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Networks and Cultural Bridges: A Case Study with the Tarahumara of Northern Mexico

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NETWORKS AND CULTURAL BRIDGES: A CASE STUDY OF THE SIERRA
TARAHUMARA IN NORTHERN MEXICO

by

Jennifer Marie Nations

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

NETWORK AND CULTURAL BRIDGES: A CASE STUDY OF THE SIERRA TARAHUMARA IN NORTHERN MEXICO

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Master of Science

Network and cultural bridge theories predict the source and durability of cultural boundaries, including how cultural boundaries are overcome in order for differing groups to have meaningful exchanges. Ethnographic interview data with three research subjects in Northern Mexico reveals the strengths and weaknesses of each theory. Minita Bustillos, Juan Daniel Villalobos, and Horacio Echeverría contribute to bridging ties between the closed indigenous community of the Tarahumara and outside Mexican and American groups. Their positions elucidate the veracity of theoretical propositions found in network and cultural bridge theories. Findings suggest that though useful in understanding several aspects of network structure and bridging, network theory does not fully explain how a person becomes part of a network bridge or what social capabilities may be useful for someone in that position. Cultural bridge theories extend the explanation by showing the importance of relationship building in bridging, but rely too heavily on the notion that a single individual can provide the cultural capital and resources necessary to be a cross-cultural bridge in and of themselves. The additional concepts of habitus and cultural tool-kits supplement these perspectives by explaining

how respondents acquired cultural and social knowledge that allows them to make connections in multiple distinct networks and how the respondents can so naturally say and do things to garner trust from members of both groups. This research shows how the theoretical concepts can be used in application to a specific social context. It also provides support for the possible use of the concepts of habitus, network bridging, and tool-kits for training members of grass roots organizations attempting to bridge between distinct, and even opposing, social groups.

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“Los vemos como todas las personas. Es lo que reclamo yo: que todos somos iguales. Todos. No porque ellos andan descalzos.”

“We see them like all people. That’s what I claim: that we’re all equals. Everyone. They aren’t excluded just because they go without shoes.”

--Minita

CHAPTER I: Research Question and Introduction

This thesis applies the theoretical concepts of network theory and, what I call cultural bridge theories, to ethnographic research I gathered while observing three individuals in Northern Mexico. A Mexican indigenous group, the Tarahumara, provide an example of a closed social network that exists within a larger, oppressive society. Past discrimination has led the Tarahumara to withdraw geographically and socially to preserve their traditions. Resultant cultural boundaries—from oppression and isolation—separating *mestizos* and natives have frustrated attempts made toward mutual benefit. In order to compare the social process of overcoming cultural and social boundaries with theoretical literature concerned with the same processes, three research subjects in Northern Mexico, who help bridge the closed indigenous community of the Tarahumara with outside groups, were chosen for observation. Minita Bustillos, Juan Daniel Villalobos, and Horacio Echeverría dedicate much of their time to improving the life situations of the Tarahumaran people whilst attempting to defend the Tarahumaras’ unique status in the dominant Mexican culture. Minita, a registered nurse living in Cuauhtémoc, has converted her home into a homeless shelter where about 80 Tarahuarans live at one time. From her home she administers medical attention, gives out free medicine, and encourages people to visit medical centers. Juan Daniel works as a carpenter in a shop attached to his home in Creel, a town at the base of the Sierra Madre Mountain range. He works in conjunction with a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) in Mexico, volunteer organizations from all over North America, and Mexican government groups in order to fund projects requested by the Tarahumara in Tarahumaran communities. The third research subject,

Horacio, works as an educator. He helps indigenous students gain access to and funding in universities, has created his own study center near his home, and worked for years teaching school in Tarahumaran communities. He lives in San Juanito, a town also bordering the Sierra Madre Mountains (see map of area page 38).

All three people are knowledgeable regarding Tarahumaran culture, are part of Tarahumaran and Mexican social networks, and aid in transferring valuable resources between the Tarahumara and outside groups. They represent what cultural bridge theorists refer to as cultural bridges; network theorists, however, would describe them as significant links between distinctive networks. In the following, I consider the adequacy of network and cultural bridge theories in accounting for the ways that individuals serve as cultural bridges or as linkages across networks. In doing so, I also address the usefulness of the alternative concepts of *habitus* and cultural tool-kits in forging cross-cultural relationships. Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio serve as useful examples of how individuals serve as effective cross-cultural links.

The application of available theories prompts seven research questions:

1) Network theory claims that bridging individuals need embedded (people they have experience with and trust), non-redundant connections for resource transfers. What connections do Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio have with the Tarahumara, government agencies, and other private/charitable organizations that facilitate the transfer of resources between them? Do the theoretical definitions of resources match the resources the respondents deal with?

2) Cultural bridge theories say being known, trusted, and knowledgeable regarding culture are important for being a cross-cultural bridge. How is this type of institutional legitimacy, or being known and trusted, demonstrated by the three respondents in the respective groups and institutions they work with?

3) Network theory claims that network structure must be such that resource transfers, communication, and bridging relationships are possible. How does each person navigate within and across networks and agencies to access resources? What are their strategies for making

contacts and maintaining them? Do their actions demonstrate the importance of network structure? Cultural familiarity? Both?

4) For network theorists a person who bridges is on the margins of the networks they work with, meaning they do not fully belong to any one network. In contrast, cultural bridge theory claims a closer, more intimate relationship is valuable. Are the relationships the respondents have personal/emotive or more distant and professional? How does each person view the relationship between the Tarahumara and the outside agencies they are involved with? How do their relationships with the Tarahumara and with outside agencies permit them to access the closed network of the Tarahumara?

5) What do network and cultural bridge theories say about interaction with bureaucratic organizations? Do the networks Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio are part of facilitate communication with bureaucratic organizations? Or avoid bureaucracies in favor of other modes of resource transfers?

6) What distinctions between the theoretical perspectives as well as the respondents can be made to help us better understand the theoretical concepts and research data?

7) Knowledge of cultural tools and *habitus* influence relationships within social networks in ways that affect the transfer of resources. How can these alternative theoretical concepts help us understand the research beyond what network and cultural bridge theories offer?

Indigenous populations are generally isolated from the dominant societies they exist in—for physical and cultural survival (Beltrán 1991; Rivero 1987). This is true for the Tarahumara, a large group of natives inhabiting the rocky Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico. In the face of demographic and environmental changes, natives have searched for help from governments, encountering the almost insurmountable task of interpreting and finding their way through foreign cultures, institutions, and social settings for which their own cultures have not prepared them (Swidler 1986; Wellman and Frank 2001). State policy attempts to aid the disadvantaged have

sometimes helped, sometimes injured, but most often ignored the special needs of indigenous peoples (Beltrán 1991; World Bank 2004).

Relations between the Tarahumaran people (or *Rarámuri*, as they call themselves) in Northern Mexico and Mexican society and government have been complicated and difficult due to a lack of understanding between Mexicans and Tarahumarans. Poor people, like the Tarahumara, depend on personal social ties to provide them with the services and material assets they need because the state is generally ineffective in reaching them (Narayan et al. 2000). Network theorists would describe groups like the Tarahumara as fundamentally closed networks because they maintain strong cultural and social boundaries that allow them to function without much interaction with other social networks (Gans 1992, Lin 2001a). All networks maintain boundaries out of necessity: without them networks would be indistinguishable. However, as a response to oppressive and racist treatment, groups like the Tarahumara are forced to close off unless they are willing to change fundamental cultural and social practices.

A cultural or network bridge is what links unassociated groups together. According to network theory, a bridge is created when individuals from different networks form a social connection that facilitates the transfer of resources from one network to another (Willer 1999, Lin 2001a). Cultural bridge theories (Vogt and Albert 1966, Blau and Schwartz 1984) define bridges as individual actors who mediate between different groups, representing the interests of both. Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio fulfill various social roles that enable them to form bridges between groups of Tarahumara, Mexican, and American networks. They all have established ties with the Tarahumara, groups from the United States, and Mexican agencies (including the Mexican government) in ways that facilitate communication and the transfer of resources despite cultural and social differences between these groups. Theories that elaborate on the ability of people to access resources due to the nature of their personal ties, including network and cultural bridge theories, provide explanations of how this is possible. As part of various network systems the research subjects' perceptions and actions regarding their positions and the networks they are

involved in are valuable in extending current theory. I am interested in how the three formed relationships with *mestizos* and Tarahumara people, and how their knowledge of institutions, organizations, and the closed society of the Tarahumara provide resources and information to indigenous people seeking aid. Network theory is useful for understanding these relationships. Cultural bridge theories make less of a contribution, therefore I also draw upon the concepts *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) and cultural tool-kits (Swidler 1986).

Data sources include: personal interviews with Minita from 2005 and 2006, extensive participant observation with Minita in 2005; tape recorded interviews, participant observation, and email exchanges with Horacio in 2006; conversations with Juan Daniel in 2002, tape recorded interviews and participant observation with Juan Daniel in 2006; and historical information and census data regarding the relationship between the Tarahumara and Mexican society and government. All the interviews were structured by the research questions and theories, allowing me to apply the theory to the social positions the respondents fulfill. Through historical accounts, personal interviews, and participant observation I examine how well available theories account for the services of these individuals and the resources they provide to the Tarahumara. I investigate how in-group legitimacy (demonstrated by familiarity and trust with a cultural group) and knowledge, personal relationships, cultural sensitivity, and access to resources on the part of Minita, Juan Daniel and Horacio have enabled them to work among and between the Tarahumara, U.S. and Mexican agencies, and Mexican government services.

