THE purpose of this paper is to describe the ways in which beer-drinking is integrated into the culture and social organization of the Tarahumara Indians of Northern Mexico and to analyze some effects of this integration. The focus is not upon drinking as such, or upon social problems connected with alcohol. The thesis is that the institutionalization of beer-drinking is of primary functional importance in the social organization and culture, and that it has had a profound influence upon the history of the Tarahumara.

I

The Tarahumara are a Uto-Aztecan speaking group of Indians occupying roughly the southwestern third of the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. They number about 50,000, and in the most conservative parts of their region, are marked off by a distinctive dress, language, and social system from the mestizos who share their territory. To a remarkable degree, the Tarahumaras have preserved the body of fused 17th century Spanish and aboriginal customs reported by Lumholtz in 1902.

The terrain in which they live is a part of the western Sierra Madre mountain chain. It is largely pine forest but is broken into several climatic and ecological zones by the 3000 foot canyons of the Fuerte River system and innumerable smaller streams and rivers. Their economy may be considered a dual one of maize agriculture and herding. The domestic animals contribute little to the diet since they are slaughtered only for ceremonial purposes and are not milked. However, they make existence possible in a difficult terrain by providing the means for a rather intense method of fertilization and by serving as a reservoir of wealth which may be sold in famine years.

The country is so broken that cultivable plots of land are small and scattered as a rule. The resulting settlement pattern is dispersed ranchos, i.e. groups of from one to 20 households depending upon available land. The average rancho contains from two to five households from 200 yards to a quarter of a mile apart, and the ranchos average from one to five miles apart across canyons and mountains. These ranchos are grouped into geographical and political units called "pueblos." The pueblo is the largest entity to which the Tarahumara feels any allegiance. It is at the pueblo level that most legal affairs are handled, and the pueblo center is the place where about five large scale religious ceremonies take place yearly. Usually it is a large enough rancho to con-

* Editorial note: Due to the length of this paper, most of the descriptive material has been cast in small print as a space saver.
tain several households as well as being the site of an old Jesuit church. However, the real functioning community for any individual is not the pueblo but a set of surrounding ranchos with whom he is connected by reciprocal bonds of cooperative labor, common ritual participation, and kinship.

The major study from which the following argument is drawn was focussed upon a gentile segment of the pueblo of Aboreachi, in the central Tarahumara region. The gentiles or cimarones (unbaptized Tarahumaras) are the most conservative and isolated members of the tribe. The gentiles have consistently rejected Catholic ritual, though their belief system shows as much influence of Catholic doctrine as does that of the so-called “Christianized” Tarahumara. More important is the fact that the gentiles of the area studied operate largely outside of the pueblo system of the baptized Tarahumara. Though they are technically under the jurisdiction of the pueblo officials of Aboreachi, in practice they handle their own legal affairs with a much more abbreviated and informal set of officers from their own group.

Gentiles are also separated from the “Christianized” majority by endogamy and feeling of superiority on the part of the latter. They lack as well the matachine and Easter ceremonial cycles with their sacrifices, communal obligations, and ceremonial statuses which are so important in the “Christianized” communities.

Since the gentiles, who probably make up no more than 3% of the total Tarahumara population, exhibit these differences from the general Tarahumara culture which has been described in the literature (Bennett & Zingg 1935, Passin 1942, Fried 1952, and Lumholtz 1902), they can hardly be called “representative.” It should be pointed out, for example, that the institution of the tesguinada (beer drinking party) is found in its most intense form among the gentiles. However, it is my contention that this institution plays a similar though more muted role in the “Christianized” pueblos. The main difference lies in the fact that in the “Christianized” pueblos, some of the social functions and activities are performed at the pueblo level, which in the gentile area are performed in the context of tesguinadas. Nevertheless, my observations in a widespread sample of “Christianized” pueblos, along with numerous references to tesguino by my predecessors in the field, support the assertion that fundamentally the analysis presented here can be applied to the Tarahumara as a whole. The statements which generalize to the wider culture and history of the Tarahumara must nevertheless be considered hypotheses rather than demonstrated facts.

From this point forward, the “Christianized” Tarahumaras shall be designated as bautizados (baptized ones) for convenience. This is also a more accurate term since the term “Christian” has far too many connotations which are completely alien to the Tarahumara.

II

**Background:** The general point which may be stated at the outset is that tesguino drinking is of overwhelming importance to the Tarahumaras. I do not
claim to be the first to have been impressed with the Tarahumara’s love of their beer. The difference in the analysis here is one of emphasis and stress upon structural significance. Let me note a few of these previous statements to indicate the importance of drinking as observed by others, so that my own conclusions will not appear as hyperbole.

The shyness and taciturnity of the Tarahumara have impressed many people. Some have felt that tesguino served the psychological function of releasing them from these unsociable traits. Lumholtz, a pioneer investigator in much of Northern Mexico, stated that it was chiefly through tesguino that the tribe was able to perpetuate itself, since it was only while drunk that the bashful Tarahumara had enough nerve to enforce his marital rights (1902:342). Robert Zingg stated that the timidity of the Tarahumara is so pronounced that normal social life could not be carried on without tesguino (Bennett and Zingg 1935:15). Bennett spoke of how it is amidst the fumes of alcohol that the Tarahumara “becomes human” (1935:328). As judgements of the psychological effects of tesguino, these statements are highly exaggerated, but they do indicate that the amount of tesguino drinking impressed itself on the observers as very great.

Historically, the Jesuit missionaries have counted drunkeness and the tesguinada as one of their major problems for three centuries. An example of their approach was Padre Neuman, who in 1681, surprised a group of drinking Indians by galloping furiously in among them on horseback, upsetting fourteen tesguino ollas and scattering his frightened flock in all directions (reported in Dunne 1948:165). Similarly, the government schools since the Revolution have been faced with the tesguino problem. The educational programs of these agencies have been definitely hampered by frequent desertion of classes by teachers who follow the tesguino ollas. Besides their personal desires for entertainment, there are social pressures upon these promotores to conform to community norms of cooperative work and drinking behavior. Likewise, families often feel that it is more important to keep children at home to watch the fields and animals while parents are out drinking, than to send them to school.

Despite all this, I was not fully prepared for the pre-eminent role of the tesguinada in Tarahumara culture because the above statements are scattered within the works quoted from. The writers appeared to view drinking from the Western standpoint of vice and entertainment and were thus seemingly blinded to its focal cultural importance and integrative functions. Also, many of the statements are so extreme as to be suspect. However, in the field, the importance of tesguino and the tesguinada as the basic social activity of the people, early began to impress itself upon me. In my daily visits to various ranchos, I often found the people to be gone. The children left to guard the fields and animals would tell me their parents were away drinking. In interviews, I began to note how tesguino was part of, and prerequisite to all important activities. Conversations frequently concerned tesguinadas, and they formed one of the dominant subjects of dreams. After participation in many of these drinking affairs, it began to dawn on me that the reasons for the failures to eradicate drinking among the Tarahumara are related to the fact that the meaning and importance of tesguino interpenetrate all major sectors of the culture and social organization.

