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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55f819pv>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 22(4)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1998-09-01

DOI

10.17953

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The Yaqui of Guadalupe, Arizona: A Century of Cultural Survival through Trilingualism

OCTAVIANA V. TRUJILLO

The Valley of the Sun is a large basin in which two major Sonoran Desert water systems, the Salt and Gila rivers, combine, enabling large-scale human settlement in central Arizona. The agricultural potential of this natural resource has sustained a stable population base since prehistoric times. Today it is home to a number of small cities that comprise the Phoenix metropolitan urban sprawl and more than half of the residents of the state of Arizona. Located at the far eastern foot of South Mountain, the southern natural boundary of the Valley, is Guadalupe, an urban anomaly that seems strangely juxtaposed in this widely spread, low density urban landscape fashioned by the advent of the automobile culture.

Founded by Yaqui refugees from Sonora just after the turn of the century, the small one-square-mile desert settlement was not much more than a refugee camp, an innocuous cluster of extremely humble dwellings on the lightly populated Valley's periphery. This was about to change. Just two years Guadalupe came into being, the small but significant city of Phoenix became the capital of the new state of Arizona. The peripheral

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location was also symbolic of the Yaquis' lack of cultural and social integration in their new homeland. As the twentieth century progressed, so did the urban sprawl, eventually threatening to envelop Guadalupe, as would the social and cultural pressures of the dominant society.

The urban cultural adaptation of the Yaqui people of Guadalupe to that force is a unique story.¹ Many indigenous groups, to be sure, have had to undergo pronounced bilingual and bicultural adaptation, particularly in the urban setting, as a result of their proximity to a dominant European American cultural presence. The Yaqui experience in Guadalupe has had a third cultural variable—interaction with the Mexican American community—so that it has manifested a trilingual and tricultural character.

To understand the underpinnings of this unique cultural setting, it is imperative to retrace briefly the historical antecedents both of the cultural region in general, as well as of the direct ancestors of the Yaqui founders of Guadalupe to their traditional homeland in the southern region of the state of Sonora, Mexico.

Urban, socially interdependent communities, characterized by a high degree of cooperation and specialization, have been found throughout the Americas. While this socioeconomic milieu has not been a predominant one, the exceptions are as striking as they are noteworthy. The sites of the Maya, the Toltecs, the Zapotecs, and most recently the Aztecs are some of the better known examples. Snaketown, Casas Grandes, and Chaco Canyon further north, however, were also home to highly integrated societies.

The phenomenon of the social adaptation of Native Americans to an urban context, therefore, is much older than the history of Native American/non-indigenous American contact. This contact has, in fact, occupied a relatively short period in the Native American urban social experience. A consequence of this contact, which has been, indeed, unique in Native American history, is the profound cultural and linguistic diversity that informs the contemporary urban landscape.

FIRST CONTACT WITH NON-INDIGENOUS AMERICAN PEOPLE

The first non-indigenous influence in North America resulted from the establishment of the Spanish colony in the Valley of

Mexico, from whom the Yaqui steadfastly maintained an almost singular isolation. Yet significant inroads were made into traditional Yaqui culture as a result of their adoption and adaptation of Catholicism, initially introduced to them by the Spanish Jesuit missionaries during their long journeys north into the present-day western United States.² This also provided the common thread that culturally, if not socially, would eventually link them to the growing Mexican population neighboring their homelands.

In the early 1600s, the Jesuits convinced the Yaquis to settle in eight pueblos, similar to European towns, by having them build eight mission churches throughout Yaqui country. They proposed to gather the Yaqui dwellings close to one or the other of these ceremonial centers. The process was a gradual one and was easily facilitated by distributing the churches without moving the residences. Whatever the rate of movement to the ceremonial centers and whatever number of families who preferred at first not to participate in the new ways, there is no doubt that by 1700 a new settlement pattern had been created, a pattern firmly enough established among the Yaquis that they came to believe it sacred and established by supernatural mandate.³ The new communities consisted of from 3,000 to 4,000 inhabitants instead of the 300 to 400 inhabitants in a traditional *rancheria*, the acceptance of a common governmental system, and the realignment of family groups and loss of *rancheria* autonomy.

With so few missionaries, never more than ten, in Yaqui territory to accomplish the task of the church, the government, and the business operations, it was necessary to rely on trained Yaqui assistants. Thus a cadre of Yaqui officials emerged to administer the new towns, further enhanced by the isolation of Yaqui territory since there was no Spanish settlement in Yaqui country. In the Yaqui homeland, their intercultural relations with non-indigenous people, outside of the few missionaries, were virtually nonexistent. Even as Christianity began to have an ever greater impact on the culture, direct interaction with the colonists had not been a factor in Yaqui lifeways. This situation permitted the Yaquis to develop their own leadership with administrative skills under the guidance of a benign and persuasive but rather coercive missionary policy. It also created a psychological environment for the acceptance of change on the part of the Yaquis.⁴

In addition to pressure for change in the areas of government and agriculture there was also the pressure for change in

religion. The constant focus of each missionary on religious instruction and the maintenance of church ritual brought about the rapid introduction of Christian verbal and behavioral forms. These forms had to diffuse outward from the missionaries through the recently trained Yaqui associates to the townspeople at large. This process resulted in much wider acquaintance as ritual forms blended with traditional Yaqui ones, giving them a meaning to the people which the Jesuits had not intended.