More specifically, this thesis explores whether the theoretical literature on networks or cultural bridges is most appropriate for understanding the role of bridges. In light of information from the respondents, which parts of the theories do we accept and which do we challenge?

A review of the theoretical literature on the isolation of indigenous populations, networks, cultural bridges, boundary maintenance, social capital, cultural tool-kits, and *habitus* is found in Chapter II. Chapter III presents background information regarding the relationship between indigenous groups and Mexico's government, generally, and a history of the Tarahumara in

Mexico. This chapter also contains data from the 2000 Mexican census comparing quality of life measures between native and *mestizo* groups. Methodology and method are in Chapter IV. Findings from the interviews and participant observation with Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio constitute Chapter V. An application of the findings to the theoretical perspectives is presented in Chapter VI, along with a discussion of the shortcomings of the theories.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

Oppression and Closed Communities

“Regiones del refugio” are places of retreat and security where native groups in Latin America have traditionally gathered in the face of oppressive forces and mechanisms (Beltrán 1991). Segregation, outside political powers, economic inequality, and discrimination cause people with similar ethnic identities to band together in isolation for protection, many times in environments so harsh others dare not disturb them there (Beltrán 1991; Rivero 1987). Based on ancient cultural traditions and new or continued oppression, they form collective identities, become cohesive units, and rely on one another for information and resources. Such survival strategies have been effective among native groups and have allowed them to both extend life and preserve culture, despite 500 years of extermination campaigns and “development plans” (Mires 1992: 15).

The nature of oppression in Latin America has changed, transitioning from Spanish forced work structured by Christianity to the current efforts to assimilate by shedding “backwards” and “uneducated” traditions that impede economic prosperity for indigenous peoples (Beltrán 1991; Mires 1992). Continued oppression has led many native groups to remain isolated from government programs, markets, and the broader Latino/a society. Eric Wolf (1951) called indigenous communities closed communities because they structure and maintain their culture, economy, society, and circle of contacts closed off from the rest of a country or area’s population. A closed network generally results in weak, misinterpreted, or absolutely no

communication between indigenous groups and the outside constituents who oppress them, or possible outsiders that may want to aid them. If the goal is to maintain the group's culture and prohibit intrusion of foreign ideas, people, languages, customs, etc., then network closure is likely and network density is high (Lin 2001a). High network density refers to familiarity between group members. In a closed, dense network, network members are more intimately associated with each other. They rely on the group for the majority of their social interactions and have few relationships outside of the network. Groups may choose to isolate themselves socially and/or geographically as part of preserving culture and cultural boundaries, though lacking capital in the broader society will limit their opportunities outside the closed network. Network closure in the case of the Tarahumara is a response to persecution—it can be said that closure for them is not a choice but was forced on them by outside discrimination.

Conversely, open networks and bridges are sought out “for searching for and obtaining resources” from outside groups (Lin 2001a: 10). Contacts are made with group outsiders to secure resources. The interconnectedness of groups, which allows transmission of culture, binds people and groups together, providing for physical, emotional, and social needs. However, even members of open networks may lack necessary capital in closed groups simply because it is undesirable or difficult to access.

The governments of many Latin American countries have tried in recent years to implement policy and program to educate, enrich, and uplift native populations. Government networks would generally be termed open networks. Some programs have alleviated poverty or sickness to an extent, but mostly these attempts have been inadequate and culturally insensitive (Narayan et al. 2000). A central problem is the lack of cultural awareness and inability to effectively communicate on the part of governments and organizations foreign to native groups (Beltrán 1991).

The Tarahumara, an ethnic group of between 50,000 and 80,000 Native Americans in Northern Mexico (Lister and Lister 2003), is one of the largest Native American tribes in the

Americas (Rivero 1987; Zingg 2001). Though they have not always exclusively inhabited the arid, rocky mountains of the state of Chihuahua, today most of the Tarahumara live there in smaller, isolated groups organized around family lines (Rivero 1987). Spaniards and other white groups took the most fertile lands in the valleys and, in response to persecution and refusal to submit to these groups, the Tarahumara began living in the most inhospitable parts of the Sierra where no white people wanted to live. Their homes are scattered far apart amongst the canyons and mountains of the Sierra, sometimes in the caves of a rocky terrain that does not allow for large numbers of people living close together. Families work their farms and tend domesticated animals; farming is basic to Rarámuri culture and life (Raat and Janecek 1996).

Some Tarahumara also live in *ejidos* (small communities with houses close in proximity) in and outside the Sierra and some live in Tarahumaran shelters outside the Sierra or in common Mexican housing. Like other native groups, the Sierra and other *regiones del refugio*, such as *ejidos*, have provided shelter from oppression and prejudice.

Geographic isolation prevents people from knowing just how much cultural difference and social prejudice exists between groups. When people from differing cultures do engage in interaction and communication cultural boundaries and differences can result in miscommunications. Such is the situation between the indigenous Tarahumara in Mexico and the more general *mestizo* society in the state of Chihuahua. While Mexican and American (U.S.) groups who desire to aid the Tarahumara exist, as do Tarahumarans who solicit help, the ability on all sides to exchange ideas and resources is limited by racist traditions and the distancing of the Tarahumara from Mexican society. A lack of cultural understanding and/or acceptance exists on both sides.

Boundaries erected by cultural groups are meant to protect themselves and their identity (Gans 1992). It is how groups are able to distinguish between cultures and distinctly identify with one or more. It is also why groups have unequal access to culture and its enabling characteristics. Gans asserts that cultural boundaries are also in place to protect the advantaged from being infiltrated by the disadvantaged. I would add, however, that the disadvantaged have

as much, if not more, reason to build cultural boundaries to keep those who may undermine and harm their culture away. Unfortunately, the result is often greater economic deprivation.

Indigenous peoples define themselves in part by a continuous exchange process with the outside world they have come to distrust, comparing and contrasting themselves in a way that differentiates them from the larger culture (Mires 1992). Their existence as a closed network is partly the natural result of oppression, and partly meant to protect them from invading groups and cultures.

Sociologists have theorized the source and durability of cultural boundaries in part to understand how individuals acquire knowledge about appropriate behavior in a group, how groups obtain information, and how interaction with other groups can take on the various forms they do (i.e. defensive interaction, positive, confusing). Theorizing boundaries, in-groups, out-groups, and group conflict have led to studies regarding the structure of social groups. Network theorists—specifically Lin (2001a and 2001b), Willer (1999), Wellman and Frank (2001), and Granovetter (1973)—are primarily concerned with the characteristics of social structures and resource transfers. Their focus is on the *structure* of social groups and the positions people fulfill within network structures. Another branch of research, what I call cultural bridge theories [represented by the work of Vogt and Albert (1966) and Blau (1977, with Schwartz 1984)] is concerned more with the actions that *individuals* take in bridging between opposing, or different, social groups. Individuals themselves can represent or embody multiple groups they pertain to and thereby link them together.

What follows is a summary of literature from both theoretical camps regarding how social groups can exist independently, be bridged through structural positions, or how individuals serve as cultural bridges. In addition other theoretical literature regarding cultural and social familiarity and cultural know-how are presented as possible alternative concepts for understanding the existence of opposing groups and linking mechanisms. All the theories presented are summarized in Table 1 at the end of the section.

Networks and Network Bridges

In network theory the structure and characteristics of social networks are the most important determinants in how well resources will be transferred between individuals and groups (Burt 1992, Lin 2001a). One such characteristic is trust: network theorists such as Burt (1992) and Granovetter (1985) point out that without trust business exchanges would rarely be successful and would never benefit from the continuity of stable relationships, meaning that even the most goal oriented, economic social relationships are not possible without trust. By asserting this they establish the importance of trust in all social exchanges. Trust allows an individual's network to extend beyond people of similar financial and/or social standing, i.e., to people from more heterogeneous groups (Granovetter 1985). Though relationships require a degree of trust intimate relationships are not necessary. In fact, having numerous casual relationships is more useful for building effective networks; something Granovetter calls the strength of weak ties (1973). These characteristics and others are extremely important in determining the "quality, quantity, novelty, and availability of resources" in an individual's network (Wellman and Frank 2001: 233).

Embeddedness suggests that social actors, rather than relying on institutions and their assumed morality, will prefer "individuals of known reputation," because "few are actually content to rely on either generalized morality *or* institutional arrangements to guard against trouble" (Granovetter 1985: 490). For the disadvantaged there is usually little or no connection between them and formal institutions, making trustworthy formal relationships rare (Narayan et al. 2000). People are most likely to go through trusted networks and network members to access information and resources (Wellman and Frank 2001). Trust arises from repeated interaction and familiarity with the individual or institution: "Better than the statement that someone is known to be reliable is information from a trusted informant that he has dealt with that individual and found him so. Even better is information from one's own past dealings with that person" (Granovetter 1985: 490). People would rather rely on those who they know and trust and whom their

communities trust than groups they are unfamiliar with, and in the case of indigenous groups in Latin America, groups that have traditionally attempted to exploit or suppress them.

Burt's (1992) conception of structural holes refers to the spaces between non-redundant contacts in a network. Ideally a network will maximize the amount of information available to you, but if your contacts know the same people and get you the same benefits they are redundant. The fewer overlapping and related contacts in your network, or the more structural holes in your network, the more likely you will have a lucrative network. Non-redundant, personal contacts serve several functions: they improve your access to information and resources, they get information "to you before the average person receives it," and they extend the contacts you have because their contacts are your contacts (14). In addition to providing information to you, connections can also direct, concentrate, and legitimate information about you to others, meaning that you will be sought out on account of network members' information sharing about you to others. More contacts are not necessarily better, however; having connections that access different networks is most advantageous.

