed at". Although siestas are frequent among the poor, they are less common than among women of the Clase Primera. If there is no bed, a hammock is used.

<sup>2</sup>Most of the information to be presented was obtained from three Clase Segunda men. All three were extremely poor. They said that neither they nor their families were sure when they could eat their next meal. All three were married. One had eight children, another six, and the last had nine, involving a polygynous marital relationship. None of them knew how to read or write; yet each seemed to be an expert judge of good fighting cocks and knew how to train them.

Every one here, rich and poor, loves them. Cock fights are seldom carried on within the town. Once in a while we have an informal fight here. But the big fights take place in the gallera<sup>1</sup> across the river or in the other towns. The country folk often have informal cock fights. Many people in town have coops behind or under their houses where cocks are kept and trained. Sunday mornings we congregate on Main Street, usually down near the bridge, with our sacks containing the cocks we are going to fight that day, and wait for transportation to a place where a fight has been announced."

(The information that follows will be presented in a question-answer form just as it was taken down).

Q. What does a good fighting cock cost? A. That depends on his breeding, age, and the number of successful fights he has had. Let me show you. (He took the interviewer to the back of and underneath a house where there was a jaula de gallos de pelea.)<sup>2</sup> See that handsome bird in that coop with spurs two inches long and as sharp as a needle. He has won seven fights. He is worth a hundred dollars. That one there has won five fights. In his last fight he was blinded in one eye. His owner will probably retire him. Those two there with button spurs have never fought. They would be worth about five dollars apiece.

Q. Do you have any pure-bred cocks in Comerío?  
A. There are not many pure-bred ones here but we have many good ones.

Q. What does a good fighting cock weigh? A. The

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<sup>1</sup>Gallera, a large shed-like structure with tiers of benches surrounding a central arena where the cock fights take place.

<sup>2</sup>Jaula de gallos de pelea, coop for fighting cocks, often with training quarters near by.

ideal weight is three and a quarter pounds. If heavier he is apt to be too slow, if lighter he is not strong enough.

Q. Why do you clip the wattles and comb so close?  
A. When the head is smooth, the opponent has difficulty grabbing and holding on with his bill. When an opponent can hold on to his head with his bill, for even a few seconds, he is very dangerous. It gives him leverage, increased power, and accuracy in his thrusts with his spurs to the head and throat which is the most vulnerable part of the body.

Q. Why do you keep the feathers pulled out of his head and down his neck? A. For the same reason. It makes his skin tougher, and his body a little stronger.

Q. Why do you clip the feathers so close along the back down to his tail and pull the feather out of his legs? A. This is not as necessary as pulling the feathers out of the head, but it exposes his body to the sunshine, makes his skin tougher, and his body a little stronger.

Q. Why don't you pull the feathers out of his tail, too? A. Ah, Mister! If we did that, the first time he missed his opponent he might lose his balance and his opponent would surely strike him.

Q. Why do they keep their cocks tied up or shut up all the time? A. So they can't run with hens, to keep them from eating everything they find, and from fighting every cock they see.

Q. What and how often do you feed fighting cocks?  
A. Ordinarily we give them corn mash and whole corn once a day. They can have all the water they want. When preparing one for a fight, we count out forty grains of corn and give all of it to him once a day. He gets nothing else to eat, but he still has all the water he wants.<sup>1</sup> He gets nothing to eat or drink on the day of the fight.<sup>1</sup>

Q. Why are you holding his tail? A. Notice how he digs his claws in the ground to get away. That exer-

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<sup>1</sup>This answer is not complete. The fault was probably in the way the question was asked. The feeding of fighting cocks is more complicated than the answer would imply.

cises his legs.

Q. Why are you pressing down on him? A. For the same reason.

Q. Why do you slap him on his head and the front part of his body? A. To teach him how to dodge and feint rapidly.

Q. Why are you holding that cock and moving him from side to side, forwards and backwards so rapidly? A. This exercise trains the one that is free to feint and be fast and accurate with his bill and spurs. Notice I am holding him low now. We want our cocks to learn to strike low and hit their opponents squarely. This is very important training.

Q. Do you give him any other exercise? A. Yes, if we are preparing him for a fight we wrap rags around his spurs and let him spar a few minutes with an opponent who also has his spurs covered.

Q. How often do you give him these exercises? A. These exercises are taken more or less regularly during his life as a fighting cock. Previous to a fight he goes through most of these exercises every day. You see it takes a lot of time and patience to train one. We cannot afford to be careless even in what may appear to be a minor detail in his training schedule. We know that the opponent he will sometime meet will be highly trained and when cocks are evenly matched victory usually goes to the one that has been most carefully trained.

Q. Why do you sharpen and serrate the under side of his upper bill just before a fight? A. If that is done, he can grab his opponent with his bill and hold on longer.

Q. Why do you spray him with water just before he starts to fight? A. That freshens him. When we are training him for a fight we usually rub him with alcohol, too, to toughen his skin.

Q. Why are you running a feather down his throat? After he has fought awhile and has been wounded in the throat and is about exhausted, we pick him up and swab out any blood that may have accumulated.

Q. Where did you get your knowledge as to how to train cocks? A. My father used to have cocks. My neighbors have had them from time to time. I just learned by watching and helping them.

Q. If some one were to introduce a new training method, would you adopt it? A. Yes, if his cocks proved better fighters.

Q. If you owned a cock, would you fight him on Friday the thirteenth. A. You see, cock fights are usually held on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. If Friday the thirteenth were a holiday and I had a cock pointed<sup>1</sup> for that day, I would fight him.

### Conclusions:

a. All three of these men are expert judges of cocks and know how to train them.

b. They say they had learned by watching and helping their friends.

c. They understand cock "psychology." They know that long patient training with careful attention to details is the one thing necessary in order to produce a good fighting cock.

d. They not only know the training methods but have acquired through the same experience practical reasons for everything done.

e. They will accept new methods as soon as they are proved in the cock pit to be better than the old.

There was not discovered any superstition, sentiment, or any other unreflective factor that might possibly

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<sup>1</sup>This term is commonly used in sports to mean the particular type of training that a competitor receives just prior to the sporting event.

stand in the way of the successful training and fighting of a cock. Emotional play has its place, but that occurs after the bets have been placed and the fight is on.<sup>1</sup> This has nothing to do with the cocks. If a spur happens to bruise an eyelid so that the eye swells shut, a pair of scissors is always ready to snip the eyelid off so that vision is restored.

An Evening on Main Street. The most important evening diversion is the paseo.<sup>2</sup> Paseos may be classified as follows:

- a. The evening paseos of the younger set of the Clase Primera and those de la orilla that regularly take place on a short section of Main Street. These are the paseos that are usually meant when the word is used.
- b. Paseos of the young set of the Clase Segunda, one of which is more or less an extension of the Clase Primera paseo, especially on the southeast end of Main Street; the other takes place at the plaza at the same time.

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<sup>1</sup>Bets are more often placed after the fight has begun than before.

<sup>2</sup>A paseo is very roughly a promenade such as might be observed in the Easter parades on Michigan Boulevard of Fifth Avenue. But the paseo is more meaningful than these promenades as the description will show. For this reason the term paseo will appear throughout the text.

- c. High-school students often gather on Main Street in front of the school in the morning and walk back and forth, frequently studying their lessons at the same time.
- d. Balcony paseos of mothers or young girls.

The paseo first enumerated is the "big" one and is the one that will be described:

The most important evening diversion, especially with girls of the younger set, is the paseo. The paseo is sociability transferred on a large scale to the street. It is, at once, the most typical and important of the evening forms of outdoor life. It consists of well-dressed groups, usually of two or three persons who stroll back and forth along the center of the street at a somewhat rapid pace.<sup>1</sup>

The paseo begins about 7:30 o'clock and dispersal takes place between 9:15 and 9:30. In the early part of the evening the paseo tends to extend the full length of Main Street.<sup>2</sup> As the hour of 8:00 approaches there is a rather rapid circulation so that by 8:15 about ninety percent of the paseadores<sup>3</sup> are concentrated in a short and narrow stretch

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<sup>1</sup>The gait in the paseo is not quite as fast as in walking to and from work, nor is it as slow as that of lovers strolling down a secluded lane.

<sup>2</sup>About five average city blocks.

<sup>3</sup>Paseadores, those who are taking paseos.

of the street, a space seventy-five to a hundred yards in length and about twenty-five feet wide.<sup>1</sup> This concentration is effected by a gradual shortening of each change of direction until the accustomed point of greatest concentration is reached. This concentrating process has become so routinized through long practice that the time of the peak of concentration can be forecast with accuracy.

The dispersal that takes place at the end of the paseo is not a reversal of the concentrating process. About 9:00 o'clock groups begin to leave and go directly home. By 9:30 the streets are pretty well cleared of paseadores.

The social life of the paseo wells up most animatedly at the time when concentration is greatest--when, for instance, between two hundred fifty and three hundred people may be found on the stretch of the street indicated above. This is the time when the young people, the girls especially, are most vivacious and are "at their best."

On the evening that a special count was taken, the following observations were made:

About two-thirds of the paseadores were girls of

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<sup>1</sup> When a car approaches, the paseadores slowly move aside and close in behind after it has passed.

high-school age. About four-fifths of the total belonged to the Clase Primera or to the Clase de la orilla. The Clase Segunda paseos are primarily extensions on the west and southeast ends of the Clase Primera paseo. Most of this class take their paseos on the southeast extension near the moving picture theater.

One girl was with her father and a girl friend. Two girls were walking alone with boys.<sup>1</sup> Four boys were walking with girls part of the evening, but there were always girl friends as companions, too. Most of the boys and girls walked in groups of two or three of their own sex. The boys alternately took paseos and loafed along the side of the street. None of the girls was seen loafing. The girls might occasionally stop and chat a few minutes with friends going in the opposite direction. As said before, both sexes were well dressed, and especially the girls. Dress is a very important feature of the paseo. Only one boy had his coat off even though the evening was very warm.

Some say that it is not considered good form for a girl to take paseos on successive nights. They are apt to call her a "loca".<sup>2</sup> This derogatory term indicates that such action is regarded by some as an impropriety.

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<sup>1</sup> One couple took paseos alone every night the observer happened to be on the street.

<sup>2</sup> Loca, "crazy."

This is probably true of a few of those whose parents are very strict and proper, but not of the majority of the Clase Primera.

The paseo is the center of congregation and interest of evening street life. But at no time are more than half of the people congregated in the vicinity of the paseo actively taking part in it. Those on the periphery shift about frequently. The young men, and occasionally the old, move in and out of the stream of paseadores. The older men of the Clase Primera stand in little groups along the side of the street, chatting and talking business. Children of all classes play about nearby. Older women sit inside the doors of their or their friends' tiendas which border the scene of the paseo, sewing and/or chatting. Both ends of Main Street are practically deserted when the paseo is at its height.

Other observations in the vicinity of the paseo yielded the following data:

- a. Ten women were leaning over their balconies.
- b. Four Negroes were sitting on the curb near the paseo.
- c. About one hundred fifty men and children were standing around the paseo. Among them there were three groups, 3-4-4 in number, of business men and tobacco farmers talking business. None of them took paseos.

d. On this evening there were about 290 people in the vicinity of the paseo.

