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SOCIAL MOBILITY  
IN A CHIAPAS BICULTURAL TOWN

by

M. Esther Hermitte

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SOCIAL MOBILITY IN A CHIAPAS BICULTURAL TOWN

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
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BY  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

### The Problem

This paper is the result of a second field trip from July 1960 to December 1961 to the village of Pinola, in Chiapas, southeast Mexico. Based on the knowledge of the community acquired during the first field study, July-December 1959, we presented a study proposal to the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, where the Chiapas project was organized. It was our aim during a second stay in Pinola to study a group of Revestido Indians. Such "redressed" Indians are those who have discontinued wearing the traditional Indian costume and have adopted Western clothing.

We made no a priori assumptions about the meaning of adopting Ladino clothing, nor, more particularly, were we taking this change either as a cause or as a result of Ladinization; rather this phenomenon was observed as one of many changes going on in the community. The field study was directed toward finding out other, more subtle types of changes involved in the immediately discernible change of habitual clothing.

In order to carry this out, we planned to work with ten Revestidos only, intending later to widen the study to include the nuclear families and more extended kinship groups of the original ten. Since Pinola is a bicultural community in which Indians and Mestizos (or Ladines) interact in many contexts, it was also important to include both of these groups in order to obtain a complete

picture of how the Revestidos interacted with more traditional Indians, and how these latter viewed the Revestidos.

Whether the Revestido assumed Western dress as an expression of deviance from his community, or did so as a result of wider, ongoing changes, we could not at that time say.

Concentration upon the ten Revestido informants was decided upon because we wanted a diagnostic sample rather than a statistical one. The number of Revestidos in Pinola is too large to cover them all in any depth. As against trying to take into account the entire group, we believed that participant observation in the activities of the ten selected, together with taking questionnaires, life histories, genealogies, schedules of activities, accounts of their experiences outside the community, their images of other groups, and so forth, would give us a better knowledge of the quality and depth of whatever cultural changes were inherent in becoming a Revestido.

Certain variations were included in the sample, such as (1) a person who had recently changed versus one who had adopted Ladino clothing more than ten years earlier; (2) a single Revestido among an entire Indian-dressed family versus one who was a member of a whole family or generation of Revestidos; (3) Revestido informants who had had prolonged experience outside Pinola versus others who had never left the town; (4) those who had special status, such as curers, as against others who did not; (5) some who were well integrated with their families and with the Indian group generally versus others who were in conflict with "Indianness"; and (6) young versus older Revestidos.

It was not expected that the ten Revestidos would be alike.

Change in each case would perhaps differ according to certain factors such as status, age, length of time spent outside the village, and so forth. At least it was expected that we might establish a range of change from those who, on the one hand, were still submerged in the Indian culture to others who had adopted Western cultural practices and values.

Another aim of the study was to find what motivations and external circumstances had produced the change and, once this process had begun, what were the attitudes and spheres of activity most influenced by it, and whether the acculturation was deep, involving changes in basic values and beliefs, or superficial (that is, involving only the adoption of the Spanish language and some items of material culture).

This objective assumed a thorough knowledge of Indian culture and social structure. Without this, it would manifestly be impossible to establish any range of variation, since we would lack the means to determine the starting point from which modifications began. After working for almost two months with the ten *Revestidos*, we discovered that there was much to learn about underlying Indian social controls, beliefs and values. It was precisely one of our *Revestido* informants who started us on the way to acquiring such knowledge.

As we gathered data on this last aspect, the picture became clarified as to what barriers were set up by the Indian group for individuals attempting change. When, after a time, we resumed the study of the *Revestidos*, our previous plan underwent change. Our informants knew more or less of the outside world than did their fellow-villagers; they spoke better or worse Spanish; some

were engaged in activities other than the traditional agricultural ones; yet all were members of the Indian community, participants in its beliefs, subject to its controls, and aware of the magical world surrounding them. Essentially, they were as Indian as the most traditionally dressed members of the community.

These, then, were acculturated Indians who were adapting to changes going on in the community as a whole, but whose self-images remained Indian. There was no intention to be mobile, or to take Ladinos as their reference group, and no observable process of Ladinization.

At the same time a different range of variation became apparent; it was between those *Revestidos* who kept their identification with their group of orientation and those others, to be described later on, whose behavior was at great variance with the former. This second group was oriented toward mobility. They were well acquainted with Ladino ways and were rapidly rejecting Indianness; they were, in fact, Ladinized Indians.

#### The Setting

Pinola, the county seat of the Municipio of Villa Las Rosas in southeast Chiapas has approximately 8,000 inhabitants. Of the total population there are 1,600 Mestizos (called Ladinos in this area), and approximately 4,500 Maya Indians, speakers of a Tzeltal dialect. These figures are, however, not entirely reliable, because the Indian percentages are augmented by local Ladino census takers (A).<sup>1</sup> The reasons for falsely augmenting the total number of Tzeltal Indians is that a town that can establish

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<sup>1</sup>Whenever a capital letter appears in parenthesis in the text, it refers to a source of information listed in Appendix I.



a majority of poor peasants with a subsistence economy can evade some taxes, or at least have them reduced by federal and state authorities.

Pinola lies in Tierra Templada. The main climatic variations are between the dry season, December to April, and the rainy season, May to November. The temperature is very stable with a mean of seventy degrees Fahrenheit the year around. The town is located on a limestone terrace at approximately 4,300 feet above sea level. Wagner and Hotchkiss (1959:1-8) include Pinola and other Chiapas communities studied by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, in an ecological zone ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 feet. All of these settlements share common characteristics, based on topographical and vegetational features, which prove to be important for some aspects of human activity. In this zone we find:

1. Nucleated Indian-Ladino settlements located on a slightly raised terrain in the central part of the terrace level.
2. Seven or eight garden sitios per block (a sitio includes a family's house and the gardens surrounding it), instead of larger house sitios as at higher levels.
3. Houses made of wattle and daub, utilizing poles from the local secondary brush and woodland, augmented by easily obtainable rock and mud. Typical roofs are made of local grasses or of palm.
4. A house plan which tends to be open, due to the warm climate, with ample air space left between walls and roof. The house has an unenclosed porch in front, and a cookhouse standing apart from the main structure.
5. Gardens usually located in or near the house compound.

6. Three types of cultivated land--irrigated, un-irrigated slash-and-burn fields, and gardens.

7. Irrigated lands, located near the settlements in the lowest portions of the terrace surfaces and in the valleys. Water is brought to them in canals from springs at the inner edge of the terraces.

8. Slash-and-burn fields, found mostly on the more level lands at some distance from the settlements. Near the settlements, the steeper slopes are also cultivated.

9. An abundance of tropical fruit, such as zapote, mango, and papaya, as well as crops such as bananas, citrus, sugar cane, and coffee.

Yet, Pinola differs from other communities of the area in certain aspects which arise from its particular location. Its situation "... near the upper altitudinal limit of some crops like coffee, sugar and tropical fruits makes this town an optimal site for commercial production for the Indians" (Wagner 1959:Part II, p. 11). The local daily market is an active center for the purchasing of these products by Indians from neighboring villages where the crops are more restricted by climatic conditions. Market activities and the large-scale production of sugar cane and coffee account for the population growth from a small village of 479 Indians and four Negroes, as recorded in the census of 1778, to the present-day figure of 7,764.

Since 1954, the town has been connected with the Pan-American Highway, and with larger towns by an all-weather road. This fact has increased the possibility of marketing Pinola produce in nearby larger towns and cities.

The town is built on a grid plain, typical of Spanish colonial settlements. The seat of the Municipal Government, or

Presidencia, the market and the main church flank the central plaza. Streets run more or less in a north-south or east-west direction. The Ladinos live almost exclusively in the blocks which surround the central park, a section known as "the Center." Toward the outskirts there are some poorer Ladino households, among sections regarded as strictly Indian.

Indian houses begin at the second North and second South streets, and extend toward the borders of the town, and the same situation occurs in the east-west direction. The high value of land and property, together with class barriers, would make it impossible for an Indian to live in the Center area. In fact, some Indians who at one time owned sitios near the Center have sold them to Ladinos and moved to the outskirts.

On the east side of the town stands a hill, the slopes of which, owned communally, are cultivated in patches, but are mainly used by Indians for gathering both firewood and fresh wood for house construction.

A first impression that Pinola is a bicultural community arises from observation of three aspects: language, house type, and dress. These are valid but not absolute criteria because, as will be seen, acculturative processes have produced some differences.

Conservative Indian men wear a distinctive costume of white cotton ankle-length trousers, shirts of the same material and color, and either red or multicolored sashes. Their white hats, made of straw or pressed paper, vary greatly in size, but tend to be wide-brimmed. Usually they go barefooted, and the warm climate does not necessitate extra protection. A few older men

have cotones, heavy wool ponchos bought from Chamula Indians. The traditional rain cape made of palm leaves is rapidly being replaced by a large oil-cloth cape bought at the stores.

Indian women have a more varied costume. The traditional one of long dark blue skirt and an embroidered multicolored blouse was abandoned some time ago, perhaps as long ago as thirty years. Today they wear a long, ankle-length, printed cotton skirt, a white or printed blouse, and a shawl which is either white or dark brown mottled in white. All of the materials for clothing are purchased, since weaving has completely disappeared in the village.

Although there is almost total bilingualism among the Indians, intra-group interaction is still carried on in Tzeltal.

The typical Indian house type is found corresponding to that described by Wagner and Hotchkiss (1959:6), except for some owned by the wealthier Tzeltales.

There are some groups of Indian residents of Pinola who have migrated from other communities into the area fairly recently. The largest foreign group are the Huastecos, speakers of Tzotzil, who settled in this town during the revolution. In the last fifteen years a few families have moved to Pinola from Amatenango and Aguacatenango, both fairly close Tzeltal villages.

There is a general consensus among Indians that Ladinos have lived in the town for a comparatively short time, perhaps the last forty or fifty years. Some old men still "remember" that in their youth, the whole center of town was inhabited by Indians. This is not entirely historically accurate, since the baptismal books of the parochial church show that by the middle of the nine-

teenth century there already was a Ladino nucleus in the town. The church has kept separate records for Ladino baptisms and marriages, and it was thus possible to verify this information.

Unfortunately for this study, Pinola belonged to the parish of Soyatitan till the early part of this century and the records in the local church are incomplete. The first Indian marriages date from 1884, but as early as 1840 there are records of baptisms of children of Ladinos settled in the town.

At present, government, education, formal Catholicism and the administration of the town are in the hands of Ladinos, who are also the large-scale entrepreneurs and businessmen. The Indians have representation in the municipal government, but always in a subordinate capacity, subject to the leadership of Ladinos.

The President is the elected chief of the town. He is assisted by a judge, a secretary, a treasurer and other minor officials. The jurisdiction of the local government follows the pattern of Spanish-American colonial cabildos (the municipal government); that is to say, judicial and economic matters of importance are submitted to higher ranking authorities outside the town. Thus, economic affairs are dealt with in San Bartolo and judicial ones in the city of Comitán. The President has an Indian Regidor, who acts mainly as presidential agent to the town Indians, in order to obtain their cooperation with official authorities.

There is a resident priest who offers Mass most often in the temple of San Miguel, Patron Saint of Pinola. The other two churches, San José and that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, are used only for a few special occasions during the year. The village

priest has organized a number of Catholic sodalities to keep the church in order and to organize ceremonies, thus absorbing the functions held formerly by the Indian religious hierarchy.

There are two schools, one near the main plaza. This is a State school which offers complete elementary education and is attended mainly by Ladino children. The other, in the outskirts, is a rural school which offers only the first two grades. This school, attended mostly by half-Ladino children, has a few Indian children, but they attend very irregularly. The boys are claimed very early in life to work in the milpas (corn fields), while the girls are required to participate actively in household chores, as well as in buying and selling.

The only formal Indian institution is the Tzeltal civil hierarchy. Men serve for a year, and then rest two or three years between the ascending posts in the hierarchy. The lowest civil post, or "cargo," is that of Mayordomo. The second in ascendancy is that of Regidor, and the highest, Alcalde.

We have described in a general way, the setting and some of the outward characteristics of the people of Pinola. Now it becomes necessary to deal with activities which are typical of each group, as well as with the many forms in which Ladinos and Indians depend upon each other. Contacts, although restricted and highly structured, are many.

#### Economic Activities

The Indians are small agriculturalists, devoted to the cultivation of maize, beans and squash, which provide the staples for their diet. Sugar cane is grown in the lowlands, to the west of Pinola, and this is a good cash crop. However, not all Indians

own plots in this area, nor can many afford the cost of milling the cane to obtain panela, a coarse brown sugar. Coffee is grown in the house gardens, mostly for home consumption. Land holdings fall under four systems: ejido, communal, small properties, and ranches.

A small proportion of the Indian population carries out extra economic activities, but these are always practiced as a sideline and do not entail giving up the traditional farming. Such enterprises include:

1. Small stores, set up in a room of the living compound. Chili peppers, salt, onions, matches, cigarettes, kerosene, trago (white liquor made from cane sugar), and other inexpensive items are sold. The supply is scanty and the stores are always attended by the women who answer when a customer calls, and then return to their household chores.