Undoubtedly the Jesuit religious ideas constituted alternatives for most Yaqui during this period. The new conception of the supernatural world with its centralization of power in the mysterious Trinity, its division of an afterworld into good and bad regions, and its separation of men and animals must have taken a good deal of reconciling with the earlier conception of the supernatural world.⁵ Although some Christian rituals coexisted as alternatives to Yaqui ritual, some forms were complementary to traditional Yaqui beliefs. The close link between church and government also created a complementary form of governance. Yaqui governors were elected but with the approval of the church dignitaries. In major decisions the governors and the officials of the church deliberated together.

This complementary form of cultural change was also reflected in the Yaqui language. Spanish words were added to the Yaqui lexicon to accommodate these cultural innovations.⁶ Even the morphology and syntax were influenced by Spanish. Yaqui speakers readily incorporated Spanish words as well as grammatical structure to accommodate new things and concepts introduced by the missionaries, rather than coin new Yaqui terminology or even translate the Spanish words into Yaqui. This phenomenon is a characteristic of the early intercultural period, before the Yaqui began to feel cultural coercion and oppression.⁷

This gradual, peaceful cultural change through the adaptation of Spanish cultural traits such as clothing, tools, beliefs, and practices slowly replacing or coexisting with Yaqui cultural traits came to an end in 1740. In that year, as a result of the gradual encroachment by the Spanish into Yaqui territory and the desire by the Spanish to gain more control over the Yaqui towns, the Yaquis joined with their neighbors, the Mayos, in revolting against the Spanish. During the ensuing months they killed or drove out all Spaniards from the river towns and the adjoining territory, sparing only the Jesuits. Toward the end of

1740, at a spot called the Hill of Bones, five thousand Yaquis were killed and the resistance crushed. Their leaders were executed, and a Spanish presidio was built at the eastern edge of Yaqui country to control the towns.⁸

A dominant Yaqui preoccupation during the remainder of the Spanish period was the struggle to maintain control over their own affairs and the resistance to Spanish political and economic domination in their territory. Shortly after the revolt of 1740, the Spanish soldiers were withdrawn to fight other neighbors of the Yaquis, the Seris. The Jesuits were also withdrawn, expelled from the New World. A few Franciscan priests subsequently attempted to work with the Yaquis, but this effort was not successful. Eventually their newfound autonomy permitted the Yaquis to form their own socio-religious form of government and religion.

The constant threat to local autonomy and to the traditional communal control of the land, however, necessitated a constant defensive preparedness. Just as the Yaquis were gaining more control of their affairs, there was a considerable decline in population. Numbers of Yaquis had removed themselves from the strife with the Spanish government by moving out of Yaqui country. The break-up of the Jesuit agricultural operations resulted in an increasing number of Yaquis seeking wages and new experiences elsewhere. Some assumed seasonal work on the haciendas or in the mines.

During the warring years of Spanish colonialism in Mexico, Yaqui culture had begun to develop a form of adaptation to adversity which was to persist in a somewhat altered form into the twentieth century. Yaqui identity was maintained, even in the face of necessary relocation, through the strong awareness of the Yaqui homeland and through sustained Yaqui socio-religious institutions and practices in their new locales.

As the Spanish influence spread throughout the population with the growth of the size and the power of the colony, many indigenous groups were drawn into a large-scale mestizification through intermarriage with the Europeans. This trend continued, contributing to a marked increase in the size of the non-indigenous population until today only a minority of Mexican nationals can be said to be purely indigenous racially or ethnically, and even fewer purely European.

After the 1770s, ever greater numbers of Yaquis found it necessary to work outside Yaqui country. Although corn, wheat, beans, watermelons, pumpkins, and squash were still raised

through the traditional method of flooding rather than irrigation, from the 1820s onward, warfare caused a decline in agricultural activity. Gradually the Yaquis became increasingly dependent upon the Mexican economy for manufactured goods.

