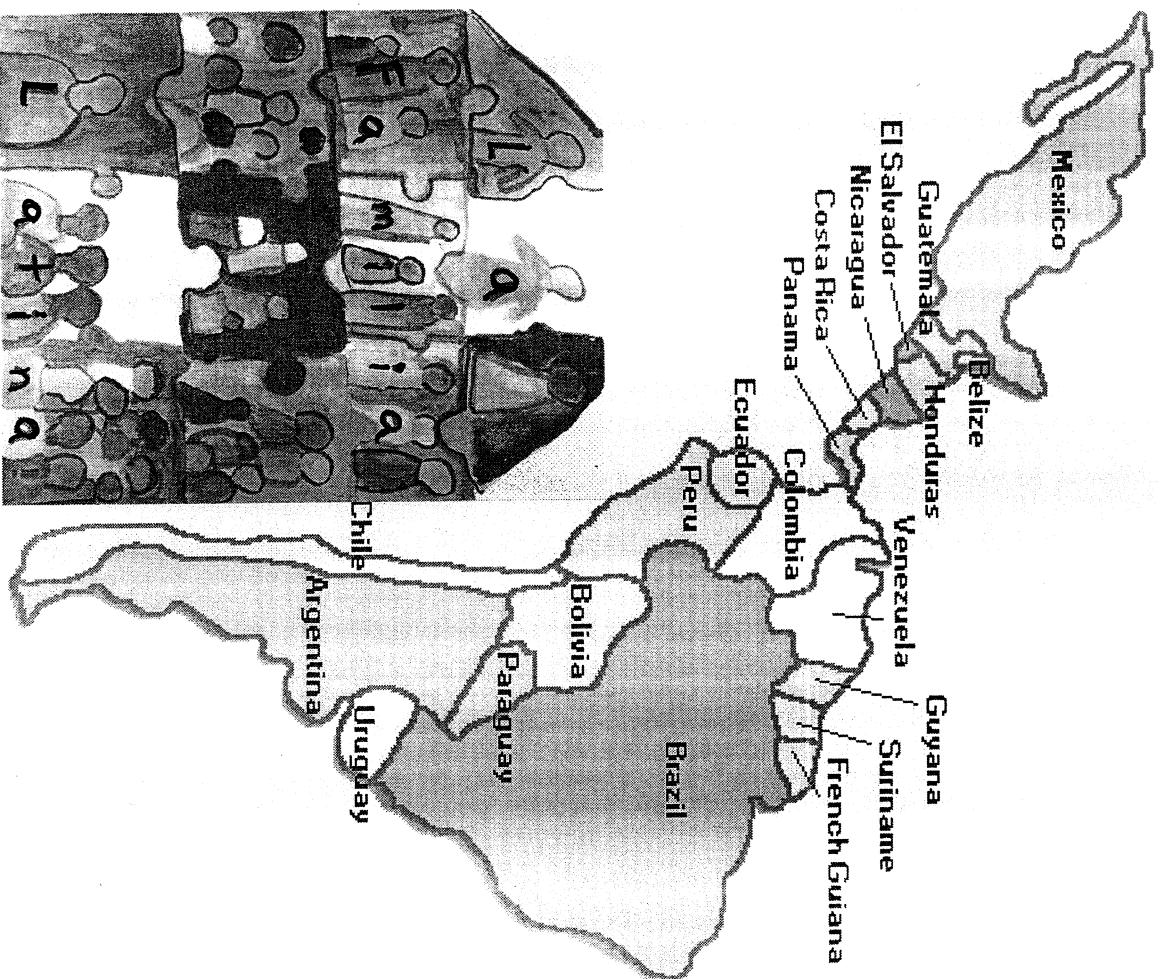


¿Qué es la diferencia?



46. *PADRINO, MADRINA; COMPADRE, COMADRE*

When Hispanic children are baptized, their parents ask two people to be **padrinos** (godparents) to serve as religious sponsors. The **padrino** [godfather] and **madrina** [godmother] assume the responsibility for the child's being brought up in the faith and act as guardians in case of the death of the parents.

Children may acquire different **padrinos** for other sacraments, such as confirmation, marriage, and, in the case of men, ordination into the priesthood. However, the strongest ties between child and **padrinos** are those established with the godparents from baptism.

The **padrinos**, and especially the godfather, provide the **ahijado** (godson) or **ahijada** (goddaughter) with a second family. Godparents do not have to be married; if they are married, they need not be married to each other. The parents may seek godparents from among people of higher social status than themselves. The resulting ties between godparents and the child and the child's family could be beneficial, even providing a way to improve the social status of the parents, or at least of the child.

The relationship between the godparents (especially the godfather) and the child and the child's family goes beyond religious obligation. Until quite recently (November 1983), the Catholic Church forbade marriage between a godparent and his or her godchild. This attitude underlines the strength and character of the ties that are to be established and maintained between godparent and godchild.

With the new bond of **padrinazgo** (godparenthood) comes another new relationship, **compadrazgo**, between the godparents and the natural parents of the child. The father and the godfather call each other **compadre** (literally 'co-father') and the mother and the **madrina** are **comadres**. (By extension, in some places, friends and acquaintances call each other **compadres**.)

26. FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The term *familia* usually means the extended family, not the nuclear family we think of in our culture. The extended family is the most important social unit in Hispanic culture, and may consist of father, mother, younger children, older children and their spouses and children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and in an outer circle, **padrinos** and **compadres**. (See Point 46, “**Padrino, madrina.**”)

Family ties are very strong. Families are very open in their daily lives and people easily welcome friends of family members into their homes and at family gatherings. When someone travels or goes to another town or city to study or for a shorter stay, as for medical treatment, for instance, common practice is for that person to stay with relatives or even with friends of relatives. Many members of a family may live together in one household for cultural, practical, and economic reasons. The family is the shelter for young members, even married ones, until they are economically established. This is not considered lack of independence on the part of the young people or an imposition on the others. The family is also the refuge for the older members.

With changing economic and social conditions, the nuclear family is a growing phenomenon. This is seen particularly as young people leave home to find work in large cities.

Serving as a credit reference or as a personal reference is an important social function of the family. (See Point 31, “Introductions.”)

Amigo/amiga (friend) is used in Spanish in its most literal sense: a real friend. Other more accurate, appropriate descriptive words are also used, such as **conocido/conocida** (acquaintance), **compañero/compañera** (companion), as in **compañero de clase** (classmate) and **compañera de trabajo** (co-worker).

18. DATING AND MARRIAGE

Although they are changing, traditional customs that differ from those of our culture still exist.

Group co-ed activities begin at about age fourteen, the important word here being *group*. Major forms of entertainment are attending movies, dances, sporting events, parties at someone's home; strolling around plazas, parks, or other public areas where people gather for social purposes; or going on picnics. Real dating is more restricted and doesn't begin until age eighteen or nineteen; pairing off is usually done only if marriage is being considered.

A man still asks a woman's father for her hand in marriage. Parents and other relatives of a couple exert a very strong influence in the acceptance of the proposed marriage partner, because any newcomer to the family becomes a part of the extended family. (See Point 26, “Family and friends.”) Engagements of several years are common. Since couples usually do not marry until the man has finished his education, fulfilled any military obligation, and established himself financially, the average marrying age for men is twenty-seven, for women twenty to twenty-four.

In many places, a civil ceremony, which is necessary for the marriage to be legally recognized, is held before the religious one. Newlyweds often live with the family of the bride or the groom until they are able to afford a place of their own. (See Point 26, “Family and friends.”)

Read the blue sheet, point 26 and point 46.

1. Explain the difference between a nuclear family and an extended family.
2. If you go visit relatives here in the USA, where do you stay?
 - Spare bedrooms.
 - Don't visit because there is no place to stay.
 - Hotel
3. Who might live in a Latin American household?
 - Unmarried children
 - married children
 - grandparents
 - friends
4. Rank these people in order of strength of relationship. (in parenthesis, write the English meaning of the word.)
 - _ amigos (_____)
 - _ compañeros (_____)
 - _ parientes (_____)
 - _ conocidos (_____)
 - _ padrino/madrino (_____)
5. What do you think about living with grandparents and other family?
The advantages ?

The disadvantages?

Have you ever lived with a relative?

What closeness are you comfortable with regarding relatives?

- Living in the same city?
- Living in the same street?
- Living in the same home?

Read the blue sheet, point 18.

1. US average age at first marriage is 22 for men, 20 for women
What is it in Latin America? Men _____ Women _____
What does the article give for the reason?

What can you see as advantages and disadvantages of marrying young or waiting?

Personal experiences:

In my (profesora Oberg) family in Mexico City, there were 4 levels in our apartment. On the first floor lived my bis-tía, el abuelo and la abuelita. They got the ground floor because they had trouble climbing stairs.

On the second floor lived my family with 3 bedrooms, a single bath, a conjoined living/dining area, and a very tiny kitchen with 4 feet of counter space. Mexico City is very crowded, so space is tight. Eric my hermano (el tiene 17 años) had a room to himself as the hijo único. The 4 hermanas (ages 9, 15, 22, 26) shared a room with 2 sets of twin beds. Mamá y Papá had a bedroom to themselves. When I came for the summer, Eric moved in with the primos on the third floor. So I got his room. 😊

On the third floor were mis tíos y mis primos. The fourth floor we used entirely for storage and the roof was used for the laundry. There was a small covered area there with a machine and a sink. We always hung the laundry, we had no dryer. It was a busy place supporting 3 family units.

A warning about generalizations:

As much as Latin America has traditions and accepted ways to behave, not everyone follows those traditions. There are people to whom family is less important, just like everywhere. Even though the tradition is marriage and family, some Latin Americans remain unmarried to focus on careers or for personal reasons. People are individuals and do not conform to stereotypes. Divorce, which used to be absolutely unacceptable because of the traditions and because of the Roman Catholic Church, has become more commonplace. However, most people still hold marriage in the highest honor and try to repair broken families.

Please reflect on similarities and differences you see in Latino and North American views on FAMILIA:

Similar

Different

Similar	Different