2. Barber shops. These may be operated by anyone owning a pair of scissors. It is common to see Indians giving haircuts in their gardens. They charge much lower rates than the shops down town, and usually are open on Saturdays and Sundays, the days the owners are free from agricultural work.

3. Marimba players. The most popular music in town is that offered by such musicians, who produce music of poor quality but are inexpensive to hire for celebrations in Indian homes.

4. Carpentry. This sideline is followed by two individuals, who make very simple and crude pieces of furniture.

5. Pottery making, done by a few women and mostly for home use.

Another activity, which is not a specialisation since it is practiced by all the Indian male population, is the making and repair of fiber nets, used for carrying corn.

The size of the community makes necessary a series of artisan skills, all of which are in the hands of the poor Ladinos. This same group has taken over such jobs as truck drivers' assistants, unskilled labor of several kinds, maids in wealthy Ladino houses, and so forth.

If we except the lower class Ladinos (or half-Comitecos), the rest of the superordinate group is strictly non-agricultural. When they devote themselves to the exploitation of large ranches it is in the role of entrepreneurs, who hire both Indians and poor Ladinos on a sharecropping basis or as peons. There are some large ranches devoted to cattle raising and cheese processing, but the owner is generally not engaged in manual labor in these activities.

The Ladinos have a series of other commercial activities, such as the transportation of local products to neighboring markets, and the supplying of local needs for out-of-town articles. Coffee, corn, cane sugar and fruits are the main exported items, while machinery, hardware and grocery articles, furniture and clothing are the main imports. Almost every family of the upper class owns one or more trucks, constituting a large investment of capital; ownership of these vehicles is a symbol of prestige in itself.

Other businesses typical of the upper class families are: (1) large stores selling groceries, agricultural tools, clothing, liquor, and so forth; (2) mills for the grinding of corn for tortillas; (3) billiard and pool halls; (4) bars; and (5) movie theatres, of which there are two in the town.



Ladino-Indian Economic Interdependence

The fact that each class carries out characteristic activities in Pinola brings about a closer interdependence between Ladinos and Indians, especially in the economic sphere. Following are some of the ways in which the two groups depend upon each other.

1. The Indians buy from Ladino local stores:

(a) items of clothing such as shawls, sandals, materials for clothing, hats, hair ribbons, and so forth; (b) tools for agricultural work such as machetes, soap, kerosene, chili peppers, cooking grease, meat, candles, liquor, kitchen ware, ingredients for curing preparations, and so forth.

All of these articles sell in Pinola at a higher price than they do in the nearby town of San Cristobal, because of the costs involved in transporting them into Pinola. Some Indians manage to go to San Cristobal to shop personally, or they may ask friends or relatives to purchase the most expensive and durable equipment for them there. Nevertheless, only a small minority travels out of Pinola, because the cost of the trip by bus or in Ladino trucks cancels out the advantages of lower prices elsewhere.

2. The Indians depend upon the Ladinos for the marketing of their harvest surplus. There is a small group of local farmers who produce in large enough quantities to make it worth hiring space in Ladino-owned trucks to transport their produce to neighboring markets, where prices are more advantageous. This presupposes, however, both an ability to deal with businessmen in the outlying towns, as well as a considerable money surplus to gain profits once transportation costs are deducted. It is quite common for the Indian to sell whatever harvest surplus he has to the local Ladino middlemen, despite the fact that he knows he will come out of the deal as a loser.

3. The Indians sell locally vegetables and animals grown at home. This type of sale, handled by women, is done from house to house, or in the daily market. Eggs, chickens, squash, coffee, fruits, flowers and some edible roots are the most common items in this category.

4. Upper class Ladinos lend money to Indians. The almost subsistence level economy of the large majority of the Tzeltal population forces them to borrow money at high interest when an emergency occurs. A family celebration, such as a wedding or baptism, new outfits of clothing, sickness or a death in the family, are sufficient to unbalance the delicate equilibrium of the household resources. The rates of interest are very high, up to 20% monthly, and the warranty offered by the borrowers is usually the title to their lands, or their forthcoming crops. In the latter case, the Ladinos will lend as low as one-third of the actual amount which the products will sell for at harvest time. The Indians are perfectly aware of this but, under the circumstances, they have no choice but to borrow.

5. The Indian men sometimes go to work at the nearby sugar refinery at Pajilitik, or at the rice mill in El Arrosal. Usually they work for only one or two weeks at a time, either when work is slack at the milpas, or when an economic emergency arises.

6. A last form of dependence is that of the poorest Indians, who have very little land for cultivation and who, in order to augment a scanty income, rent plots in the large ranches, or enter into sharecropping agreements with the owners.

In the six aspects described above, it can be seen that there is a mutual intergroup dependence, although it has been described mostly from the point of view of the Indians. The role of the Ladinos in all the transactions, either as buyers, sellers, landowners, or transportation agents could not very well continue

without the ongoing small-scale production of the Indians, and  
without the profits derived from supplying the Indians' needs  
for goods and services.

## II. CLASS STRUCTURE IN PINOLA

### The Use of the Concept of Caste

In this general description of Pinola there was repeated mention of "rich Ladinos," "poor Ladinos," and Indians, without further analysis of the local class structure. Before proceeding with a discussion of the particular processes involved in the transition of an individual from one social stratum to another, it is imperative that we be more precise in the definition of the different strata of Pinola society. This will take us somewhat far afield, due to the fact that inter-ethnic relations have been described as "caste systems" by anthropologists working in Middle America. Hence we have to trace back the use of this term in order to understand how it is defined for this and other areas as well as our reasons for departing from it.

Societies where there is a lower stratum (either a colored group, as in North America; or an Indian one, as in Middle and South America) for whose members upward social mobility is difficult or impossible have been classified as having "caste systems." Both sociologists and anthropologists seem to be adhering more and more to this usage. Warner adopted the term color-caste to describe the status of Negroes in the United States. He applied the term to the segment of the population

severely punished by the formal and informal rules of our society if they intermarry, and when they break this rule of 'caste' endogamy their children suffer the penalties of our caste-like system by being placed in the lower color caste. Unlike class the rules of the system forbid the members of the lower caste from climbing out of it. Their status and

that of their children are fixed forever. There can be no social mobility out of the lower caste into the higher ones (Warner 1960:20).

Dollard, in his study of caste in a Southern town in the United States, analyzes "the barriers to social contact or, at least to some forms of social contact ... to sexual congress between upper caste women and lower caste men and to the legitimacy of a child of members of the two castes." He adds,

American caste is pinned not to cultural but to biological features, to color, hair form and the like. Inferior caste results in a degree of social isolation for the individuals concerned. Nothing else seems absolute about the caste barrier. It does not totally exclude social contact and seems to have no other mark so distinctive as the marriage and sexual prohibitions (Dollard 1957:62).

The acceptance of the term "caste" in theoretical publications (Weber 1957:71, Parsons 1958:78, and Barber 1957:335-36) is quite generalized. Barriers to mobility are the main criteria to define different social systems as "caste systems." Barber makes this explicit:

On the basis of institutionalized value attitudes toward social mobility we may define two basic models: the open-class system which strongly approves of upward mobility ... and encourages everyone to improve his present social class position. The other is the "caste" type which strongly disapproves of social mobility ... and treats the wish to improve one's present class position as sinful (Barber 1957: 335).

We are not here concerned with the use of the word "caste" in the description of the status-system in the United States. The only purpose in mentioning it here is for the influence it has had upon recent studies in Middle and South America.

The usage is imprecise, as can be seen from the following. Tamin (1952) centers his whole thesis around the use of the concept of caste. His criteria for the adoption of the term are; the

institutionalized avoidance patterns between Ladinos and Indians, the taboos on commensalism and miscegenation and the absence of upward mobility.

In the same year, De la Fuente (1952:76-96), in an analysis of inter-ethnic relations in Mexico and Guatemala, compares the differences in social mobility (from Indian to Ladino) between different areas of the countries mentioned and divides the communities into three types:

1.--Communities where there is a complete absence of passing, of which there are two subtypes: (a) No Indian is considered a Ladino regardless of his degree of Ladinization or occupation and no child of a mixed marriage brought up as a Ladino is accepted socially as a Ladino. Ladino status is sought and achieved outside the local community. (b) A Ladinized individual would be considered a Ladino if raised or educated as such; or he would be categorized as racially Indian and culturally Ladino.

2.--Communities where there is a certain amount of passing: (a) Ladinized individuals with long residence in Ladino communities and of artisan occupation sometimes marry Ladino women and pretend to be Ladinos. They are either not recognized as such by the latter group, or they are considered Ladinos of the lower class. (b) Individuals Ladinized to a slight degree, women raised as Ladinos, and children of formal and informal mixed unions are recognized as Ladinos.

3.--Communities where more complete or total passing occurs: (a) Individuals Ladinized in language and custom, individuals of high status, or children of mixed unions raised as Ladinos are considered Ladinos. (b) An Indian woman married to a Ladino

man acquires his status.

Communities of types 1 and 2 are considered to have caste systems, while type 3 has a class system. But since mobility varies within types 1 and 2, De la Fuente (1952:81) states that "the social structure in particular communities may be described as that of caste or something which approximates it."

Beals is more cautious with the use of the term "caste." When he deals with stratification in Mexico, he says that

there is not one caste but several dozens. In such cases the Indian groups are at the lowest hierarchical level or parallel with the lowest level of mestizo culture. The groups are self-identified, organized by village or tribe and have distinctive cultural, linguistic and other social attributes (1952:327).

After this description, he abandons the term by saying, "these groups here will be called plural cultures rather than castes."

Recently, Reichel-Delmatoff described a bicultural community in Colombia where mobility is restricted to the three upper strata, and where Indians cannot aspire to be incorporated into their ranks. Again, on the basis of the barriers to mobility, he qualifies this system as "one of two castes so to speak" (Reichel-Delmatoff 1961:132).

We have cited these authors in order to show that (1) without exception they refer to an absence of upward mobility as the main criterion for the definition of "caste"; that (2) they do not use the term in any precise way; and that (3) when the structure of the communities seems to include certain variations, they simply avoid the problem by using expressions such as "caste-like," "caste-type," "caste, so to speak," or worse still, "something which approximates caste."

In the description of the system of social inequality in

Pinola we prefer to discuss the class structure of the community. We do not believe it is justified to carry over one trait from a whole social system as it obtains, for instance, in India and apply it to another widely different total system. Neither will such terms as "color caste" or "cultural caste" serve to clarify or make more specific the use of the concept of caste.

The most useful critique concerning the use of the concept of caste for social system other than the one obtaining in India, comes from Dumont (1960:91-112). His is a detailed and erudite analysis of sociological and anthropological studies in which the status differences between segments of the population have been described as those of caste. In particular, he attacks the Warner school in the United States for their use of caste to designate Negro-White interrelations.

We feel justified in applying Dumont's critique to the situation in Pinola on the grounds that the subordinate status of Indians and their segregation from Ladino privileges and activities have a similar origin to those existing in the United States. Once the juridical status distinctions, in the form of debt-peonage for Mexico were abolished by the egalitarian ideals of the Mexican revolution, discrimination against Indians has been an effective social mechanism to reestablish the social distance.

Dumont's main arguments against the use of the term caste are: (1) The caste system in India is a coherent social system founded on the principle of inequality, while the "color bar" (or the ethnic bar in Pinola) contradicts the egalitarian ideal and it is in a way a social disease. (2) A sum of traits such as endogamy, mutual avoidance in certain situations and lack of easy



social mobility cannot be equated to a whole social system.

(3) Those traits of the Indian caste system which do not find an equivalent are eliminated from comparison with the other societies.

(4) In the selection of one cluster of traits, sociologists and anthropologists have disregarded the function which particular traits may have within the total system.

#### Analysis of the Class Structure

In the analysis of class of Pinola we have to take into consideration several criteria. Although economic status is one of the factors in social ranking within the community, this alone does not describe accurately the real class structure. Other important criteria are certain occupational distinctions and the ethnic boundary which separates the lowest class (that of the Indians) from the three upper ones.

The upper class is restricted to a few wealthy families who live, without exception, in the area immediately surrounding the central plaza. Their high economic status is not of long standing. On the contrary, they show some pride in the fact that through industrious efforts they have acquired wealth, starting from relatively humble origins. In the case of the richest man in town (C's father) both himself and his family speak of his beginnings as a muleteer, transporting goods to and from Pinola. After the opening of the road in 1954, transportation by truck became one of the main economic activities of this class. They are also owners of large ranches which they manage as absentee landlords.

There are no professionals in the ranks of the upper class (except for A, who is atypical since he migrated into Pinola only

a few years ago), and no great intellectual achievements have been made by its members. Some of them have had one year of secondary school, but have abandoned learning, attracted by the faster rewards available through commercial enterprises. However, since 1961 a higher value has seemingly been put on education. At present there are four teen-agers studying in the nearby city of Comitán.

Upper class Ladinos travel widely, frequently as far as Mexico City. The reasons for these trips, although mostly commercial, include visiting friends and entering into certain political activities in the metropolis. They also have widespread family and ritual kinship bonds in the larger cities of the area. Their socio-recreational private activities are very exclusive, including only peers in the community, guests from out of town, and a restricted minority of representatives of the middle class local Ladinos.