YAQUIS AND THE EMERGING MEXICAN REPUBLIC

Soon after Mexican independence was established, the federal government, and later the Sonoran state government, assumed a similar role to that of the Spanish in that they would with time increasingly attempt to impose political and economic control on the Yaquis. In response, and united with the Mayos, Opatas, and Pimas, the Yaquis conceived of the notion of an independent indigenous nation in the region. Leadership was supplied by a literate Yaqui, Juan Banderas, who was reported to have had a vision of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Again, non-Yaquis were driven out of the territory, until Banderas was finally defeated and executed in 1833.⁹

In the late 1870s a new leader appeared. Cajeme had wide experience in the Mexican army and had been appointed mayor, the highest civil authority of the Yaqui towns. In 1885-86 he fought a brilliant campaign using both Mayos and Yaquis against federal and state troops. His defeat and execution in 1887 ended organized military operations by Yaquis, although various guerrilla activities continued from mountain strongholds for another twenty years.¹⁰

The oral history now included the conflicts with the Spaniards and the Mexicans and combined with the growing myths of the time, such as the founding of the towns through prophetic vision. Gradually some Yaquis became literate both in Spanish and in Yaqui. Yaqui leaders wrote to their Mexican contemporaries in Spanish and to their literate Yaqui friends who had relocated to other parts of Sonora in Yaqui. As church ceremonies were written in Spanish and Yaqui for all to use, a Yaqui written record appeared.¹¹ The majority of Yaqui were literate, although with little formal schooling, and many spoke several languages.¹² In their own minds, the Yaquis considered themselves more civilized than Mexicans and other indigenous groups and equal, except in technical skills, to European Americans.

The atrocities perpetrated by both sides during warfare greatly reduced the likelihood of Yaqui assimilation into

Mexican society, the most poignant example of which was the first aerial bomb in history being dropped on a group of Yaquis at Guymas in 1914. This historical animosity continues to be a factor in Mexican-Yaqui relations to this day.¹³

The period of unrest which culminated in the Mexican revolution affected Yaqui society in a variety of ways. First, it implanted in the Yaqui ideology an even firmer concept of their sacred territory. Even though the geography of the Yaqui towns changed drastically during this period, the notion of the homeland remained constant. The greatest force informing the development of Yaqui cultural adaptation, since the coming of the Spanish, was this steady growth of the extensive Mexican nation around them. The ever increasing population of non-Native peoples in their immediate environment brought with it, like the earlier presence of the Spanish missionaries, a major impetus for cultural adaptation that was beyond their control.

REFUGE IN ARIZONA

During the warring years of Spanish colonialism in Mexico, the Yaqui culture had begun to develop a form of adaptation in the face of adversity which was to persist in some form into the twentieth century. By the time the Yaqui began to migrate across the border into the United States in the late 1800s, their lifeways had undergone drastic changes from earlier times. Cultural adaptations continued as small Yaqui communities were established in Arizona.

The Yaqui struggles against Mexican encroachment, and particularly the Mexican government's effort to evict them forcibly from their traditional homeland, provided the context for the greatest trauma and the most profound cultural adaptation ever faced by the tribe. This crisis precipitated a diaspora through which a considerable number of tribal members were now rapidly experiencing cross-cultural interaction under duress, as hundreds were exported against their will to the opposite end of the Mexican republic to work the henequen plantations of the Yucatan as forced laborers. Meanwhile, others seeking to avoid such a fate began making their way clandestinely across the U.S. border into Arizona and into a life of self-imposed exile also wrought with peril, but at least safe from the threat of annihilation.

Although Yaquis began to cross the border into the United

States as early as 1887, they were not strangers to the northern region. Yaqui oral history tells of their presence in the area of what is today the southern United States from time immemorial.¹⁴ The major migration of the historical era came during the years 1900 to 1910. By the 1950s, there were approximately 4,000 in Arizona. For the most part, they were escaping deportation to Yucatan or seeking employment when conditions in Sonora became extremely difficult. As many Yaquis in Sonora were doing, those coming to Arizona established themselves in barrios at the edges of cities or in work camps, neither assimilating into the dominant society nor returning to their homeland permanently.¹⁵

The Yaquis were refugees and their earliest settlements bore universal refugee characteristics of inadequate food, shelter, and sanitation. They were intruders who had no legal status. They owned no land and were forced to establish themselves as squatters. During the early years, they were fearful of being identified as Yaquis and being sent back to Sonora, so they operated primarily within their own microcosmic cultural enclave as a defense mechanism to the perceived threat of deportation. Because of this, Yaqui identity, language, and religious practices were outwardly suppressed. They had as little contact as possible with government officials so that nearly fifteen years passed before the Yaquis became aware that they had been afforded political asylum, and that in the United States religious freedom was upheld regardless of political or social status.

Most Yaquis came to the United States as individuals without any kin or social grouping to help them survive. Usually they were unrelated individuals who had fallen in with one another. During the early years of residence in Arizona, they gradually developed new family groupings through reunion of separated families and the starting of new families. Ritual kin groups, based upon baptismal godparents and ceremonial sponsors, further extended the basic family organization.

Among the earliest Yaqui settlers in the Valley of the Sun were freedom-fighters fleeing the guerrilla war after the execution of Cajeme, who had planned to return home eventually. This was never to be, as the Mexican government subsequently appropriated their land. These defiant Yaquis supplied rebels back in their homeland with food staples and, when necessary, assisted them to escape by sheltering them in this northern camp.