The picture show is roughly the boundary line between the Clase Primera and Clase Segunda paseadores. It closes about 9:00 o'clock. Those of the Clase Segunda swing to the right and mix in the stream of Clase Segunda paseadores; those of the Clase Primera swing to the left into the other stream. The result is that on show nights paseos terminate later and the numbers participating in them are greater. The average attendance at the tri-weekly shows is about fifty.

Dominoes. Four men of the Clase Primera were playing dominoes in the fire station and three were watching them play. The game was almost as dramatic as a cock fight. The play was deliberate. When a player had a choice of plays he counted the number of dominoes on the table that matched his possible playing choice and then played on the probability that the number on the domino in his hand which matched the number most frequently appearing on the table would be most likely to be unplayable by his opponent. "Post mortems" took place after each game and two heated arguments between partners took place over the merits of playing a particular domino. When the game ended, the losers treated the winners to beer.

Radios. Radio programs were attracting crowds in two small stores. From sixteen to twenty men and boys of the Clase Segunda were congregated in each store. But conversation seemed to be the real interest and the radio programs incidental. There was continuous coming and going in these groups.

Billiards and Cards. In a small pool hall with one table two men of the Clase Segunda were playing billiards. Thirteen were watching. Near the wall four men were playing cards with grains of corn as chips; two were watching.

The Doctor's Office. Doctor A had three callers this evening. They had come in to pay their respects and to converse on political topics. This occurs practically every night.

Conclusions.

- a. The paseo is the main center of evening diversions.
- b. The paseo is characterized by a class distinction.
- c. The paseo is participated in mostly by the younger set, particularly the girls.
- d. To an onlooker, dress and sociability are the dominant traits of the paseo.
- e. The paseo induces dependent activity on the part of equal numbers on its periphery.
- f. The farther away from the paseo the more autonomous are the diversions.

A Dance at the Casino:<sup>1</sup> The Queen. Misses X, Y, and Z were the candidates of the Sophomore class for queen. All three were daughters of wealthy local families. All three came to the dance dressed as queens because all of the votes had not been turned in when the dance began. The winner was uncertain even after the dance had been in progress for a while. At a "dramatic moment," when the crowd was in greatest suspense, Mr. A. Novio<sup>2</sup> of Miss X, entered with five thousand votes which gave her the victory.<sup>3</sup>

About eleven o'clock an aisle was formed among the dancers, leading from the entrance to a trono<sup>4</sup> previously prepared on the east end of the dance floor. The queen, escorted by her novio, proceeded down the human aisle

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<sup>1</sup> The particular dance upon which most of the description that follows is based, was a benefit dance given by the High School Sophomores. The money received from admissions and votes on the queen went to the High School to defray graduation expenses as well as to pay for social affairs that were to come at the end of the school year.

While this dance was not strictly a Clase Primera affair, it was conducted, with the exception of the selection and induction of a queen, similarly to other Casino dances. Anyway the selection of a queen and giving a dance in her honor is a typical social activity, especially with the Clase Primera.

<sup>2</sup> Novio, sweetheart.

<sup>3</sup> This meant that it cost him fifty dollars.

<sup>4</sup> Trono, throne.

to the throne. After she had mounted her throne she turned, bowed, and thanked "her subjects." The two defeated candidates proceeded down the aisle in the same manner and took their positions on the throne as attendants to the queen. All three sat down. In a few minutes the orchestra struck up a tune, the sweetheart of Miss X advanced to the throne, assisted his lady from the throne, and then they proceeded to dance back down the aisle amidst a general handclapping. She was followed by her two girl attendants who proceeded back down the aisle in the same manner. As the group passed, the rest of the dancers closed in behind and proceeded to dance. Thereafter the queen mixed with the crowd, danced, and received congratulations and compliments on her beautiful ensemble.

Orchestra and Music. An eight-piece orchestra, costing sixty-dollars, was brought from San Juan for the occasion.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the maraca<sup>2</sup> and güfcharo,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Native orchestras do not play for dances at the Casino.

<sup>2</sup> The maraca is made from a round gourd-like fruit about four inches in diameter that has a very tough shell when dry. Holes are cut in both ends, the pith and seeds are extracted, small pebbles and a handle inserted. It produces a rattling noise and is used to keep time.

<sup>3</sup> The güfcharo is made from a long gourd-like fruit. Holes are cut in the side of it and the contents removed. Semi-circular incisions are made at regular intervals at right angles to its axis. A wooden handle is then made and several stiff wires are driven into the end. This is rubbed at right angles across the surface of the gourd. This produces a peculiar, sharp, and rasping sound. It is used to keep time.

the instruments used were the same as those found in an American dance orchestra.<sup>1</sup> There was a mixture of Spanish and American dance music with the former predominating. Fox trots, rumbas, and danzones<sup>2</sup> were popular. The dance closed, as it always does, with "Home Sweet Home," played as a séis.<sup>3</sup>

Dress. No girl went to this dance with the same dress that she had worn previously to a dance in Comerío. All dresses were either new or made over. No girl had asked her friend before the dance what she was going to wear. That would be a secret only to be revealed as a "surprise" when she appeared at the dance. The styles conformed in general to those set by New York and Paris but within those general limits much originality in design was shown. For the young girl, her preparation for this dance was as interesting as the dance itself. The men dressed informally, but were all neat and well groomed.

Other Features. Two hundred people were in attendance on a floor area of about 1,600 square feet, about half of which was used for dancing, accommodating for

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<sup>1</sup> Excepting the banjo, which is seldom used.

<sup>2</sup> Danzones, dances, two rather long steps forward then backward, each ending with a two-step. For example, the popular tune known as "The Peanut Vendor" is a danzón.

<sup>3</sup> Séis, several short rapid side-steps followed by rapid pivoting on a small spot on the floor.

each dance about thirty couples. Like the paseo, the dance was mostly for the younger set. Mothers seldom danced. They occupied chairs around the sides, visited, commented on dresses, and cast an occasional glance at a daughter. The older men danced more often but kept more to the back of the hall, talking and joking and treating friends to rum, perhaps cognac or whiskey, taken straight.<sup>1</sup> During the intermissions, dancers often joined the older groups, the girls taking small glasses of wine, usually preferring the sweet varieties.

#### Conclusions:

a. Preparing for and attending a dance is one of the most interesting leisure-time activities for the girls.

b. Dress is a subject of primary concern for the girls; men enjoy "treating" and visiting with their friends, as well as dancing.

c. Dancing gives girls a slight respite from the omnipresent supervision of the chaperon.

d. The instruments used and music played show an assimilation of foreign musical elements.<sup>2</sup>

e. While the dance is the center of interest, there are at any given time more people not dancing than dancing, especially among the older persons.

f. Electing a queen is an occasion for added interest in the dance.

#### Literary and Artistic Diversions. Literary and

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<sup>1</sup> This dance was peaceful. It is said that fights frequently occur.

<sup>2</sup> Segunda Clase dances in their homes use native instruments and music.

artistic activities do not stand out as prominently in the total leisure-time pattern of the community as do some other types of activities. Reading in the Clase Primera is largely confined to current newspapers and magazines. The insular daily newspapers have considerable circulation and are more widely read than any other type of material. The men prefer to read about insular politics, foreign and local news. A few are interested in society news. Women prefer, in the order named, society news, fashion news, local political news, and subjects that are religious in nature.

About seventy-eight El Mundos are sold in town daily by newsboys. The El Mundo is the most widely read and circulated of all newspapers in town. Newspapers are usually read by men while loafing on the streets. The following is a list of the more important periodicals and magazines read in Comerío:

A. Newspapers

El Mundo  
 La Correspondencia  
 El Imparcial  
 La Democracia (political organ primarily)  
 El País

B. Satirical and humorous magazines

El Diluvio  
 Yo Acuso  
 Florete

## B. (Cont'd)

## La Linterna

Puns, jokes, and satirical quips, especially those dealing with the subject of politics, are widely read.

## C. Religious periodicals

El Piloto  
 La Milagrosa  
 El Mensajero Bíblico  
 Puerto Rico Evangélico  
 El Amigo de los Niños

Religious literature is widely read by the more devout of all sects.

## D. Sporting periodicals

Semana Deportiva  
 Deporte Hípico

## E. Pictorial Periodicals

Puerto Rico Ilustrado  
 El Gráfico  
 Pictorial Review (American)

## F. Moving Picture Periodicals

Cinelandia  
 Cine Mundial  
 Motion Picture (American)

The last two classes of periodicals are of special interest to girls and women. American fashion magazines are used freely by women.

There are no local publications. All reading material comes from outside. One person well qualified to speak on this subject stated: "Excepting Messrs. X and Y, no one in town reads much. No one as far as I know ever reads real scholarly books or magazines."

Book reading, excluding that of the teachers, is largely confined to novel-reading by both sexes, but no even much novel-reading is done. A few Protestants read the Bible regularly. A few Catholics read such books as Libro de Misa<sup>1</sup> and some children study and memorize the Catecismo.<sup>2</sup> The average library of the Clase Primera contains about twelve books, including sets of several volumes, such as Everyman's Library, World Book, the New Human Interest Library, and the National Encyclopedia.

The following is a list of books contained in a Clase Primera library. It is more or less representative of the twenty lists that were made:

Gran Galeoto . . . . .	José Echegaray
La Trepadera . . . . .	Rómulo Gallego
Dofia Bárbara . . . . .	Rómulo Gallego
Sin Novedad en el Trente . . . . .	E. M. Remarque
Tres Novelas Ejemplares y Prologo. . . . .	Unamuno
De los Hombres de Cristo . . . . .	Fray Luis de León
Amado Nervo . . . . .	Concha Espina
Escenas Montañesas . . . . .	J. M. Pereda
Campos de Pastilla . . . . .	Antonio Machado
Modern Readings . . . . .	John W. Davis
Burning Beauty . . . . .	T. Baily
Vanity Fair . . . . .	Thackeray

Further conclusions as to what the Clase Primera reads can be made from topics of conversation, the subject-matter of which can only be gained from reading or from the reports of others based on their reading. The average man of the Clase Primera is well informed about foreign affairs and can dis-

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<sup>1</sup>Libro de Misa, Mass Book.

<sup>2</sup>Catecismo, Catechism.

discuss current events in Europe and America. He knows about insular happenings, particularly what is going on in the political field. He is usually posted on insular sporting events, especially horse racing. Most of this information is obtained from insular newspapers, particularly the *El Mundo*<sup>1</sup> which covers the subjects indicated more completely than rest. On the other hand wives and daughters are well acquainted with the latest fashion news and social happenings in the Island and in a lesser degree with insular politics. There are no reading circles or study groups in town.

Music. Comerieños, with few exceptions, are fond of music, although comparatively few actually play instruments. The preference of the majority is for Spanish, including native and Latin-American dance music. A few, however, like American dance music, such as fox trots, which they frequently hear over the radio. Only three of the two score questioned preferred classical music.

The musical instruments preferred by most are the guitar and the mandolin. The guitar takes first place. Next in preference to these instruments is the cuatro.<sup>2</sup> With the flute these instruments form a typical ensemble for evening serenades.

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<sup>1</sup>The *El Mundo* is published in San Juan, which is the capital, the most important seaport, and the largest city in the Island.

<sup>2</sup>A cuatro is a small guitar-like instrument having four strings.