Attempts to explain the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities have, in part, resulted in the sociological term social capital, or "capital captured through social relations" (Lin 2001b). Who you know and how favorable the acquaintance is influence all social interactions. Social capital facilitates certain actions within a structure and makes possible the achievement of ends (Coleman 1988). Possession of social capital can allow a person access to profitable people and places, investing the individual with other forms of capital, including cultural capital, human capital, and resource capital. All social groups possess cultural capital and the transmission of it contributes to the formation of cultural boundaries and teaches cultural difference. Possessing cultural capital in the dominant, or most powerful culture, is different however—it can provide opportunities for upward mobility, whereas capital within one's own cultural group does not guarantee upward movement in general society.

The structure and form of networks predicts the degree of capital found within said network (Lin 2001a). If trust is present, contacts are non-redundant, and the network is open, the network can easily move resources around and acquire them from outside the group. Bridges are important for network functioning when one network is incapable of adequately relating to and sharing resources with another network, or incapable of acquiring more forms of capital. Network theorists define a bridge as a tie between two individuals, where each individual is also part of one or more networks, or different parts of the same network (Lin 2001b; Willer 1999). They facilitate “access to resources embedded in nodes in another cluster that otherwise would not be accessible” to a network (Lin 2001b). Bridges bring information, resources, and people into contact with others who could not otherwise access those things.

The position of people who are in bridging relationships is marginal: “bridging individuals tend to be on the margin of their respective social circle[s]” (70). Being deeply involved in a tight-knit, closed network would limit the opportunities a person has to reach out to other people or groups. Remaining on the margins of groups allows bridging people the social space and distance needed to participate in different, or even opposing, groups. Willer (1999) points out that when bridging the two networks being bridged do not have to be the same or even necessarily agree on much, but the people involved in the bridging relationship need be in accordance. Thus the Tarahumara and Mexicans need not be in accordance with each other as long as a bridging individual can transmit the desires and needs of each side to another individual in a bridging position.

Does the presence of networks or the existence of embeddedness solve the problem of cultural misunderstanding? No, it cannot because whole cultures cannot, and do not, meet. However, individuals as culture carriers do meet (Vogt and Albert 1966: 61). Though Vogt and Albert rely on the contested assumption that action is driven by value orientation, their contribution regarding cross-cultural bridges may extend our understanding of how a person can engage in action that results in ties and bridging. Their greater emphasis on people as cultural

carriers who can internalize and share culture with diverse groups in order to facilitate communication de-emphasizes network structure and looks at the importance of the individual's personal characteristics in bridging groups.

Individuals as Cultural Bridges

In contrast with network theories, Blau and Schwartz (1984), Blau (1977), and Vogt and Albert (1966), and anthropologists who have borrowed from them, claim that at the intersection of social circles are individual people who act as liaisons and bridges between differing groups. Rather than stress the importance of social structure in making cross-cultural bridging possible they emphasize the individual's knowledge of culture, language, and their reputation within communities. Cultural bridge and network theorists both discuss the value of embeddedness, or being trusted, within social groups (Granovetter 1985, Vogt and Albert 1966). However, their description of bridges is very different and borrowing from each will aid our understanding of the ethnographic data.

Interaction between people of differing cultures is not a simple exchange between undifferentiated, rational actors. Each carries with them "a complex of beliefs and values" that inevitably influences their interpretation of social exchanges and situations (Vogt and Albert 1966:62), even when their external environment is the same. Native Americans will not, and possibly cannot, approach social interaction with a Chilean, a Mexican, or a Peruvian of mixed descent without drawing upon the cognitive orientations constructed within their own group. The same is true for the mindset of the Chilean, Mexican, or Peruvian. Anticipation of social events, ideas of the other group, and interpretations of interactions are influenced by "cognitive orientations [ways in which one group perceives another] which each group has developed to each of the others, and the intercultural role network which, paradoxically, provides both effective lines of communication and limits on the degree of intimacy between cultures" (61).

The cultural bridge may become the only means one group has of understanding and working with another. It is precisely due to difference that two networks may not interact or

exchange; an understanding of cultural norms for both groups is necessary for the people who bridge between them. Vogt and Albert's Rimrock Study observed the "complex but limited number of roles. . .which establish a precedent" for interaction between different cultural groups (61). For example, between the Texans and Spanish-Americans the "key intercultural roles are storekeeper-customer, employer-employee. . .teacher-pupil, and intermarriage" (78). Not all of those interactions produced positive cross-cultural relationships, but some did, and through those the cultures of each group were transmitted to the opposing group. Individuals who become cross-cultural bridges possess legitimacy in multiple groups, meaning that they are trusted by members of those groups and are known to understand and respect the cultural views of them. Thus, legitimacy is much like Granovetter's (1985) notion of embeddedness.

When in-group relations are weak it is easier for individuals to reach out to other groups (Blau and Schwartz 1984). This is especially true because "most in-group associates on any given dimension are inter-group associates on some other dimension" (86). This concept complements Lin's (2001b) explanation that bridging individuals are on the margins of their respective networks since the bridging individual is only weakly connected to the group.

Blau and Schwartz (1984) draw on Simmel's concept of social structure in describing a bridge. Social circles overlap at certain points and "create a web of affiliations for individuals" (1). Those individuals use their relationships in various social groups to link and bridge them together. Individuals in and of themselves can be cross-group bridges. Those individuals ultimately "achieve the status of channels through which the content of cultural systems *must* be communicated and transmitted one to the other" (Vogt and Albert 1966: 61). Such a person has been called an "intercultural role network" (61), or a system or network that can link opposing cultures in order to facilitate meaningful interaction. The existence of cultural boundaries that divide networks requires the intervention of bridges.

What enables an individual to bridge to another person in a different cluster, or network? Blau (1977) attaches importance to the amount of time spent associating with in-group members

to promote solidarity and out-group members to promote diverse associations. This can be applied here in that social relations, including the formation of trusted confidants, require time spent socializing.

Habitus and Cultural Tool-kits

Versions of capital (social, human, network, cultural, etc.) are drawn on in the above theories to explain why in-group and out-group relations take on the forms they do, how individuals' positions within networks can be understood, and how inequality and power come into existence. Closed networks will lack the types of capital useful in general society, but individuals within the closed group will be heavily instilled with capital from their own group. Dominant groups, or classes, define appropriate cultural forms and symbols and transmit them to select individuals, making one group proficient in the culture of dominance, so to speak, while others learn proficiency in a "lower" culture (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Blau 1977). The lack of capital on the part of natives within the larger Latin American society and Latinos within native cultures results in the situation of poor communication and little common social capital.

Though less structured or planned, Bourdieu's term field is similar to the concept of a network (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). He writes that "a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (97). A field is like a game, though not the product of an intentional act of creation, in that the players agree that the game is worth playing, people have stakes in the game, and people compete with one another for forms of capital. Fields are networks with implicit rules and regularities, which means that the outsiders of a group may not have the knowledge or "*habitus*" to navigate in another group's field. People learn about fields and how to act in them from those around them and the social structures that transmit culture and social appropriateness; a lack of cultural capital leads to difficulty in associating in and with other groups. Without access to information regarding another culture, proper behavior, language, and mores cannot be transmitted, and an outsider may not have the opportunity to learn the culture and social norms in a different field.

Habitus becomes a very natural part of who a person is, derived from their exposure to social life. It is a “feel for the game,” embodied in the individual and does not involve reflexive thought because it is a “socially constituted nature” (Bourdieu 1990:11). Thus the individual actor is subject to the influences of the social world around her, makes choices in how to engage it, but when drawing upon knowledge and experience in order to act she unconsciously draws upon the practical logic her social world has written into her. However, “*social agents are not ‘particles’* that are mechanically pushed and pulled about by external forces. . . they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 109).

Similar to Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, cultural capital has also been described as a tool kit for dealing with social life (Swidler 1986). An individual’s culture provides various strategies of action. Rather than being driven by value orientations, Swidler claims that people use the tools available to them regardless of their values, since achieving values is not always in range. The social and cultural structures we live in enable and constrain our actions because they provide us with knowledge of modes of action and the cultural tools (words, symbols, perspectives) to act. Thus, what makes our strategies distinct are the tools we have to choose from when deciding how to act. This version of culture and human action acknowledges the limits/constraints on our action caused by the social position we are in. It also allows for agency on the part of the actor in that people choose what cultural tools they draw on when. It is not interests alone that govern action—it is what is available to us in terms of cultural capital and knowledge (i.e. what tools can we draw on). People are “active, sometimes skilled users of culture” (277).

Table 1. Theory Diagram

<p>Network theory: bridge is a relationship, not an individual</p>	<p>Lin, Nan 2001a, 2001b</p>	<p>Bridgers will be on the margins of networks. Network and personal characteristics determine resource access. The connections a bridge has outside the network influences what they contribute to the network</p>
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	Burt, Ronald 1992	Contacts should not be redundant. Network structure influences access to resources as does position within network (network location equals degree social capital)
	Granovetter 1973, 1985	Trust is what makes the network and bridging work. Weak ties allow more access to resources, the closer one is to a network bridge the more access to resources they have.
	Wellman and Frank 2001	Differing network characteristics meet different needs. Network ties have the greatest influence on network capital.
	Waller 1999	Networks do not have to be in agreement in order to be bridged, bridging implies an exchange, not assimilation.
Cultural bridge	Vogt and Albert 1966	An individual is a cross-cultural bridge because they are cultural carriers. Bridges rely on their own knowledge of cultures to bridge
	Blau 1977, Blau and Schwartz 1984	Experience and time spent with groups helps an individual bridge. The weaker the relationships in a network the easier it is to access. Individuals are at the intersection of groups, they are the links between them.
Alternative concepts	Bourdieu 1990	Habitus is a feel for the game, an unconscious response to the social world written in our bodies by society. Yet one can choose to increase capital or not, individuals are not controlled by outside forces.
	Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992	A field is a network of objective relations between positions, like a game though not intentionally created. Capital is a resource gained from the structure, it helps us know how to act and struggle in a field
	Coleman, James 1988 Swidler 1986	Social capital facilitates certain actions within a structure, makes possible achievement of ends. Capital through relationships implies access to information. Culture provides people with cognitive and behavioral tools. We choose from the tools available for acting. It is what is available that drives our social strategies, not our value orientation.