The beer: The alcohol used by the Tarahumara is almost entirely in the form of tesguino. In the vicinities of the larger mestizo towns such as Creel and Guachochic there are Indians who now prefer the stronger distilled beverages which form the principal entertainment for the mestizos of this region, but these are still rare. The majority of the Tarahumaras have neither the money nor the inclination for this harder liquor and many, in fact, are afraid of it. Tesguino is the Mexican name for the corn beer which is common to most of the tribes of Northern Mexico. The Tarahumaras have two native names for it: batóri and sugut. It is a thick, milky, nutritious brew made from corn fermented with a local grass seed (basishuari). It takes about three days to grind, cook,
and ferment the corn after it has been dampened and allowed to sprout (a seven day process in all). It must be drunk within a short space of time to prevent spoilage. Because of this narrow range of time when the beer is best (about 12 to 24 hours), the donor waits almost until the last minute before making his long journey of invitation to the surrounding ranchos. It would be unthinkable to allow the tesguino to spoil, even though as much as fifty gallons is often made. If the people present cannot finish the tesguino during the night, they sleep awhile and begin again. Meanwhile, when they become too sick or full to go on, they drink esquipe (parched corn, ground with water) as an antidote so that they can continue until the beer is finished.

The fact that tesguino cannot be stored, its high expense in terms of corn, and its relatively low alcoholic content, are probably the main reasons why there are no alcoholics among the Tarahumaras of the region studied. In the Inapuchi and Aboreachi areas, I was met by incredulous laughter when I suggested to informants that it might be possible for some wealthier men to make a continuous supply of tesguino for their own private use. Drinking, to the Tarahumara, is a social rather than an individual activity.

III

Tesguino and religion: Tesguino has a sacred character somewhat analogous to that of the ubiquitous kava of the Pacific. It is said that tesguino was given to the Indians by onoruame or tata diosi (god) so that they could get their work done and that they might enjoy themselves. Whenever a jar of the beer is drunk, it must first be dedicated to tata diosi by symbolically tossing three small gourdfuls dipped from a larger gourd towards each of the four directions. This is done in front of a wooden cross and is for the purpose of allowing God to drink first so that he will not get angry. Each full jar of the beer is presented to an influential man in the community by the maker. The one to whom it is presented then takes an honored place next to the jar and serves the beer to others in order of their social rank. The ritual dedication of the tesguino is performed by the honored recipient of the jar, or younger delegate, in case there are many people present.

The ritual significance of the beer is further shown by the fact that it is included as an integral part of most ceremonies. For example, in the “curing” ceremonies for the assurance of good crops, protection of animals, killing of worms, petition for rain, or protection from lightning, a jar of tesguino is placed at the foot of a wooden cross throughout the ritual. It is drunk by the ritual specialist and important men as part of the ceremony and later serves as one of the “medicines” which is sprinkled on the new corn and the animals. In the “curing” ritual for the prevention of disease in children, the overuame, or ritual specialist, dips his small cross in tesguino and touches it to the lips of the baby, whom he then makes drink a little of the sacred beverage. If a person is sick, the overuame marks crosses on wrists and crown of the head of the patient with a crucifix dipped in tesguino. At various places in this curing, both patient and doctor imbibe small amounts of the beer.

The only ceremonial act which resembles a rite of passage besides child curing rituals and funerals, is the time when a boy about the age of fourteen is allowed to drink tesguino for the first time. He is given a short “sermon” about his manly responsibilities and may thenceforth drink with his elders.

Besides the importance of the beer as a sacred part of ceremonies themselves, each religious fiesta is followed by a large tesguinada which may last as long as 48 hours.

Unlike the bautizado communities which have a number of community-wide ceremonies taking place at the church where ordinarily no tesguino enters, all of the ritual activities of the Inapuchi community take place at tesguinadas which rotate in location from rancho to rancho.

Religious ceremonies of the gentiles are all of the variety called, by Bennett, the “native fiesta.” They are called for the purpose of “curing” the crops, animals, and people. This usually is a preventative measure, though it may also be alleviative. Tesguino must be made for the child “curings,” (three disease prevention fiestas for boys and four for girls) as well as for the death fiestas (three for men and four for women). It must be made for the shaman who is called to cure a sick person or to counteract sorcerers who may be using peyote against one. All of these personal anxiety-provoking events, as well as the larger ritual needs of the people for the bringing of rain and protecting the economic sphere, require tesguino, and are accompanied by a tesguinada.

Tesguino and economics: The people of Inapuchi say that to make tesguino there must be a good reason such as a need for cooperative work or for a “curing” ceremony. Actually, about 95% of the tesguinadas given have one of these motives, with the great proportion ostensibly being for cooperative labor. Rarely does a man make tesguino with no practical motive or excuse.
As indicated, an important part of the economic system is the tradition of cooperative labor. While any or all agricultural tasks may be performed by family members alone, the favored way of doing long and tedious jobs is by cooperative labor. This pattern among the Tarahumara has been called the “working tesguinada” because it always involves the drinking of corn beer.

The procedure, when one needs to accomplish a major task such as weeding, harvesting, cutting fodder, spreading fertilizer, fence making, or house building, is to make an appropriate amount of tesguino, and then to invite men from the surrounding ranchos to come to work and drink. Tesguino is considered the pay one receives for the work and is a mandatory ingredient in the situation, though basic motivations are the reciprocal bonds, obligation, and privilege which hold between the men in the vicinity. When the “inviter” makes his rounds to the various households, he says, “Would you like to drink a little tesguino tomorrow?” He feels it unnecessary to first mention that work will be a part of the program, and stresses the social aspect of the tesguinada to follow.

A man may choose to perform any task alone or to make tesguino, but the latter method is much preferred because of the time and effort saved, and because of the euphoria of group participation which is so lacking in the relative solitude of everyday life. This group comaraderie is of course considerably enhanced by the effects of the alcohol.

In many cases the two types of economic unit (household and neighborhood group) are utilized for the same task. For several days a man and his family may work on some job alone, such as weeding or harvesting, while they are preparing tesguino. The labor force will then be invited to finish up the job quickly. The order may be reversed also with the individual family finishing after the cooperative group has made a large start. Rich men may on occasion make tesguino two or three times to complete a single task. Flexibility in the pattern is made necessary by the time limits and rotation of the particular job. Obviously all men cannot make tesguino at the same time. Some men make tesguino rarely, working alone and shunning the contact with their neighbors, while others make it frequently.

Fig. 1. Distances in foot-time between Inapuchi and surrounding ranchos (numbers in parenthesis indicate number of households).
Tesguino and community structure: The organization of the gentile community represents a simpler level of integration than is the case with bautizado communities. Like the bautizados, the gentiles are first members of nuclear or extended families farming the limited plots of ground. They too are grouped into ranchos according to the amount of arable land available. Both gentiles and bautizados also have what Bennett called "... a rather ill-defined neighborhood group which unites in work at the tesguinada and, slightly augmented, unites in ceremony at the native fiesta" (1935:333). There is one other level of Tarahumara organization, however, which the gentiles lack, i.e., "a community or pueblo which furnishes Sunday meetings, church fiestas and government" (1935:333).