Within a decade, the Western Canal camp had grown so as to warrant the residence of a Franciscan friar. By the time of the

arrival of Friar Lucius in 1904, sporadic Yaqui rituals had been held, but the consistent demands of membership within a ceremonial society were difficult, if not impossible, to maintain for men whose employment kept them away from camp for even brief periods of time.

Most of the men were employed as agricultural workers on the farms within the large basin area, and they were entirely dependent upon their Anglo employers. Others found work on outlying ranches, but such jobs entailed prolonged absence from the Yaqui camp. Some of the men who left to work on ranches were able to take along their immediate families, but most went alone, returning whenever possible to their families and friends.

As fieldworkers, the Yaquis gained an impressive reputation as diligent and conscientious laborers. Workers were usually separated into ethnic groups by employers, not only in residential camps but also in the field. Cotton farmers claimed that they could identify rows picked by the Yaquis at a glance by the neat and thorough method of their work. Agricultural laborers were separated into four major groups: Indians, Mexicans, Negroes, and Anglos. Although this perpetuated the concept of social stratification, it did serve to reinforce Yaqui linguistic and cultural continuity in their new land.

The atrocities witnessed by Yaquis who had been caught up in the bloodiest fighting in the Rio Yaqui campaigns were bitterly remembered by those who fled. These memories formed the basis for deep-seated hatred and justified anxieties. Fearing their vulnerability to potentially hostile Mexicans in Arizona, some fleeing Yaquis denied their ethnicity by posing as either O'Odham or Mexicans according to their physical characteristics and any positive contacts they may have had with either of these two groups.

THE FOUNDING OF GUADALUPE AS A YAQUI COMMUNITY

By 1910, Friar Lucius had acquired forty acres for the Yaquis to build a permanent settlement. The constant complaints from neighboring towns about the proximity of the culturally different "squatters" underscored the need for these people to have a place of their own. He was unable, however, to secure for them the land beside the Western Canal because of its potential

value as farmland. Instead, he acquired forty acres on high ground west of the Highline Canal, granted by a United States government patent and signed by Woodrow Wilson. The new site was elevated enough to be worthless as farmland since it could not be irrigated. Although the legal transaction was not completed until 1914, the camp at Western Canal was abandoned for the new acreage in 1910. The population of non-Yaquis was nominal at this time.

Since the arrival of Friar Lucius with the symbolic *santa* of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Western Canal camp had been known as Guadalupe. After the move to higher ground, the former settlement, which continued to serve as a burial site, was referred to as Old Guadalupe and the new settlement simply as Guadalupe.

The decade comprising the last five years of Old Guadalupe and the first five years of Guadalupe on high ground was a period of intense cultural renaissance. The first Catholic church, a small adobe structure, was built in 1915 facing onto the traditional open plaza. The move from Old Guadalupe to the new site covered only one mile but altered the lives of all involved. Along the Western Canal, the Yaqui camp was self-sufficient in its own food production by gently irrigating the fertile land immediately adjacent to the settlement. On the high ground this was not possible. The Yaquis now were dependent upon a cash economy, labor for wages as hard currency in order to purchase every basic need.

The Yaqui uprising of 1927 in Mexico led to another wave of northerly migration. In the 1920s, Mexican Americans began to settle the area adjacent to the forty acres but remained a minority of the settlement's population. As a result of these events, the population of Guadalupe more than doubled during this time, far exceeding the number that could be accommodated by farm labor.

Interaction between Guadalupe and the other neighboring settlements was still minimal. Due to its proximity, Tempe was the most accessible town. More Yaqui men were gradually employed as manual laborers by the Water Users Association.¹⁶ Young women either walked or rode into Tempe, about four hours round trip, to work a ten-hour day as seamstresses. Merchants from Tempe peddled their wares in Guadalupe at elevated prices to cover the cost of delivery.

The depression was heavily felt in Guadalupe throughout the 1930s. Displaced English-speaking farmers from the dust

bowl farther to the east, whose farms had been repossessed, were intent on reaching California. Some of these farmers, upon reaching the fertile Salt River Valley, decided to settle there, further crowding the Yaquis as field laborers. The number of Mexican American families settling adjacent to the forty acres continued to grow, finally equaling the Yaqui population.

In the mid-thirties, many Yaqui families returned to the Rio Yaqui, drawn to the relative peace in their homeland and driven away by the difficult conditions of the depression. Despite this emigration, the population of the Guadalupe was steadily increasing. Agricultural labor or canal maintenance, however, was the only work consistently available. By the end of the Korean conflict, the Yaquis comprised a distant and rapidly diminishing minority of the overall population of Guadalupe, although their numbers continued to dominate the barrios of the *Cuarenta* and Biehn Colony, the two oldest neighborhoods.¹⁷

By 1974, the population of Guadalupe had reached nearly five thousand persons. The growth of Tempe, right up to the edges of Guadalupe, led to the consideration to annex the smaller community of Guadalupe. Local action was taken in an attempt to register the community as a historical site with the State Parks Department and to list it on the National Register of Historical Places, to preserve the special character of the community. As the threat of annexation increased, the Citizens Committee to Incorporate Guadalupe was formed to begin action leading to incorporation. This would secure the community from rules and regulations imposed by the ordinances of other cities. In February 1975, the residents voted to incorporate.