The following is a list of musical instruments in town:

Radios . . . . .	22
Victrolas and phonographs. . . . .	23
Guitars. . . . .	14
Pianos . . . . .	11
Cuatros. . . . .	8
Mandolins. . . . .	7
Violins. . . . .	4
Güiros <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	3
Flutes . . . . .	3
Pianolas . . . . .	2
Cornets. . . . .	2
Tiple <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	1

The numbers claiming they could play musical instruments were as follows:

Piano. . . . .	20
Mandolin . . . . .	10
Guitar . . . . .	8
Flute . . . . .	8
Clarinet . . . . .	3
Violin . . . . .	2
Saxophone. . . . .	1

- Musical programs over the radio always attract crowds of people.

At present there is no organized orchestra or band.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Güfcharo in Glossary

<sup>2</sup>Tiple, an instrument similar to a cuatro.

<sup>3</sup>This has not always been true. A "pick-up" band occasionally parades the streets announcing an interesting picture show. The same group sometimes plays in the religious processions and at the funerals of the Clase Segunda.

"I have tried to organize an orchestra of wind and stringed instruments, but have been able to get only eight interested. There are many obstacles, such as the depression, public indifference, and political schisms that stand in the way of my efforts."<sup>1</sup>

It should be added that the instruments most Comerienses prefer do not lend themselves very satisfactorily to orchestration. The instruments best liked are "individualistic" and harmonize satisfactorily with the Comeriense type of personality.

Comerienses of all ages may be heard at all hours of the day singing popular tunes.<sup>2</sup> But with the exception of the coro<sup>3</sup> of Clase Primera girls who sing at the Masses, the chants at masses, and the Congregational singing in the Methodist church, there is no ensemble, or group singing.<sup>4</sup>

#### Some Personality Traits Revealed in the Use of Leisure Time

While all of the traits to be discussed here appear to be most conspicuous in the various types of leisure-time activities, yet all of them also tend to cut across

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<sup>1</sup>Statement by a local music lover.

<sup>2</sup>Especially the Clase Segunda.

<sup>3</sup>Coro, choir.

<sup>4</sup>Collective effort in music is conspicuous for its absence. This is true in spite of the fact that large numbers of Comerienses are music lovers. Musically speaking, they tend to be soloists.

Other forms of artistic activity play such a small part in the life of the community that they will not be considered.

and dominate to a large degree all other types of activity.

Sociability. "When you pass some one on the street, greet him whether you have met him before or not. By all means, do not pass him without giving him a nod or smile. Non-recognition is an affront that is hard to forget."<sup>1</sup>

Acquaintanceship in the lower classes may begin with very little social formality, with the first smile, nod or, ¡Qué Hay!<sup>2</sup> Even though there be no formal introduction, a recognition, as indicated, tends to be sufficient to establish friendly contact. If a person be at all congenial and tactful thereafter, he has initiated a friendship group. His friendship group extends rapidly and with facility, directly through personal contacts and indirectly through the process of having those whom he has met tell others about him. Others are then friends too.<sup>3</sup>

The upper classes are more formal. Acquaintanceship is preceded by an introduction. But a long period of "apprenticeship" after an introduction is not a prerequisite to "belonging."

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<sup>1</sup>Quotation from a local observer of Comeriñan life.

<sup>2</sup>¡Qué Hay!, Hello!

<sup>3</sup>Comeriños are jealous of their members. They do not like to have them spend too much of their time with out-of-town friends.

If a Comerieño is alone, he is very likely to be triste.<sup>1</sup> If he is not triste when alone, he is likely to be considered "peculiar." Private acts, except those that are vegetative, are unpopular.

Sociability tends to be in direct ratio to the shortness of physical distance between one person and another. The most animated leisure-time situations tend to be those where there is a concentration of the largest possible numbers in the narrowest space. A dance at the Casino or in a private home seems to be "at its best" socially when there is a minimum of elbow room. The best dancer at a dance of the Clase Segunda is uno que sabe bailar en una tabla.<sup>2</sup> A like rule seems to apply to the paseo and other social events. A Comerieño does not say: "This place is too crowded (or congested), let's get out of here!" If there has been a large number at a dance or party, the favorable comment is ¡Que gentío!<sup>3</sup> This usually means that the dance or party was a good one. If there were few present and the dance was "slow", the comment is apt to be: "Ese baile era una porquería."<sup>4</sup> 'Crowding' is,

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<sup>1</sup>Triste, said; better, lonesome.

<sup>2</sup>Uno que sabe bailar en una tabla, one who knows how to dance on a board.

<sup>3</sup>¡Qué gentío! What an agglomeration of people!

<sup>4</sup>Ese baile era una porquería, "This dance was no good--a "flop."

therefore, not a satisfactory term to describe large agglomerations of people. It contains too much of the idea of discomfort. The term, to be correct, ought to mean the opposite of discomfort.

The typical leisure-time group on the streets of Comerío is the conversational group whose membership constantly changes. The typical leisure-time group at home is the visiting group which does not change its membership. Both are groups whose members join in the exchange of experiences, discussion of topics of the day, and frequently in "kidding" and "joking",<sup>1</sup> repartee and laughter. Density of population tendency to geographic and economic isolation, and population stability are conducive to a social compactness and a strong sense of "belonging." These conditions and the limitations they impose on more active leisure-time pursuits tend to create an "ideal" social milieu from the point of view of forming a mutual basis for experience and understanding. A person who recounts his experiences or expresses his feelings may be sure that they are quite completely anticipated and sympathized with.

- Being close together and talking are the essence of Comerieñan sociability.

Sociability cases. Y is eighty-eight years old. He is much younger in action. He is a lover of peace. He has no other pastime than to stay at home and talk.

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<sup>1</sup>"Kidding" and "joking" are important traits in conversational groups among all classes.

He loves to talk. He is a philosopher. He does not believe in politics. He hates radios and newspapers. He does not know how to read, nevertheless he is well informed.

"I am very sociable. In a way my husband is too. He acquires friends easily."

"Both of us are very sociable. My husband is very impulsive and generous. I visit much with my relatives. My husband works hard and doesn't have so much time to visit."

"I like to visit with my friends and be around in all social events where there are lots of people."

"I guess my disposition makes it difficult for me to acquire friends easily. My husband is very sociable. He does not like the society of women. In spite of my disposition I cannot stand being alone."

"I am not a sociable man. I like being alone. I do not care to cultivate friendships because I am in a poor economic condition and cannot be as generous with them as I would like to. My wife likes to visit. Every minute she has to spare, she steps over to the neighbor's house to visit."

"I like to be alone only when I'm sad. Then I have my society with my God."

Spontaneity. Those factors that are identified with a high degree of sociability also influence the readiness of individuals to adjust themselves to leisure-time situations.<sup>1</sup> To be more precise: Socially planned and organized use of leisure time is of minor importance; there is a large amount of leisure time at the disposal of the average Comerioño; sociability is a prominent trait; All

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<sup>1</sup> Commercialized leisure-time institutions are confined to the picture show, pool hall, cock fighting. (Admission is charged for the more formal events but there are also many informal fights.)

these combined connote, on the part of the individual, a readiness (and/or aptitude) to participate in whatever pleasurable activity may casually present itself.

The Comerieño tends to take his leisure time where and when he finds it. He lives in today. He does not pull out his watch and say, "I have to be at such-and-such a leisure-time affair at such-and-such a time." He rarely plans his picnics a week ahead. He is much more likely to plan and have them on the "spur of the moment." Even last summer's carnival, as important an event socially as it was to be, was only announced a month beforehand.

The boy does not ask his girl friend, "May I have a date with you at eight o'clock next Saturday evening. I will be there promptly at eight, so we can go to the picture show." He is more likely to pay her a visit "when he feels like it" and will often call at her home unannounced.<sup>1</sup> If she is at home, there is then plenty of time to decide what to do. If she is not there, he is usually not irritated.

If a guest comes half an hour or even an hour late, he is not frowned upon by the hostess. He does not seem to consider it his duty to offer excuses for his tardiness.

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<sup>1</sup>Of course if they are going to a dance or a more or less formal social event, he will announce his intentions beforehand.

"Where will I find Juan?" "I don't know, I suppose he went down town. You are most likely to find him somewhere along Main Street." Juan doesn't follow a "groove."<sup>1</sup> He has many casual contacts as he goes along. When he meets a friend, he greets him, talks with him a few minutes, and walks on. In this sense Juan is very mobile. He is also accustomed to contact quickly and appropriately the many friends and acquaintances he sees in his daily round of leisure-time activity. Fifteen men, mostly of the Clase Segunda, were standing in and about a little store, ostensibly listening to a radio but primarily interested in talking. Twenty minutes later there were twenty present. Excepting for two or three faces, the group had changed completely three times.

Dramatization of Leisure-Time Response. There is little social restraint placed upon the overt expression of those moods or sentiments that may be called out by social stimuli. Expressed negatively, Comericanos do not feel comfortable in the presence of a person who takes leisure-time experience of any type dispassionately. It is taken as a matter of course that each individual should give free expression of his impulses. If those expressions appear <sup>extreme</sup>, he

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<sup>1</sup>Only a few follow "grooves".

may be laughed at, but to this he is not particularly sensitive, since both parties have given vent to their feelings to their mutual satisfaction.

In a leisure-time group there is not, nor is there supposed to be, a nice balance between listening and talking. Talking seems to be primary, and listening secondary. The ratio between the two, as regards distribution of time and attention, seems to range from about five-to-four in visits to three-to-one in more animated social situations that may often be observed on the street among all classes.<sup>1</sup> This comparison brings out the dramatic possibilities of conversation.<sup>2</sup> The function of conversation seems not only to be the interstimulation of ideas that results from talking and listening to others but also a stimulation to dramatic action on the part of the members of the talking group. It is usually not considered bad taste if this dramatic action takes place simultaneously among the several conversants.

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<sup>1</sup>This conclusion is based on five efforts to measure the length of time certain individuals talked in comparison to the length of time they remained silent in conversational groups.

<sup>2</sup>An outsider is apt to be confused by the animated conversations that take place so often and to think that they are just arguing and that the whole conversational set-up is meaningless with so many talking at once. Such an inference is hardly correct. They are accustomed to this and, judging by the trend of the conversation, are able to talk and at the same time respond to what is being said.

Another way of describing the dramatic character of leisure-time response is as follows:

a. The laugh instead of the smile. In humorous situations, and they are frequent, there is comparatively little subdued expression of pleasure. If a thing is "funny", a Comeriño is likely to laugh out loud.

b. The "forte" instead of the "piano". As far as public opinion is concerned a Comeriño, especially of the Clase Segunda, may sing aloud if he cares to. A "piano" voice, either in talking or singing, seems to mean that there is not much enjoyment.

c. The expanded vocal gesture. Narration of an experience tends to be vivid simulation of that experience, because the original situation, the subject of the narration, was also dramatically experienced. A calm recounting of an experience seems to create a marked sense of depression in the auditor. Intonation, inflection, gesticulation, and their underlying feelings seem, on the basis of behavior observation, to have a value equal to words.

d. Suspense and Uncertainty. Dramatic suspense is often consciously and unconsciously present in leisure-time situations. The suspense element was consciously

introduced when Mr. A finally came to the support of his sweetheart, Miss X, at the dance at the Casino, which resulted in her election as queen. The same is true when girls refuse to tell friends what they are going to wear to the dance; "Es una sorpresa."<sup>1</sup> The suspense or element of chance runs through most of the sports and games that are enjoyed by Comericanos. Betting is an important feature of most of them.