My researches indicate that the "ill defined neighborhood group" as Bennett called it, is fundamental to gentile social organization. But it also appears to be the basic social form underlying the weak political and religious organization of all bautizado Tarahumara pueblos.

The tesguino network: I have designated this "neighborhood" the "tesguino network." The term refers to the sets of people who gather together in tesguinadas. Despite the intermittency of attendance at tesguinadas, viewing the situation from a more macroscopic position, the vagueness evaporates. A definite structural form may be observed. The set of people defined by reciprocal tesguino invitation form the meaningful "community" for any particular individual. The important point about this type of structure is its centrifugal character caused by the fact that the meaningful community shifts its locus from household to household. This brings about a general network system of household-centered, overlapping interaction systems, stretching across the region.

To make clear what is meant by this, let us take the household of Seledonio, in the rancho of Inapuchi as an example. (Refer to figures 1 and 2 for spatial reference of these ranchos.) Seledonio
invites all the other people of Inapuchi rancho (6 households), those of Rynarachi (2 households), Uurarari (3 households), 1 household from Chuverachi, 1 from Yipo, the 1 at Rejovachi, and occasionally 1 from Awirachi. He and his family are invited to these ranchos as well. His closest and most frequent invitations go to Uurarari, Rynarachi, Yipo, and Chuverachi, in that order.

The rancho of Inapuchi is separated from the rancho of Uurarari by a gorge 1000 feet deep. Rodrigo of Uurarari invites the other two households from his own rancho, Uurarari, 5 from Inapuchi, 3 from Sumarachi, 2 from Awirachi, 1 from Rejovachi, and 2 from Yipo (1 bautizado).

For each household, the tesguino network is composed of most of the surrounding ranchos, and the groups overlap. For example, Julio of Rynarachi does not ordinarily invite those of Uurarari, or vice versa, except on occasions of a large curing fiesta, though households from both Rynarachi and Uurarari may be seen interacting there at tesguinadas. If Uurarari is taken as the center, one would rarely see a person from Rynarachi (2 deep canyons away), but would see people from Inapuchi and Sumarachi interacting with each other as well as with the people of Uurarari rancho. Figure 2 illustrates the over-all character of the system schematically. Each dot is a household. All the dots touched by lines surrounding any one point represent the members of the tesguino network for the household in the center of the circle.

This overlapping, interwoven net of interaction systems based upon the criterion of tesguino drinking takes no account of pueblo lines, even though the people know to which pueblo they belong and sometimes go to their pueblo center for various purposes. It is this overlapping character of the system that is responsible for the "vagueness" of the groupings (Bennett and Zingg 1935:333).

It should be mentioned, finally, that the stability of tesguino networks is broken by winter mobility (removal of animals to warmer quarters), and in many parts of the Tarahumara area, by necessity of working fields in a spouse’s rancho. In both of these circumstances, a family finds itself temporarily in another circle of neighbors, and the center of another tesguino network. This mobility aspect of the settlement pattern is a factor which reduces consistent associations with the same people. It is another feature of the situation which gives it an appearance of irregularity, so that the underlying structure is obscured.

The entities defined by tesguino drinking are called "networks" rather than groups because the overlapping nature of the system has a centrifugal effect, preventing the formation of close knit bounded entities, which are properly called "groups" in sociological usage. It also may be seen that the tesguinadas bears an extremely heavy institutional load. In the absence of unilineal kin groups, sacred societies, church, separate legal institutions, recreation groups, or other ascribed or voluntary groups, the meetings of the shifting and varying personnel of tesguino networks perform the great proportion of social functions required.

Tesguino and status ranking: The social status system too is intimately connected with the tesguino complex. Social ranking is not great among the Tarahumara, but what there is, is based almost entirely upon wealth as demonstrated through the possession of cattle, goats, horses, and pigs, plus the ability to harvest a surplus of maize and beans. A loin cloth of new white material and many strands of beads around the neck of his wife are about the only marks which in daily life symbolize the wealth of a man who outranks his fellows. The tesguinada serves the important function of publicizing rank and power in the community. All men feel the need to make the beer occasionally to maintain their position, but the wealthier man can make it oftener and make more of it. He especially demonstrates his wealth by being one of the few who can afford to sacrifice the amount of corn necessary to make tesguino during the season when there is much hunger in the land, the few months before harvest.

The size of the tesguinada (the number of people attending) is another indication of the giver's status. A man who is known to drink "very far" and who reciprocally pulls people from far away to his own tesguinadas is envied and respected. The degree of drunkenness attained is a third measure, and a man who does not usually provide enough beer for all to be completely intoxicated drops in ranking. Conversely, a man who is consistently not invited to the tesguinadas of others is disgraced. Since participation in one of these drinking bouts is always by invitation, regardless of how physically or socially close the individuals involved may be, this form of shunning is an effective form of social control, and, if regular, an indicator of a person's lower social ranking.

Tesguino and legal affairs: Unlike the more formalized method of handling legal matters in bautizado communities, in Inapuchi they are taken care of within the context of the tesguinada. In bautizado Aboreachi, a large meeting is called to settle questions of crime or dispute. The gobernador and his officials sit gravely in special positions in the patio outside the church. Their attitudes are formal and their bullet-tipped canes lend a sanctity to their office.

In the gentle segment of the pueblo, on the other hand, there is no special place for trials,
and the much abbreviated panel of officials do not have canes symbolizing their authority. For
the most part, the trial is conducted by the influential men in the vicinity at a tesguinada, with
the injured party taking the leading part. The atmosphere, while serious, is nevertheless some-
what altered by the relative lack of symbols and formality, by the lack of fixity and sanctity of
place, and the presence of tesguino. The meeting has the extemporaneous informal atmosphere
of the small group rather than the gravity of the courtroom.

An important point in connection with gentile legal procedures in Inapuchi is the fact that
there is great reluctance to initiate action against others, even if there is great provocation. This
is related to the two extremely strong value orientations of individual independence and non-
violence which condition a great deal of Tarahumara behavior. Only at a tesguinada, where these
strongly internalized restraints may be temporarily relaxed with the aid of alcohol, can sufficient
group feeling be aroused so that overt action is actually taken.

Not only is the tesguinada the situation in which legal actions are taken and decisions made,
but it is also that context in which most crimes and violations of moral norms occur. At the
beginning of most large tesguinadas and all fiestas, either the siriame (leader) or another im-
portant man in the community gives a sermon to the gathered people. This speech is largely an
admonition to behave well while drinking. The people are cautioned not to fight or to engage in
sexual intercourse with the unmarried or the mates of others. Also coming in for mention in these
exhortations are stealing, gossip, and child care. There are reminders not to pick up the headbands
or sashes should the drunken owner have lost them, and not to "talk bad" of others. They are
warned to keep children away from the drinking area where they may learn things beyond their
stage of development. The principal emphasis in these speeches is always first upon fighting, and
next upon adultery.