European American and Mexican communities were already well established in Arizona by the time the Yaquis settled there. As in Mexico, they were faced with the cultural diversity that was anything but democratic. While the Mexican majority in Sonora had essentially relegated them in their homeland to second-class status, in the United States, their social status was diminished yet further by the Mexicans there who were, themselves, considered second-class by the white population. The trilingual characteristic of the contemporary Arizona Yaqui community is a cross-cultural legacy of the dynamics of their living many decades in proximity to ever increasing numbers of neighbors flanking both their original Mexican and current U.S. community who did not speak the indigenous language.

Despite considerable success in trilingual and tricultural

adaptation, the Yaqui continue to be financially the poorest of any single population in southern Arizona. This is largely attributable to extraordinarily low levels of formal education attainment, in that only some two-thirds have completed the eighth grade, fewer than 20 percent have completed high school or the equivalency, and less than 1 percent has graduated from an institution of higher education. Economic indicators show that more than 60 percent is unemployed, and that of the employed, fewer than one-fourth is employed full-time. Based on national standards, approximately 85 percent of the tribal population live below the poverty level.¹⁸

SPANISH AS THE YAQUIS' FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In stark contrast with North Americans of today, the vast majority of Mexicans can trace some percentage of their ancestry to indigenous roots. The development of a Mexican national consciousness, nevertheless, has paralleled a commensurate disassociation from an exclusively indigenous identity for much of the population. Probably no one historical trend has been more significant to this phenomenon, with the possible exception of the advent of Christianity, than the development of Spanish as a national language and an intercultural *lingua franca* throughout the country and most of the hemisphere.

Although it was not uncommon for Yaquis in the traditional homeland to know other languages, Spanish was the first truly *foreign* language with which they would be compelled to contend in terms of cultural adaptation. By the time of the founding of Guadalupe, it was widely used by the Yaqui residents in all their dealings, economic and social, with the population of Mexicans and Mexican Americans that surrounded them.

Spanish is the dominant language today in Guadalupe, even among the Yaqui. It is spoken in virtually all Yaqui homes, roughly 70 percent of the time on average. Yaqui is spoken approximately 20 percent of the time on average (usually by older family members), with the remainder consisting of English (usually younger family members).¹⁹ These three languages coexist in most households, however, with a high degree of lexical interchange and code-switching among them.

The children of today typically learn Spanish as their first language, since this is the predominant *lingua franca* of Guadalupe. The trend is, nevertheless, toward an ever greater

percentage of children learning English as their first language, which is reinforced in the schools, so that it is now common for parents to speak to their children in Spanish, and for the children to respond in English.

Elders are the predominant speakers of Yaqui today, and they use it primarily intragenerationally, using Spanish far more commonly with those who are younger.

ENGLISH AS THE YAQUIS' SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The Yaquis had adapted to the changes in Mexico by learning the cultural "vocabulary" as well as the vernacular of the Mexicans. These skills served them well when they arrived in the United States, enabling them to interact as necessary with the Mexicans and Mexican Americans of Arizona. But a new cultural vocabulary and vernacular had to be acquired to survive in this Anglo-dominant society. Until the late fifties, Yaquis in Arizona remained primarily bilingual in Yaqui and Spanish. The third generation, coming of age during that decade, was beginning to speak English as well as the two other languages. Most of the present Yaqui population of Guadalupe are either bilingual Spanish/English, or trilingual Spanish/Yaqui/English, also tending toward Spanish dominance.

The population of Guadalupe Yaquis today is young; almost half are in school. Their language abilities are mixed. Most over age fifty speak at least some Yaqui and a dialect of Spanish in which they have steadily become dominant. Most of the school-age population are dominant in a regional Spanish dialect and also have acquired a non-standard English dialect, while a few enter school knowing no English at all. A very few adolescents maintain at least a passive knowledge of spoken Yaqui, although virtually none continues to speak Yaqui fluently. An ever increasing number of children speak only English, with a varying degree of receptive knowledge of Spanish.

The particular character of the linguistic competence of Yaquis is unique. They, as most Native Americans, speak a dialect variant of English that bears a strong influence from the native language. Since individuals who are raised in an indigenous or minority community usually learn English from other members of that community, the linguistic patterns of their English dialect continue that influence.²⁰

In the case of the Yaqui of Guadalupe, however, there exists another dimension to their linguistic culture, since they have gone through this same process earlier in learning Spanish as a second language. The majority of these people acquired English as dominant Yaqui-dialect *Spanish* speakers. That is, many of the grammatical patterns and items of vocabulary differ in form and meaning from those used in the "standard" form of both English *and* Spanish.²¹

TEMPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S IMPACT ON CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Frank School, the Tempe public elementary school in Guadalupe, enjoys a favorable image in the community, largely due to the practice of employing aides from the community, which has engendered a widespread identification with that school. This bridge between the school and the community has helped to increase communication between these two groups. This has been accomplished both by providing a sense of community-school continuity, as well as providing a linguistic bridge between the mostly Spanish-speaking students and the mostly white, English-speaking instructional staff. This function has been essential, since language is more than an instrument of communication; it is inseparable from culture.²² It provides a complex set of categories that determines the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures, a sort of intellectual literacy.