Individualized Leisure-Time Response. Sociability, spontaneity, and dramatization of leisure-time activity all indicate individualized leisure-time response. The common environment and, therefore, the common basis of experience are generally conducive to social accord from the point of view of individual attitudes. There is not likely to be a marked discrepancy in individual attitudes with relation to topics of common interest. Individualized leisure-time response is not to be defined in terms of difference in point of view but rather in terms of social approval of a free and dramatic expression of that point of view. In leisure-time groups where conversation is dominant form of action, cooperation is a neutral rather than a positive

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<sup>1</sup>"Es una sorpresa," It is a surprise.

or negative social value.

When the Comerieño prefers to play and sing alone; when he is indifferent to the needs of joint action in preparation for some important social event such as getting the Casino ready for a dance, or the organization of a club; or when he is desirous of appearing at the dance in a dress that will "surprise", he is expressing his individualistic traits positively. His individualism along these lines is due to and a part of his social experience, especially that large amount of leisure time experience of the type that does not require active physical and social cooperation for collective ends. This non-cooperation in ordinary social intercourse tends to characterize his reactions to those situations where cooperation is necessary if success is to be realized.

Identification of the Foregoing Personality Traits with Basic Social Attitudes.<sup>1</sup> The average Comerieño tends to end his day with the subconscious experience of having had a full and unblocked response to a succession of leisure-time situations. He has lived the day at instants when in-

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<sup>1</sup>The term "attitudes" is here used in a broad sense, signifying (a) oral responses to life conditions, and (b) overt social behavior patterns that underlie oral responses.

terest was most intense, namely, in the present time of each given situation.

If frustration and failure has been a part of his day's experiences, he has also lived that through dramatically. Even though he has been unable to effect a practical solution to his problem, and he probably has not, his overt expression of sentiments and emotions on the occasions in question have tended, in themselves, to be a satisfying solution to his problems.

The dominant importance of the play or leisure-time attitude towards basic life conditions may be illustrated by the following:

"I do not know whether we will have anything to eat for dinner today or not. I think some about tomorrow, but life is too short to worry."

"I am always happy. If I worry I will die sooner. Every one of my friends is happy."

"Vivo como un gato, pero estoy contento."<sup>1</sup>

"We had no breakfast and only a few beans for dinner, but we are happy."

"I used to be a rich man, now I am very poor. I am as happy now as I ever was."

"Why mourn so long over the loss of loved ones?"  
It does no good. I pour forth my grief and forget."

"I am happy porque me conformo con todo lo que tengo."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vivo como un gato, pero estoy contento, I live like a cat, but I am happy.

<sup>2</sup> Porque me conformo con todo lo que tengo, literally, because I conform, or am adjusted, to all I have.

The foregoing quotations are not only typical of the way the average Comerieño expresses himself but they also tend to be representative of the way he lives. Happiness appears to be the dominant tone of Comerieñan life. It is not only identified with the personality traits analyzed but also with leisure-time activities; and lastly, it actively pervades the basic life attitudes.

#### General Conclusions

- a. The average Comerieño has a large amount of leisure time. Much of this leisure time is forced upon him because of limited economic opportunity.
- b. Tobacco is considered a barometer of social life among the wealthy.
- c. A good tobacco crop does not influence markedly the ways in which the poor use their leisure time.
- d. Congestion at home and an equable climate tend to make outdoor leisure-time activities attractive.
- e. The average Comerieño spends much of his leisure time outdoors, in Comerío, on the streets, and especially on Main Street.
- f. Limited space and the character of places used restricts markedly the ways of using leisure time.
- g. The young of both sexes and the old of the male sex spend much of their leisure time outdoors on the streets; older women, and especially married women, spend much of their leisure time at home.
- h. Among the married women, especially of the Clase Primera, balcony life, visiting, sewing, and siestas are the most important leisure-time activities.

- i. The training and fighting of cocks is the most highly organized form of sport in Comerio. Of all Comeriefian activities this sport seems to be the most highly developed along logico-experimental lines.
- j. The Paseo is the most important evening leisure-time activity. It is centered on a narrow stretch of Main Street and is enjoyed mostly by the younger set. Large numbers of people of all classes, particularly men, congregate around the periphery of the paseo.
- k. A dance at the Casino is a most important social event for the Clase Primera.
- l. Literary and artistic pursuits are not important forms of leisure-time activity.
- m. Sociability, spontaneity, dramatization of leisure-time responses, and individualized leisure-time response are the personality traits that seem to stand out most distinctively when leisure-time activities are looked at as a whole.
- n. Those personality traits have grown out of and alongside such basic factors in life adjustments as natural resources, climatic conditions, agricultural patterns, dense population, limited economic opportunities, and place and space restrictions on the ways in which leisure time may be enjoyed.

## CHAPTER IX

## CLASS STRATIFICATION

## Terminology

Class Terms. Clase Primera, de Sociedad, Buena Familia, Crema, and Los Blancos are terms used to refer to the upper class.<sup>1</sup> The terms most commonly used are the first three. The terms de Sociedad and Crema, when spoken by the Clase Primera possess a strong vocal fervor. They are more likely to refer to those more elect who are members of the Casino.<sup>2</sup> Even though the Casino does not have all of the members of the Clase Primera on its roll, it may be considered as the best single barometer of Comerisñan society.

Artesanos<sup>3</sup> is the term used to denote those whose

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<sup>1</sup> Clase Primera, de Sociedad, Buena Familia, Crema, and Los Blancos in their order mean: First Class, of Society, of Good Family, Cream, and the Whites. Los Blancos is primarily a class, and not a racial term. The majority of the two lower classes are also white. The lower-class whites are not called Negroes unless they are racially and socially defined as such. (Who is a Negro? will be discussed later.)

<sup>2</sup> The Casino is a sort of club-house used for the social activities of the Clase Primera. The one in Comercio was, and will be when reorganized, used almost exclusively for dancing. Casinos in the larger towns and cities are also used for cultural purposes and other social activities.

The Casino has been closed for several years because of the depression. It is being reorganized. A list of the members is being made up. Clase Primera dances are still held there.

<sup>3</sup> Artesanos, artisans.

position is intermediate in the social scale. It usually refers to those who make their living by manual skill. Numerically this class is very small. Economically, it is comparatively unimportant.

The social position of the Artesano is often outside the Second Class by his own choice and outside the Clase Primera because the Clase Primera does not accept him. His position may be described as de la orilla with reference to the Clase Primera. De la orilla is often used to apply to any individual who is socially near the Clase Primera; and in all of those activities in the community, except exclusive Clase Primera social events, such as Casino dances, those de la orilla properly pertain to the Clase Primera.

Clase Segunda, Clase Tercera, Obreros, Sirvientes, Cocineras, and Negroes are class terms used to denote those lower in the social scale.<sup>1</sup> The first and second are general social terms used similarly to Clase Primera. There was difference of opinion among local observers as to whether Clase Segunda or Tercera should be used. Both are

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<sup>1</sup> Clase Segunda, Clase Tercera, Obreros, Sirvientes, Cocineras, and Negroes in their order mean: Second Class, Workers, Servants, Cooks, and Negroes.

Farm laborers are sometimes called Peons. Peons do not take part in the social activities in the town to such an extent as to give them separate consideration. They would be classified, however, under the Clase Segunda or Tercera.

used but the former is heard much more often and in its use the speaker appears to refer to any one of the lower classes. Clase Tercera is more derogatory. So, even though there is some confusion in usage, Clase Segunda will be used in the text to designate approximately two-thirds of that population which occupies a social level below the Clase Primera and those individuals who are de la orilla. The third, fourth, and fifth terms are economic and occupational in meaning.<sup>1</sup> The last is racial.

The language is rich in terms that refer to the Clase Primera. Terms used to denote the Clase Primera are more social in character than those that refer to either of the other two classes. The Clase Primera talks most about itself. Class distinctions are most important for this class. All class terms are used much more frequently by the upper class. Their use implies a lower class without the use of terms that refer to that lower class.

#### Evidences of Social Stratification

Between Employer and Employee. Don, Dofia, Señor, Señora, Señorita, and Usted are the terms used by the

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<sup>1</sup> Unskilled labor would be the English term applied to this class.

employee when saluting or referring to his employer.<sup>1</sup>

When spoken to by his employer, the employee answers:

"Sí Señor," "Sí Señorita", "Sí Señora," or "Mande."<sup>2</sup>

The employer is saluted, or referred to, formally. The employee is referred to or saluted informally, as "tu."

The servant or cook always enters the house of her employer through the back door. She remains in the back of the house when not cleaning or straightening up the front of the house or caring for the children. She is not allowed to sit in the parlor or stand alone on the balcony. Neighbors asked why the servant of the author of this study was allowed to stand on the front porch. She is supposed to remain silent, not initiate a general conversation with visitors or members of the family, and to obey, without answer, the orders of her superior. The Señora does not like to have her servant overhear conversations with friends, because, she says, "They will go out and gossip everything." She never eats with the family, but in the kitchen. She is usually given less variety of food and, when there are special dinners, she usually waits

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<sup>1</sup> Don and Doña are terms of respect. They are never used alone, but with the given name; for example: Don Rafael, Doña Elena.

Señor, Señora, and Señorita mean Mr., Mrs., and Miss. Usted is the formal "You"; tu, the informal.

If the servant is old and has been long in the service of the family, she may be saluted with Usted.

<sup>2</sup> "Sí, Señor," "Sí, Señorita," "Sí, Señora," and "Mande" mean respectively: "Yes, Sir;" "Yes, Miss;" "Yes, Mrs.;" and "at your orders".

and eats what is left over. In some families, the lady of the house goes to the kitchen at meal times and apports out the food to the servants. Servants and cooks have eating utensils of their own. If the servant sleeps in the house, she usually sleeps in a small room in the back of the house on a narrow bed with a thin mattress. She may or may not have a mosquito net. If there are separate bathrooms in the house, she is not allowed to use the one that the family uses. She usually cannot leave the house after the evening work is done without the consent of the Señora. The servant's freedom is also frequently restricted by her own parents who instruct the Señora not to let her leave the house except to go to church or unless she goes in company with one of the members of the family. Most servants are given cast-off wearing apparel of the members of the family. The majority of them also spend most of their wages on clothes for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The woman of the Clase Primera seldom bothers with kitchen affairs. But if the Señora is poor, she may have to do most of the house-work herself. The daily meals are usually prepared by the cook. On special occasions, the Doña may go to the kitchen to aid in the preparation of the meals. On ordinary occasions, the purchasing of food is done by the cook or servant; but on special occasions, the

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<sup>1</sup> The servants' and cooks' wages are from three to four dollars a month.

Señora may go to the market place to make the purchases. The Señora rarely washes the dishes, scrubs the floor, or does the laundry if she has a servant. A poor relative or friend who lives and works in the house is usually treated like a member of the family.

The distinctions between the male employer and his employee are not so clear-cut and so numerous. With the exception of the terms of salutation and recognition, the conversational contacts between the employer of the Clase Primera and his employee are quite informal. The best distinction seems to be that the language and actions of the Señor are more "diplomatic" towards members of his own class. He is more gracious, shows more solicitude, and is more tactful in his dealings with members of his own class.

Rarely will the Señor work with his hands. He must, if a farmer, maintain the respect and the dignity of his peons. In order to do this, he says that he cannot work shoulder-to-shoulder with them.