The frequency and emphasis of these prohibitions seems to be in direct proportion to their
actual occurrence. Fighting is frequent and adultery only a little less so. By frequent, I mean
that at most large tesguinadas some kind of altercation ending in serious physical struggle occurs
and one or more adulterous contacts.

Theoretically, formal sanctions may be invoked against people who fight. In practice, most
fights are forgotten the day after the tesguinadas, unless they result in serious injury. If asked
about his fighting the next day, the person almost always shrugs it off as due to tesguino. Informal
sanctions are brought to bear against persistent offenders by neglecting to invite them to tes-
guinadas. This inflicts an allocation which is almost unendurable for some people.

When a fight does break out, and possible injury is imminent, friends and relatives try to
break it up. Usually each antagonist is taken some distance away from the drinking area, and
some person of authority or one who "talks well" is brought to lecture him in the traditional
Tarahumara sermon-giving pattern. This usually serves to cool the combatants down, and the
drinking resumes its affable atmosphere.

The situation with regard to adultery and fornication is ambiguous. Fried developed the
concept of "polar attitude" to deal with this and some other Tarahumara norms. His idea was
that two conflicting attitudes exist simultaneously. One prohibits extra-marital intercourse, while
the opposing attitude exists "that if women or men are given an opportunity to commit adultery,
they will use it" (1952:156–7). This seems true, but with the qualification that it is only in the
context of the tesguinada that the permissive norm may be expressed. In the ordinary course of
life, men joke about catching a woman at home alone, but this practically never occurs. Women
will run if approached by a stranger, and a neighbor will keep his distance.

On the other hand, the tesguinada, despite the sermons, is known by all to be an opportunity
for intercourse with others than one's spouse. This does not mean that people immediately pair
off. There is a great deal of ambivalent feeling. In the first phase of a tesguinada, the women segre-
gate from the men and drink after them. As things progress and activity picks up, there is a
tendency for men to gravitate to their spouses, and keep a jealous eye on them. Some women
follow their husbands around. As the drinking continues, dark is usually falling. The interactions
keep changing; some people lose consciousness, and some people find an opportunity to slip away
unnoticed. Usually, the woman will take the initiative in these matters, in complete contrast to
her normal, shy and avoiding behavior. She may dance in front of a man she likes, or pull his
sleeve to ask him outside. Occasionally these liaisons result in the loss of the spouse, though
comparatively rarely.

No sanctions are brought to bear for adulterous behavior unless it results in actual breakup
of marriage. The unanimous opinion of informants was that tesguino was to blame for these infrac-
tions, as for fighting. This "folk" theory is also supported by the lack of crimes not associated
with tesguino. The cause of these tesguinada crimes is ascribed to one of the contributing factors,
the beer, rather than to the underlying hostilities and aggressive impulses which are repressed under ordinary circumstances.

**In summary:** The relation of tesguino to legal affairs and social control is as follows: 1. At least 90% of all social infractions take place in the context of tesguinadas by people under the influence of alcohol. 2. It is at the tesguinada and under the influence of alcohol that men generally work themselves into the proper pitch to take concerted action against an offender. 3. The state of drunkenness mitigates the punishment of all crimes and sometimes even waives it. This is extremely important, for it virtually excuses most offenses, since they usually take place at tesguinadas. Guilt for most offenses is thus transferred from the volition of the individual to an impersonal scapegoat, tesguino. Thus the *tesguinada* serves as a frequent escape valve for hostility, repressed aggression, and sexual tension. The overall effect is that almost all prohibited behavior is in effect temporarily allowed, though strong internalized sanctions relating to individual integrity, freedom, and non-aggression repress most antisocial impulses, so that the society is not disrupted.

**Tesguino and entertainment:** The entertainment function of the tesguinada is obvious but should not be overlooked. The point is not so much that the tesguinada is a time for relaxation, the playing of music, joking, etc., but that it is practically the only group entertainment of the gentiles. They lack the drama of the winter season mataachines, and Easter pageantry which, though performed only a few times a year, are important entertainment in the bautizado church centers. These gentiles also hold fewer races than do the *bautizados*. Most of the races they hold are not of the larger so-called "interpueblo" variety, but are simply between all the men present at the tesguinada, divided up into two fairly equal sides. The betting is small compared to the heavy wagering of the bautizados at their big races. The entire event usually takes place in the context of the tesguinada with the participants at least partially drunk.

### IV

**SOME EFFECTS OF THE TESGUINO COMPLEX**

The quality of social life: One social consequence of the dispersed type of settlement pattern and individualized daily economic tasks, along with the tesguinada pattern, is an alternation of extremes in interaction frequency and intensity.

At one pole there is relative isolation. A man's daily activities, such as caring for his herd of goats, hoeing in his field, checking the whereabouts of his free-ranging cattle, or watching one of his widely separated fields are of such a nature that they can be performed alone. The women, too, alternately participate in the lonely task of goat herding while the remainder of their tasks are performed in the relative isolation of the household, sometimes in the company of one or two small children. The distance between ranchos, seasonal mobility, and separation of houses within the rancho, along with the time-consuming nature of daily tasks, prevent frequent social visiting. At night, the family is together, but exhaustion, custom, and lack of light determine an early hour for sleep so that there is little time or inclination for conviviality or social intercourse. At this extreme the frequency and intensity of interaction is very low for days and sometimes weeks at a time.

At the other pole is the tesguinada. This is a short period into which is compressed the great proportion of a person's interaction. When one approaches a household where a tesguinada is going on, he is immediately impressed by the din. The general loud hum, punctuated by shouts and singing, mixed with noise of drunkenly operated violins, guitars, and occasionally accordions and harmonicas, is in great contrast to the usual peaceful silence of the rancho, broken only by raucous barks of mongrels.
To the gentiles of Inapuchi, the tesguinada serves all the functions of social life outside those served by the household groups. It is the religious group, the economic group, the entertainment group, the group at which disputes are settled, marriages arranged, and deals completed. It is here with his set of neighbors, and under the influence of alcohol, that the individual has a chance to play the roles which have been dormant during his isolation. The man with leadership qualities or aspirations gets to his feet and gives a “sermon,” which also functions to reinforce moral norms, as well as to dramatize status aspirations or position. Deals are made for animals or maize. A ceremony or race may be arranged. It is at the tesguinada that the unmarried may find a mate, or the married vary his sexual experience. Kinship roles outside those of the nuclear family rarely find a chance or mood for expression except at one of these inebriated get-togethers. Here, also, the clown makes his reputation of being muy diablo, and much laughing follows stereotyped sexual jokes and horseplay. The ritual role of the native religious practitioner is also largely played out in this atmosphere. The tesguinada provides practically the only opportunity for the release of aggressive impulses, so frequently a fight occurs for one reason or another. This is in contrast to the fact that fighting virtually never occurs outside of the tesguinada.