The community-school communication, however, has not been historically bilateral, in that aides disseminated information to the community, but significantly less input has gone from the community to the school. Although the outreach endeavors of the local school district have been well received in the community, the closed nature of traditional Yaqui society has continuously acted to inhibit interaction outside the community—a historically conditioned response which has served to protect the people and the culture, albeit to a limited degree, from external elements that have forced change upon them.²³

At the core of the discontinuity between the school and the community is the institution's implicit hidden curriculum, which is predicated on the age-appropriate skills and knowledge that native English-speaking European American students typically bring with them to school. From this presuppo-

sition follows a deficit model of the Yaquis as learners, since they lack this experiential foundation. This is generalized to both language and culture, and the Yaquis are, therefore, assumed to be linguistically and culturally deficient. If learning is fostered in a context of positive interaction, mutual intelligibility, and shared meaning, then the domain assumptions of the institution's hidden curriculum serve only to marginalize the Yaquis.

Even though the school is located in the community and outwardly attempts to communicate with the parents of the Yaqui students, it has nevertheless perpetuated both the social distance and the school–community discontinuity. It has done this by conceiving that this discontinuity is a result of the educational and social “deficiencies” of the students and their community. That attitude has justified the lowering of expectations for Yaqui learners and, in turn, hindered their attainment of educational benefits commensurate with their potential capabilities in a manner consistent with that of those students who are envisioned in the “hidden” curriculum. To be sure, as part of their education, Yaqui students need to be guided toward the *additive* skills of dominant-culture linguistic and cultural competency in order to maximize their future personal and economic options. That this hasn't happened to any greater degree is largely due to the failure of educators to perceive the dynamics of cultural “literacy,” to recognize the variability of how it manifests in different cultures, and to understand the implications that it has for education.²⁴

For many years no bilingual instruction was provided nor appropriate assessment done to ascertain the educational needs of the Yaqui and Mexican children by the Tempe Elementary School District. Three decades ago, more than 67 percent of the children in special education classes were Yaqui and Mexican, although they constituted only 17 percent of the district student population. In August 1971, the community-based Guadalupe Organization (GO), founded in 1964, took action to correct the situation of misdiagnosing and mislabeling Guadalupe's non-English-proficient students by filing a class action lawsuit against the school district.

In 1972, the district was ordered to develop a desegregation plan as a result of the U.S. Office of Civil Rights (OCR) citing a 97 percent minority enrollment at the local elementary school in Guadalupe. This action immediately precipitated a row between the community and the school district. The desegre-

gation plan for Guadalupe included the busing of students to seven elementary schools in Tempe. Guadalupe parents argued that they had not been allowed to contribute to the plan, which seemed to them inadequate. They had favored a plan in which a second school would be built nearby that would attract children from European American neighborhoods.

Some Guadalupe residents felt that the school district was trying to destroy the power of the community by scattering the more than seven hundred Guadalupe children among seven different schools, where they would constitute minority enclaves. They felt, furthermore, that the school district was overtly attempting to assimilate the kids into the majority culture. Both Guadalupe and Tempe school parents resisted the busing plan. Guadalupe parents, through GO, began to take a critical look at the educational services provided to their children at the secondary level as well.

During the height of the busing boycott in 1973, the Guadalupe Organization opened I'tom Escuela, "Our School" in Yaqui and Spanish,²⁵ in a church community center with fifteen volunteer teachers and two hundred students. Many in the community charged that the inability of public education to meet the needs of Yaqui and Mexican students was one of the prime reasons for the prolonged economic plight in Guadalupe.²⁶

I'tom Escuela was financed by rummage and bake sales, car washes, contributions from community groups and by fundraising campaigns. Its teachers were paid through money received from Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). The alternative school prided itself on building on the cultural heritage students brought from home. The instructional program was not oriented to tests or grades; rather it helped students establish positive self-concepts through learning about their culture and those of others. Three languages were taught: English, Spanish, and Yaqui.

The curriculum included the unseen components of language that structure the way people view themselves, each other, and the world around them by presenting content area instruction from the perspective of, and with respect for, the cultural background of the community. It also addressed many injustices, the most glaring being the placement of children in classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of IQ tests administered in English, by seeking more appropriate measures for ascertaining student abilities that were free of cultural and linguistic biases.

After ten years of providing a trilingual/tricultural curriculum for the students of Guadalupe, I'tom Escuela finally closed its doors due to financial instability. A primary barrier to seeking federal funds for continuing this unique school was, ironically, the GO's action resisting busing and boycotting the Civil Rights Plan for Desegregation.