All of the concepts described here will be used in application to the ethnographic data gathered with the three respondents. First, a description of the Tarahumara and the social context

they have lived in will provide background information for the interview data. The next section also includes 2000 Mexican Census data regarding the quality of life of the Tarahumara.

CHAPTER III: Social Position of the Sierra Tarahumara

Interaction between the Tarahumara and Mestizos

Like many people globally who have migrated from insufficiently profitable rural areas to urban centers for work, many Tarahumara migrate between their home in the Sierra Nevada and Mexican towns in order to survive during the year (Bustillos and Nations 2005). Some live permanently near cities in *ejidos* and work in the cities, in agricultural labor, or beg in the streets. Others farm small plots in their Sierra villages, producing food for part of the year and searching for temporary work in the valley while other community members tend to their farm plots at home. Due to their impermanent status outside the Sierra, and many times racial discrimination, they find it difficult to find work with good pay.

Outsiders have criticized the common *Rarámuri* practice of migrating between the cities and the Sierra, working in the cities and returning to tend their lands when they can. But outsiders do not understand “the material culture of the Tarahumara is intrinsically bound to the physical environment of the Sierra” (Raat and Janecek 1996:56), and therefore they must return to it. Those who wish to leave the Sierra but not lose the mountain heritage have established colonies as permanent residence outside the Sierra where they preserve many of the traditions of the Sierra. The Tarahumara do not share many of the mores or lifestyle habits of the Mexican *mestizo* people, contributing to the lack of understanding between them (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). In addition, the social ties and communication channels needed to gain a mutual understanding are lacking due to cultural boundaries between the Tarahumara and Mexicans (Lin 2001a). A limited understanding of how to transmit knowledge of their cultures and how to navigate within a foreign culture also frustrate communication (Wellman and Frank 2001).

Racist Mexican and American practices, and a desire for social distance on the part of the Tarahumara, have resulted in this situation.

The population of the Tarahumara was stable from the 1700s until the mid-1900s because the Tarahumara had found a way to sustain themselves, surviving off the arid, mountain land (Raat and Janecek 1996). With new medical advances that reach into Rarámuri country the population is growing; the Sierra Mountains can no longer adequately support the ever-increasing population. Unable to feed their families, some communities have accepted the help of government and other agencies who provide corn and basic foods.

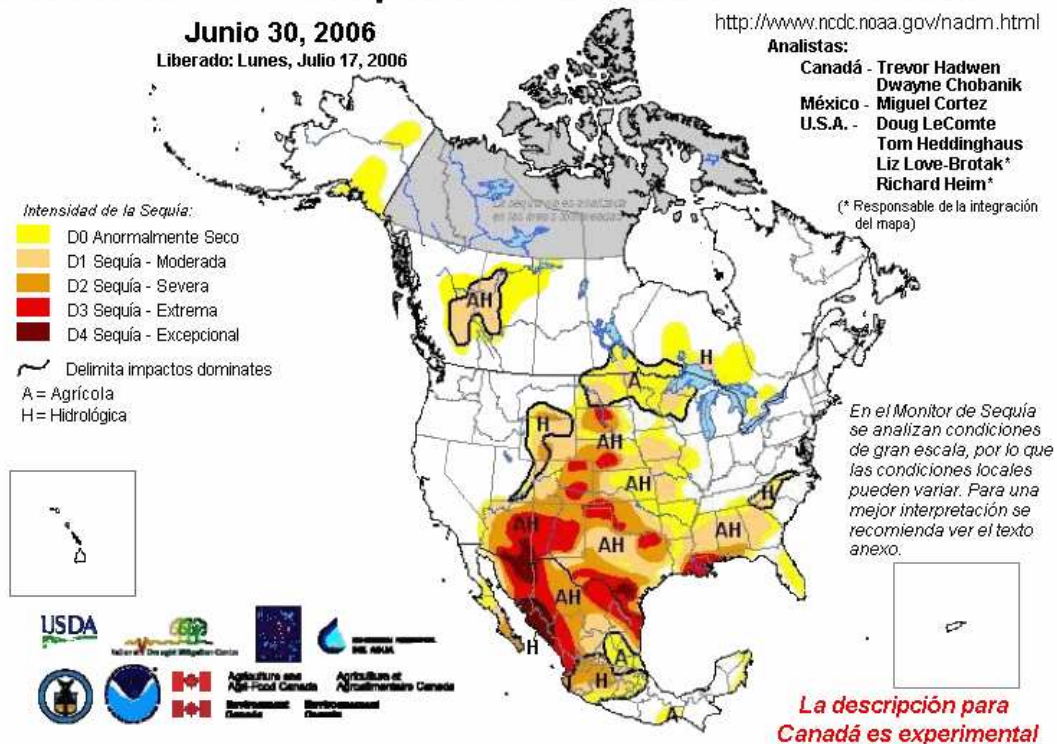
Some pose the question of whether or not the Tarahumara will survive the onslaught of modernization and interference (Raat and Janecek 1996). Drug traffickers, miners, religious groups, loggers, and tourists have all entered the Sierra, posing serious threats to the traditional lifestyle of the Tarahumara (Rivero 1987). Mexican farmers and ranchers, like the Spanish, have taken the best land in the valley and the lower parts of the Sierra. As a result the Tarahumara have continued to retreat to the south and west, moving to more arid, rocky land. The timber industry and drug traffickers reach some of the deepest mountain regions however, recruiting the Tarahumara to perform cheap and sometimes illegal labor. Over the years the Rarámuri have been able to survive by adopting aspects of intrusive cultures that supplement and compliment their own, while disregarding aspects that do not (Rivero 1987). Thus far their strategies of isolation and a degree of assimilation have been “successful”: with only one exception, Raat and Janecek (1996) say that no Indian culture is “less acculturated and less Hispanicized than that of the Tarahumara” (56). For the purposes of this research I am not concerned with the preservation of Rarámuri culture as it was or is; the way the Tarahumara choose to respond to outside influences is their choice. However, knowing what others say about them as a group is important, as is understanding the differences *mestizos* and Tarahumara see between themselves.

Perhaps the strongest force pressing on the Tarahumara at present is a persistent drought that is said to be in its fifteenth year. Water has always been a scarce resource for the

Tarahumara, requiring them to walk long distances to access clean water (Bryner 2005). In the past two years the drought has deepened severely, leaving many communities with no water, completely unable to plant or harvest. Such conditions force even more people to leave the Sierra for work and food and force communities to accept more aid than they might otherwise. Drought has created, or exasperated, a system of dependence where some Tarahumara seek government recourse to survive. The map below made in June of 2006 shows the severity of drought in North America during the time I gathered the majority of my research: the darker the shaded area the more severe the drought. For example, the darkest shaded areas had an exceptional level of drought in June 2006, the second darkest were at extreme levels, the third severe levels, etc. One of only two areas on the map shown to have an exceptional level of drought was Western Chihuahua State, precisely where the majority of Rarámuri people live.

Figure 1. North American Drought Monitor, 2006. <http://ncdc.noaa.gov/nadm.html>

Monitor de Sequía de América del Norte



Since the creation of this map the western Chihuahua state region has received more rainfall, removing it from the exceptional drought level to the moderate level—a huge jump. If the rain does not continue to fall the region could easily rise to worse drought levels.

Though some Tarahumara living in urban and rural areas may not see their situation as destitute, compared with the standard of living for Mexicans, and even other Mexican indigenous groups, the Tarahumara have very little (see Mexican Census Data presented below). Many times their ability to access the benefits of *mestizo* culture depends on relationships built with individuals who can network between *mestizo* and Tarahumaran culture. The difficulty of navigating in a foreign culture, the desire to remain apart, and presence of drought in the Sierra create a great need for cross-cultural bridges.

Minita has facilitated access to some policies and programs for the Tarahumara she works with and has helped non-Native groups gain a greater understanding of the Tarahumara and their way of life. Juan Daniel and Horacio have also accomplished similar work, though in different contexts. In all three cases, resource transfers have been possible due to the networks they are part of and because they, as individuals with knowledge and understanding of both Mexican culture and Tarahumaran culture, fulfill positions within networks from which they can reach out to bridging individuals in other networks.

Mexican government policy

Mexican law Article 4 of the 1917 Constitution protects native Mexican peoples to live according to their own culture (Raat and Janecek 1996). However, little has been done to enforce this law, and at times little can be done. The Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) was formed to protect the indigenous people of Mexico, though it has been more of an agent of assimilation than of protection and preservation.