The point I wish to stress is that the quality of Tarahumara interaction is affected or colored by the circumstance that most social activities outside of the family involve drinking. This qualitative attribute is due to a combination of two factors: (1) the chemical effects of alcohol on the human body, and (2) the cultural norms associated with drinking. The important fact to note in determining the role of this complex is that interaction involving groups larger than the residence group is practically always affected by these two characteristics. In contrast to other cultures where drinking is a custom, there is here no rigid separation of formal and serious activities from the drinking and recreation. The time and place are the same for both.

The etiquette of tesguino drinking requires that all people present, both women and men, drink as much as possible. When a drinking gourd (capacity from a pint to a quart) is passed to a person, he is expected to drink it without hesitation. Only one or two gourds are available, and the other people are anxiously waiting their turn. Rarely is one allowed to beg off this drinking obligation, though rarely does one want to. Most people like the beer and have an amazing capacity for it.

Contrary to our own conflicting values about drinking, and in spite of 300 years of Catholic influence, the Tarahumaras not only attach no shame to being drunk, but make drunkeness a matter of pride. A person is expected to get intoxicated and is proud to brag later of his degree of intoxication. The ideal of enjoyment is the state of complete inebriation.

The general result is the association of the feelings of emotional release and the general distortion of normal perception engendered by alcohol with all group social activity. Religious, political, and economic activities are colored by their association with drinking. The edge of seriousness is taken off (or on
It is difficult to describe the social quality I want to convey here, but perhaps it might be best summed up by saying that the extrafamilial social situation is given an atmosphere of make-believe. Everyone realizes he is in a qualitatively different reality where the norms and conditions of ordinary existence are temporarily suspended. The contrast is heightened by the great increase in interaction frequency and by the telescoping of social functions into this short span of time, as well as by their compression in space. Under this stimulus, and the effects of alcohol, all actions tend to take on an exaggerated and intense character. The excluded children watch this forbidden, emotionally charged adult world from a distance when a tesguinada is held at their rancho. They do not fully understand it until they become participants with the assumption of adult roles.

V

THE NEGATIVE ROLE OF TESGUINO

Throughout various parts of the discussion, I have pointed out the functional ramifications of tesguino drinking and the tesguinada. It is clear that the drinking of this alcoholic beverage is inextricably associated with the economic, ceremonial, social control, and status systems, as well as with recreational activities. It is popularly conceived as the main motivating incentive to gather in extrafamilial social activities. It is because of all these functional ramifications that I have called this set of beliefs and activities the “tesguino complex.” The functional role of tesguino is great; however, an examination of its “side effects” may clarify other aspects of Tarahumara social life. I hypothesize what might be called some “negative” effects which result from this institutionalization of drinking an alcoholic beverage. It is first necessary to explain the special meaning implied by the term “negative” here.

Cost and dysfunction: When one embarks upon the assessment of the negative qualities of a cultural pattern, he is treading upon dangerous ground. Not only may he be accused of ethnocentrism and nonobjectivity, but he is at least partially contradicting the precious principle of cultural relativism and the basically positive bias inherent in functionalism. Nevertheless, in recent years, anthropologists have more and more felt the need for concepts expressing negative effects, especially as their studies have come to be concerned more frequently with change, acculturation, and the like, where disorganizing conflicts at both the personal and social levels are inescapable data. Systems that are more or less in equilibrium (like the Tarahumara), being more products of history and chance than rational planning, have also come to be recognized as having inherent conflicts, oppositions, socially wasteful and illogical patterns, even from the point of view of the system itself and its members. It was the historically justifiable goal of the functionalists and cultural relativists to search out and stress the underlying logic and rationality of other customs and social structures, regardless of how irrational they might appear in terms of
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Western values. But the effect of this laudable reaction against chauvinism, imperialism, and missionary "enlightenment," was to ignore the negative effects of cultural patterns and to leave a dearth of concepts dealing with them. The concepts of Marx, Ogburn, and others which, despite certain drawbacks, have yielded important insights into Western society are also largely unusable in dealing with simpler, "stable," less differentiated, nonindustrial societies.

Two "middle range" concepts which have been rather tentatively put forward to describe these negative effects are "cost" and "dysfunction." In his analysis of Navaho witchcraft, Kluckhohn proposed the term cost as a balance to the concept of function: "Navaho witchcraft does constitute an adjustive and adaptive structure. Its cost is projected aggression and some social disruption" (1944:68). Another cost he notes is that witchcraft is "the basis of unwillingness to undertake or continue the burdens of leadership" (1944:68). Another attempt to use the cost concept was Vogt's paper on water divining. There, he points to certain "functional costs" of the dowsing practices and beliefs which tend to offset the "functional gains." Under costs, he lists such things as wasted energy and resources, inconvenience and inefficiency of well operation, and inhibition of a more scientific approach to the water problem (1952:85).

Merton perhaps most clearly defined the need for the concept of dysfunction: "This more exacting form of functional analysis includes not only a study of the functions of existing social structures, but also a study of their dysfunctions for diversely situated individuals, subgroups or social strata, and the more inclusive society" (1957:40). He defines dysfunction as "those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system" (1956:51). As indicated earlier, this concept has been most often used in connection with change. An example is Geertz's analysis of a Javanese religious ritual (1957:49–53).

I have not tried to canvass the literature for all of the usages of cost and dysfunction, but have cited these examples to give a general indication of the kinds of phenomena the concepts have been used to classify. It is readily seen that as they have been used, there is some overlapping of meaning, e.g., the social disruption and leadership failure might be classed as dysfunctions in Merton's sense of systemic maladjustment, while Vogt's costs are clearly of a different order, being based on criteria of potentiality and efficiency from the point of view of modern technical knowledge.

In reviewing these usages and in the analysis of my own material, it has occurred to me that there are fundamentally two different types of judgment involved. One of these is clearly evaluative and rests upon criteria drawn from the humanistic tradition, from modern standards of efficiency, and from the empirically based assumption that culture "evolves." It is based upon ideas, such as those developed by Kroeber and Redfield among others, which hold that humanity as a whole has tended to mature.

It has clarified my own thinking to classify these first kinds of negative judgements under the heading of "costs." Reserved for the category of "dys-
functions” are consequences which are clearly negative only in terms of the sociocultural structure itself. Thus, under dysfunction would come 1) conflicting norms and values which result in behavioral consequences, i.e., incompatible choices in actual situation, 2) those activities resulting in the disruption or interference with other regularized activities, i.e., large scale culture patterns held to be desirable by the people.

Significant divergences between values and norms and the requirements of social life (e.g., Geertz 1957), such as those due to migration, social change, may be the dynamic factors. Examples are cases of “culture lag,” or uneven change. The dysfunctions inherent in more stable societies have received less attention. It is not claimed that the types proposed are the only types of dysfunction or that they are mutually exclusive in actual life. The classification is merely a pragmatic one for the purposes of the material dealt with in this paper. This definition agrees fundamentally with Merton’s, but distinguishes two types of dysfunction and tries to specify observable criteria for them. Using the broadest distinction, outlined above, the cost concept would embrace the “functional costs” of Vogt, but most of Kluckhohn’s costs would be termed “dysfunctions.”