The 1973 lawsuit against the Tempe Elementary School District by the Guadalupe Organization brought about change in respect to language and student assessment. The *Guadalupe Decision* was incorporated into Arizona Department of Education policy on assessment, which now states that the primary language of each student must be determined, and then the student's proficiency must be tested in that language. As a class action suit, the *Guadalupe Decision* ensured that all children in the state of Arizona will be assessed in their native language.²⁷ The Tempe Elementary School District appealed the ruling, and seven years later, in 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower court decision in favor of the community.²⁸

In 1977, while awaiting their final appeal to the high court, the district announced its OCR compliance plan. Numerous changes were put into effect, including more responsive and comprehensive assessment of children whose first language was not English. This included conducting home language surveys to ascertain what language the children spoke at home, assessment of the children's language proficiency in Spanish, utilizing instruments in Spanish and Spanish-speaking testers, and a teacher/aide instrument for ascertaining student language usage and patterns in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and on the playground. Provision was also made for providing training to administrators and to instructional, support, and assessment personnel to better prepare them for meeting the needs of the language minority students.²⁹

YAQUI PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION

The possession of multiple operating cultures requires the ability to act and behave appropriately in accordance with alternative sets of standards as determined by a specific situational context. To be able to engage in multiple operating cultures constitutes a wider field of shared cultural experience as one's

original set of cultural standards is expanded to accommodate alternative sets. The Yaquis' distinctive identity within their respective communities in both countries, where they must coexist with "dominant" cultures, has been reinforced as a consequence of both positive and negative factors.

Languages are generally not viewed by the Yaqui community as systems of communicative competence, but rather as vehicles of access to the socioeconomic cultural domains they symbolize. The Yaqui language is perceived more as a repository for culture and heritage in a static sense, not viewed as an equally valid and viable medium for intellectual and contemporary social development. English, however, is imbued with such qualities and thereby becomes the gatekeeper for success in the European American-dominated national culture.³⁰

A study of Yaqui viewpoints on language and literacy conducted in 1989 found that cultural conflict exists in the context of both education and language learning. For Yaquis, cultural conflict in education results from the dichotomy of cultural survival (preservation) versus functional survival within the multiple operating cultures (adaptation).³¹ According to the study, Yaquis often attribute the decline of the Yaqui language in Arizona to cultural change as well as to adaptation to the dominant culture.³² Yet, paradoxically, their historical marginalization by the dominant society and its institutions such as the schools, as well as by the Mexican American community, has served to keep that identity strong.

The educational expectations of the Yaqui are embedded in the need, as indigenous people, to adapt and to change in order to exist in the context of a dominant society. These expectations spring from their participation in multiple alternative cultural standards, that is, the Yaquis' multiple cultural "literacies." Some of their experience and learning is shared with the majority, some is shared with other minorities—especially Mexicans and to a lesser degree Mexican Americans—and some is shared as a unique aspect of being Yaqui in the context of the Guadalupe cultural setting. All the resulting cultural change and adaptation occur under conditions of sustained contact in this milieu.

Situational interaction, however, can override the effects of cultural differences, as acculturation is not unimodal.³³ It is evident that many Yaquis share cultural similarities with others, but in different ways. Social experience, or effects of "primary and secondary networks," greatly diversify their existing range of operating culture. This has gone largely unnoticed by the

educational institutions that serve them.

The importance of language to the participatory development and transmission of culture is paramount. Education as cultural transmission implies a set of basic assumptions about a society's cultural interests. It is not the individual but rather a human group that shares a common cultural system. Although information comes from individuals based upon their social perceptions and interactions, it suggests how social structures and functions inform and define the accepted patterns for transmitting culture.³⁴

Since this is not happening in the classrooms attended by Guadalupe Yaquis, their native language skills in Yaqui or Spanish are not being developed. Neither is their primary language skill being exploited to assist them with their acquisition of English. Their overall linguistic development is being compromised as a consequence.

Inner conflicts also are a byproduct of multiculturalism, in that individuals are likely to experience a greater degree of role conflict in a multicultural setting. This is particularly true for minority individuals, who may be caught in a conflict between the expectations of the dominant culture and those of their own primary culture. In addition, role conflict can be expected to arise between the personal aspirations of an individual and appropriate behavior as defined by the person's cultural group.

Language is generally acknowledged in our society as a critical aspect of cultural pluralism, and study of the languages of developed societies—especially those deemed significant to the global economy—is widely encouraged. There continues to be a stigmatization, however, associated with indigenous languages or—as in the case of Spanish—with languages that are locally associated primarily with culturally and economically marginalized groups. Spanish study is viewed favorably, on the other hand, for native English-speaking European American students who may, for example, seek to participate in an exchange program in Spain. Yet it is viewed quite differently when it is offered for minority students who come from Spanish-speaking homes.