Marriage is endogamous within local upper class families, but there is also prestige attached to unions with powerful families of larger cities. They are not engaged in the political life of the village outwardly, yet they manipulate some decisions in this arena through their contacts with the state and national authorities.

The Ladino middle class is composed of smaller land-owners, national and state employees, resident in town, teachers, and smaller store-owners. There are no agriculturalists in its ranks. These people travel less and have fewer outside connections. Teachers of the local elementary school are regarded as the local intelligentsia, but aside from them, the range of education in

this class is low. Their attitude toward Indians is similar to that of members of the upper class.

In the last ten to fifteen years there has been a reinforcement of class boundaries, especially in regard to the upper stratum. Social distance from the rest of the population has increased by a fast acquisition of wealth and the power which accompanies it. It is probable that this trend will continue.

From the point of view of the Indians and half-Ladinos, the two upper classes are "the real Ladinos." A teacher, because of his intellectual pursuit is rated on the same level with a rich man. In the section on the images of Ladinos held by Indians it will be seen that both criteria are equally important in rating people as "Ladinos." The rich minority suspects everybody below them of being an Indian, while middle class members do not accord great prestige to the wealth acquiring activities of the upper class Ladinos.

The two lowest classes (half-Ladinos and Indians) will be dealt with at greater length since they are centrally linked to the main topic of this paper.

#### The half-Ladino or half-Comiteco

In Finca there is a group of Mestizos of a low economic level between the top-ranking Ladinos and the Tzeltal-speaking Indians. Upper and middle class Ladinos call them "the poor people," and the Indians designate them, interchangeably, by two terms, "Medio Comitecos" or "Medio Ladinos"--half-Comitecos, or half-Ladinos.

The origin of the term "half-Comiteco" is obscure. It seems that about thirty to forty years ago there was a migration

of several families from the city of Comitán.<sup>1</sup> These people were poor, and came to Pinola in search of better opportunities. There are many half-Comitecos who actually were from Comitán, but since then the term has acquired a wider application and defines with precision a group characterized by a combination of economic and cultural traits which sets it somewhat apart from both wealthy upper-class Ladinos and from Indians. As we shall see, however, this group interrelates with both of the other groups.

The main economic activity of the half-Comiteco is agriculture, but a few of them work as artisans, low ranking employees, truck drivers' assistants, and in many other necessary jobs for which the members of the Indian group lack the skills. Half-Comiteco girls find jobs as maids in wealthy Ladino houses. Unlike other communities in the area, in which Indian women work in this capacity, in Pinola the half-Comiteco girls have taken over, since they are considered more intelligent, harder-working, cleaner and more honest.

Half-Comitecos are speakers of the Spanish language, although a minority have learned Tzeltal after years of interaction with Indians. Their houses are scattered throughout the town, from very close to the center to the farthest outskirts of the village. With the exception of a few better-off homes, their houses are very similar to those of the Indians.

The Indian has a clear image of what a half-Comiteco is. He defines this poor Ladino on the basis of some traits similar to those that characterize the Indian population, but, at the same time, he is conscious of the difference. In general, the main criteria identifying the half-Comiteco are the following:

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<sup>1</sup>Information furnished by several Ladinos; there are no official records in the town.

(1) low economic level, (2) use of the Spanish language, (3) working habits and certain other customs similar to those of the Indians, and (4) differences from the upper-class Ladinos.

The best and most descriptive definition of half-Comitecos is the following, given by one of the informants (B):

The half-Comitecos are poor people. They speak Spanish only. If they know our language they do not master it. They are neither very Indian nor very Ladino. They do not have expensive clothing. They live in humble houses. They work in the corn fields and some of them have horses which they use to go on trips or to earn some money transporting cargo. They eat cheap things and enjoy wild vegetables as well as we do. They work just as the poor people (the Indians). Their main work is in the milpas and the sugar cane plantations. They are very much midway between the Ladinos and the Indians because sometimes they can have a better meal and eat more meat than we do.

Their houses cannot be like those of the Ladinos but the reason for this is not that they fear envy (witchcraft) but that they lack the money. If they can afford a house with a tile roof and good walls, they do not paint them. They work like us Indians but try to keep shorter hours and do not maltreat themselves as we do. They wear pants and long-sleeved shirts but never a jacket or a short-sleeved sport shirt. A half-Ladino understands things half-way. He suffers very much like the poor people and receives no consideration from the rich Ladinos. After childbirth they practice sweat baths, like us and not the injections, enemas, and purgatives like the real Ladinos.

The Ladino (C, D) sees the half-Comiteco as a poor man. There is not as wide a cultural gap as with the Indian, but the poor Ladino, in general, is excluded from private social events, unless he is hired in the capacity of a helper.

The half-Ladino (E, F, G, H, I) has a self image which corresponds closely to the one ascribed to them by Indians. He may pretend to be closer to Ladinos than he actually is, and the main distinctions he establishes between himself and an Indian is the fact that there is a good deal of witchcraft among the Tzeltals. He talks always about "the Ladinos" and "the Indians" and

thus places himself in a group which is set apart somehow from the other two.

When interacting with members of the other classes, he feels much more at ease with the Indians. On many occasions, when this was witnessed, the grounds for communication were wide and varied. Common interests in agriculture, similar practices in curing, and many correlations in aspects of material culture create a basis for understanding and, to a degree, an emotional involvement which is reinforced by multiple bonds of ritual kinship.

Economic competition which could create conflict between these closely related classes is absent. Both produce mainly for home consumption and the local and nearby markets absorb whatever surplus they may have left.

#### The Indian

In order to understand the behavior of a Tzeltal toward his own people as well as in interaction with the ladinos, it is necessary to describe his belief and value systems. They determine a way of life and keep Indian society integrated by giving the individual a frame of reference within which he may act with security. The Indian community has a moral code which reinforces habits of hard work, respect for elders, economic equality, and reciprocal obligations. Every member of the community knows which sanctions will be applied to him if he becomes a transgressor.

There are no formal Indian institutions in this community to apply legal sanctions. The religious hierarchy disappeared about thirty years ago and the organization of ceremonies has been

absorbed gradually by the local Catholic church. The civil hierarchy, with an Alcalde at the top, four Regidores and five Mayor-domos is actually subsidiary to the purposes of the Ladino presidency. Its tasks are mainly to keep the trails which link the village with the corn fields in good condition, help in the upkeep of the cemetery, and repair bridges built across creeks. Aside from these tasks, they have no influence upon their own people, and being at the top of the hierarchy does not necessarily imply being considered as one of the Indian leaders. The Indian civil hierarchy is also gradually being absorbed by local agrarian organizations under the control of Ladinos but this is not important to the Indians since there are other mechanisms of control which have a wider influence than these institutions.

With the increasing influence of Ladinos over the still-existing Indian institutions, and the disappearance of others, a question comes to mind: what are the means of social control, what types of sanctions can be effectively applied, and what are the threads of the web of power necessary to maintain adherence to Indian norms in spite of the impact of external forces?

There are two types of transgressions by members of the Indian group. The first type includes crimes which fall under the jurisdiction of Ladino authorities. Divorce, stealing, trespassing on plots by animals, and conflicts over land ownership are the most important incidents which the Ladino authorities are called upon to handle. Imprisonment and fines are the most typical sanctions applied by the local judge.

In an entirely different context, adherence by the Indians to the norms of the Tzeltal community is reinforced by super-

natural sanctions. The power to punish by witchcraft, attributed to men of strong spirit is the most effective means of social control in this area. Indians believe that every person has both an animal soul (or nawai), usually an animal of the forest, and an ethereal spirit (or chulel). Physical energy, ability for curing or protecting the community, even life itself depend upon the strength and well-being of one's nawai and chulel.

The chulel is located in the heart of each man but simultaneously abides in one of the sacred places, the hills which surround Pinola. There it is protected from harm by the spirits of the guardians (or Heiltatiles) of the Indian population. The chulel leaves the body during sleep and roams about, visiting places or communicating with other spirits. Upon his return to the body the person awakes. This is a natural and voluntary separation of the chulel. There are other instances of involuntary or accidental departures which are dangerous because they involve illness and possibly death. When the chulel becomes detached from the body either as a result of fright or when the spirit owner of a place retains it, the person falls ill and a curer has to be called to perform a ceremony which will reinstate the spirit into the body.

The nawai and the chulel are different, though they complement each other and blend with the person in a perfect unit. The nawai is embodied in an animal of the forest which never comes close to his owner. A man and his nawai never meet face to face, yet they partake of the same essence. As much as the chulel, the nawai also roams about at night. No man has a single animal soul. A minimum of three and a maximum of thirteen are attributed to



Indians. Tigers, lions, monkeys, bears, opossums, bulls and a number of other animals are thought to be nawals. But aside from these there are others which in our conception, but not in that of Tselal Indians, are atmospherical phenomena, such as Thunder, Meteor and Whirlwind. For the Indian these are manifestations of live beings, i.e., Thunder is a child, Meteor is a bird. As it will be seen later, these nawals are the most important in the hierarchy of supernatural control.

The survival of man is linked to the well-being of his nawals. Neither man nor his nawal survive each other. A physical attack on the animal soul is reflected, even to the localization of the wound, in the human being.

The average individual does not know what animals are his nawals. The diagnostic techniques to find out which animal corresponds to a person are absent, or lost, in Pinola. In Chenalhó (Guiterras-Holmes 1961:299) "the nawal is related to the day of the birth of a person ... the ilol (curer) is summoned when the infant is a few days old ... and having been told the exact hour and date of birth he discovers the identity of the nawal in the beating pulse." Sometimes the physical traits or abilities of certain Pinola Indians will make them suspected of having certain animals as nawals, i.e., a fat man may be a bear, a hairy one a monkey, one who walks swiftly across muddy stretches without getting dirty may be a dog, and so on.

The nawal and the chulel constitute both the strength and the vulnerability of a man. The attempts of witches are directed at the soul. Therefore, the population of Pinola is protected by those who can counteract evil because they own powerful souls.

The greatest differences between the common men and the important leaders of supernatural control are, the number and rank of navais and the command a man has over them. Curers and Mellitales are endowed with characteristics which enable them to guard the town and punish the transgressors. They are the only ones who can control the behavior of their navais. They are supposed to have top ranking spirits and navais such as Thunder or Meteor, which, because of their high-flying capacities, can better observe the behavior of their subjects. The idea of the magic flight of curers and witches is widespread in the world and relates to "the idea of the intelligence and to the understanding of secret things or metaphysical truths expected of important men" (Eliade 1960:356).

The men who exercise supernatural control in Pinola are old. Age is one of the first requirements in gaining the respect of the population. Since life expectancy is relatively low, the mere fact of being old causes a man to be suspected of having a powerful spirit. Yet there are other criteria which reinforce the principle of age. One of them is behavior in accordance with the community moral code. The correlation between strict following of rules and prestige is very high. A third criterion, which according to its importance should perhaps be ranked first is to have dreams with certain accepted contents. Dreams are necessary to those who wish to play certain roles, such as that of curer. They constitute, according to the theory of dreams of the Pinola Indians, a true form of action, since during sleep the ghulei is active and communicates with other ghuleis, or engages in other kinds of activities. The high occurrence of face-to-face rela-

tions and gossip in this community and having one's significant dreams interpreted as auspicious by one of the important old men can be the cause of starting a man on the road to being a Neilitati. The diagnosis of a sufficiently high obulel and nawal will not be done a priori, as in Chenalhó, but only after a long period during which a continuous interplay of the three requisites mentioned above are observed. Failing such manifestations, an old man will be respected for his age, but he will not participate in the hierarchy of supernatural control.

Up to now we have spoken of the guardians of Pinola norms without specifying their distinctive roles. Although sometimes the roles overlap, certain distinctions can be drawn. The most important personalities in Pinola are:

1. The Neilitatiles or the oldest men, who both protect Indians and punish their transgressions. These are not necessarily, but may be curers.
2. The curers, who are potentially witches.
3. The real witches. They do not cure or guard but are motivated only by envy.

The obulels of the Neilitatiles hold meetings on Thursdays and Fridays (magic days for the Tzeltal Indians) and decide on the destiny of their subjects. The punishment they apply follows only one course--witchcraft--but it is perfectly legitimate, almost never results in death, and serves the purpose of reinforcing Indian norms.

The result of the practice of witchcraft is disease in the person it is directed against. Indians know that a wide variety of symptoms may arise out of witchcraft, and they report to the medicine men to obtain a diagnosis. From then on the sufferer

is in the hands of the curer, who, as owner of a powerful spirit, can communicate with the guardians, obtain forgiveness for his patient, and restore him to health as well as to a harmonious relationship with his group. This power makes the curer a very important figure in Pinola social structure, who acts as mediator between the sick individual and the judges of his behavior. His role entails a great prestige, but places him in danger as well. This explains why certain prerequisites have to be fulfilled before he may start to practice curing.