Formerly, the general consensus among those who have worked with both the Mexican government and the Tarahumara is that there is a lack of understanding and commitment to sustainable development (Villalobos 2002; Raat and Janecek 1996). For example, one of the

government's biggest solutions to address widespread poverty among the Tarahumara has been to donate food, a temporary fix to an issue with strong staying power. Past attempts by the Mexican government to address the complaints of the Tarahumara have been to "modernize," "civilize," or otherwise "Mexicanize" them (Raat and Janecek 1996: 138; Lister and Lister 2003). Many Mexicans cling to stereotypes about the Tarahumara that lead to discriminatory practices, encouraging Tarahumara retreat into areas of refuge (Beltrán 1991). Expectations that the Tarahumara assimilate leave few options for economic stability that do not require abandonment of cultural traditions.

More recent data regarding the situation of Mexico's indigenous people show an improvement in socioeconomic status and standard of living (World Bank 2004). After a sharp increase in poverty rates from 1994 to 1996, extreme poverty declined 17% during the 1996 to 2002 period, a decrease to 20% of the population living in extreme poverty. Lest this number be deceptive, however, it must be noted that pre-1994 levels of extreme poverty were 21%, making the decrease a 1% decrease from 1994 to 2002. The World Bank reports that despite gains, "poverty remains widespread" and stratification extreme in every Mexican state (xvii). Nonetheless, poverty rates have declined and the improvement is generally attributed to successful government programs. Poverty levels among indigenous groups—as compared to other Mexicans—remain the highest, education the lowest, and health the worst. Recent programs target rural areas and indigenous groups but have not yet been able to remedy recurrent problems among them.

Overall poverty rates do not show the difference in poverty for natives and non-natives, however. Forty-four percent of Mexican natives are in the bottom income quintile and 80% are in the bottom 50%. Indigenous people account for 10% of the overall population but 21% of the extreme poor. Additionally, "Indigenous groups typically suffer higher levels of deprivation in terms of education and health status and access to services" (World Bank 2004: xxix). Test scores show that indigenous children in indigenous schools receive the lowest quality of

education. Natives generally live in rural areas, some of them isolated, and in the past have had little or no access to government programs. Recent programs, such as OPORTUNIDADES, PROCAMPO, and PROCEDE aimed to provide more educational opportunities for the poor, help people acquire land and strengthen their productive base, and distribute loans, respectively. Access to electricity, improved water sources, and sanitation services have improved, but are still unequal and not improved enough.

As the World Bank notes, improvements in Mexico's programs have been phenomenal: they take a varied approach to poverty, understanding that poverty has many causes and that policy must reflect that by using a diversity of methods and programs to address it (though the World Bank generally does not use a diversity of method in understanding or measuring poverty). For example, the government has considered that poverty is affected by geographic, political, social, and cultural sources, an extremely important consideration in light of the "regiones del refugio" phenomenon (Beltrán 1991). Due to "distinct preferences and practices" (World Bank 2004: 1), rural indigenous groups require distinct programs. Government programs that work with indigenous communities have appointed small groups that maintain constant contact with native people. They are guided by external agents who direct or assist them in their work, but they have a less bureaucratic design—they even seek out indigenous individuals as leaders and program directors. Such groups have led to several successful programs.

Expenditure on programs targeting poverty reduction has risen as a percentage of the GDP: .7% in 1990 to 1.3% in 2002. Many programs are not most beneficial for the extreme poor; people with land and access to resources take better advantage of services offered. Thus, in spite of increases in spending on programs, education about programs, and specific tasks to reach the rural poor, they still benefit unequally from new policy.

For a clearer view of how indigenous people in Chihuahua state fare under Mexico's programs state-level data must be examined. Chihuahua has a better economy overall than other states and a smaller indigenous population, thus on a national level the rate of poverty in

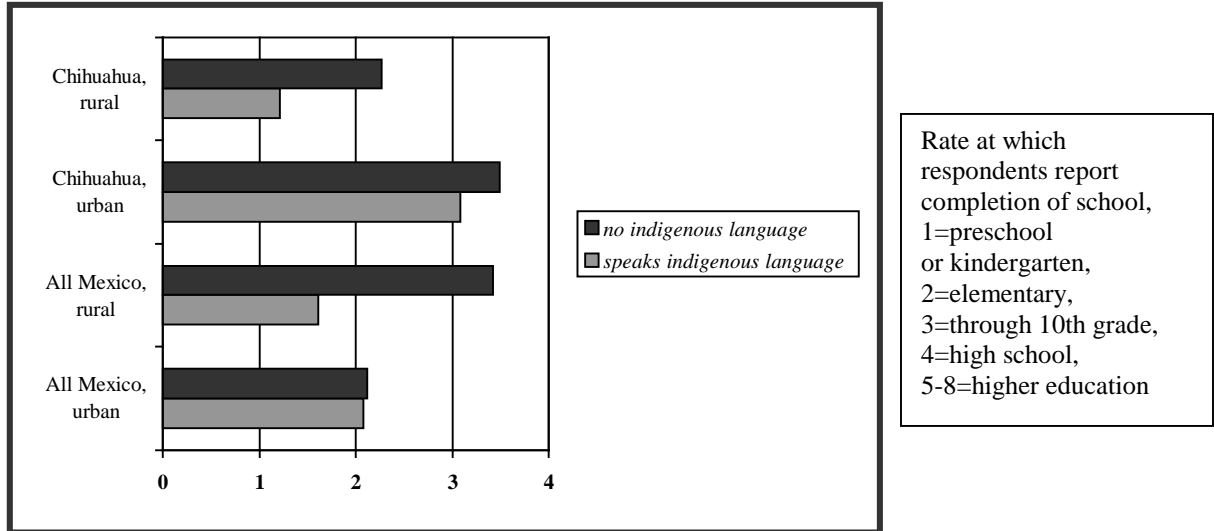
Chihuahua is low compared to states such as Guerrero and Oaxaca. The 2000 Mexican Census presented next shows how poverty rates in Chihuahua compare to rates for Mexico as a whole, for both indigenous and non-indigenous groups.

Government policy and program can potentially benefit all of Mexico's indigenous people, even the most isolated. The study of individuals who can bridge to other networks due to an understanding of both Mexican and indigenous cultures—and who are situated within or associated with government, philanthropic, medical, and religious bureaucracies—will supplement our understanding of how bridges can be formed between differing groups. It will also add to our understanding of how access to policies and programs meant for indigenous people can be facilitated, especially when access to policies and programs is complicated by cultural boundaries and a lack of network ties.

2000 Mexican Census Data

Government programs do not reach indigenous people as effectively as they do non-indigenous people. Access to education in urban areas is better in Chihuahua State than in the nation as a whole for both indigenous and non-indigenous people. However, school completion among the indigenous in rural areas in Chihuahua is lower than that of rural indigenous in all of Mexico. Though indigenous people throughout Mexico face challenges in accessing education, the case of indigenous school students in Chihuahua State is of special concern.

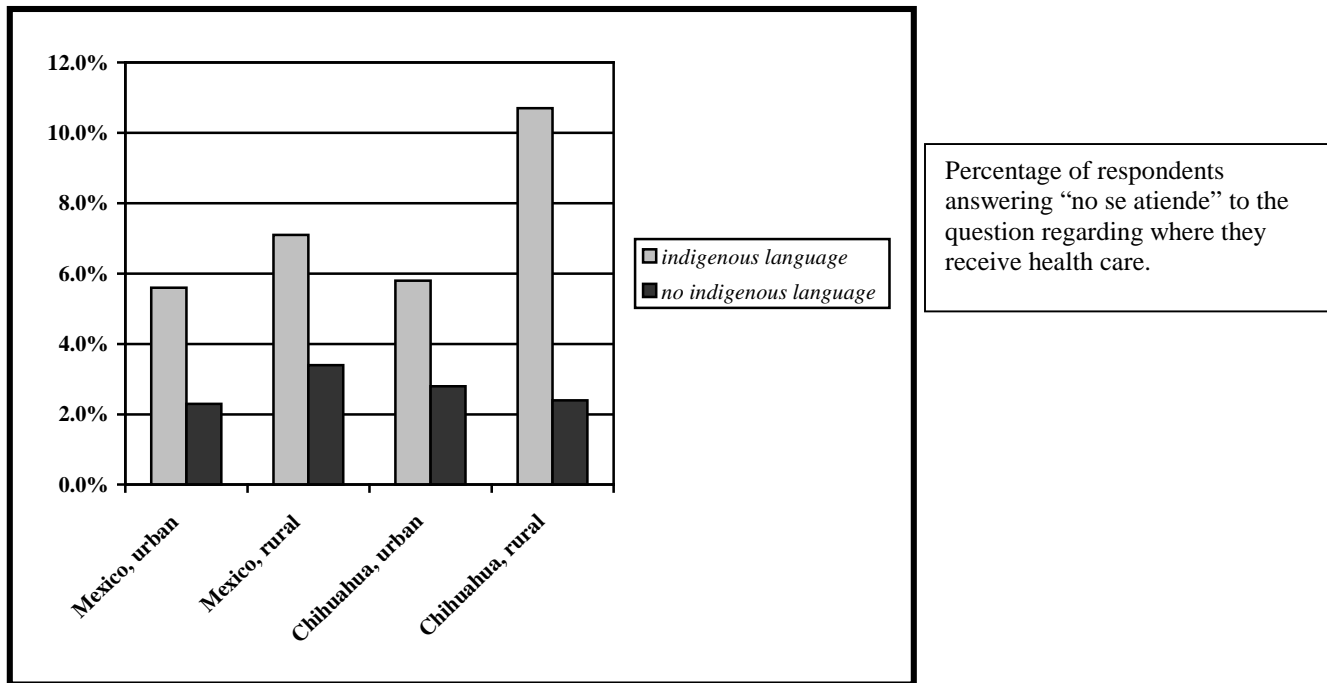
Figure 2. School completion levels, Mexican Census 2000.