Costs of the tsegui no complex: I have previously discussed the kinds of evaluations admissible under the concept of cost as defined. Here I shall limit myself to criteria of physical harm and inhibition of change and development. The first set of costs I wish to discuss are those negative consequences to health and life. Many of these are recognized as deleterious by the Tarahumara themselves. For example, the Indians realize that it is drunkenness which frequently causes the death of an infant when its mother drops it in the fire, or, in a stupor, rolls over and crushes it. They also know that no Tarahumara falls over a cliff to his death or injury unless he is stumbling home from a tsegui no in the dark. Both of these types of injury and death are common in proportion to the sparse population and virtually never occur except in connection with drinking. However, Tarahumara conceptions of disease are still largely magical. They thus see no connection between the common drinking gourd, shared by all participants at a tsegui no, and the transmission of sickness. Contrarily, they confidently inform you that tsegui no has healing properties for many minor illnesses. This attitude is of course directly related to the death rate, which is maintained at a high level by almost yearly epidemics of influenza. Contributing also to this high rate is pneumonia. Here, the people do see a connection between death and the common occurrence of overexposure from sleeping along the trail on the way home from tsegui nos on winter nights. The lure of tsegui no and its personal and social rewards serves to offset this knowledge, however.

In the category of costs must also be put some of the injury and death resulting from the fighting in tsegui nos, especially since fighting is correlated exclusively with drinking.

Another set of costs might best be summed up by proposing that the “tsegui no complex” is one of the important factors in maintaining the general level
of Tarahumara culture and inhibiting change. Here I step onto even more diffi-
cult ground. The pitfalls inherent in evaluation of costs is made painfully clear
by one of my predecessors in the study of Tarahumara culture. In an article
inspired by Sapir's well known paper on "Genuine and Suprious Cultures"
(1924:401–429), Robert Zingg attempted an evaluation of Tarahumara cus-
toms in terms of genuine and spurious values. In this article he alleges that
Tarahumara culture "fails the individual" because it does not provide saws
and carpentry to make more adequate shelter (1942:79). A "spurious value" is
the weakness of kinship bonds which lack effective functions in comparison
with other tribes (1942:85). Not only this, but "the most spurious quality of
the pagan religion is its unrelieved drabness. All their ceremonies lack the color,
romance, drama, and pageantry which are genuine values in religion" (1942:
88). In regard to the major topic here, he says:

But the real case for the spurious quality of the articulation of their culture around drunken-
ness lies in the bleak, drab tone of Tarahumara life with its starkness of cultural equipment,
utterly primitive in all its features. It is a vicious cycle, the drabness encourages the escape
through drunkenness; the drunkenness encourages drabness (1942:92).

The unsubstantiated and ethnocentric quality of these and many other
judgements is so patent that they do not merit a detailed refutation. It illus-
trates graphically the excesses which may result from the freedom of such a
concept as "cost" in injudicious hands. Nevertheless, my experience with
Tarahumara did lead me to wonder why their general level of culture has re-
mained so low and so stable.9 On theoretical grounds, one would assume that
given their economic base there would be a trend in the direction of more com-
plexity of culture. To go into a long documentation of their cultural simplicity
would make this discussion too long. Zingg's paper may be referred to for more
evidence. However, my research also indicated a lack of interest in mythology,
at restricted to simple weaving, geometric designs, and musical instrument
making, shelter of a makeshift sort despite cold weather, and an extremely
simple technology based mainly on several basic tools of Western origin. This
seems to me somewhat incongruously coupled with an economy which yields
a small surplus of food, a good deal of leisure time, fertilization of crops, fairly
large herds of domestic animals, etc.10 Not only this, but they have been in
sporadic contact with the more complex mestizo culture for more than 300
years. Since most of our theories of culture development assume that such
factors are causative or at least provide the necessary conditions for change, it
seems reasonable to look for the conditions which in specific situations may
render them inoperative.

The most obvious cause of this cultural level is the fissive effect of the scat-
tered mobile settlement pattern. With this, there has also been a transmitted
attitude of fear and withdrawal from contact, coupled with a large wilderness
area to retreat into, and the general poverty of the mestizo culture with which
they were in contact. Along with this set of ecological and contact factors, I
believe there is evidence that the tesguino complex has played a significant
part.
First, I would point to the inhibiting effect of the complex on processes of creativity. Despite the fact that creativity is essentially the product of individuals, to a large extent it flourishes and increases in environments where there is communication, interaction, and stimulation. In a situation like that of the Tarahumara, however, one is either alone, carrying out his daily tasks, or he is with his fellows, but under the influence of alcohol. The depressant effects of alcohol inhibit creative processes under most conditions, but also importantly as was pointed out, the tesguinada is oriented towards release, sociability, and attainment of personal ends in the short time available; the effect is to militate against the exchange of ideas and creativity generally. The better minds are not only not stimulated, but they are not given an opportunity to develop along lines which improve either the individual or cultural lot.

Another effect is the dissipation of the corn surplus in making beer. Despite the fact that the wealthier people tend to assume the responsibility for tesguinadas more often, and the undoubted nutrient value of the corn beer, there can be no doubt that the obligation to hold tesguinadas imposes hardship on many people. They are aware of the fact that they may have to get into debt with mestizos, or even go hungry, yet a certain percentage of their precious corn must go into tesguino, due to the social and religious requirements described earlier.

A rough estimate of the amount of maize so expended may be calculated by using a minimum figure of one and a half jars of tesguino each time it is made. As far as I can determine, this is actually a minimum, in the Aboreachi area at least, i.e., one may make more but not less than this. Combining this figure with the estimate of six times per year, per family, for beer making, around 18 decalitros, or 216 pounds of corn would be consumed annually per family in this way. I regard this estimate to be definitely on the low side, however, especially if one were to attempt a calculation for the whole community. This is because, while very few families fall below the minimum figure, there are quite a number of wealthier men who make more tesguino. The total expenditure of corn is slightly reduced, however, by the use of green corn stalks (cana) for beer at least once a year, and in some areas, the seasonal availability of maguey juice to mix with, and supplement the corn. The total expenditure is also slightly offset by the pattern of cooperative donation (about a half decalitro per family) for some of the larger religious ceremonies. Nevertheless, despite these savings, I believe it can be safely estimated that the average Tarahumara family expends at least 200 pounds of staple food annually in the production of tesguino. When it is realized that given the dietary habits of this group this much corn would last a family of four or five members more than a month, it can be appreciated how much this sacrifice entails.