In order to become a curer, a man has to be of age, have a strong spirit, and dream a specific number of times. Dreams must take place on Thursdays and Fridays, and during them the spirit of the future curer has to receive instructions as to what therapeutic techniques to apply in his career. He must also receive a reaffirmatory message that he is destined to cure and that his strength will overcome the dangers involved in this task.

Of all the curers in Pinola, and there are many, only the strong and prestigious ones venture into the dangers of curing patients deemed to be bewitched. But they cannot cure unless they have the authorization of the guardian spirits; otherwise they would be counteracting the punitive measures of the Meilitales. Dreams will be important for the curer throughout his career. From them he will learn specific medicines to apply, the possibilities of recovery, and the type of transgression which his patient has perpetrated.

His functions will always involve him in a plea to Meilitales, or in a quarrel with the forces of evil, the powers of real witches. This is the reason a curer has to be equipped with

the force to counteract witchcraft by being a witch himself. His spirit will have to master certain situations, for instance when he goes to distant places to regain the spirit of a patient he must resist the enticements of the spirit owner of that place to remain.

The real witch is a malevolent figure with a powerful spirit and nawals, who neither serves as guardian of the Tzeltal Indians nor knows how to cure. His activities are mainly those of bewitching others, either out of personal envy or as an agent of another person who lacks the strong spirit necessary to cast the spell himself. He acts without the authorization of the Meilitatiles, and may bewitch persons who have committed no crime or transgression.

If age were a paramount principle in Pinola, every old man would be a candidate for participation in the supernatural control of the Tzeltal Indians. Yet there are many about whom there is general consensus that they do not have the capacity to "watch" because they do not have high-flying spirits.

All the coordination among the Meilitatiles takes place on a supernatural level. There is no formal organization and the old men do not hold meetings. On the other hand, there are factions of a temporary nature among some, reinforced by ties of ritual kinship. Nevertheless, the individual experiences formidable guides to righteous behavior in the form of the supernatural content of dreams and whenever he falls ill as a result of witchcraft.

The cosmos of the Pinola Indian is populated with spirits, aside from the ones mentioned. The hills and caves are the resi-

dence of the spirits of ancestors and of living men who are old and powerful. In the water holes, Thunder abides; nawals roam about the forest. A man, unless he is reaffirmed in the possession of a powerful spirit and nawals, does not intrude in those places because his ohulel might be retained by its residents. But the power of supernatural forces is even closer to man. His own house has a nawal that brings death to the children and nightmares to the adults unless certain propitiatory rites are performed.

The preceding description of the beliefs of Tzeltal Indians has been done on a supernatural level. We have purposely left out the analysis of the functions of witchcraft in the social structure of Pinola because it was our intention to describe, precisely, the beliefs which determine Indian behavior. As can be seen, the forms of anxiety and the ways to alleviate them are structured. Through the intervening action of the curer and the Melittales, both intra-psychic and intra-group conflicts are solved within a perfectly consistent system.

The individual has no other explanation for his success or failure, health or disease. He lives in a world populated with powerful spirits which both protect and attack him. His behavior is a continuous search for harmony with these forces.

Respect for older men, economic equality, reciprocity and cooperation instead of competition are highly valued in the moral code. But the reward for compliance with the norms follows particular channels. The person who proves himself worthy of his group will find, at the end of a long and hard life, a place among the powerful ones if consensus is reached that he possesses a good spirit. In this other-worldly oriented culture the summit of prestige is reached only by acquisition of supernatural powers.

### III. BARRIERS TO AND CHANNELS FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY

#### Ladino-Indian Interaction

Inter-ethnic relations in Pinola take place within certain specific contexts. In the six aspects of interdependence described earlier in this paper, there is some interaction, no matter how brief or how restricted to particular transactions. Besides these, there are a multiplicity of other forms in which the groups meet. Any attempt at classifying forms of interaction into a few categories may result in overlapping descriptions or, worse still, in incomplete analyses of some of these forms. Yet such classification can be attempted if we keep in mind that the most important aspect of any encounter between Indians and Ladinos is the role performance of each party. The social distance between the strata is great enough to bring into focus the superordinate-subordinate relationships in practically every instance which brings them into contact. This form of analysis will lead to our understanding of the barriers between classes and also of the courses of action which the mobility-oriented Indian has to choose from in order to cross the class boundary.

The two types of situations which vary deeply as far as the roles of the interacting groups or individuals go are the structured versus the unstructured contacts. By structured situations is meant here those events organized, in most cases, by formal institutions where participation is prearranged, or which are which are restricted to specific purposes where there is little

personal involvement and where competition is absent. These situations, sponsored by official or religious authorities, bring the two ethnic groups together without involving them in any intimate interaction.

An example of a structured situation is, for instance, when the Indian section of town or some of its representatives, such as members of the civil hierarchy or of the Communal Lands organisation (Bienes Comunales), are invited to participate in an official political celebration. Assumptions of office by the new Municipal President is one of these occasions. Mexican national holidays, celebrated with parades, patriotic speeches and entertainment at the school, are another instance. Two or three of the better known Indian leaders have reserved seats next to Ladino authorities, and large groups of Ejido members march in the parades.

Though somewhat different in character, there is a whole series of meetings including both Ladinos and Indians which concern the solution of land problems, forestry permits to gather wood, and maintenance of roads, bridges and water canals. In all these instances matters are presented to the President by the people concerned. The Indians act as representatives of Tzeltal Pinola and group action gives force to the delegations. Ladinos are careful not to overstep some areas of Indian rights, since the Ladinos are conscious of the large majority which the Indian group constitutes.

The situations mentioned above are the ones in which social distance is at a maximum, yet they can be the most harmonious of all interactions. The reason is that in them the Indian is de-



lined as such in the eyes of the Ladinos who, in turn, perform the role of indulgent patronizers.

Joint participation between Indians and Ladinos is at a maximum in the religious sphere, yet their relations here are least strained. Under the direction of the priest, every member becomes an anonymous follower of the Catholic ritual. Be it during the attendance at mass, where there is no physical separation between Ladinos and Indians, during the saying of the rosary, during the novenas, or in the more formally organized sodalities<sup>1</sup> which take care of the churches and organize religious celebrations, we will find, always, a minimum of conflict. The explanation lies in the fact that in these types of situations competitive attitudes are lacking; there is no use of one group by the other; and again these belong to what we call structured situations where performances are clearly delimited.

Both groups participate in the week-long celebrations organized by Ladinos to commemorate national or religious dates. The central park is the main locus for the performances which take place during these days. But within this setting, there are socially restricted areas for the exclusive use of the upper classes, such as certain canteens or the municipal hall where young Ladino couples dance to the music of the marimba. The wider environment of the plaza is free to all but the role of the Indians is very much that of outsiders looking on at Ladino activities. If Indians

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<sup>1</sup>Membership is mixed in most of the sodalities. Only that of San Miguel has a majority of Indians, but this is due to the fact that San Miguel (besides being the patron saint of the town) has been fused with Tzeltal supernatural beliefs and is identified with Thunder in the group of Pinela supernatural guardians.

interact with Ladinos, it is only when buying drinks in the shops and canteens, or sweets and food in the stores or stands temporarily set up for the celebrations. As customers in brief contact with upper classes they have a definite role which contains no ingredients for conflict.

In most of the unstructured forms of interaction which take place in the political, legal and economic spheres, the superordinancy of Ladinos comes into focus. It is in this type of encounter that the mutual images, which include an element of distrust, heighten the barriers to communication. As long as the Indian is able to be identified as such, the Ladino will be benevolent and patronizing toward his problems. But whenever the course of interaction appears to obliterate the status distinction and there is any doubt as to the subordinate role of Indians, the Ladino will react promptly to avoid any possibility of dealing with him as an equal. Scorn and harsh humiliation are the attitudes displayed by Ladinos in order to reestablish a status distinction in danger of being destroyed.

The delicate line between the Ladino's benevolent toleration and his angry derision of the Indian can be snapped by the slightest gesture or word from the Indian implying intimacy or claims which are inconsistent with the rights accorded to the lower classes. In all situations involving Ladinos, the Indian plays a most insecure role.

In the case of legal problems, when Indians feel that the solution will emanate from the intervening action of Ladino authorities, he appeals to them for advice and help. As mentioned above, divorce, stealing, trespassing on property by animals, and so forth,

are within this range. The local judge, the secretary, or the President, according to the type of problem, will be either paternalistic or admonitory to the applicant as long as he maintains the social distance, shows submission, and complies with instructions. Failing these signs of respect, Indians will be subject to the strictest legal sanctions; thus the authority and privileges of the upper class, personified in this case by the legal authorities, are maintained.

In the sphere of private economic interaction, there are some instances when the situation is more structured and less prone to conflict. These types of contact occur in selling or buying in the local market, or when Indian women sell home products from house to house. In spite of some haggling, always customary in economic transactions among Pinola Indians and Ladinos, the prices are fairly standardized according to area production. The encounters are necessarily brief, and restricted to a particular purpose. In the local Ladino stores the same situation obtains, but here the Indian will have to wait till every Ladino customer present has been waited on. When his turn comes he will be addressed in the familiar second person in Spanish, instead of the polite form customary among Ladinos.

There are several forms of unstructured interaction which arise from specific motivations. Among these we can mention the visits of an Indian to his Ladino "compadre" or "comadre" (who are ritual kinsmen). In the upper class house he may have a friendly reception, be given discarded clothes, be thanked for the gifts he presents, usually fruit, a chicken or eggs, and even be fed in the kitchen. An Indian will receive paternalistic

treatment from his or her Ladino compadres, but beyond this, there will be no meeting on any other ground. If he does not act according to the expectations of the Ladino, who defines him as a member of a subordinate group in spite of the ritual bond of kinship, he will be negatively sanctioned by derisive treatment or, in extreme cases, by cessation of the relationship.

Other occasions of interaction are when the Ladinos go from house to house in the Indian section of town, looking for sellers of agricultural products or of cane sugar, and when the Indians deal with the Ladino owner of a ranch in order to become sharecroppers on it. It is unnecessary to point out here that the same problems arise as in other unstructured situations. In these cases, the ambivalence of Ladino's attitude toward Indians is sharpened by the possibility of economic profit involved in the transactions. A conciliatory attitude will be maintained as long as the deal is likely to result exactly according to his demands for maximum benefits to himself. Failing this, he will resort to behavior showing the Indian that he is not entitled to make any claims or expect any privileges when faced by members of the upper class.

#### Restrictions Against Joint Participation

Certain spheres of both public and private social life are completely restricted to either Indians or Ladinos. In these situations the barriers to joint participation are essentially cultural. Some public events are celebrated by Indians according to traditional patterns and the Ladinos act as simple spectators. In extreme cases, each group carries out simultaneous but entirely different activities.

In the case of public recreational activities, in addition to the class barriers which inhibit joint participation there is a wide difference between what a Ladino considers leisure and entertainment and the ideas of the Indians on these topics. The typical Ladino public activities in this sphere are picnics, sports (mainly basket ball and soccer), horse racing, dances in the park or municipal hall, and theatrical performances in the school. Sports and dancing, on the other hand, are very seldom practiced by Indian people. When they go to the woods, they do so in an entirely different capacity. Nature is not viewed as a beautiful landscape, it is rather populated with magic forces with which every Indian is intimately linked. They sometimes go out to gather wild plants or walk in the fields, or visit the milpas and rejoice in its growth or worry about its failure. Perhaps they will hunt, but always with the purpose of eating the meat and selling the hides of the game.

Sports as an extra activity after long hours in the fields do not enter into the scheme of Indian activities. Moreover, sports imply a competitive attitude which is foreign to the mores of the Indians.

The public celebrations which are strongly tinged with Indianness, and from which the Ladinos keep apart are Carnival, the day of the Holy Cross, and the day of the Dead. In this last both groups carry out different activities simultaneously.

The Day of the Holy Cross is restricted to the Indian Civil hierarchy. Its members visit the crosses, scattered around the Finca area, and close to the water holes. It is hard to explain the original meaning of this ceremony. It is outwardly a

Catholic celebration and no one in town, not even the oldest men can give any information as to why it is restricted to the members of the Indian organization.

On the two other days mentioned, the Indian section of town celebrates in full view of the Ladinos but never mixes with them. During the three days of Carnival, the Indians adopt costumes, hire marimbas and dance in houses and streets, and finally in the main park. Some Indians are dressed as Ladino women, others as Ladino men and they dance in couples. When the celebration reaches the park, there are numerous Ladino onlookers who laugh at the behavior of the dancers, most of whom are already drunk and acting accordingly.

The Day of the Dead is kept in all of Mexico. The Catholic population goes to mass and then visits the cemetery. In Pinola both groups fulfill their obligations to the dead, but once in the burial grounds they separate and engage in different activities.

After an early visit to the tombs, where flowers are arranged, the Ladinos spend the rest of the day running horse races outside the cemetery in a large plain. Heavy bets are laid by the Ladino men. Young girls and women walk around, watching the races or ride in the local trucks, back and forth to town.

The Indians stay inside the cemetery most of the day. They sit around on the tombs and enjoy a leisurely meal accompanied by heavy drinking. Only late in the evening do they return to their houses.

Ladinos (A, C, J, D) resent this Indian behavior and avoid it by going early to the cemetery. The local priest, the

only person with authority to change it, is lenient about certain Indian customs.