Even when education, and specifically secondary education, does reach indigenous communities it may not be useful for them. The training received in those schools generally does not provide training that is relevant to their communities and lives. Ensuring that higher education is available to the Tarahumara is not necessarily a worthwhile goal unless it helps them pursue the training they actually need within their communities—not what would be important for them in Mexican society.

The census question for health care access had respondents choose where they are primarily treated for health problems. This graph shows how many people responded that they received no health care: “*no se atiende*,” or not attended. “*No se atiende*” means they did not receive health care assistance.

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who did not receive health care, Mexican Census 2000.



For all of Mexico people responded “no” less in urban places. For all of Mexico indigenous people get better help in urban places but more commonly replied “no se atiende” than the non-indigenous people. In Chihuahua state people in urban places barely responded “no” less than those in rural. For indigenous people more people in rural and urban places responded “no se atiende” than for Mexico as a whole, and the difference between those in rural vs. those in urban was much more pronounced (1.5% in Mexico vs. 4.9% in Chihuahua). In sum, indigenous people in Mexico were more likely to responde “no se atiende” than non-indigenous people. However, indigenous people in Chihuahua State were even more likely to respond “no se atiende” than indigenous people in Mexico as a whole. In rural areas people were more likely to responde “no se atiende,” though indigenous people in rural areas were more likely than non-indigenous. Again, the lack of government resources meeting indigenous people in Chihuahua State seems to be more pronounced than that in other regions. Individuals who can help government programs bridge resources to indigenous groups, such as Minita in this case, can be very beneficial to the wellbeing of these hard-to-reach people.

All three quality life measures indicate that indigenous people living in rural areas in the state of Chihuahua have less access to electricity, more commonly have dirt floors, and do not have indoor plumbing for bodily waste. The table below represents respondents' answers.

Table 2. Quality of life measures, Mexican Census 2000.

		Mex-Urb-Ind	Mex-Urb-No	Mex-Rur-Ind	Mex-Rur-No	Chih-Urb-Ind	Chih-Urb-No	Chih-Rur-Ind	Chih-Rur-No
Housing material									
	<i>dirt floor</i>	39.20%	9.10%	68.80%	33.80%	19.40%	2.60%	85%	19.90%
	<i>cement floor</i>	50.40%	59.80%	29.40%	58.90%	61.90%	67.60%	11.40%	70.10%
	<i>wood, tile, other</i>	10.40%	31.20%	1.80%	7.30%	18.80%	29.80%	3.60%	10%
Plumbing in shelter									
	<i>si, tiene (yes)</i>	73.10%	94.30%	66.50%	69.40%	94.40%	97.30%	34.40%	81.50%
	<i>no tiene (no)</i>	26.90%	5.70%	33.50%	30.60%	5.60%	2.70%	65.60%	18.50%
Electricity in shelter									
	<i>si, tiene (yes)</i>	89.70%	97.80%	73.40%	86.30%	88.10%	99.10%	8.70%	79.10%
	<i>no tiene (no)</i>	10.30%	2.20%	26.60%	13.70%	11.90%	0.90%	91.30%	20.90%

Quality of life measures can help us understand the living conditions of indigenous people in Mexico, but they do not necessarily provide a guideline of what impoverished people need or want. One of the roles Juan Daniel and the other respondents fulfill is helping the Tarahumara improve their quality of life. However, as we shall see, helping them improve their lives should not mean giving them what we believe they need and should want. Rather, it may be something as simple as digging a trench to lay pipe or helping catch water run-off from the roofs of dwellings.

CHAPTER IV: Methodology and Data Collection Method

Methodology

This project was formulated during a visit to Minita's homeless shelter (*albergue*, in Spanish) in Cuauhtémoc, Mexico during the summer of 2005. My goal was to gather data about the albergue, Minita's relations with local Tarahumaran people and the Mexican medical establishment, Tarahumaran life in the albergue, and Minita's experiences in establishing and running the albergue. The medical record and that initial interview provided the basis for this thesis. The medical record has been an important data source for background information on the Tarahumara and will provide information on the work done by Minita for this project. Though not an impetus for this study, an interview with Juan Daniel in 2002 is also included in the paper as data regarding the current situation of the Tarahumara. Suggestions by professors in the BYU sociology department have prompted the acquisition of supplementary interviews with Juan Daniel and Horacio.

I have extensively considered my position as a white, advantaged, citizen of the U.S. as I approach a project regarding the cultural and ethnic differences between Mexican and indigenous groups. There are multiple drawbacks to being an outsider to both the Mexican culture and race and a foreigner to the Tarahumaran culture and race (Blea 1995). Certainly I have interpreted much of what went on in a way different than what may have been understood had a Mexican or Tarahumaran conducted the research. I believe, however, that being an outsider is beneficial in that I was not entrenched in the social world of Mexico. Being in the position of outsider and researcher has allowed, and will allow, me to note conversations, nuances, actions, and situations an insider may not recognize as extraordinary or noteworthy.

The nature of the data I collected for this project required personal, in-depth contact and interaction. Ethnographic data leads to detailed descriptions from an insider's perspective (Fetterman 1998) and enables the researcher to access information that may only be accessible for field or ethnographic study research (Lofland and Lofland 1995). Empirical data cannot access

information that is detail-rich and personal in the way that ethnographic data can. It is presumptuous to assume that a “snapshot” perspective on a particular phenomenon is enough to understand the nature of that phenomenon; the researcher must get as “inside” as they can (Fitchen 1981). Understanding meaning of social action necessitates an exploration of the definitions and explanations those involved in creating a phenomenon give. A case study methodology is most appropriate for this project because it “provides a way of studying human events and actions in their natural surroundings” (Feagin et al. 1991:7). Surveys or large quantitative studies cannot offer findings that match such a project.

The case study allows “the observer to render social action in a manner that comes closest to the action as it is understood by the actors themselves” (Feagin et al. 1991: 8). Because the researcher can be in the same context of the research subject(s) they observe, hear, and feel similar to the subject. Estrangement from the case study, or the attraction to strictly comparative social science, leads to “a detachment of the investigator from the real cases and events that are the raw material of comparative social science” (Ragin 1991:2). The “case study . . . can permit the researcher to examine not only the complexity of life in which people are implicated but also the impact on beliefs and decisions of the complex web of social interaction” (Feagin et al. 1991: 9).

Research necessitating ethnographic research should not automatically exclude the use of other data collection methods, such as census survey data. Many researchers agree that mixed methodology is an advantageous approach to understanding any phenomenon (see list in Strauss and Corbin 1998, p. 28). Placing ethnographic interview data within the context of Mexican census data supplements my results and better captures the situation under investigation. Drawing from the 2000 Mexican Census, I examined several factors that will clarify the present relationship between the Mexican government and Mexico’s indigenous people, specifically noting the differences between indigenous people in Chihuahua compared to those in the rest of Mexico.

With the intent of looking for differences in access to educational opportunities, knowledge of government programs, and quality of life, I explored differences between indigenous and *mestizo* respondents and rural and urban respondents from the 2000 Mexican Census (INEGI 2000). Level of educational attainment among native and non-native groups is reported and discussed to understand what access groups have to education according to ethnicity and geographic location, i.e. rural or urban. The degree of participation of indigenous people in government programs aimed to reduce poverty, specifically PROCAMPO, is used as an indicator of government policy influences the lives of natives. Similarly, the number of respondents reporting that they generally receive no medical care may or may not vary according to ethnicity, another indicator of the relationship between the Mexican government and Mexico's indigenous population. Lastly, several indicators of quality of life is given to show signs of change and differences between *mestizo* and native peoples. Those indicators include type of floor in the home where the respondent lives (ex., dirt, cement, wood), access to sewage systems, and whether or not the person has electricity in their home. In the Mexican census a question concerning the language(s) the respondent speaks and a question regarding connections to any indigenous origin indicate their ethnicity.

By including this data I intend to provide understanding of the differences between indigenous people and *mestizos* in Mexico. The rural/urban contrast is included because rural poverty is generally greater in Mexico and also because indigenous people tend to be concentrated in rural areas. I want to make clear, however, that by including "quality of life" measures I am not asserting that the absence of electricity in some respondent's homes means their lives are bad, or that they want or need our pity. In some cases people lack access to sewage systems or electricity because they cannot afford such amenities, but for others it is also a preference or custom based on indigenous traditions in which their families have lived for generations. They themselves may not see their low scores on a "quality of life" scale as indicating a poor life, and therefore neither should we automatically make that assumption.

Method

In 2005 I assisted Minita in compiling records and data for the years 2002 through June of 2005 of all medical work she had done. Having met her in 2002 I decided to work with her on any project she needed help with when I traveled with a BYU group to Mexico in 2005. The medical record was requested by the Chihuahua state government and included information regarding all medical visits she had done, all medicine administered, all deaths she witnessed, all births she assisted in, the state of Tarahumaran health in her albergue, the most common illnesses during a given year, and the number of Tarahumara staying in the albergue. During the two and a half weeks I assisted her in this project I interviewed Minita almost daily regarding her work as a nurse, the story of her life, her relationship with the Tarahumara, her interactions with local institutions and the Mexican medical establishment, and her personal relationships with *mestizos* and several BYU faculty members. In total I videotaped over two and half hours of interviews with her, kept detailed notes of our conversations and my observations, and wrote about the stories told by her and Tarahumarans in the shelter. Since I had a laptop in order to work on the state medical document I was able to type my field notes on site. Upon my return to Mexico in 2006 to collect additional data I visited Minita for two days and tape-recorded new conversations. I asked follow up questions according to the changes made in my research topic and purpose, guided by the seven research questions above.