A third factor which might be interpreted as hindering culture change or growth is the amount of time devoted to the requirements of the tesguino orientation. If an average figure of 4–6 times per year per family for making beer is correct, and if a man is reciprocally connected with 15 other households in a tesguino network, a person would potentially have the opportunity of
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getting drunk between 60 and 90 times per year. Actually, the number of potential tesguinadas is slightly reduced by the custom of houses relatively closely situated occasionally agreeing to make tesguino at the same time in order to increase the possibility of making the intoxication complete. Allowing for this and the various reasons which often prevent a person’s going, we find that people still attend 40–60 drinking bouts per year on the average. Since tesguinadas last from 10 to 36 hours, with about 15 to 20 being the average, a person will minimally spend about 750 hours or 50 fifteen-hour periods engaged in drinking behavior. Since a great deal is actually being accomplished in this time, in terms of time loss it is more meaningful to point to the equal number of days which it takes to recover from the effects, since after a tesguinada, one generally spends the next day inactivated. It should also be mentioned that a great many hours are spent in the long hikes across rough country to and from these drinking affairs. All this is aside from the energy and time devoted to the preparation of tesguino by the women. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is no exaggeration to estimate that the average Tarahumara spends at least 100 days per year directly concerned with tesguino and much of this time under its influence or aftereffects. I would like to state at this point that although none of these estimates is precisely accurate because of the many factors entering into them, I have estimated on the conservative side to prevent distorting the argument.

These effects of the tesguino complex I have named as “costs.” From the traditional, functional point of view, I believe that it would be argued that the manifold functions of the complex—its “adjustive” value more than outweighs these effects. The fact that the tesguino complex-tesguinada pattern is a viable response to the Tarahumara life situation which has persisted in a relatively stable manner for at least several centuries is evidence in favor of this view. Nevertheless, in my opinion, Merton is correct in pointing out that the necessary functions an institution performs are not irrevocably bound to the institution which has traditionally performed them (1955:33). Following the implication of this further, we can objectively point to the retarding (or stabilizing) properties of the tesguino complex from the standpoint of change and development, whether change may be considered “good” or not.

Dysfunctions of the tesguino complex: The first type of dysfunction is exemplified by the relationship of tesguino drinking to norm-breaking and norm-conflict. I have previously described the strong value of intoxication and the norms operating to produce inebriation for the group as a whole at a tesguinada.

Conformance to this ideal and to the norms of drinking behavior, however, places the Tarahumara in a chemical condition where other norms tend to be broken. A universal effect of alcohol in the blood stream is the partial breakdown of the internalized controls which have been built into the personality from childhood. Among the Tarahumara, the effect of this is to cause the transgression of their two most frequently voiced moral prohibitions—that against fighting and that against adultery. Despite the strong contrary norms
and the fact that there is a special group of officials (capitan and his soldados) who have the responsibility of preventing aggression and adultery at tesguinadas, both of these offenses occur frequently. It must be emphasized again that they almost never occur outside of tesguinadas.

Here, obviously, adherence to norms brings about conflicting behavior. On the one hand, one should get as drunk as possible; on the other, one should not fight or engage in sex relations with others than his mate, even though he is driven by his impulses to do these things under the influence of alcohol.

Though I have considered this situation in terms of norm conflict, it might also be viewed as a case of alternate substitution of two apparently conflicting sets of norms in compartmentalized spheres of life. The frequency of these behaviors in spite of legal sanctions against them suggests that a contrary pattern corresponding to deep needs may have developed to circumvent the norms. The atmosphere of the suspension of rules of everyday life mentioned earlier is evidence for this. Supporting this interpretation is the fact that the punishment of any crime, including murder, is legally mitigated or even waived if there is evidence that the perpetrator was drunk.

The three sample cases which follow illustrate the second type of dysfunction. They describe the way in which other complex patterns of behavior are sometimes interfered with or short-circuited by the chemical consequences of the tesguino complex. The cases are not restricted to the gentile area only, since my contention is that these forces have been operating throughout Tarahumara culture.

Case 1. Cooperative work pattern: Tesguino was made at the houses of Seledonio and Dionicio of the rancho Inapuchi for the purpose of hoeing corn. After about an hour's work, buckets of tesguino were brought to the workers in the field. This was drunk and work resumed. Shortly after this the host, Seledonio, invited the group to his house to finish the tesguino. Although his fields were not completely weeded, it was thought that enough had been done. The men agreed to pass on to the fields of Dionicio, the other donor of tesguino, after the ollas at the house of Seledonio had been emptied. After about two hours, this beer had been consumed and the people passed, dancing and singing, to the house of Dionicio. However, Dionicio's field was left unhoe'd since immediate recourse was had to the new ollas of tesguino. His hoeing had to be finished up by himself and his son-in-law alone in the next two weeks. On other occasions, men have had to make tesguino twice for the same job, a recourse of rich men only.

Case 2. Ceremonial pattern-pueblo level: According to tradition, the Easter ceremony in Aboreachi involves a search for a straw Judas on the last day of the Semana Santa. The ranchos on one side of the pueblo are called judas, from Spanish judeo (jew), and are responsible for hiding and protecting the dummy, while those of the other side, called the fariseos, have the role of searching it out and destroying it after a mock battle. However, beginning the day before this climax, the painted boys of both sides parade through the mountains beating drums and blowing flutes. They stop at each isolated household and dance for tesguino. After finishing a small olla at each house, they arrive after dark at the church in the pueblo center. There they dance by fire-light and mill around the church in the darkness. The dummy is searched for while other people go through the ritual of guarding some clothing symbolizing tata diosi inside the church. In 1960, the climax of all this activity, the mock battle and destruction of Judas on Sabado de Gloria morning, did not take place. The night was cold and the lure of the tesguino waiting in all the nearby households too great. Before morning, everyone dispersed and the whole fiesta had deteriorated into a series of tesguinadas. We were told that they would wait till next year to kill the Judas.

Case 3. Ceremonial pattern-rancho level: An important ceremony each year is the one for "curing" the animals and fields. The "curing" in this case, as in many Tarahumara ceremonies, refers to preventative or protective ritual, rather than to the alleviation of ill. These ceremonies take place in late spring, varying from the middle of May up until the end of June, depending on
the progress of the corn in each sub-area of the pueblo. The ceremonies are performed by a ritual specialist and a number of the younger men who are recruited as assistants. The central component of the ritual is the sprinkling of “medicines” (various herbs and minerals) onto the animals and in the fields, by a single-file procession of these young men, marching to the music of a violin. Also included are symbolic flag waving, the placing of tiny wooden crosses at various places in the fields, the smoking of the animals with cedar smoke, the burning of crosses onto the hides of several animals, symbolically taken to represent the herd, and of course the drinking of tesguino. The principal purposes of the ritual are to prevent the worms from demolishing the corn, to protect the corn from hail and the animals from disease, and, in general, to assure a successful year. Sometimes this ceremony is coupled with rain making, lightning-preventative ceremonies, and/or child “curing” ritual as well. On June 17, 1960, a large combination ceremony including all of the above aims was scheduled at the rancho Yehuachique. Although the parts of ceremony pertaining to rain and lightning were held as scheduled, the important task of curing the fields was omitted because the “medicines” had not been collected. The men who had been delegated to go down to the barranca and collect them had instead gone to a tesguinada, gotten drunk, and failed to complete their task. This meant that the ceremony was not performed in this area this year, since the considerable organizational effort necessary could not be mobilized and coordinated again for several weeks—the preparation of tonari (meat and tortillas for all the people), the gathering of people from their distant ranchos, preparation of tesguino, assurance of the presence of one of the more popular ritual specialists, and, finally, the organized trip to secure the “medicines.” An important ceremony had simply “misfired”; the fields and animals were not “cured.”