It cannot be said that none of the Indians enjoy horse racing. In fact there are two days in the year, June 29 and July 25, when a group of them enter a kind of contest, the purpose of which is to grab, while galloping, a rooster which has been suspended from a tight rope secured across one of the streets. This is not strictly a race, since every individual waits for his turn to grab at the rooster and the reward consists of some liquor of which they all partake. It is interesting to note here that local Ladino informants (A, B, H, J) report that Ladinos used to participate in these contests but abandoned them some years ago because they were "too Indian."

The private occasions for social gathering, both for Ladinos and Indians, as the Saint's day of a member of the house, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Joint participation is impossible in any of them. There has been no instance in Pinola of a private social event at which a member of the opposite class has been present. In this village, where a private gathering means interpersonal identification, mutually felt loyalties, equality, and characteristic modes of entertainment, the opposite group is excluded because its presence would mean a restriction in behavior and an adoption of the rules of interaction which are obligatory whenever the two groups meet. Behavior during a gathering of either group, in the form of cooperation, etiquette, and respect, is a result of value systems which have few points in common between Ladinos and Indians.

A useful distinction between interaction in structured as

against informal situations is pointed out by G. McGuire (1950: 197):

... a formal organization, a structured situation ... permits its members to have contacts with people of various class positions without the necessity of intimacy. Acceptance within relatively informal associations is the crux of status reputation.

The Image of Ladinos held by Indians

As to knowledge of each others' personalities and ways between the members of the two ethnic groups in Pinela, there is better information--although it is stereotyped in many respects--among the Indians as to the ways of the Ladinos than among the Ladinos concerning the Indians. This knowledge on the part of the Indians does not imply that Indians have been in Ladino houses or have interacted in any other than strictly delimited contexts, mostly economic in character. But Ladinos, as an upper class, have "news value" in the community. Ladino houses are located in the center of the town, and many Ladinos own stores where several members of the family wait on customers. Indians, as already mentioned, also attend many Ladino celebrations in the central plaza as onlookers. As we have seen, the Indian deals with Ladinos as a customer and as a seller of agricultural products, during which he gains an idea not only of the symbols denoting upper class membership, but of how Ladinos interact with each other as contrasted with their behavior toward persons of a different status.

The knowledge of Ladinos about Indians is sketchier. First and foremost, an Indian is a resident of a neighborhood where Ladinos seldom venture, except for the specific purpose of buying. Second, the Ladino deals with the Indian as an inferior, and may not even know his name. Third, the upper class, in a



dominant position, is the one that closes its ranks to membership by Indians and only receives them in specialized capacities which preclude any close contact.

The Indian is perfectly aware of the differences between people of his group and those of the upper class. The most obvious criteria are differences in culture and economic status. Another criterion is the special personality traits ascribed to the Ladinos; knowledge of these is derived more from the roles played by the members of each group during the interaction than from a real knowledge of individual characteristics.

In any description of Ladinos, Indians attribute differences in Ladino behavior to differences in wealth. Ladinos are often called "the rich of downtown." Yet this society is made up of two distinct cultures, in which, despite mutual borrowing along certain lines, the core of values, beliefs and customs keep them apart. The Indian is also aware of contrasts in "customs." In the economic sphere, there are several activities and possessions considered by Indians as symbols of membership in the Ladino classes. Needless to say, none of them are shared by the Indians, which makes the distinction between the groups much sharper.

The Indian, highly conscious of the gap which separates him from the Ladinos, defines them exclusively on the basis of these differences. Never, in talking to an Indian did we find a single mention of similarity or identity with the upper classes, in spite of the fact that as members of the same community both groups are subjected to influences which affect them to some degree similarly, not to mention the mutual borrowing in areas of material culture and in practices of curing.

It was said above that one of the main criteria chosen by Indians to identify Ladinos, was the economic one. In this we can include: type of house, dress, food, livelihood and private socio-recreational activities. It can be argued that all these differences are not strictly economic, but are determined by cultural distinctions. Yet we are following here the verbalizations of Indians who claim that Ladinos can afford certain things because they are richer.

Characteristic building material, size and equipment and ornaments of the house are the main indicators of Ladino upper classes. Such houses have brick walls painted in colors, cement or tile floors and tile roofs, and both windows and doors. Molding on the walls is another distinctive aspect. Ladino houses also have gardens with a variety of cultivated flowers. There are pets in every household, especially Castilian dogs worth about eight dollars, and not fit for going out to the fields. Birds and rabbits can be kept as pets too. As one Indian informant (K) put it, "Whenever we have these animals it is because we find them in the woods but we immediately try to sell them."

In the eyes of the Indians, the equipment of houses is even more indicative of class membership than the house itself. First to command the Indians' attention are the chairs (painted or varnished) and the big tables which the Ladinos use for the specific purpose of sitting at and eating. Utensils are different also. Not only the amount and variety owned by each household, but the materials and shapes differ from Indian utensils also. Ladinos eat from plates, using knives and forks. These last items are totally lacking in Indian households; and plates, when present,

serve to store leftovers, not to serve meals. Glass and china ware, seldom bought by Indians due to their high prices, are regarded as strictly Ladino possessions. Beds with springs and mattresses, ornaments on the walls, such as mirrors, large photographs, and paintings, complete the image of a Ladino household, in the eyes of the Indians.

That there is a strong cultural element in the distinction, although not specifically verbalized, can be seen in the fact that some informants state that there are a few rich Indians who could afford to have many of the items used exclusively by Ladinos, but they do not acquire them since their customs are different. Besides--and here we enter into the sphere of supernatural controls--a rich Indian who puts money into building a luxurious Ladino-like house would risk punishment by witchcraft.

Ladino male and female costume is another symbol of class distinction. In spite of the fact that the process of changing from the traditional Indian costume to western dress has acquired great momentum in Pinola, the Revestido Indian never adopts some items of clothing which are considered strictly Ladino. The difference between the clothing of the groups applies not only to quality, of which the Indians are highly conscious, but also to cut and to special garments in the upper-class wardrobe. The first thing noticed is that a Ladino wears good, expensive materials. Parallel to this, and foremost in the characterization of Ladino dress, is that he wears shoes and not a hat. Ladinos wear hats only during trips or when the heat makes it necessary, in which case he wears a small hat, called Tejano locally. (The Indian, on the other hand, never parts with his typically wide-

brimmed hat). Short-sleeved, plaid or striped sport shirts worn outside closely fitted pants are distinctive of Ladino men. Indians consider that one of their class only lets his shirt tail hang outside his pants when he is drunk. Although the subtropical climate does not require the wearing of jackets, complete suits, dark blue or black, are a "must" for Ladino social occasions. Indians call upper class members "the jacketed ones."

Ladino women are equally identified by their clothing. Shoes, one-piece dresses (as opposed to the customary skirt and blouse of the Indian woman) are the main indicators. Underwear, seldom used by Tzeltal women, is the valued symbol of upper class membership which Ladinized Indians adopt, and they tend to make it a point to prove its use, as we repeatedly witnessed. A woman (M) belonging to this group insisted on her girls putting on panties for a family gathering and went into a length explanation as to how that item of clothing was indispensable and how many pairs each of her daughters had.

Distinctive eating habits, including different menus and times of eating meals, come next in the image that an Indian has of Ladinos. First of all, rich people can afford more meat, chocolate, bread and bottled drinks with their meals. In addition the Indian, who gets up before dawn and is in his milpa till late afternoon, usually eats his main meal upon his return. The Ladino who stays in town can distribute his meals as he pleases and does it at his leisure, a late breakfast at 11 a.m. and lunch at 3 p.m.

Ladinos never eat a single course. They will have meat and rice, and soup with it. If they eat vegetables, these are

bought in the market and are not the wild varieties picked in the woods which the Indian eats. They have various kinds of fruit with a meal, a thing an Indian never does, because "how is he going to know which one made him sick?" (DD, B, Y, X). The food habits of Ladinos are so stereotyped in the Indian mind that they do not understand and consequently do not believe him whenever a member of the upper classes states that he enjoys wild vegetables or posol (a typically Indian gruel made of corn meal and water).

In contrast with his own hard work in the fields, the Indians view Ladino commercial or professional activities as light, enjoyable and highly remunerative. In the words of several informants (W, L, K, X, Y):

A Ladino works always always right here in town but never in the fields. He is always in the shade, be it at the store, school, office or Municipal Presidency. Teaching and selling are their main activities. Work for a Ladino is walking around and talking ... talking to carry out his commercial dealings. If a rich Ladino owns corn fields, he pays others to get things done. A Ladino never earns, he only pays.

Ladinos know how to read, they have good ideas and are able to foresee the outcome of any enterprise. They talk well and can deal to their advantage with authorities. They are more "civilized" and understand better than we do.

Intelligence and the capacity to "talk well" are important personality traits ascribed to Ladinos. The Indians when talking about themselves and Ladinos always make the distinction between the intellectual capacities of the upper classes and those of their own. They state repeatedly that an Indian does not know how to profit from his work and ends up in debt and has to flee the town.

Private social gatherings are very popular in Pinola. Birthdays, weddings, Saints' days and baptisms are occasions for parties with music provided by the local marimbas. It is common

to see numerous onlookers standing outside the house. Among Indians it is not unusual to invite some of the watchers in and some even enter without invitation when drunkenness releases inhibitions. When the parties take place in Ladino houses, the Indians also stand near the door. They are never invited in, and they do not dare to go in, either. Nevertheless they become acquainted with some aspects of the organization of Ladino entertainment. The different times of day that Ladinos choose for their celebrations, plus the fact that in every one of them many couples are invited to dance, are the two aspects that Indians mention first. The first characteristic mentioned arises from the fact that the resident priest officiates at special hours for upper class ceremonials, something which the Indians consider a privilege, since they have to baptise their children only on Sundays and marry on Saturdays, the two days on which mass ceremonies of this kind take place. Abundant and expensive foods, the best marimbas in town, good quality bottled liquor and "closed doors," complete the description of a typical upper class celebration.

But the image of a Ladino as a different group is reinforced in the eyes of the Indians when they talk about physical traits which characterize the members of the upper classes. The Indian considers himself a member of a more "delicate race." He uses this expression to explain some diseases which affect his group and which are not the result of supernatural sanctions but of weak blood. Disipela has a high degree of incidence among Finola Indians. It occurs when an individual becomes "ashamed" or "rattled." The circumstances in which one can become sick are varied, but all of them have one element in common; they all take

place in social situations. Examples are: a young girl being wooed by a man in public, a woman falling down in the street and having her skirt fly up, or a woman being mistreated by her husband in front of other people. The most common symptom of the resulting illness is a rash which can appear on the legs or on other parts of the body. The cure consists of spraying the patient with a mixture of liquor and salt. Disipela can be cured by any member of the family or by a friend; it is never fatal, and people draw a clear distinction between it and more serious sicknesses. Yet it bothers Indians and they avoid certain situations, afraid of becoming ill.

Indians attribute to Ladinos stronger blood, which permits them to mix freely in the park and in other crowded places without being afflicted by this illness. They partially explain the better health of Ladinos on the grounds that Ladino injections and medicines are better (although the Ladino medicines are not considered effective for Indian patients). On two occasions Indian women (X, Y) stated that Ladino women have different "bodies," and that they bleed longer after childbirth. This would seem to contradict the statement that Ladinos are stronger, but both informants insisted that it was not a matter of strength but simply of difference.

The type of life that Ladinos lead makes them less prone to contract diseases. Staying in town, they do not risk losing their souls as a result of a fright. Indians, on the other hand, spend most of their time working far from home in the corn fields or woods, where dangerous animals or accidents can bring about the greatly feared illness called espanto.

Thus the Ladinos are identified by a cluster of characteristics which fall into two main categories; cultural and economic. In regard to a third category, personality traits, as mentioned above, a Ladino is thought to be intelligent, able to talk well, and to get ahead materially. But Ladinos have negative traits as well. For instance, they are never honest or straightforward. As one informant put it (S): "They are like my guitar, it sounds beautiful when the weather is clear but when it rains, it sounds bad.... Ladinos are just like that, they change their moods."

The Indian is highly conscious of the derisive treatment he receives from the members of the upper classes. Their greatest complaint is that they are never greeted by Ladinos and that the scorn of the Ladinos has forced the Tzeltales to give up certain customs, such as bending the head to be touched by an older person as a sign of respect, and speaking their own dialect in the stores. The Indians verbalize clearly the unfair treatment given them by the Ladinos and also are aware of the disadvantages of being forced to deal with them in commercial matters. Yet, they know also that there is no other choice but to sell their produce to them.

A final aspect of the image an Indian has of Ladinos has to do with the supernatural. It is important since it reinforces the total image of an out-group from which the Indian is separated by clearly felt differences. Ladinos do not practice witchcraft among themselves. The proof of this is that they get rich and "nothing happens to them" (B, K). But more important still, a Ladino cannot be bewitched by the Indians. This leaves them outside the sphere of control, both in regard to protection and



negative sanctions. Attempts to bewitch a Ladino must have been made, no doubt, in some cases of interpersonal conflict, but Indians state that witches do not care for Ladino flesh because it is "spoiled with perfumed soap, hair oils and creams, all of which are absorbed and change the flavor of the meat" (B, K, X, Y, DD).