Mr. X, a high-school student whose father belongs to the Clase Primera, would not carry a chair across the plaza alone, because he was afraid that his friends would laugh at him; yet he willingly cooperated in the construction of a basketball court alongside friends and a director.

Mr. Y says that he likes manual training but that none will ever see him working in a carpenter shop or a furniture factory.

Mr. Z owns and works in a grocery store. His hired help is of the Clase Segunda. The only difference in the

type of work done is that the help does the cleaning and heavy work.

Two men of the Clase Primera own drug stores, another owns a dry goods store. They work alongside their help. This type of work is considered respectable.

The owners of three shoe shops in town work side by side with their hired help. All three are Artesanos. This kind of work is not respectable. The same is true of the two local bakers.

Class Distinctions in Religious Activities. During the services at the Catholic church, the women of the Clase Primera sit in a group on the front benches on the left-hand side. There are no special pews or seats set aside for them.<sup>1</sup> If the seats are full and a woman of the Clase Primera enters, she is given a seat by a member of the lower class. The men of the Clase Primera go to church so rarely that there is little evidence of class distinction on their part. Those who do attend usually come late. They stand behind the right hand rear benches and do not seem to expect any one to give seats to them.

The girls of the Clase Primera most frequently sing in the Catholic choruses. The presidents of the Congregation of Jesus Christ and other Congregations are always members of the Clase Primera. Persons de Sociedad take preference in the confessions. The altars are prepared by women de Sociedad. The image of the Virgen de la

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<sup>1</sup> Some reported that there were no class distinctions in the seating, but a check made on three successive Sundays indicates some segregation.

Milagrosa is inclosed in a box with a glass front and sent to the homes of the members of the Clase Primera in order that prayers may be offered to it. Persons of the Clase Segunda receive a picture of the Virgin instead of the more ornate box. If a member of the Clase Primera does not send palm leaves to the church to be blessed for Palm Sunday, he will receive them, already prepared, anyway. If a member of the Clase Segunda sends none, he will receive none.

In the Religious Processions on Good Friday, and other Processions as well, the Virgen Maria is always carried by women of the Clase Primera. All classes aid in the carrying of the image of Christ in these Processions. This task or privilege belongs to the men because the image is so heavy. In the church services, the priest prefers that the Palio<sup>1</sup> be carried by persons of the Clase Primera. Only the Clase Segunda has Novenas.<sup>2</sup>

No one of the two hundred and seventy-five who are members of the Methodist church belongs to the Clase Primera.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that one must be a member of

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<sup>1</sup> Palio, a sort of cloth canopy borne by four persons and under which the priest marches in the religious processions.

<sup>2</sup> Novenas, nine days of prayer after the death of one of the family.

<sup>3</sup> The Protestants prohibit dancing, smoking, and drinking. This automatically excludes them from the social activities of the Clase Primera.

the Catholic church in order to belong to the Clase Primera. Sectarianism, as such, is of little class importance.

Class Distinctions in Diversions. There is very little class distinction noticed in outdoor sports and games. At the cock fights, which are attended by men of all classes, bantering, arguing, and friendly rivalry over favorite cocks take place indiscriminately. The men of the Clase Primera bet more because they have more money to bet. They may sit a little to the side during the interims and carry on a little more exalted conversation--less vulgar, too--than do the men of the Clase Segunda. The men of the Clase Segunda clean and prepare the cocks for their fights.

The Clase Primera men do not shoot craps. Dice games are usually played on the ground or floor; therefore, the Clase Primera men consider them undignified. Nor do they play billiards. The billiard hall is frequented by laboring men of the Clase Segunda. The men of the Clase Primera play poker, dominoes, and damas.<sup>1</sup>

The fire station, the rear of one of the drug stores, and the physician's office are the congregating places for the men of the Clase Primera. Here they gossip, argue, and discuss politics, and in the two first places mentioned,

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<sup>1</sup>Damas, a game similar to checkers.

play games.<sup>1</sup> The men of the Clase Segunda pass their leisure time in the billiard hall and in two or three of the cafetines,<sup>2</sup> where they play cards or billiards, gossip, and listen to the radio.

The evening paseos on the Main Street quite distinctly belong to the younger set of the Clase Primera. The members of the Clase Segunda take their paseos on the upper end of the same street or else sit and court and gossip at the new plaza. During these paseos most of the older men, and many of the younger as well, congregate on the sidewalks and talk. No man of the Clase Primera will be seen sitting on the curbs or on the store steps. This latter is not uncommon among the men of the Clase Segunda.

Courtship among the boys and girls of the Clase Primera is more restricted to the homes and to social affairs, such as dances. A boy may occasionally walk along with his girl friend and her girl friend at the evening paseos, but only two or three couples were noticed habitually doing this. Outdoor courtship among girls and boys of the Clase Segunda is much more frequently

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<sup>1</sup>There are two separate cliques that habituate the drug store and fire house. The physician's office is the center of informal conversations and political discussions. The physician is a local leader of the Liberal Party.

<sup>2</sup>Cafetines are coffee shops and drinking parlors.

observed. There is also somewhat less chaperoning of sweethearts in the Clase Segunda.

The Clase Primera gives invitation parties and birthday parties. The Clase Segunda does not give either. The Clase Primera has its dances at the casino or invitation dances at home. The Clase Segunda has informal dances at home. Sometimes this class uses the City Hall for its dances.

At the picture show, the Clase Segunda sits in the rear seats or in the last seats in the balcony.

On the day of the fiesta del Cristo, the men of the Clase Primera ride the horses in the carrera de sortijas.<sup>1</sup> On the same occasion, the Clase Segunda takes part in the carrera de saco,<sup>2</sup> and the climbing of the palo encebado.<sup>3</sup>

When a member of the Clase Segunda dies, the women relatives usually wear black as a sign of mourning longer than do those of the Clase Primera. The funeral procession of the Clase Primera is much more solemn than that of the Clase Segunda. The Clase Primera never has music at its funerals; the Clase Segunda, however, occasionally does have music. The Clase Primera always decorates the coffin with wreathes of natural flowers; the Clase Segunda frequently uses artificial wreathes. Both sexes of the

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<sup>1</sup>Carrera de sortijas, literally, ring race. Rings are suspended at intervals on a wire across the street. Men of the Clase Primera mount horses and, with a baton in the right hand, race to see which can loop the most of the rings.

<sup>2</sup>Carrera de saco, sack race.

<sup>3</sup>Palo encebado, greased pole.

Clase Segunda accompany the coffin to the cemetery. Women of the Clase Primera stop at the bridge which is about half a mile from the cemetery. The men proceed with the coffin, alone.

### Class and Race

Another approach to class distinction is a race approach. There are only two distinct races recognized in Comerío--white and Negro. The white race is found in all classes. The Negro is never found in the Clase Primera. He belongs to one of the other classes. This excludes him from all the social activities of the Clase Primera.<sup>1</sup>

The Mulatto<sup>2</sup> The social position of the full-blooded Negro is clear because of his well-defined and observable racial traits. He needs little mention here, because there are probably not more than a hundred in the town.<sup>3</sup> But approximately thirty-three per cent of the population is mulatto.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the mulatto is much more difficult to place socially. This is true

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<sup>1</sup>Social activities means here activities de Sociedad, of the Clase Primera which are centered around the privilege of enjoying the dances at the casino. However, discriminations range into a broader social atmosphere than casino life. The following rule may be laid down: the farther removed the social intercourse from the face-to-face contacts found in acts "of society", the less class discrimination there is.

<sup>2</sup>Mulatto is here used as a general term to apply to any person with a strain of Negro blood.

<sup>3</sup>The United States Census, 1930, reports five per cent.

<sup>4</sup>This is probably an under-estimate.

because of a combination of interacting racial, social, and economic factors that have varying degrees of importance in particular situations that might cause a person to be defined as a mulatto at one time and as white at another.

This difficulty was brought out when thirty persons, indiscriminately selected, were asked, "Who is a Negro?" The following twelve answers are a sample of the thirty received:

"A Negro is a person with black skin and kinky hair."

"If white in appearance and all other things are equal, a person is white even though he is known to have had Negro ancestors."

"A Negro is a person with pelo malo."<sup>1</sup>

"If a person does not go to the Casino, he is a Negro."<sup>2</sup>

"If a person is white and has kinky hair, he is a Negro."

"If a person has kinky hair and his face is black, he is a Negro."

"I am not a Negro, because I go to the dances of the Clase Segunda."<sup>3</sup>

"A Negro is a person who is bien prieto."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Peño malo, literally, bad hair--meaning kinky hair.

<sup>2</sup>This is not accurate.

<sup>3</sup>Negroes associate freely with the Clase Segunda.

<sup>4</sup>Bien prieto, very black. This term is usually used to refer to an animal. When alluding to man, it is derogatory. Also, negro retinto is used, meaning a coal-black Negro.

"That person is trigueño."<sup>1</sup>

"A Negro is a person who is socially defined as such."

"A Negro is a person who is very black."

"If a person has hair that is almost kinky, he is a Negro, even though he is not very dark skinned."

Since these definitions were not very convincing, a more direct method was tried.

Several persons who were white in appearance were asked to indicate their reactions to various persons of color

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<sup>1</sup>As nearly as could be ascertained, trigueño means dark to medium-dark mulatto. The derogatory term for trigueño is grifo. Sometimes a grifo is described as a "mulatto climber".

As far as is known, scientific terminology denoting race and mixed-race types was first developed for Puerto Rico by Andres Peáro Ledru who, in his book, Viaje a la Isla de Puerto Rico, published in the year 1797 (translated and published by Julis L. de Vizcarrondo in Puerto Rico in 1863), gives the following table on page 165:

Blanco (white)	plus negra (negress)	equals mulato. (mulatto)
Mulato	plus negra	equals grifo
Grifo	plus negra	equals marabu
Blanco	plus mulato	equals cuaterón (quadroon)
Blanco	plus cuaterón	equals meztizo (octoroon)
Blanco	plus meztiza	equals trecerón (1/16 Negro)
Blanco	plus tercerona	equals blanco.

According to this table, a grifo is a cross between a mulatto and a Negro. This is a scientific classification. In popular usage, a quadroon may be called a grifo if he shows strong negro traits or if some one wishes to ridicule him.

Scientific terminology and popular usage by no means always coincide.

as they passed along the street. Several persons, mulatto in appearance, were then asked to do the same thing.

The white observers never indicated a person as Negro unless he showed well-defined Negro traits. The mulatto observers, on the other hand, invariably indicated the passers-by as having less color than the white observers had indicated. This indicates a "white wish" on the part of the mulattoes and some prejudice on the part of the white observers.

The importance of getting reactions such as those just presented lies in the fact that it is not only a means of determining the extent of race prejudice but also of indicating the possibilities that any given person with a strain of color may have of rising in the social scale.

The mulatto is found in all classes, if mulatto means any person with mixed blood.

Persons belonging to the Clase Primera are anxious to forget that they have had colored ancestors, and their neighbors, in turn, are not particularly interested in examining racial pedigrees. There is also a noticeable lack of self-consciousness on the part of the well-established members of the Clase Primera regarding the subject of color. On the other hand, persons whose social position is somewhat dubious may go to considerable

trouble to eliminate negroid appearances. The degree of race-consciousness depends upon how well they are established in the ranks of the Clase Primera. Since mulattoes mix freely with the Clase Segunda and, in fact, are a part of this class, they have, with reference to this class, become almost oblivious of race. It is not in their own social milieu that they need be concerned about race, but rather when they make contacts with the Clase Primera and are stimulated into a "wish to climb", and then class, more than race, prejudice, does most to thwart this wish.