Examples of the same kind of misfiring on a smaller scale were cases of pueblo officials on a distant journey to a remote rancho for the purposes of settling land disputes, getting drunk at the tesguinada given for the occasion, and failing to arrange anything before the gathering dispersed. Evidence of a related nature comes from Jacob Fried, who from work in such pueblos as Choguita and Santa Anita, noted that: “In cases where a tesguinada occurs on a Sunday, some of the native officials may shirk their obligations to go to the pueblo center in order that they may attend the tesguinada” (1952: 88). This is certainly true in the Aboreachi area as well. Similarly, it often happens that a shaman who is necessary for certain ceremonies, such as curing a child, will not be able to attend a curing fiesta even after irreversible preparations of tesguino and food have been completed. It may be due to other ritual obligations, but on several occasions, the effects of alcohol on the shaman at a previous tesguinada were what required the postponement of the ritual. A duplication of effort and expenditure of corn was required.

These examples are not uncommon accidents, but are a frequent, though not regular, type of occurrence. Some anxiety results from the ritual failures though it is difficult to say how much, and some resentment arises from the cooperative work failures. Frustration and time loss result from the sidetracking of officials. In case the crops should be poor after such a ritual failure, informants said it would be because the proper ceremony had not been performed. But the men who were responsible for the ceremonial failure were not and would not be punished. Under the influence of tesguino, one is not wholly responsible for one’s actions.

VI
CONCLUSION

This paper has two objectives. The first is to demonstrate the focal importance of tesguino drinking in Tarahumara culture. Though my principal data came from the gentile segment of Aboreachi pueblo, personal observation and
the work of other writers support the hypothesis that the tesoquio complex plays a similar role throughout the Tarahumara area (Bennett & Zingg, Lumboltz, and Fried: passim). It has also been suggested to me that a similar orientation and effects may be found in Apache culture (Spicer: personal communication), and in other North Mexican cultures such as the Varohio, N. Tepehuan, and lower Pima (T. Hinton: personal communication).

The way in which the present treatment differs from those of earlier writers is in the stress put upon this pervasive orientation. This stress which I believe corresponds to its true sociocultural importance, was stimulated by field experience in a gentile community where the obscuring superstructure of grafted 17th century Spanish political and ritual organization is absent. It appears to me that an understanding of this complex may be one key to the mediating of apparently inevitable change to the Tarahumara. If the tesoquio complex can be comprehended in terms of its sociocultural role, rather than treated from the "social problems" standpoint of many bearers of Western culture, much strain may be avoided in the new transitional period which seems to be now gathering momentum.

The second objective is the analysis of some of the consequences of elevating an alcoholic beverage to such a preeminent cultural position. Though the analysis stressed the negative, no disparagement of the Tarahumara was intended. Obviously, tesoquio gives these people much personal satisfaction under the rigorous exigencies of their isolated lives. There is also much to be said for tesoquio as a "social lubricant." Advantages can be seen in a system which allows much of the accumulated hostility and petty vindictiveness, which seems typical of all human groups, to be siphoned off rather than to remain as festering social sores. The day after a tesoquinada altercation the combatants are free to engage in much needed cooperation again. Tesquino is a recognized scapegoat and explanation for hostile acts.

At the same time, every culture has its inconsistencies, its dysfunctional and costly patterns. It serves no useful purpose to assert that each culture provides the best of all possible worlds for its members. One of the major tasks before us is the development of conceptual tools for objectively handling the negative as well as the positive in sociocultural analysis.

NOTES

1 The research on which this article is based was carried out in the year 1959–60 (1 year). It was supported by grants from the Grace and Henry Doherty Charitable Foundation for Latin American Research, and the George C. Barker Memorial Fund at U.C.L.A. It was greatly facilitated by the cooperation of Augustin Romano and Maurilio Muñoz, director and sub-director of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Coordinador Tarahumara, Guachochic, Chihuahua.

2 The term rancho is used here instead of the more conventional rancheria because it is the term in use throughout the Sierra. Rancheria also appears to indicate a larger settlement throughout most of Mexico than is typical for the Tarahumara.

3 There is also a custom that anyone passing by a tesoquinada is automatically invited to participate. There is some ambivalence about this and strangers may be allowed to pass if they do not perceive that a tesoquinada is going on. One more partaker makes that much less beer and another
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potential sex partner for the wives. On the other hand, a traveler considers it a great piece of luck to stumble upon a tesguinada in progress.

4 *Siriame* is the Aboreachi equivalent of Bennett's *seligame* (supposedly, lancebearer) cf. Hilton 1959:116 *siriami* (regional variant ending)

5 As distinguished from merely conflicting on the ideological level alone. Contrary values may be held by people without being dysfunctional in the structural sense. Only if the conflict is evident on the behavioral level of norm breaking is it dysfunctional.

6 The distinction between cost and dysfunction is an analytical one, i.e., obviously a dysfunctional consequence may be “costly,” and vice versa. It seems to me that both concepts become more useful if the fundamentally different types of judgment involved are kept separated. It is also recognized that elements might be functional at one level and dysfunctional at another etc..

7 No figures are available on how “common” this is. My statement is based on informants’ opinions. Everyone I interviewed could recount several different instances of this kind of accident having occurred within the last few years.

8 The evidence for a high death rate is based upon reports of doctors from the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Guachochic, and genealogies which, for example, showed as many dead children as living ones.

9 It might be thought that the relative poverty of Tarahumara culture could be a recent phenomenon which is due to contact conditions. Such an assumption is unfounded. In the first century and a half after initial contact in 1616, the Tarahumara accepted many Spanish items and patterns such as domestic animals, the plow and metal tools, fruit trees, pueblo organization and Catholic ritual. After the depletion of mineral resources and the Jesuit expulsion in 1767, they were able to withdraw into the wilderness areas and to a large extent control their contacts with the sparsely distributed Mexican ranchers remaining in the Sierra. Archeological and historical sources indicate that they received much more from the Spanish than they lost. The evidence indicates an increment and replacement rather than cultural decline (cf. Bennett & Zingg 1935:355-87). Although they have recently had more difficulty with mestizos because of the lumber potential and increasing settlement of the Sierra, they have been able to maintain their isolation in many areas. By “stability” then, I refer to the reintegrated pattern of sociocultural life which was consolidated after the Jesuit expulsion. There is an amazing correspondence, for example, between what Lumholtz found in 1896 and what I found in 1960. (See Dunne 1948, Lumholtz 1902, and Kennedy 1961 as well as Fried 1952.)

10 Supporting evidence for these assertions may be found in Kennedy 1961.

11 One large *olla* uses 2 decalitros of corn, (One decalitro contains approximately 12 lbs. of maize) and one smaller *olla* uses 1 decalitro of corn.

12 cf. reference from Dunne 1948:165.

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