This is, at the psychological level, the most formidable barrier between the classes in Pinola. The Indian when dealing with members of his own group knows what to expect and how to behave, but he has difficulty in dealing with people who are beyond the reach of those who set and reinforce the norms for the Tzeltal community.

#### The Image of Indians Held by Ladinos

In this section the data are necessarily more scanty.

This is due, as was mentioned above, to the fact that the knowledge a Ladino has of Indian ways is much less than in the opposite case, and it is more stereotyped as well. Ladinos view Indians as ignorant, dirty, lazy and treacherous. Few Ladinos venture into Indian neighborhoods after dark. The fact of the Indian's ignorance is in Ladino eyes more related to an inherent incapacity to learn and to progress than to a real lack of education. Even the teachers (D) and the few Ladinos (H) who write documents for Indians when these are needed to present to local authorities comment on the insurmountable illiteracy of the Tzeltales.

The customs and beliefs of Indians are only known at certain levels, such as their practices for Carnival and the Day of the Dead, or their beliefs in witchcraft or "fright." With reference to social control, of which witchcraft is the main aspect, Ladinos are aware of the consequences but not of the mechanisms

behind them.

Names of individual Indians are not well known. Not even the Municipal President, who is in charge of handing the baton to the newly elected Tzeltal Alcalde every year, could inform us on the membership of the hierarchy or their particular functions.

There are four Indian leaders (AA, BB, CC, Z) who have become very well known to the Ladino local authorities. Their functions are specifically those needed when a problem arises between the Indian section and the Ladinos. All of these men are literate, know Ladino ways, have travelled to the capital of the State and some as far as Mexico City (AA, CC) and somewhat bridge the gap between Ladinos and Indians. They are considered the really important men by Ladinos, and given a seat next to authorities during some ceremonies of official character. They are not regarded as leaders or as important men by the Indians who know exactly in what type of circumstances they are useful. The Indians also know the requirements which are not met by these men, requirements necessary for any man to become a respected member of the hierarchy of supernatural control. One of them is quite young (BB), another is a Huisteco (AA) who migrated to Pinola many years ago, and the third and fourth are rich (Z, CC) by Indian standards. All of them thus have characteristics which set them apart from the age-respect and equalitarian principles which are fundamental to acquiring personal ascendancy among the Tzeltals. Jokingly, Indians say that these men are "Ladinos disguised as Indians." The truly important men are virtually unknown outside the Indian circle.

Some Indians are thought to be very rich, but miserly.

There are widespread rumors about the devices by which an Indian hides gold coins, for instance, burying them in large earthen jars in his own garden.

Perhaps the clearest image of an Indian is the one presented during the big celebration commemorating the Mexican revolution. On this day, September 15th, there is an evening program at the local school, organized by Ladinos who also play the main roles in the entertainment. For three consecutive years we witnessed these shows, which include music, poetry recitals, dancing and always a comic skit. The actors are Ladino students or young adults. The plot of the skit was strikingly similar in all three celebrations. It was about a very poor, very dirty Indian, who could speak Spanish only with great difficulty and who was very sly in his methods of obtaining money to buy liquor without working. The skit was received with tremendous enthusiasm by the Ladinos.

In Pinola there is no overt conflict between the classes, unless members of both have claims on the same piece of land. In such situations the Ladinos, in addition to the distrust they feel toward Indians, also feel certain fear of "what the Indians might do to them." In the case of the most powerful Ladino family of Pinola (C), when one of its members (A) bought land which had been occupied by Indians for many years and the Indians insisted on having it back, there was great pressure from all the family of the buyer to give it up.

There are no instances of Ladinos having been killed by Indians, yet they frequently talk about this possibility; they also mention fears of being poisoned by Indians if they eat whatever

is offered as a gift. As a rule upper class families throw away cooked foods, and even fruit, presented to them by Indian women.

#### The Process of Ladinization

In the preceding sections we have dealt with the description of the two largest groups in this society. It can be seen that the social distance which separates them is much too wide to be bridged through the few types of contact into which they come. Nevertheless there is an active process of change in the community as a whole and, at a superficial level, one might consider that the rate of movement toward Ladinization on the part of the Indians is rapid, since the younger Indians have almost completely abandoned the traditional costume and adopted Western type, or Ladino-like clothing. Also bilingualism--use of the Spanish language as well as the native Tzeltal--has spread to almost all of the Indians.

Precisely because some changes have acquired great momentum in the town, it was necessary to qualify the assumption that Ladinization was working successfully in Pinola. It cannot be denied that the Indian who foregoes the easily identifiable traditional white costume (B, L, W) feels safer when interacting with local Ladinos or working in nearby industrial enterprises, such as Fujiltic. He knows, or hopes that he will not be called "Indian" to his face. But this is not Ladinization; it is rather an adaptation to the peculiar structure of the society in which he lives. He presents himself in a way which will eliminate the most obvious symbol of Indianness, and thus will avoid derisive treatment from Ladinos. Deep inside he is as much an Indian as his kinsman or neighbor who dresses in white. As several old men put it: "As

long as he respects his customs and his elders, a young man can dress as he pleases; at any rate, almost everybody here is adopting Ladino costume."

All of the Indians who adopt Western-type clothing cannot be assumed to be characterized by traits of the socially mobile. They neither take upper class Ladinos as a reference, nor do they pretend to incorporate themselves into that class. The change in these individuals cannot be denied, but it is not a purposeful and conscious change. The barriers to Ladinization lie deeply rooted in his identification with his group and his submission to a system of beliefs and social control which set strict norms. The success or failure of crops, health and disease, even life and death are explained in terms of those beliefs, and change toward Ladino culture would imply abandoning them and thus becoming subject to negative sanctions. Only when substitute norms for behavior are found can we speak of Ladinized Indians.

In many acculturated Revestidos we found an adoption of very superficial Ladino traits. In their forms of interaction, in their beliefs and values, they were still attached to Indianness. They explained their world, and their place in it, in terms of supernatural concepts. They behaved within a strict frame of reference and never went beyond it. Basically, they did not know the norms of Ladinos well and in this they contrasted strongly with the socially mobile individuals in the community, to be described later. This is a fundamental distinction to be kept in mind in an attempt to understand change in Pinela. As long as there is no conscious attempt to adopt the Ladinos as a reference group, other adoptions can be equated with a slow, steady process of accultura-

tion which is affecting the whole population.

The meaning of adopting Western-type clothing has an entirely different value in Pinola compared to other communities of the area where all the men dress alike and all the women dress alike. In Pinola the adoption of Ladino clothes has been going on for over thirty years and has progressively lost meaning. What keeps the community functioning as a traditionally Indian system is not the maintenance of outward symbols, but a perfectly consistent and solidly integrated web of beliefs which require the adherence of each and all of its members.

Yet we find a group of Pinola Indians who are trying to move upward and to "pass" as real Ladinos (M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V). Their success is not apparent over any short span of time, and we may even say that during their entire lifetime, no matter how hard they try, both Ladinos and Indians in the community will still regard them as Revestido Indians. There are numerous people with whom we became acquainted during our stay in the field and who fitted into what we call the group of Ladinized Indians. The ways in which they presented themselves both to Indians and to Ladinos, and the patterned lying in their interaction with both groups followed similar lines in all cases.

In three cases these Indians (M, Q, S) had spent some years in Ladino houses, either as children's nurses or as visitors to Ladino godparents who kept them for long periods. Others (S, R, U, V) had lived outside the community for several years and had had the opportunity of learning different ways of life. There were also a few who lacked either type of experience, but behaved, nevertheless, very much like ones mentioned above (O, N, P, T).

All of them had at least partially internalized Ladino values and although they had returned as adults to their Indian neighborhood and to its standards, they persisted in following Ladino ways.

We have not carried out any psychological depth studies in Pinola. Therefore, any attempt at classifying this type of social climber from the point of view of a particular mobility-oriented personality would be beyond our competence. Yet, if we look at these people, not from an individual personality point of view but in terms of the local social structure, where classes are divided according to cultural, social and economic criteria, change can take place, if at all, only with the denial of the symbols and norms of behavior and beliefs of one class, and the adoption of those which characterize the other. This is, of course, not a phenomenon exclusive to communities of the type described here. Any form of social mobility involves both a process of learning of upper class ways and an acquisition of the symbols which its members display. But here the barriers to be crossed are of a distinctive kind. Persons who try to change must turn their backs on Indianness, and present a typical Ladino front. Since the image of Indians held by Ladinos is one of the barriers to mobility, these Ladinized Indians eliminate from their behavior anything that can be labeled as Indian. In our description of the behavior of the socially mobile Indian we will refer to Goffman's study on the presentation of the self (1959). Not only the terminology but some of the concepts discussed in this book have been most useful in the analysis of Ladinized Indians who try to "pass."

"Upward mobility involves always the presentation of proper performances and the efforts to move upward ... are expressed

in terms of sacrifices made for the maintenance of front" (Goffman 1959:36). Ladinized Indians are skillful performers who, as will be seen in the description of rejection of Indian traits and adoption of Ladino ones,

... accentuate certain matters and conceal others. ... control [by the performer] over what is perceived is control over contact that is made, and the limitation and regulation of what is shown is a limitation and regulation of contact ... failure to regulate the information acquired by the audience involves possible disruption of the projected definition of the situation (Goffman 1959:67).

In Pinola the Ladinized Indians cannot be equated with individuals who have begun to operate in a cash economy. No matter how small a scale, the truth is that a cash economy prevails throughout this village, perhaps to different degrees, but everyone participates in it. Besides, there are many Indians who have abandoned the traditional costume, who can be classified as "rich" according to local standards, but who keep their identification with Indianness. The explanation seems to lie at a deeper level; when an Indian is not well integrated in his own group, he is likely to turn to the Ladinos as his reference group. Once his rejection toward his own group begins, there is a complex network of changes involved in his Ladinization. The two systems offer no midway solution; the gap between the strata in the society is too wide for anyone to maintain a firm foothold in both.

In our discussion of the images of each other that Ladinos and Indians have, we said that distinctive dress, language, customs and food habits are the most outstanding indicators of Indian-group membership. Therefore, the Indian who tries to bridge the two cultures has to proceed along two channels of action. The first of them implies "closing the door" on his Indian



past and the rejection of all obvious symbols of Indianness. The second is the presentation of the self with a front which resembles that of upper class Ladinos. Since all of the Ladinized individuals studied by us behaved with striking similarity in these respects, we will try to classify the forms of behavior which they adopt.

It goes without saying that none of the Indian items of clothing are worn by these people. Among all the Ladinized men and women known there was one woman (N) still wearing long hair and walking barefooted but all of her daughters had short-cropped hair and some kind of shoes, no matter how simple or how worn out.

Next to clothing, the most manifest symbol of Indianness is fluency in the local Tzeltal dialect. All of the members of the group we are dealing with denied any knowledge of the language. When joking, they would "imitate" Indian words, mispronouncing them grossly, to "prove" that, just as there are Ladinos who can manage a few Tzeltal expressions, they could do so too. The denial of linguistic Indianness went as far as the elimination from their vocabulary of some Spanish words, never used by Ladinos and characteristic of Indian speech. For instance, Indians use Tata instead of the Spanish padre and Nana in place of madre, when they speak Spanish. No Ladinized Indian would admit to this usage and he would laugh at anyone who did.

If some of these individuals (M, P) were caught speaking the Indian dialect, they volunteered the explanation that neither of their parents could speak it, but that during their own lifetime, working or playing with Indians, they had been able to acquire the language. As one informant (DD) Revestido, but well

integrated with the Indian group once said: "When I visit some friends I just cannot speak Tzeltal with them, lest somebody listening will call us Indians; this is the best way my friends have to pretend they are not Indians." In none of the cases known was the dialect used at home, thus preventing the descending generation from learning it. Together with the denial of knowing the Indian language goes a refusal to greet people in the streets using the Tzeltal forms (even when meeting an older and theoretically very respected man). This is not so strange though, since Ladinos are always around and the Indians avoid using their own dialect in such situations.

A third type of class symbol in Pinola is the food eaten, as noted above. Indians are limited in their choice of foods by their economic status, but aside from this they have strong preferences. A variety of wild roots, plants and leaves constitute part of their diet, and the staple foods are corn prepared in several ways and beans. The noon meal, usually taken during a rest in the fields, is pozol, a kind of gruel made of corn meal mixed with water. The Ladinized Indians deny drinking pozol and claim that they have coffee and biscuits at these times. When people of upper status visit their houses, they will make all efforts to offer them beer, pop, or biscuits in short, any refreshments that are non-Indian.

Pinola Indians use Spanish surnames. Whether there once were Tzeltal surnames is impossible to ascertain since the parochial books show no trace of them. The practice of giving Indians Spanish surnames, mostly those of missionaries or early Spanish settlers, was common throughout Spanish America. The result is

that large Indian communities have only a handful of surnames. In Pinola the same situation obtains. The most "Indian" Spanish surnames are: Santis, Bautista, Solano, Montoya, Tovilla and Méndez. There are no Ladinos with these names. Therefore, the surname by itself is a clear indicator of Indian group membership. When faced by outsiders or by people who do not know them well, such as an upper class Ladino, the Ladinized Indians will try to pass under the name of a Ladino. Change of Christian name is not so common, yet there is a well-known range of typical Indian names. We learned of only one woman who has changed her first name from the very "Indian" Bonifacia to the more Ladino-like Angelica (M).