The following deductions may be made: Any mulatto who is not in physical features, pigmentation, and/or hair texture too close to the negroid type is either a trigueño or a blanco.<sup>1</sup> He is one of these two but not a Negro. If his social heritage is good, or his wealth is adequate, or he has "pull", he may belong to the Clase Primera.

Mulatto Cases. Mr. A, white, and the son of an influential father, was seen walking up the street with his arm around a drunken mulatto friend.<sup>2</sup> When Mr. A was asked whether his friend went to the casino,

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<sup>1</sup>Blanco, white in English, but here, the Spanish brunette type. A person who is unusually white, a blonde, is sometimes called an "Americano" or American. This is complimentary. A blond baby is much admired.

<sup>2</sup>A girl of the Clase Primera would be more chary about showing physical affections towards a dark mulatto.

he answered, "No, he is too dark and the girls would not dance with him."

Mr. B, a medium mulatto with white features, asked a girl of the Clase Primera to dance with him at an informal social gathering. She refused and insulted him. Some said that he was a trigueño and belonged to the Clase Segunda. But color in this case did not seem to be the main objection, because she previously had danced with a boy who was just as dark. This boy is the son of a local baker. This occupation is not considered very respectable.

Mr. D is a light mulatto. He regularly attends the dances de Sociedad. He has a good social and economic heritage.

Mr. E is socially accepted as white. He has white features but is a medium mulatto in complexion. He is locally influential but lacks the good social heritage requisite to social status.

Mr. and Mrs. F are light mulattoes. They are very much respected in the community. But they are not very aggressive in making contacts with those who count; so they remain the Clase Segunda.

Young Mr. G is a light mulatto. He is a local man-about-town and they say that he is "clever in knowing how to make himself useless." He is very much a member de Sociedad, because his father is a rich tobacco planter.

Observations and Conclusions on the Mulatto. The term mulatto, as it is here used, does not clearly identify for the people of this community those who have varying degrees of colored traits. As remarked before, the term mulatto is rarely used locally. More precise distinctions were presented in the foregoing discussion.

There are two types of mulattoes. The first may

be called the "high mulatto".<sup>1</sup> The "high mulatto" is a blanco who may either belong to the Clase Primera or Segunda. If he belongs to the Clase Primera, it is either because his social heritage is correct, or because some other factor, such as wealth or "pull", is present.

If he be a "high mulatto" of the Clase Segunda, his position in this lower class is not the consequence of traces of color, but the consequence of failure to possess those attributes that society prizes. He may be accused of having color, but that is a good reason, not a real one, for he appears more white than colored, just as does his "high mulatto" brother who may belong to the Clase Primera.

The second type of mulatto is the trigueño.<sup>2</sup> The trigueño has more clearly visible negroïd traits, such as would appear in a half-blood, and less frequently, in a quadroon. The trigueño is a trigueño because of the way he looks, and also because of his racial and social heritage. While the "high mulatto" is seen as white and passes as blanco without further ado, the trigueño, on the other hand, is not only seen as trigueño, but there is also a

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<sup>1</sup>This term is a little arbitrary. There is no local need for a Spanish equivalent, because the "high mulatto" is a blanco, just as is the white person with no colored blood.

<sup>2</sup>Trigueño, literally means brunette, and would in English describe the Spanish type. In local usage, trigueño refers to the medium mulatto.

recollection of his ancestors; for example, "We do not claim Mr. A because his grandmother was a Negro slave." The trigueño, as such, never belongs to the Clase Primera. If the trigueño were to belong to the Clase Primera, he would cease to be a trigueño, he would then be a blanco.

Race, therefore, changes its meaning under the influence of social conditions. In this sense, the rules of admission are flexible. But the rules of admission and acceptance are rigid in the sense that all who belong to the Clase Primera must have some non-physical attribute that society prizes.

Gaining Social Recognition. The process of gaining social recognition is not governed by hard and fast rules that are predetermined by class mores. Social distance is not maintained, to any noticeable degree, by rigid class codes of conduct. The Clase Primera does not say, "If you belong to one of the other classes and acquire the necessary 'pull' of an influential friend, or marry one of us, or get a college degree (especially a professional one), and further, provided that your occupation is not too undignified, or you are not too colored, we will give you a chance to become one of us." The social attitudes of the Clase Primera are reasonably democratic.

Theoretically then, acquiring social status is com-

paratively easy. But practically, it is difficult because of the limited natural resources, density of population, educational handicaps, and consequent limited economic opportunity. These interacting limitations serve to limit the process of achieving social status and to encourage social distance. These practical barriers make membership in the Clase Primera almost as stable as if rigid class codes were present. It is apparent that these limitations hinge on economic conditions. This explains why there are comparatively few illustrations of social capillarity.

Miss A was a poor white girl of the Clase Segunda. She dressed one evening and went to a dance at the Casino. She was put out. Later she married a man of the Clase Primera. After that, she attended the Casino regularly.

Miss B used to work for a local tobacco company, stripping the leaves for forty cents a day. She married a man of the Clase Primera, and was elevated to that class.

Miss C was a poor orphan who lived with relatives who were de Sociedad. One evening they took her to a dance at the Casino. After that, she could go whenever she pleased.

Mr. D was once considered as a "high mulatto." Through influential contacts, he became a member de Sociedad. He is no longer considered doubtful. He is now a blanco.

Mr. E used to be very poor. He used to "clerk" in a local general store for three dollars a week. With the small savings that he was able to accumulate over a period of years, he bought into a partnership with his brother in a general merchandising business. He made money in this and acquired an interest in a local tobacco trading association. Later he bought a tobacco farm and is now considered one of the richest men in the community. In

youth he was a poor white of the Clase Segunda, now he belongs to the Clase Primera.

Mr. F is the richest man in town. His wealth is estimated at between two hundred fifty and three hundred thousand dollars. He has no debts and is one of the two or three men in town who has paid his taxes throughout the depression. He is attractive physically, and would be classified as a medium trigueño. He is indifferent toward social activities and prefers to get his pleasure in the admiration of his many fields of tobacco. He is frugal in his living habits and, with the exception of regular donations to the Liberal Party, he is not public-spirited. Gossip has it that he is a descendent of a Negro slave, which is given as the reason why he does not belong to the Clase Primera.

In order to get a clearer idea of the possibilities of social capillarity, ten of the more intelligent members of the community were asked to give their reactions to the following questions:

- a. If a person were to become rich, would that change his class position?
- b. If a person belonging to one of the lower classes were to acquire an influential friend, would that person be raised socially?
- c. If a boy or girl of the Clase Segunda were to get a college degree, would that improve his or her social position?
- d. If a person were to become a leader in local or insular politics, would that improve him socially?
- e. If a person of the Clase Segunda were to marry a person belonging to the Clase Primera, would that person be raised?

All ten answered, "Yes, other things being equal," to both questions (a) and (b). The qualifications were,

"provided that he is not too trigueño or a Negro", and, in addition, if a girl or woman, "provided that she is not immoral."

As to question (c), they were all sure that a person would become a member of the Clase Primera if he had received a professional degree such as that of a physician, lawyer, or engineer, provided that those qualifications mentioned above were not violated. A person who receives a general college degree is not so much respected. But if he were to devote his time to educational pursuits and become a leader in local education, he would be socially recognized. The legal and medical professions are most respected.

Since the town is traditionally Liberal in its party affiliations, and almost every one who is socially and economically important in the community belongs to the Liberal Party, all were agreed that the leader of the Liberal Party would be, ipso facto, a member of the Clase Primera.<sup>1</sup> If he were to become a leader of the local Socialist Party, the answer of all was "yes," and "no." The stigma against the term "Socialism" is not based upon the fundamental economic tenets of Socialism, but upon the fact that the term connotes labor. Laborers do not count socially. The present leader of the local Socialist Party belongs to the Clase Primera, but that is

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<sup>1</sup> This is not quite true. Mr. A, a trigueño, is a leader of local influence in the Liberal Party.

because he is the relative of one of the rich and influential men in the town. His social position is not the result of his political leadership, but of his relationship. If he were to become the leader of the local Republican Party, he would probably be raised, "other things being equal." Three did not concur in this opinion.

All were agreed that if a man of the Clase Primera were to marry a woman of the Clase Segunda, she would be elevated to his social rank provided the qualifications mentioned in connection with (a) and (b) were satisfied.

There was some hesitancy on the part of several in case a woman of the Clase Primera were to marry below her rank.<sup>1</sup> All were agreed that the promotion for the man, in this case, would not be quite as sure as it was for the woman in the previous case. But if the woman had enough wealth and social prestige, and the man were not too doubtful in color and too undesirable in character, he would be raised. Otherwise, the marriage would lower her position rather than increasing respect for him.

The discussion of social capillarity is important primarily as a method of bringing out more clearly the nature of local class changes, and not because individuals often rise in the social scale.

Loss of Status. In the discussion of this topic,

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<sup>1</sup> Three were doubtful. But all agreed when the qualifications that follow were presented to them.

it is of first importance to note the distinctions between the sexes. For the woman, the mores of decency, chastity, and fidelity are strictly enforced. Infractions, even of minor form, immediately arouse criticism. With the man, however, there is a readiness to ignore and even condone, on the basis of "naturalness," violations of sex codes. The distinctions between the two sexes is not absolute, but relative. They do not rest on an absolute difference in the type of moral sanctions, but rather upon the intensity of these sanctions.

A woman who oversteps the bounds of decency, chastity, and fidelity has committed a grave social error. The man who oversteps may lose a little respect with some, but he has not committed a grave social error, and he will continue to be received in the most intimate social circles. This, however, does not mean that a man is supposed to be indecent, unchaste, or unfaithful in order to be some one. One of the reasons why Mr. A is the most respected man in the community is because he is said to have those moral qualities that society demands of the woman.<sup>1</sup>

The rationalizations that are most commonly used to justify a more rigid code of morality for the woman than the man may be summarized as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> This is not the most important reason, but it was one mentioned by several. There is a little, but not much, evidence to show that a man is supposed to "sow his wild oats" in order to be a "real man."

Woman needs to be more moral than man for the sake of her children.

Woman is physically and mentally weaker than man and, consequently, more apt to surrender to temptations.

Submission to temptations injures the woman more than it does the man.

Man is, by nature, more inclined to sex freedom than woman, and it is useless to attempt to control his conduct.<sup>1</sup>

It follows from the foregoing analysis that no man who is well established and respected in the community will lose class by reason of immorality unless his actions are so openly perverted that he is regarded as a degenerate; or, on the other hand, he might possibly lose class if, through an extended series of anti-social acts, he became so demoralized as to be physically incapable of participating in social activities.

Mr. A of the Clase Primera was a model son in his youth. As soon as he had finished the grade school, he went to work with his father in a small grocery store. They made money and rapidly enlarged their business. In a few years, Mr. A's father became the owner of a large tract of tobacco land. They added to their landholdings until they became recognized as the wealthiest people in the community.