Few people will regularly choose to use a stigmatized language without a strong ideological commitment. This has provided a strong impetus for many Guadalupe Yaquis to seek to ensure that their children learn English as a primary language as early as possible. Often this is done even to the detriment of commensurate Spanish and/or Yaqui skills development.

The development and maintenance of language skills demand the use of the language in significant and useful ways as part of normal real-life activities, not just in structured language lessons. Full language acquisition necessitates availability of the total range of communicative possibilities by which the learner may selectively recreate the language in a natural order.³⁵ This is why dominant languages always prevail while minority languages are continually retreating in their path.

This is the situation Guadalupe community leaders face as they attempt to develop community educational programs that address the Yaqui language and culture. Historically, their cultural and linguistic adaptation has been primarily reactive, in an effort to ensure that they would survive. The focus has now shifted with the awareness that in a democratic multicultural society, it is the right of every culture, as with every individual, to thrive.

NOTES

1. Octaviana V. Trujillo, born and raised in Guadalupe, attended the Tempe public schools before desegregation and the implementation of bilingual, bicultural curricular programs.

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3. Larry Evers and Felipe Molina, "The Holy Dividing Line: Inscription and Resistance in Yaqui Culture," *Journal of the Southwest* 4 (Summer 1992).

4. Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Rim of Christendom: A Biography of Eusebio Francisco Kino, Pacific Coast Pioneer* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1936).

5. Larry Evers and Felipe Molina, *Yaqui Deer Songs: A Native American Poetry* (Tucson: Sun Tracks and the University of Arizona Press, 1990).

6. Edward H. Spicer, "Linguistic Aspects of Yaqui Acculturation," *American Anthropologist* 45 (1943): 3, 409-426.

7. Edward P. Dozier, "Two Examples of Linguistic Acculturation: The Yaqui of Sonora and Arizona and the Tewa of New Mexico," *Language* 32 (1956): 1, 146-157.

8. Edward H. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962).

9. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival: The Struggle for Land and Autonomy, 1821-1910* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

10. Frank Hillary, "Cajeme, and the Mexico of his Time," *The Journal of Arizona History* 8 (1967): 120-136.

11. Carroll G. Barber, "Trilingualism in an Arizona Yaqui Village," in

Bilingualism in the Southwest, ed. Raul R. Turner (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1973), 295-318.

12. Edward H. Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), 26.

13. Sam Aaron Brewer, Jr., "The Yaqui Indians of Arizona: Trilingualism and Cultural Change," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Texas, 1976), 116.

14. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, *Pascua Yaqui Tribe Extension of Benefits: Hearing before the Committee on Indian Affairs*, 103rd Cong., 2nd sess., 27 January 1994, 11.

15. Edward H. Spicer, *Perspectives in American Indian Culture Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 7-93.

16. Pat H. Stein, "Archaeological Testing at AZ: U:9:111 (ASM), a Yaqui Laborer's Camp at the Southside Water Services Center, Mesa, Arizona" (Flagstaff: SWCA, Inc. Environmental Consultants, 1992). Also see Leah S. Glaser, "Working for Community: The Yaqui Indians of the Salt River Project," *Journal of Arizona History* 37 (Winter 1996): 337-356.

17. *Cuarenta*, "forty" in Spanish, is the term used by locals of Guadalupe to refer to the original forty acres ceded to Yaquis by presidential decree in 1914. Biehn Colony refers to land given to the Presbyterian church as homesites for Yaquis by Jennie Biehn in 1924.

18. Yaqui Family Literacy Partnership Program, *Needs assessment* (Tucson: Pima Community College, 1989).

19. *Culture: A Way to Reading*, Tempe, Arizona: Tempe Elementary School District #3, 1979.

20. William Leap, "The Study of American Indian English: An Introduction to the Issues," in *Papers in Southwestern English II: Studies in Southwestern Indian English*, ed. William Leap (San Antonio: Trinity University, 1977), 33-41.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Ward Goodenough, *Culture, Language, and Society* (Menlo Park, CA: Cummings Publishing Co., 1981), 102.

23. *Culture: A Way to Reading*, Tempe, Arizona: Tempe Elementary School District #3, 1979.

24. John H. Chilcott, "Where Are You Coming From and Where Are You Going?: The Reporting Of Ethnographic Research," *American Educational Research Journal* 24 (1987): 199-218.

25. Cathryn Retzlaff, "Guadalupe Kids Celebrate Town's Pride," *Arizona Republic*, 10 February 1982, extra.

26. Cathryn R. Shaffer, "Trilingual School Keeps Hanging On During Hard Times," *Arizona Republic*, 12 October 1983, extra.

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29. Tempe Elementary School District #3, "A Compliance Plan of Educational Strategies for Eliminating Educational Practices Ruled Unlawful under *Lau vs. Nichols* for Non-English Speaking Students of the Tempe Elementary School District #3," Tempe, Arizona: 1977.

30. Ibid.

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32. Ibid.

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35. Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1965).