Logically, an individual who, when interacting presents a front which will define him as a Ladino, may receive a blow to his performance if he is connected immediately with conservative Indians who are his close kin. One of the first actions to be undertaken by Ladinized Indians is the reduction to a minimum of interaction with family members who still wear traditional costume. In some cases (P, O) when he shares a common sitio with them, he may deny kinship ties and claim that they share the dwelling grounds for convenience only. In extreme cases there is a total break off of contact (N, Q).

When the truth about kinship ties is discovered, either by Ladinos or outsiders (both being the least informed on real Indian familial affiliations), some fanciful explanations are offered (N, Q, T). It is said that members of the family who dress as conservative Indians were brought up as Ladinos, but that they found Indian costumes well suited for work and once they got used to it, never gave it up. This may sound like a fruitless lie but

it forms part of the effort to cover up the most outstanding clues to identification.

None of the Ladinized Indians known to us admitted to knowing any of the aspects which constitute the core of Indian culture. Systematically they repeated their ignorance of myths, ways of supernatural control, ways of curing, etc. Many efforts to obtain their opinion on these aspects met with no success whatever. Only once one of the most Ladinized men (S), complained that old men in town served only to slow down progress by punishing those who wanted to get ahead. He added that the only motive behind the threats of witchcraft was envy, real envy, but that disease had other causes.

In Pinela therapeutical techniques are varied, but a few stand out as typically Indian, namely, the use of the sweat bath and the building of small fires at the entrance of a room in which there is a newly-born child, in order to exclude diseases from outside. In other respects, curing techniques have many points of contact with Ladino practices, even if the beliefs of the latter are more on the level of superstitions than on a magico-religious one. The Ladinized Indians follow Indian practices in curing, but only in the utmost secrecy. Overtly they would claim an adherence to Ladino patent medicines, talk about injections, and in particular, about the "Doctor downtown" (N, P, Q, R, S, V).

Thus far we have mentioned forms of behavior which serve the purpose of denying Indianness. But the process would not be complete if this group of Ladinized Indians were not to adopt some positive symbols of Ladino classes. The choice of symbols is limited, however. There is a wide range of Ladino symbols which are

beyond the reach of almost any Ladinized person, including most of those which fall in the category of economic symbols. It would be impossible for most to acquire a Ladino house in the center of town, or to carry out the characteristic activities of the upper classes.

In the discussion of the rejection of Indian symbols, a complementary adoption of Ladino ones was implied. The Ladinized Indian who abandons traditional costume adopts Ladino-like clothes; when refusing to speak Tzeltal, he tries to improve his Spanish; and similar patterns apply to food, curing, and so forth.

Of the positive ways in which Ladinized Indians claim closeness to the Ladinos, the two most important are (1) pretended ties of friendship with members of the upper class, and (2) forced ties of ritual kinship, or compadrazgo. These last ties are forced because only members of the lower class request Ladinos to become godparents for their children. The difference is great between Indians who ask a few Ladinos to become godparents of their children and the Ladinized Indians who try to have only Ladinos. The new bond does not alter the forms of interaction, but such an Indian will claim great comradeship with his compadre, and will try to benefit from this form of kinship. Dropping names of Ladino compadres is a common form of behavior when talking both to Indians and Ladinos. They also mention special favors received from Ladinos and the mutual trust between them, and also claim participation in private Ladino celebrations. In these matters, however, we find the greatest discrepancy between verbalization and reality. The Ladinized Indian will mention frequently his contacts in the Ladino world and will describe many instances to

prove them. He will repeat before his acquaintances how, on such and such an occasion, he gave a "piece of his mind" (M, Q, S) to the richest Ladino in town and reminded him of the times when he was neither rich nor a Ladino. (This denying true Ladino origins to persons who are recognized as such by everybody else in town is common with the Ladinized Indians.) But when face-to-face relations with a member of the upper class actually occur, the Ladinized front collapses, because the Ladino knows who is an Indian and the Indian in spite of his acquired Ladino ways cannot play the role successfully. In short, the performance of Ladinized Indians is actually more often for the benefit of the Indian group and for the half-Ladinos, and only very indirectly for upper class members.

There are two settings in which claims to Ladino class membership cannot be kept up successfully. The first, as mentioned above, is when faced by Ladinos and the second is in the Ladinized Indian's own home. Here, as Goffman points out (1959: 112), the performer is in a "back region or backstage" and no member of the audience is likely to intrude. "The impression fostered by the performances is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course." The front collapses on account of the pervasive influence of Indianness in house equipment and in customs, unhappily reinforced by other members of the family who may not team up with the Ladinized Indian.

There are, however, instances in which the Ladinized Indian is brought out into the open and faced by a critical audience. This occurs at certain events in their social life such as baptisms or weddings which, by local custom, follow entirely dis-

tinct paths according to whether they are organized by Indians or by Ladinos. We were invited to several of these occasions, during which the Ladinized Indians made every effort to carry through ideal Ladino behavior. We will describe such patterns of behavior witnessed at one wedding, typical of several we attended.

The bride's mother (M), the most Ladinized of the whole family, had forbidden her daughter to marry two young *Revestidos*, because there was too much Indian traditionalism in their families. Finally, she succeeded in marrying the girl to a very poor Ladino. The groom's family, however, were infuriated with all the preparations for the wedding, the norms imposed by the bride's family, and the subsequent expenses incurred.

The arrangements preceding the ceremony started with the choice of godparents. For this, and contrary to all Indian traditions, several couples (instead of only one) were nominated; a local teacher and his wife, the local doctor and the anthropologist, and the son and daughter of two of the most prominent Ladino families. The invitations were printed cards specifying that godmothers should wear pink dresses to the ceremony. According to the bride's family's version, everybody was delighted to have been nominated and had accepted wholeheartedly. Twelve young couples were supposed to escort the newlyweds from the church to the house where the party would take place, and there they would dance. Up to this point, everything was arranged according to upper class wedding customs. When finally the day arrived, the Ladino godparents failed to show up, some of them refusing flatly, others leaving town on an "urgent call." Indeed, one nominee had been living in Mexico City for a whole year, a fact that the bride and

her family were unaware of. The wedding had to be postponed in order to choose substitutes, while gossip was rife among both Ladinos and Indians. When the marriage took place there was only one "Ladina" present, the anthropologist. One couple of half-Ladinos had been appointed as godparents, and the twelve couples had been reduced to four, mainly girls working as servants in rich houses and young males of the same half-Comiteco class. No Indian wearing the traditional costume was present; upon checking afterwards we learned that they had been carefully eliminated from the lists of guests. The bride's family in this instance, by a careful selection "were excluding from the audience those before whom they had performed in the past (or in different settings) a show different and inconsistent with the current one" (Goffman 1959:137).

Nevertheless, the party which followed the religious ceremony, aside from the failure to display Ladinos from the center of town, was organized according to upper class norms. The marimba was the best in Pinola, the meal offered was not only perfect according to Ladino standards, but the cook hired to prepare it was a well-known woman who works almost exclusively for the rich families in town. Pink dresses were totally absent but the bride was dressed according to upper class fashion if we except quality of material and taste.

Summing up, we can see that the Ladinized Indian tries to climb the social ladder by a dual process of rejection of traits belonging to the class he wants to leave and adoption of those typical of the group he aspires to be assimilated into. Among the rejections of Indian traits we can mention are: (1) dress, (2) language, (3) kinship ties, (4) foods, (5) knowledge of magic-



religious practices and beliefs. The adoptions are mostly in:

- (1) verbal behavior, (2) ties of ritual kinship with Ladinos,
- (3) marriage into the half-Ladino group which is the next higher in status to their own.

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

In the description of the behavior of the Ladinized Indian in Pinola we have used the concept of reference group as expressed by Merton. In all cases described it could be seen that the socially mobile "oriented themselves to groups other than their own in shaping their behavior and evaluations" (Merton 1957:282). Yet, some further clarification of the actual reference group for the Pinola Indian is needed here. There is not one, but two reference points for the mobile person, which he uses in different ways. The upper class Ladinos are an ideal reference group, the half-Ladino is actually the normative group.

The use of contrasting outside points of reference for self-evaluation and the apparent resulting inconsistencies in behavior become clear when we consider the way this society is stratified. Recently, French (1961:403) described a similar case of multiple points of reference in the description of Chinookan behavior. The situation depicted for the Chinookan is different but he also "commonly uses three points of reference, Chinookan, Sahaptin and White. Depending upon how he categorizes a situation, a Chinookan will employ one or more of these in making evaluations."

In view of the similarity between the customs of Indians and half-Comitecos in Pinola, and the necessity of rejecting the symbols of Indian life, the socially mobile have no alternative but to imitate the upper class Ladinos, even though there is no

hope of acceptance by this class. The aspect of rejection is fundamental; the upper class norms are adopted not as a strategy to gain acceptance by the highest class but really as a technique to guarantee their non-Indianness in the eyes of the poor Ladinos.

Beals (1953:338) says that in Mexico "Indians can move albeit slowly into rural mestizo classification." We have presented here the case of a group of people who, although relatively unsuccessful during their own lifetime, are able to move upward into the half-Ladino class by marrying either themselves or their children into that class (O, Q, R, S, T). The conscious rejection of the main symbols of Indian identification favors their assimilation. A proof of this slow upward social movement is related to the difficulty of classifying people once they are "intermingled," meaning by this that they are descendants of Revestido Indians and half-Ladinos. In repeated instances we tried to elicit ratings of descendants of mixed unions, both from Indian and half-Ladinos. The answers were always typical. Those children were not quite Indian due to the fact that (1) one of the parents had different customs, (2) they were not taught the Indian language, and (3) one of the parents was of a different "race," which in the minds of the people of this village amounts to a biological distinction.

The same imprecision in rating people as Revestido Indians or half-Ladino takes place with recent settlers in Pinola. There are a number of men who have arrived in town alone, and have married local half-Ladino women (S, I, T). The parentage of these people is unknown to Pinola inhabitants. This creates

latent doubts and gossip many times attributes to them an Indian origin. But so long as the foreigner keeps a consistent Ladino front, he is accepted as a lower class Ladino.

Of the two types of change which are taking place in Piñola, the first can be called acculturation and the second Ladinization. Acculturation is characterized by (1) a slow rate of change, (2) experiences shared by all members of the Indian group, (3) an influence on the community as a whole, and (4) effects which are minimal when viewed in a short time span. In contrast, Ladinization (1) has a rapid rate of change, (2) affects only certain individuals, (3) shows effects which are maximal over a short time span, (4) has no important influence on the rest of the community, and (5) is mobility-oriented.

We are not discarding the possibility of a slow process of Ladinization in the community as a whole, but the types of change have to be qualified because they involve two entirely different processes. It is clear that both types of change arise from the impact on Indians of Ladino culture, both local and national. The question still to be answered is what are the causes of the rapid Ladinization of some individuals?

Mobility always involves some conflict for the socially mobile. An interesting example of how, even in open-class United States, the occupationally mobile person faces the problem of marginality is brought forth by Blau (1956:290). In his analysis of "Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations," Blau says that

The upward mobile must choose between abandoning hope of translating his occupational success into social acceptance by a more prestigious group and sacrificing valued social ties and customs in an effort to gain acceptance ... the mobile persons are not well integrated in either social class.

Without extensive and intimate social contacts, they do not have sufficient opportunity for complete acculturation to the values and style of life of the one group, nor do they continue to experience the full impact of the social constraints of the other. But both groups exert some influence over mobile individuals since they have, or have had social contacts with members of both, being placed by economic circumstances amidst the one, while having been socialized among the other.

The social distance between classes in Pinola is such that the Ladinized Indian becomes marginal to both his group of origin and to the one he is trying to enter. There is no halfway mobility in this system. Stonequist, in his analysis of the marginal man, draws some conclusions which apply exactly to the situation we are dealing with.

The concept of the marginal man refers to any individual who is living in two cultures which are in conflict. By the phrase living in two cultures is meant the participation of the individual in each culture or group to such an extent that he is able to take the point of view or attitude of each of the two cultures toward the other. By conflict is meant a relationship between the two groups which involves attitudes of superiority, contempt, prejudice, etc. on the part of the more powerful group toward the other and weaker. These attitudes may find open and blatant expression or they may be subtly expressed by a reserve. The marginal individual is one who has ties of origin, whether through one or both parents, with the weaker or minority and who has also come to identify himself in some ways with the dominant group. Because he has this double identification with the two groups in conflict he experiences in his own mind the external cultural conflict (Stonequist 1930:307).

Mobility in Middle American bicultural communities has been analyzed by students from the point of view only of upper class barriers. We want to stress that in Pinola the barriers have to be understood as double, those which the upper classes set before the climbing individuals and those which his own class erects. Only when we consider both types of barriers does it become clear why the stratification present in this town in a way "determine" the forms of marginality.