When A was about twenty-five years old, a major catastrophe happened to the family. One of A's brothers had gone to New York to work. While there, the brother met and fell violently in love with an American girl who refused to return his attentions. Angered by her rebuffs, he shot her. The trial that followed was long and expensive. The father mortgaged his farms and spent thousands of dollars trying to save him. Influential commissions were sent to plead with the governor of New York, but to

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<sup>1</sup> This is by far the most common rationalization.

no avail. He was hanged. To add to the disgrace of the family, the state of New York would not allow the body to be returned to Puerto Rico.

Mr. A took charge of the business during the time that the father was absent trying to save his other son's life. A was very popular among all classes and spent money freely, treating his friends. Mr. A says that this generosity was the beginning of his downfall, for he rapidly became a confirmed alcoholic. He lost complete control over himself and would be under the influence of alcohol for several days at a time.

At present, he is a physical wreck with palsied and cramped hands and a shuffling walk. He occasionally has delirium tremens and is in the advanced stages of dipsomania. To add to his physical and mental demoralization, he has acquired, within the last few years, a malignant growth on his nose that physicians have diagnosed as cancer.

Every morning, he shuffles down to the tobacco warehouse where he loafs, and visits with second-class friends. Two or three small glasses of rum a day are enough to keep him in a continuous drunken stupor.

He has been married three times. His first wife divorced him after bearing three children. His second wife died. The third, who is now living with him, is threatening to divorce him because, she says, he is intolerable at home and does not support her and the children adequately.

He is living on fifteen dollars a month that he receives as rent from a bakery. This rent is paid by a competitor on condition that he keep it closed.

The case of Mr. B of the Clase Primera is similar. Several of the members of his family had died of tuberculosis. B contracted the disease and was sent to Europe to be treated. His father mortgaged one of his farms to pay the expenses. When B returned, he was pronounced cured. He married and settled down in Comerio. B could not get a job; so he had to depend upon his father for a living. Being very sociable and generous, he acquired the drinking habit. Later he was elected mayor. This seemed to reform him for a while; for he quit drinking. Before the expiration of his term, his wife died and left him with two children who have been brought up by his mother-in-law.

After the death of his wife, he went to live with a mistress who, within the next few years, bore him four children. About that same time he resumed drinking. His drunken sprees gradually degenerated into habitual orgies,

at which time he would become dangerous and want to fight. His friends would patiently assist him to his home night after night. But at last friendship had an end. They all deserted him and left him to wallow on the street until some kind-hearted friend of the Clase Segunda would come along and carry him home.

Once a wealthy man, he is now dependent for his living upon the meager wages that his daughter earns from a small relief job.

What conclusions may be drawn from these two cases that have a bearing upon the loss of recognition?

Both of these men are completely demoralized.

They are dipsomaniacs. Both are in their middle fifties. Both of them have lost all their wealth and are practically dependent on charity. Neither of them has any active friends in the Clase Primera. No former friend ever comes to either of them for counsel--worse than this, none of the numerous former friends stops to greet either of them on an equal footing to carry on those informal chats that every man of respect in the community so highly prizes.

Practically speaking, both are socially ostracised. The first evidence of loss of respect appeared when their friends ceased helping them during their drunken sprees. Ordinarily, a drunken man is never deserted by a friend who is himself sober enough to know what he is doing. But even with all of this, they are not de-classed. No one would refuse either of them the privilege of attending

affairs de Sociedad should they care to do so.<sup>1</sup> "When they die, their departure will be mourned by all classes. The whole town will join their funeral processions. At the last farewell at the bridge, men and women of all classes will stand with bowed heads and listen respectfully to the eulogies of former friends."<sup>2</sup>

Several people were of the opinion that loss of property would mean a considerable loss of respect, because every one would say, "That's too bad!" But seven families of the Clase Primera are either dependent upon public relief or upon relatives.

While sex misconduct does not damage the reputation of the man to any extent, it is the one type of behavior that quickly arouses criticism of women. It is not what the woman may or may not actually do that counts, but what gossip says that she does. Even slight and apparently innocent acts may be given ulterior meaning. A woman is carefully hedged about by customs that guarantee her virginity up until marriage and is expected to maintain an unquestionable fidelity to her husband after marriage. This is applicable to all classes, but especially to the Clase Primera.

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<sup>1</sup> It is understood that the names of both will appear on the new social register.

<sup>2</sup> This is a quotation from a former friend of both.

Miss W ran off with a man and spent the night with him.

Miss X ran off with a man. Both of these women were disgraced.

Mrs. Z liked high society very much. She got into the habit of going alone or with friends to parties at San Juan while her husband stayed at home and took care of his business. Criticism of her conduct became so strong that she could no longer endure it. She now refuses to come back to Comerio to live.

Mrs. Y was accused of causing her husband to separate from his previous wife. She lost class. Some say that the ill-feeling against her is waning and that, in time, she may be restored to her previous reputable status.

Last year, several high school girls from the best homes in town decided to have a vulgar-story contest in order to see which could write the most lurid one. One of the teachers got hold of the note book containing these stories with the signatures of the girls attached. The teacher turned the notebook over to the proper authority who, in turn, took up the case with the daughters' parents. Somehow, the news of the matter leaked out through the spying of one of the boys. The affair became the chief topic of gossip in the town for several days. An understanding was reached between the parents and the school authorities, and they agreed to drop the matter. This case did not have a more serious ending for the girls because there were too many of them and they were all daughters of influential parents. This case does not disprove the rule. Words carry a much lighter meaning than actions in situations of this sort.

#### Summary

- a. Class distinctions are important in Comerio.
- b. Class distinctions are most clearly marked along social lines.
- c. Class distinctions are much more numerous and well-defined among women than among men.
- d. The Casino is the best class barometer.

- e. The Negro is not admitted to the Clase Primera.
- f. Race is a factor in class, but people with colored blood do not have a class of their own.
- g. The "high mulatto" may belong to the Clase Primera if he has qualities that are socially prized.
- h. Next to social life at the Casino, class stratification is most manifest in home life and in the evening paseos.
- i. Social heritage and wealth are the most important class criteria as well as being the best means of maintaining status.
- j. The community is essentially democratic in attitude. Class distinctions are maintained primarily because of limited physical and economic resources.
- k. Only the most aggravated form of misconduct seems to prejudice the community against a man of the Clase Primera.
- l. An upper-class woman who violates the standards of decency and chastity loses respect and is usually de-classed.

## CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS<sup>1</sup>

## Basic Social Traits

One of the main purposes of this study was to discover basic traits of Comerieñan culture. No effort was made at the outset of the study to hypothecate any outstanding trait or traits or characteristic features of Comerieñan culture. It was assumed that, as the study began to take definite form and as information began to come in for recording and scrutinizing, certain traits would be found that would prove to be the differentia of the organized and unorganized life of the community. The idea was to let whatever traits or outstanding characteristics that would undoubtedly emerge from an examination of the cultural pattern as a whole speak, as it were, for themselves.

In this way it was hoped that whatever traits or characteristics that might be discovered would tend to take a normal place in their cultural setting and not appear so predominant as to distort the picture by being

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<sup>1</sup> Specific social traits that characterize particular phases of Comerieñan culture are presented in the summaries at the ends of the chapters.

overworked through a priori conceptions.

Class Differences. In the initial stages of the study, data were gathered without any special regard to class other than the fact that there was indicated on the cards containing the data notations as to whether the individual giving the information appeared to be poor or reasonably well-to-do. This was a tentative classification. This tentative classification of data gradually took form as a more definite classification when the individuals tentatively classified as rich were discovered to possess many differences in points of view from those classified as poor. These general differences formed the basis of a class approach and, since it was found possible to zone the town on the basis of economic classes, it became a definite part of the routine of gathering data to seek most of the information on the basis of "urban zones" that could be more or less closely identified with one class or another.

The very nature of the information thus gathered indicated that the modes of conduct and conditions of life differed from place to place. These observations demonstrated that people in different places in town lived on different social and economic levels and that, therefore, their behavior and attitudes under the influence of their different social and economic backgrounds produced broad

differences in patterns of conduct. These differences, based upon differences in practical life conditions, are given the name of class distinctions.

Every chapter in this study, in fact almost every section in each chapter, brings out class demarcations in attitudes and conduct. These attitudes and conduct are intra-class patterns. The Clase Primera has its social pattern; the Clase Segunda has its social pattern. The two patterns are basically alike and basically different. The basic differences that produced these class patterns are not the result of a few minor variations but rather of numerous variations. The basic differences between classes were discovered by the process of analyzing phases and sub-phases of Comeriñan culture. In the mind of the writer, the process of working out these class differences was the most interesting part of the study. But these class differences, no matter how fundamental they appeared to be in their aggregate nor how readily they lent themselves to the inference that there were distinct class patterns, were never great enough to undermine an essential inter-class unity. To move from a Clase Primera atmosphere into a Clase Segunda atmosphere was not equivalent to moving into a different cultural world.

Class distinctions as such were found to be interesting and important. These distinctions were found

to be a base upon which a super-structure of crystallized attitudes and institutions indicative of inter-class relationships was built. Class distinctions in Comerieñan culture were found to be expressed dynamically in the conduct of one class towards the other. So to speak, class distinctions were found to resolve themselves into stratified class relationships as manifested in political, economic, and social power that was lodged in the Clase Primera. This class possessed the necessary sanctions to determine the direction which social traits were to take. The possession of these sanctions necessitated the inference that the Clase Primera conduct set the pattern for lower-class conduct. The source of cultural movement was the Clase Primera. The superordinate position of the Clase Primera gave that class the predominant status and made that class the model of conduct for the Clase Segunda. No Clase Segunda trait was found to be in a position to ascend the social scale and receive Clase Primera recognition. But every Clase Primera trait had potential or real power to descend the social scale and be incorporated into the Clase Segunda social patterns. The influence of the Clase Primera was most apparent where there was the least tolerance of a free social intercourse between classes. The undemocratic social life of the Clase Primera,

such as was found at the Casino and in the home, was a means of preserving status and forcing recognition.

The ability to enforce non-participation upon the Clase Segunda in the "affairs of society" is probably the result largely of political and economic power, but this enforced non-participation is in itself the most direct and most important evidence of class stratification. It concretely demonstrated that this was one kind of social experience which the Clase Primera had a "prescriptive right" to enjoy by itself. This exclusive social life of the Clase Primera proved to be a reminder to the Clase Segunda that there were enforced limits upon social democracy.

It has not been the intention to make inter-class attitudes and inter-class conduct that result in class cleavages and subordinate and superordinate roles in the relationships between the Clase Segunda and Primera the basis of class study. These factors have been considered as culminating factors in Comeriéñan class life and have not been considered as being as great in importance as the broader aspects of class distinctions.

Sex Distinctions. Sex distinctions are somewhat less important as features of Comeriéñan life than are class distinctions. Nevertheless the sex differences in social conduct are a very important phase of the cultural

picture. Sex distinctions take on a more crystallized form in the Comerican mores than do class differences.

In many ways sex differences have stronger social sanctions than do class distinctions, because sex mores are more precise and tend to deal with familiar relations between the sexes while class differences are more diffused and subject to numerous variations.

As between the classes the Clase Segunda plays an inferior role; as between the sexes, the woman plays the inferior role. In many ways it is more difficult for a woman to simulate a role of equality with man than it is for a Clase Segunda person to simulate a role of equality with the Clase Primera.