I met and was able to contact Juan Daniel and Horacio through a BYU faculty member. Interview questions were derived from the ideas of network theory and experiences with Minita. The interviews with Juan Daniel and Horacio were guided by some written questions and notes, including the seven questions included above. I tape recorded each interview and wrote notes on my reflections of how each interview went. During my time with Juan Daniel I tape-recorded most of my field notes, which I transcribed upon returning home. The answers to some follow up questions were written down. Field notes with Horacio were all written down, though I had few notes from my time with him because it was so brief.

Language was generally not a barrier in the interviews I conducted because of my fluency in Spanish. However, the interview with Horacio was difficult to understand at times because of his status as a very educated person. His vocabulary was much larger than mine and I was not able to ask him to define every word I could not understand. I have been able to contact Horacio through email to clarify the confusions and misunderstandings as he has constant access to the internet.

Though my interview experiences were inevitably different with Juan Daniel and Horacio due to time restrictions and less familiarity, I collected data similar to that from Minita. The research collected with Minita involved a significant amount of participant observation and recorded footage of the *albergue* and her interactions with hospital personnel and Tarahumarans; time and circumstance did not afford participant observation or the same depth of experience with Juan Daniel and Horacio.

I have loosely transcribed the tape-recorded and video recorded interviews from the original Spanish and have translated them into English. The interviews were not transcribed word for word, noting every pause and word choice, because conversation analysis or close observation of word choice is not what is of interest to me. The parts of the interviews that were pertinent and which I thought could be useful for quoting I transcribed word for word. As Lofland and Lofland (1995) suggest, aspects of the interviews that were more conversational, not as relevant or important, were summarized. There are particular sections of the conversations that needed to be transcribed for further examination and use, but more than anything, to understand a section of conversation, I returned to the source of the data—the tape—to examine what was said. The tape-recorded interviews were many times the best source for analysis because the intonation of voice and the context of the questions and answers are important in understanding what is said.

Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio have been chosen for this study because they are part of various networks that bring resources and information from institutions, agencies, and individuals

to the Tarahumara. They, in part, facilitate transfers between groups with little cultural understanding due to the many connections they have both with the Tarahumara and people who have access to what some Tarahumara need and want. A closer look at their knowledge of institutions and legitimacy within them, their personal relationships in and outside established institutions, their cultural and social capital within both Tarahumaran and *mestizo* fields, and their access to resources will provide examples to extend or contradict existing network and cultural bridge theories.

CHAPTER V: Findings from Ethnographic Research

In this chapter I present the findings from the interviews, field notes, emails, and census data collected regarding the positions of Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio as parts of cultural and social bridges. Since the data from the seven questions produced some redundancies I have combined the questions into six sections that represent the seven original research questions. Preceding that is a description of the three participants and the work they do. An application of the findings to the theoretical literature is found in the discussion section.

The Case of Three Cultural bridges: Herminia Prado Bustillos (“Minita”), Juan Daniel Villalobos, and Horacio Gonzalez

Minita’s childhood was mostly spent among the Tarahumara in Baquiachi, Mexico. Her father was a schoolteacher of the Tarahumara there and in other small towns. It was in Baquiachi that Minita became familiar with Rarámuri, the Tarahumaran language, and the customs of the Tarahumara through the influence of her mother and father who both worked with and befriended them. Later, when she went to nursing school, she determined to focus her efforts in helping the Tarahumara.

For years Minita worked as a nurse in Cuauhtémoc and other places, going between hospitals and private homes to give medical attention to those in need. Cuauhtémoc has a population of about 80,500 (INEGI 2000). It is about 50 miles from Chihuahua, the state capital.

The following map from Raat and Janecek (1996: 6) shows where Cuauhtémoc is in relation to Chihuahua and the cities the other two respondents live in. The gray arrow indicates Cuauhtémoc.

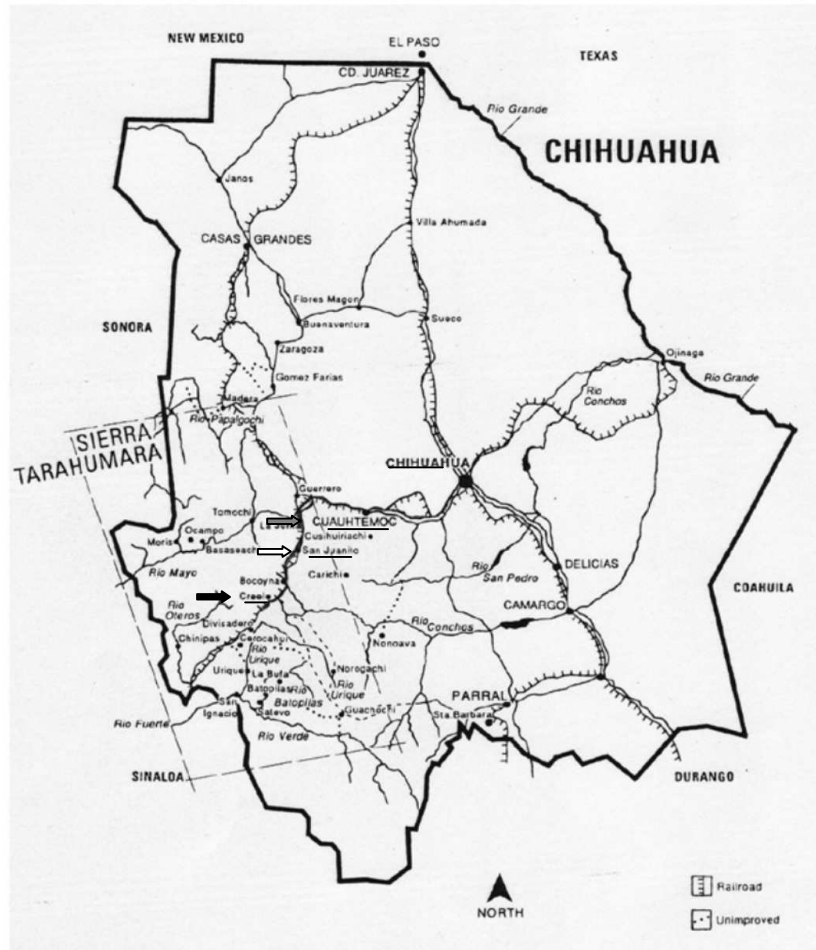


Figure 4. In this map of Chihuahua State the grey arrow points to Cuauhtémoc, white to San Juanito, and black to Creel. The black lines are newer highways and the other lines with lines crossing them indicate rail road tracks. The box indicates the general area the Tarahumara are concentrated in. Creel is app. 264 k (164 m) from Chihuahua.

After years of working in the hospitals Minita experienced a mental breakdown during which she worked as a seamstress. At that time she moved into a small home that later became the *Albergue Tarahumara Minita*, also in Cuauhtémoc. She began by tending to the sick that came to her

there, reaching out to the Tarahumara in the community as a medical help and as a provider of shelter. The homeless shelter began very small, but with contributions from the neighborhood, some friends, family, and a few other sources, it was expanded to house her and members of her extended family, with a sufficient number of additional bedrooms for Tarahumarans who needed a place to stay.

Minita's home is close to the corner of a rocky, dirt street with a semblance of a sidewalk. Next door is a shop that sells basic food items—eggs, beans, cheese, and processed foods and sodas. The tortilla shop is down the adjacent, paved street, and most other items are several blocks away. The front of the house gives the impression that it is small, though in fact it is quite large due to the numerous rooms and sections of roof that have been added on over the years.

Minita conducts the majority of exams, administers medicine and shots, records births and other events, and receives guests or nurses from the hospital in the front room. She has a table set up with files, journals, records, a stethoscope, a blood pressure monitor, and quotes from Mother Theresa and other religious heroes. There is a scale, more files, drawers with medicines, chairs, and a few awards she has been granted hanging on the wall along with a picture of Jesus Christ. This room also serves as her bedroom. Her bed takes up a corner of the room, though she has no other personal belongings in the room. If her visitors are eating together or drinking coffee they may move into the little kitchen that is adjacent to the bedroom where they gather around a wooden table. The house originally consisted of just these two rooms, though now you can pass through the kitchen to a large central room off of which are two more bedrooms, a wash room, and a bathroom. Her older, incapacitated brother lives in one room, a niece with her two sons in another, and second niece sleeps in the large central room.

A door leads out of the wash room into a courtyard that is crowded with plants, clothes lines and drying wash, wash basins, mattresses, children, bags of clothes and other personal belongings, and adults. There are flies everywhere, despite the intense effort of the women to

keep the overcrowded area clean. Surrounding the courtyard with doors facing into it are two bathrooms and three bedrooms. The bedrooms are equipped with lights, oven/stoves, refrigerators, tables, chairs, bunk beds, extra mattresses, and the occasional television set. This is the *albergue*, or homeless shelter. The *albergue* is usually very full, with about 80 people sleeping in the three small bedrooms, courtyard, and covered garage area. The majority of those people are friends and acquaintances from Baquiachi. When I asked how everyone can sleep in such small space, she said, “Oh [they sleep], in the whole patio and everything.” I asked, “On the floor!?” She quickly responded, “No, of course not. On mattresses.”

Minita’s work generally takes place here, in her home, though she sometimes travels by bus (and sometimes ambulance) to the hospital downtown. Although her home is far from the center of town she essentially lives in an urban setting and helps the Tarahumara who come from rural areas find their way in the city. Her domain is medical; her approach is practical and committed. When the Western medicine she knows fails to cure she calls a Tarahumaran healer to pray for and dream about her patients, hoping their knowledge will cure what she cannot. She uses medicinal plants when needs be while also sending patients to doctors and hospitals.