In Pinola the marginality of the socially mobile is accentuated since, rather than merely a progression, Ladinzation is a true conversion.

## APPENDIX I

### Sources of Information

For the purpose of reference symbols are given for informants who were the basis of the findings. The following is a list of selected informants with whom we worked during our stay in Pinola. When either "Indians say" or "Ladinos say" appears in this paper, the statements referred to were heard repeatedly from numerous individuals of the group indicated.

(A) David Segura Vernis (44 years old), Ladino-engineer from northern Mexico who was married to (C) in 1946 and settled down in Pinola. He owns two power mills for grinding corn, trucks, two ranches, a movie house, and beehives; and he engages in buying agricultural products from local Indians. He furnished confidential information about the faking of population percentages in census.

(B) Alberto Méndez Tovilla (26 years old). Acculturated Revestido. Literate. Identified with his group. Has not travelled outside Pinola until recently when he worked in San Cristobal as linguistic informant for the University of Chicago Chiapas project.

(C) Elva Villatoro de Segura (33 years old). Ladina. Member of the richest family in town. Engages actively in same commercial activities as husband (A).

(D) Abenamar Garcia Argüello (41 years old). Ladino. Teacher in the local elementary school.

(E) Melquiades Vásquez (48 years old). Half-Comiteco, originally from a nearby colony. Small agriculturist. Active member of the Catholic church and president of the sedality of San Miguel (some people say he is a Revestido). Wide ties of compadrazgo with local Indians.

(F) Luz Guillen de Ruiz (40 years old). Half-Comiteca. Originally from Comitán, has lived in Pinola for the last 30 years. Owns a small canteen. Husband is small agriculturist.

(G) Pedro Ruiz (50 years old). Half-Comiteco born in Pinola. Small agriculturist.

(H) Elias Gordillo (65 years old). Ladino. Works repairing watches, typewriters and other machinery. Also writes applications and titles to land for illiterate people.

(I) Eladio Ruiz (40 years old). Half-Comiteco (some informants say he is a Revestido). Originally from the Ranchos. Small agriculturist. Works as mason in town also. Active member of the Catholic church. Wide ties of compadrazgo with local Indians.

(J) Emilio Martínez (60 years old). Ladino. Owner of one of the big stores in town.

(K) Ericio Hernández Montoya (38 years old). Conservative Indian. On his way to being a member of the hierarchy of supernatural control.

(L) Agustín López (20 years old). A Revestido acculturated Indian. Thoroughly identified with his group. Will be a curer in the future.

(M) Angélica Giménez (48 years old). Ladinized Indian woman, brought up in Ladino godmother's house in Pinola.

(N) Guillermo Moreno (19 years old). Ladinized Indian. Literate. His father is married to a half-Comiteca and Guillermo has already "passed."

(O) José Bautista (35 years old). Ladinized Indian. Small agriculturist, marimba player. Married to a half-Comiteca.

(P) Gilberto Domínguez (23 years old). Ladinized Indian. Claims he was born out of wedlock of a Ladino father and an Indian mother. Since his adoption, at 3 years old, he has lived with an Indian family.

(Q) Candelaria López (18 years old). Ladinized Indian. Recently married to a half-Comiteco.



(R) Augusto Bautista (41 years old). Ladinized Indian. Former marimba player. Married to a half-Comiteca. Recently moved out of town to Ixtapilla where he owns a small store.

(S) Alberto García (28 years old). Ladinized Indian. Literate. Has lived many years outside Pinola. Small agriculturist, part-time carpenter. Married to a local half-Comiteca.

(T) Felix Ramirez (45 years old). Ladinized Indian. Small agriculturist. Married to a half-Comiteca.

(U) Miguel Méndez (20 years old). Ladinized Indian. Works for long periods in the coffee plantations near the city of Tapachula.

(V) Asunción Montoya (25 years old). Ladinized Indian. Works as foreman in the rice mill near Pinola. Comes to town only on weekends.

(W) Martín Méndez Bautista (56 Years old). Very acculturated Revestido Indian. Identified with his group. Married to a local Indian woman. Lived for 20 years in other cities. Also travelled widely as a soldier.

(X) Ernestina Bautista Santis (36 years old). Conservative Indian woman.

(Y) Silveria Tovilla (70 years old). Conservative Indian woman.

(Z) Juan Tovilla (69 years old). Indian leader. Plays the role of intermediary with Ladinos. Travels often to capital of the State. Rich man.

(AA) Miguel de la Cruz (50 years old). Huasteco resident in Pinola. Leader in special situations which require dealing with Ladinos. Has been president of the local Ejido and is now representative for Communal Lands. Rich man.

(BB) Nazario Jiménez (38 years old). Literate. Leader of the Indians in situations of contact with Ladinos. At present has a minor post in the Ladino Municipal presidency.

(CC) Alejo Pérez (60 years old). Leader of Indian people in same position as (AA) and (DE). Has been president of the Ejido for many years. Has travelled widely. Literate. Lately has lost prestige even in that particular role as intermediary because he leans too overtly to the side of the Ladinos.

(DD) Emilio Solano (44 years old). Revestido, acculturated Indian. Identified with his group. Literate. Is a curer.

## APPENDIX II

### Critique of Tumin's Study

We have reserved for the last section of this paper a comment on Tumin's book, Caste in a Peasant Society. This is a study which has many points of contact with the subject matter which has concerned us here. Not only is the community on which the study is based, San Luis Jilotepeque in Guatemala, Ladino-Indian, as is Pinola, but Tumin also describes the inter-ethnic relations, and considers the forms of interaction and the patterns of avoidance. The social structure of San Luis appears to have a high degree of coincidence with the one in our Chiapas town. Yet, the author's thesis is "that the stratification system in San Luis is caste-like, with two castes fitted into one social system in a type of equilibrium which requires their common participation in many aspects of the social life (1952:59) . . . but where the lines of class mobility are not open to anyone defined as an Indian" (1952:215).

Our comments may appear somewhat disorganized because they touch on different aspects of Tumin's study, such as: (1) incomplete information on one of the two castes which results in assumptions, relating to values, beliefs, norms and attitudes which do not correspond to reality; (2) the presentation of the data, i.e., the encounters between castes; and (3) a lack of elaboration in certain sections in the description of the possible social and cultural changes in San Luis.

As for Pinola we have, thus far, presented our data on the Ladinized Indian and have discussed the beliefs and value systems of the Tzeltal Indians. It has been our aim to stress the barriers to mobility set before the individual who attempts to cross the class boundaries, both by Ladinos and by his own group, and the particular channels along which social mobility must take place.

Tumin's work in San Luis was mostly based on the results of questionnaires and lacks sufficient information which would as-

sist in understanding Indian norms. Throughout the book, the author analyzes the barriers set to mobility by the upper class, but any real understanding of Indian religious beliefs, of the forms of intragroup social control or of the role of the Indians in interaction is absent.

Unfortunately, this approach permeates the description and evaluations made by the author. It is difficult to agree with the statement that

the fact of non-sharing of values is, in short, what makes it possible for the Indian to be insulted by the Ladino, as the Ladino sees it but not as the Indian sees it... Indians know that the Ladinos think poorly of them. But this 'knowledge' is different from the 'awareness' which implies recognition plus sensitivity (Tunin 1952:138).

In our experience both recognition and sensitivity to slights were extremely sharp among Indians who verbalized clearly the ways in which Ladinos used Indians to their own advantage in the economic sphere, scorned some traditional Indian customs which as a result had to be given up, insulted Indians in public if they did not follow Ladino commands promptly, and so forth.

It was not borne out in our data that the non-sharing of values insulates the feelings of the Indians. It is rather that the values and the strict norms for behavior which regulate intra-Indian society do not provide them with a ready-to-hand role in which to react to insult, since in their own culture, face-to-face conflict solving is noticeable absent and besides that, their status, subordinate to that of Ladinos, would make them subject to strong negative sanctions if they behaved differently.

One could not expect to find an exact replica of the Pinola ways of social control in San Luis. Yet, it is apparent that many aspects of Pinola life are present in the Guatemalan village. For instance:

A number of Indians who can afford brick floors have not had them put in their houses. One of the standard rationalizations offered in explanation of this fact is that 'we are too poor.' Basically this refers not to the economic ability to construct a brick floor but, rather to the ability to purchase those other symbols of status which in the prevailing definitions are natural concomitants of brick floors. When the Indian therefore insists that he is too poor to be able

to afford something which in fact he could afford if it were to be his only purchase, he really refers to the fact that he has no 'right' in terms of his total economic status to think in the terms implied by brick floors. This sentiment generally prevails throughout the Indian group and it is reinforced at all points by the invidious view Indians take toward those among them who pretend toward wealth or social status as measured by conspicuously consumed items of display. It requires a great deal of courage on the part of any Indian to flaunt this convention and to bear the consequences (Tumin 1952:107-108).

The danger of negative sanctions in case of violation of community egalitarian norms, and the role of witches and witchcraft as a form of social control, of which the preceding paragraph is an example, passes unnoticed in the pages of Caste in a Peasant Society. Yet, as said before, it can be inferred from the context. Again, I quote at length:

As in any system where reason is not the primary guide, the ideas concerning the relations between magical forces and health in San Luis display some marked inconsistencies [underlining ours]. The net result is that the same disease may be held on different occasions to be differently caused, the preference for one or another notion depending not on pathological symptoms nearly so much as on the socio-psychological situation of the patient relative to possible hostile acts by himself and his enemies. Thus for instance, when one feels secure about his good standing with his associates, the occurrence of a pain in the stomach may be attributed simply to overeating. When however, this pain comes shortly after the patient has had an argument, it is believed that the likelihood is increased that some magically induced force such as an evil wind, purposively conjured against him is responsible ... belief is invested in various types of magical theories ... [like] magical creatures and powers, such as small animals secretly placed inside of one, which then grow and ghostlike creatures of no particular form which simply torment the person.

The specialist in the use of these materials and the control of these forces is called a brujo, or wizard, and his art brujeria, or witchcraft. He or she is held to act sometimes on the paid instigation of an enemy, sometimes out of sheer malice, sometimes in retribution for bad things said or thought about him. Generally, the brujo is invested with a degree of omnipresence and omniscience, so that he does not require actual sensory contact with those who wish him evil, but is even capable of fathoming thoughts which have never been overtly expressed (underlining ours).

In the actual diagnosis of a disease the wizard hired... conducts an inquiry ... questions are asked concerning possible offense given ...

It is interesting in this regard, that many of the wizards who are held capable of black magic are also considered efficient curers of disease.... The securing of their services creates the rather ticklish psychological situation of getting the disease-causer to act now as disease-curer (underlining ours) (Tumin 1952:44-45).

This lengthy quotation is a brief example of what we would refer to as lack of depth in the knowledge of San Luis culture, which vitiates some of the interpretations arrived at by the author. Thus, when he describes a group of Indians, who appear to be very similar to the Ladinized ones in Pinola, he says that

the greatest dissatisfaction with the traditional [Indian] pattern is to be found among young men who are beginning to operate within a cash economy; to forego religious devotions; to accept secular Ladino definitions of what is desirable; and to ignore the prestige and respect traditionally commanded by old men of the group (*ibid.*:228).

Tumin does not press the point any further and describes only briefly two cases of Indians who are trying to bridge both cultures and for whom

it is no longer possible in terms of their own attitudes to fit again into the traditional Indian structure and by no means possible, in terms of Ladino attitudes, to have any real mobility inside Ladino social organization. They are marginal to both cultural foci and derive full satisfaction from neither (*ibid.*:230).

As to what is really the behavior of these men or what are the secular Ladino definitions of what is desirable which they adopt, or more particularly, in just what ways the prestige of old men is ignored, no further information is given. Such an important statement as "a portion of the Indian community is being slowly fractured off so that it comes to share Ladino values and thus deprecate other portions of the Indian community" (*ibid.*:229) is unconvincing. It would have been interesting to the reader to know more about what lies behind such statements as: "social and cultural changes are initiated in San Luis in part by those individuals who are cast off the main currents of the culture by its inadequacies and/or their own" (*ibid.*:139).

A last aspect to comment on is Tumin's classification of Ladino-Indian interaction in San Luis in situations characterized

by one or more of the following conditions: (1) Ladinos and Indians are mutually dependent for the success of the effort about which the situation is constructed [seller-buyer; employer-employee; landowner-tenant]; (2) one group needs the other and profits from its participation without the latter incurring any loss or feeling especially 'used' [godparent; prostitution]; (3) both groups are compelled by a force or custom external and compulsive upon both of them to participate jointly [Ladino religious and political affairs, education]; (4) the joint participation is unavoidable and of short duration, even though it may be regular in its occurrence [meetings in streets, roads and plaza] (*ibid.*:174).

That this classification is not ideal can be seen by the author's statement that many of these encounters share more than one of the listed conditions. Certainly, if "caste interaction" in San Luis prescribes a derisive treatment for Indians, in order to reinforce social distance, it is manifestly unlikely that an Indian prostitute will not feel "used" by a Ladino.

This statement, as well as the others quoted above, tends to make difficult a realistic understanding of the class structure in Tumin's Guatemalan community.

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