The inferior position of the woman has been indicated throughout this study. Its primary cause seems to be found in limited economic opportunity and its primary sanction is the sex mores. An analogous observation applies to the inferior position of the Clase Segunda. This inferior position of the woman takes most definite form in the sex mores of decency, chastity, and fidelity. The inferior role of the Clase Segunda assumes its most definite form in its isolation from "affairs of society."

Associated with mores that closely circumscribe the sex conduct of the woman were frequently observable

evidences of differences in attitudes of the two sexes on similar topics that have undoubtedly grown out of differences in patterns of conduct. The attitudes of the women were just as different from those of the men as were the attitudes of the Clase Segunda different from those of the Clase Primera. On the other hand, they were also just as similar.

Just as was the case in dealing with class distinction, the interest in sex aspects of Comerioñan life has been primarily to observe and interpret these differences as such and to consider the superordinate position of the male as being a less important feature of the study. The chapter on Courtship, Marriage, and Family Life approaches the study of sex differences much as does the chapter on Class Stratification the study of class distinctions.

Interrelationships. No type of social study seemed better adapted to the exploration of complex causes underlying any given social structure than the study undertaken here. In fact it was discovered on many occasions that adequate description and interpretation of any given social phenomenon not only demanded a recognition of complex causes but also a recognition of the fact that to introduce and evaluate those causes for conduct was really a way of

giving the particular conduct its meaning. Not infrequently the use of the term 'cause' or 'factor' was misleading in that it gave the impression that the causes or factors were outside of and antecedent to the particular social situation that happened to be the subject of interest, when in reality the causes or factors were inside of and contemporaneous with the particular situation. In the broad sense the discovery and evaluation of complex causes for a particular social phenomenon proved to be equivalent to the depicting of that phenomenon as having a significant place in an essentially unitary series of relationships.

Many times a particular cause gave early indications of being very significant--so significant, in fact, that there seemed to be no need to proceed further in the search for other causes. Yet often by probing it was found that the cause was in itself a consequence and, as such, was not only continuously conditioning other related social phenomena but was in itself being continuously conditioned by complex influences. It was soon found that this maze of interacting influences could never be completely separated into its constituent parts.

There was considerable proof to the effect that economic conditions were the most important underlying causes

for a broad series of social behaviors, but in no case was it found possible to regard a given social condition as exclusively economic in character. Whether an economic cause were dynamic or relatively passive in character, whether it took one direction or another was determined not only by conditions lying within the economic pattern but also by complex cultural and social psychological influences. The author became convinced by the end of the study that economic conditions, important as they evidently were, are by no means as important as many students are inclined to make them. In this community, at least, religious traits, low health standards, density of population, and limited natural resources exercised a profound influence on Comerieñan cultural patterns. The presence of these conditions influenced economic traits and vice versa. They were interactive in determining the nature of the whole cultural pattern.

To those whose interest lies primarily in the melioration of social and economic conditions through a narrow economic and/or political approach it may be suggested that no solution to the Comerieñan social and economic problems can be confined solely to one line of approach. Just as causes were found to be complex and interrelated conditioning influences, so also it should be recognized that

social melioration would require the application of complex and interrelated methods.

#### Underlying Comerieñan Attitudes and Philosophy

What gives Comerieñan life its essential unity and purpose? What gives Comerieñan life a meaning comprehensible to the average Comerieño? What is the source and the nature of the Comerieño's philosophy whereby he explains and justifies his conduct?

As each of the several chapters in this study successively approached its end, an effort was made to evaluate the role that the traits presented therein played with reference to the whole cultural pattern and also to determine what outside influences affected the particular phases of institutional and non-institutional life under immediate consideration. This process was carried one step further. An attempt was made to answer the question, What practical life philosophy underlies each series of traits? The answers found in each general phase of conduct for this question were revealing, because they usually converged towards a common denominator. This may have given the impression that the conclusions for each chapter were somewhat repetitious, but, instead, these repetitions only emphasized similar life values underlying the varied types of social activity. In short, this meant that there was

an essential unity in the average Comerioño's life.

This essential unity is the result of a merging of many complex influences that have tended to make the average Comerioño a well-adjusted individual. Climatic, geographic, population, economic, family, and neighborhood conditions are the factors that underlie his practical life adjustments. The adjustments to these factors have been of such a nature as to produce such attitudes as complacency, contentment, and fatalism. "I am contented because I make the best of what I have." These attitudes characterize both the nature of his actions and also the underlying tone of his remarks. Religious values approach from another direction and merge themselves into these attitudes and give them a more exalted sanction and surround them with a supernatural atmosphere. This harmonizing of supernatural and worldly values in the experience of the average Comerioño has unified his life and given him an adequate life philosophy.

## GLOSSARY OF SPANISH TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS

Achiote. A reddish-brown seed used for the coloring of food.

Acta de Nati-Muertos. Still-birth Register.

Aguacate. Avocado or alligator pear.

Alcaldía. Town Hall.

Alianza. The Alliance Party.

Artesano. Artisan.

Baile de bomba. Drum-dance.

Barriadas. A popular political sub-division of a municipality, of no political significance.

Barrio. A political division of a municipality, similar to an American township.

Bien prieto. Very black. A derogatory term when applied to a Negro.

Los Blancos. Literally, "the whites," meaning those of the upper class.

Botica. Drug store.

"Bruto." A rough, uncouth person, or an ignoramus.

Buena familia. An upper-class family, that is, a family with a good social heritage.

Cafetines. Drink parlors.

Carrera de saco. Sack race.

Carrera de sortija. Ring race.

Casino. A club-house used for the social activities of the upper class. It is used primarily for dances.

Catecismo. Catechism.

Chicharón. Cracklings.

Clase de la Orilla. Class on the borderline to the first class.

Clase Primera. First Class. The class possessing highest social, political, and economic position or rank.

Clase Segunda. Second Class. Term is used here to denote all of those below the rank of the first class and the class on the borderline to the first class.

Clase Tercera. Third Class. Sometimes used to describe those who live in the lowest economic level.

La Coalición. The Coalition Party.

Cocineras. Cooks

Confrades. Saints' believers. The most devout members of the Catholic church.

Coro. Choir.

Crema. Literally, cream; meaning here the socially elect.

Cuatro. A guitar-like instrument, but smaller and with four strings.

Cuerda. .9712 acres.

Damas. A game similar to checkers, though more complicated.

Danzones. A type of dance.

Día de los Tres Reyes. Three Kings' Day.

Días de Preceptos. Days set aside by the Catholic church for instruction in the Ten Commandments.

Dios manda. God wills.

Don. A masculine term of salutation used with the given name.

Dofia. A feminine term of salutation for upper-class married women used with the given name.

El que no sabe no vale nada. He who knows nothing is worth nothing.

"Es caliente." He is sensuous.

Es una sorpresa. It's a surprise.

Escapularios. Small pictures of the Virgin framed in a cloth pad and containing a written prayer to the favorite saint. Escapularios are worn around the neck for protection.

Evangélico. Book of Gospels.

Fiesta del Cristo. Christ Festival commemorating the patron saint of Comercio.

Filaria. A serious parasitic infection causing a swelling of the legs and induced by bathing in infested water.

Fincas. Farms.

"Flojo." "Slow," or inclined to be impotent.

Frutos menores. Minor crops, such as sweet potatoes, bananas, and yautías.

Gallera. A structure used for cock fights.

Gandules. A legume similar to a pea.

Garbanzos. A large, round legume similar to a bean.

Glorieta. A structure similar to a bandstand used for visiting and loafing.

Gracias, Dios y la Virgen la Ayuden. Thanks, and may God and the Virgin help you.

Guiadora de los Rosarios. One who directs prayers and chants for the dead members of the family.

Gúfcharo. A gourd-like fruit used as a musical instrument in keeping time.

Gúiro. See gúfcharo.

Hombres-niños. Men who act like children.

Honor. Honor, as in English, but a much more emphatic word.

Jaula de gallos de pelea. Coops in which fighting cocks are kept.

Jíbaro. A farmer. The term usually applies to day-laborers on the farm.

Jiras. Picnics.

Junta Central. Central Committee of a party.

Letanía. Supplicatory procession in honor of the Virgin.

Libro de misa. Mass Book.

"Loca." "Crazy."

Machete. Corn knife.

Machinas. Merry-go-rounds and ferris wheels.

Madrina. Godmother

Mande. "At your orders."

Maraca. A musical instrument used in keeping time.

Matadero. Slaughter house.

Misas de Aguinaldo. Literally, Gift Masses. Special early morning masses held during the Christmas season.

Negros. Negroes.

Niños-hombres. Children who act like men.

Novenas. Nine nights of prayer in commemoration of a dead member of the family.

Novio. Sweetheart.

Obreros. Laboring men.

Onomástico. A person's saint day.

Padrino. Godfather.

Padrinos. Godparents.

Palio. A canopy supported by four pedestals under which the priest marches in the religious processions.

Papaya. A melon-like fruit that grows on a tree-like plant.

Partido Liberal. Liberal Party.

Partido Nacionalista. Nationalist or Independence Party.

Partido Republicano. Republican Party.

Partido Socialista. Socialist Party.

Paseadores. Those who are taking evening promenades.

Paseítos. A short promenade.

Paseo. Promenade, but much more social than American promenades.

Pasteles. A food similar to a hot tamale but without the hot peppers.

Patios. An open court.

Patrón. Patron saint.

Pecado. A sin or violation of one of the Ten Commandments.

Pelo malo. Kinky hair.

Picas. Gambling concessions that are always found with carnivals.

Plazita. Small plaza.

Porque me conformo con todo lo que tengo. Because I make the best of what I have.

Protestantes. Protestants.

"Putá." Vulgar for prostitute.

¡Que gentío! What an agglomeration of people!

¡Que hay! Hello!

¡Que pena! That's too bad!

"Querida." Literally means, dear; but as here used it means concubine.

Registro Civil de Defunciones. Civil Register of Deaths.

Registro Civil de Nacimientos. Civil Register of Births.

Rifas. Raffles.

Salve. Special prayer to the Virgin appealing to her for protection.

Santa Cruz. Literally, Saint Cross.

Santísimo. Most Holy Christ.

Séis. A dance with a rapid tempo.

Señor. Sir. A term of salutation used by a lower-class person to address a superior.

Señora. Mrs. A term of salutation used by a lower-class person in addressing a superior.

Señorita. Miss.

"Seven-oleven." "Seven-come-eleven," a crap-shooting term.

Sí. Yes.

Sinvergüenza. Shameless, an insulting term.

Sirvientes. Servants.

De sociedad. "The four hundred."

Sociedad de la Vida de la Milagrosa. The Society of  
the Life of the Miraculous Virgin.

Tiendas. Stores.

Tiple. Musical instrument similar to a guitar.

Triduum. Three days of prayer in preparation for a  
saint's day, or in asking for a saint's intercession.

Trigueño. Literally, brunette. A term usually applied  
to a person with some negroid pigmentation.

Triste. Sad, or lonesome.

Trono. Throne.

Tu. You (informal).

La Unión. The Union Party.

Uno que sabe bailar en una tabla. One who knows how to  
dance on a board.

Usinariasis. Hookworm infection.

Usted. You (formal).

Veladas. Evening entertainments.

Virgen. Virgin.

Visita. A visit.

Vivo como un gato, pero estoy contento. I live like a  
cat, but I am contented.

Yautía. A starchy tuber.

El Yunque. A mountain peak and Government reservation  
situated on the east end of the Island.

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