Minita continues administering medical attention to those who live in the *albergue*, visit the *albergue*, or seek her help from other local and distant residences. She is concerned with the many challenges Tarahumarans face when living in the city but her time is almost exclusively devoted to medicine and healing among them. She has ties to the local hospital that dispatches supplies, nurses, and ambulances to the *albergue* when needed. She also receives medical supplies and money from other sources, including several people in the United States and agencies in Cuauhtémoc. People in the neighborhood and town donate supplies to the *albergue*, as do various other groups inside and outside the surrounding area. Many Tarahumara come to her not only from the local neighborhood, but also from the Sierra as they pass through town, for medical help. They discuss their experiences with work, medical attention in the Centro de Salud (Health Center), and the health of family and friends in various areas.

Juan Daniel Villalobos and Horacio Echeverría also work closely with the Tarahumara, though in different locals and through different programs. Juan Daniel is associated with several organizations but works primarily as an independent person who assists in development projects in the mountain villages of the Sierra around the town of Creel. He does not support himself through his work with the Tarahumara; he is a carpenter and lives off profits from the furniture he makes and sells. In Creel, a town of 4,613 and 154 kilometers (96 miles) from Cuauhtémoc (INEGI 2000) at the base of the mountains, he has established his family home, with his carpentry shop set up in back, and the school his wife has founded next door. The map above shows the location of Creel, indicated by the black arrow. His work can generally be called grassroots development: he works in conjunction with various agencies to establish better irrigation and farming techniques in communities in the Sierra.

Juan Daniel drives around town and on rocky mountain roads in a 4-wheel drive, 1980s, American truck. That is, until the roads are too windy or rough for even his truck—then he hikes. His skin is tanned and leathery from years of farming and irrigation work in the Sierra. On his feet he wears *huaraches*, the typical foot wear of the Tarahumara. They are sandals made from old tire treads and tied together with leather straps. His feet are cracked, calloused, and worn from hiking over rocky, mountain terrain in sandals.

He has extensive contacts with Mexican and American groups eager to donate time and money to promoting projects he supports in the Tarahumaran communities. The Catholic Church, Chihuahua State government, and numerous NGO's in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, all work through and with him. He has committed a large portion of his time to serving the Tarahumara, has chosen 5 communities to focus his efforts in, and travels days in car and on foot to discover and meet the needs of the people there.

Horacio is a short, dark-skinned Pima Indian with dark black hair. His enthusiasm for education and devotion to indigenous students is very apparent. He works Monday to Friday in the large city of Chihuahua but he has established his home in the small town of San Juanito, a

town of 9,358 situated approximately 120 kilometers (74 miles) from Cuauhtémoc and 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Creel (INEGI 2000). Again, the map above will show where he lives and where he works. San Juanito is indicated by the white arrow, Chihuahua is the state capital to the north-east.

Though he was not raised among the Pima or related Tarahumara, Horacio speaks three dialects of *Rarámuri*, and has extensive experience in various Tarahumaran mountain communities. He has changed employment multiple times, though he has always worked education; he is extremely dedicated to education and development among Chihuahua State's indigenous population. His first position after receiving a degree in education was to teach in schools located deep within the Sierra. Soon after he began writing curriculum for indigenous schools and for teachers who would be teaching there. He has also been an employee of the Chihuahua State department of education, founded the first indigenous high school in the Sierra, and has opened a study center of his own. Currently he heads up projects that outreach to potential indigenous college students, enabling them to attend university by seeking out funding, housing, and admittance to universities. The Tarahumara who know him and trust him refer to him as “el maestro”: teacher in English, though it has an insinuation of deference as well. They respect and honor him as a teacher, a leader, and one who can help them and their children escape poverty.

An important aspect of Horacio's work is that he always has several side projects he works on in addition to his full-time employment. All of them have to do with indigenous education, but their scope varies. Right now he and several others are conducting interview research in various Tarahumaran communities to assess the impact and success of such government programs as OPORTUNIDADES, PROGRESA, and PROCAMPO—all of which were described previously. His other work-in-progress is establishing a college in San Juanito, the town where he lives, that local indigenous students can attend. His extensive connections help him access funding and other aid, including other individuals willing to help.

All three respondents live within 100 miles of each other, and very close to the Sierra Madre Mountains where the majority of Tarahumara live, yet they are not acquainted and their work addresses distinct issues. In other words, their network ties are non-redundant, giving each person's network strength since each has almost exclusive access to resources from government and non-government organizations necessary for their work. They have only heard mention of one another. Minita is concerned primarily with healthcare in Cuauhtémoc, administering medical help and sanitary shelter to numerous people. Horacio has been part of the state's educational bureaucracy at many levels, as a teacher and administrator, and works in conjunction with Chihuahua's principal university. Juan Daniel's time is spent obtaining resources for projects in the mountain communities: his network involves a diversity of organizations looking to donate time and supplies for his projects. Their geographic proximity makes their lack of contact surprising, but their varied interests and different modes of navigating to access resources allow them to operate in distinct social networks, among both *mestizos* and Tarahumara.

Section 1: Habitus, navigation in social networks, cultural sensitivity.

Habitus is not a sociological principle that can be measured or quantified. However, descriptions of Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio and how they navigate in the social networks they are part of will show the value of the "logic of practice" that comes with time and past experience (Bourdieu 1990: 11). This section draws on data from questions two and seven.

Minita. Minita's childhood in Baquiachi among the Tarahumara gave her extensive time and experience living in the Tarahumara social context. Since her childhood there poverty has forced many of the people who lived in Baquiachi to leave in search of employment, and some of her oldest friends and acquaintances from there have sought shelter under her roof. Living among the people has equipped her with the embodied knowledge necessary to act and talk according to the cultural rules of the Tarahumaran social context. In fact, so extensive is her involvement in the Tarahumaran network that *mestizo* friends have told her that she speaks Spanish like the Tarahumara, meaning poorly.

With most people Minita converses in Spanish, mixing in occasional *Rarámuri* words, and slipping into *Rarámuri* when something is not understood. She explains that it is difficult for *mestizos* to understand their Spanish because they mix tenses, they use the wrong verbs, but that she understands. In most conversations, when a *Rarámuri* term or practice came up that I didn't understand, Minita would teach me about it. She explained how they understand medicine and healing, and how she incorporates some of it into her own practice. She had a Tarahumaran woman show me how they grind corn, what they eat, and how they make baskets.

On most days Minita begins healing around 7 or 8 a.m. and sometimes there are already several people waiting for her. She arises, eats corn mush and coffee—the typical breakfast of the Tarahumara. If new people have come to live in the albergue she feeds them, gives them coffee, and talks to them for a time about their needs and experiences, basically an unofficial intake conversation. Her approach to healing is very practical. Generally she relies on Western medicine, but she drawn on any type of healing tradition if it helps.

Mestizo culture, as compared to Tarahumaran culture, demands that work be done more or less on time, requires precision and speed in actions and decisions, is somewhat intrusive, and has less respect for collective decision making and discussion. I joked with the *mestizo* women who know Minita about her seemingly nonexistent reference to time or what I saw as priorities. In 2006, having offered to give Minita a ride to a doctor's appointment for herself, I waited almost two hours before she was ready to go. During that time she treated several people, talked to others in the *albergue*, took care of some other matters, and slowly prepared herself to leave. Her relations with the Tarahumara show how fully and deeply she has learned their culture and practices: she does not need to stop to consider if something is appropriate to say to them, she knows instinctively how to “play the game.”

Sensitivity to and knowledge of Tarahumaran culture plays an extremely important role in Minita's ability to make and maintain connections; it allows her to navigate easily and naturally within the various networks of which she is a part. Cultural sensitivity implies a

knowledge concerning a group's culture and then behavior that reacts to or complies with that knowledge in order to positively interact with the group; it is the feel for the game that comes with knowledge of a culture and time spent in it. Minita knows Rarámuri culture and language, respects their culture, and understands their beliefs and superstitions. In Baquiachi when the Tarahumara had fiestas and religious celebrations she and her family generally attended. During my visit she enjoyed asking the Tarahumara to explain customs and practices to me, demonstrating an appreciation of them and a desire to share them. By showing me elements of the culture she demonstrates an ability to distinguish herself from them.

In order to contrast Minita's familiarity with Tarahumaran life and culture I present an example of another woman who runs a homeless shelter in Cuauhtémoc. Deisy was a figure in the daily life at Minita's albergue when I visited in 2006. Her approach to aiding the Tarahumara is strikingly different, though I believe many of her intentions are similar to Minita's. Deisy has a degree in social work and is in charge of a federally funded homeless shelter situated about 5 miles from Minita's home. According to Minita the Tarahumara say they don't want to stay there, they prefer staying elsewhere, even if it means living in crowded conditions with about 70 or 80 other people.

When I visited the other shelter I began to understand why. The half-acre of land was surrounded by high, barbed-wire, chain-linked fence that remains locked through the night. Despite the bright yellow paint on the buildings it felt like a compound or prison. There are 8 family housing units, complete with one bedroom and a small kitchen. Wash tubs, showers, and bathrooms are used communally with the other housing units set aside specifically for single men who come without their families to work. There is a lot more space at the federally run shelter, nicer facilities, and more free food. However, most Tarahumaran men do not travel without their families: even if searching for seasonal work they come with their wives and children since their wives generally work as well. The single-men housing was almost completely empty—only 8 of

over 40 beds were filled. In addition, one of the family housing units was empty and one was occupied by the Mexican family who manages the place 24-hours a day.

Deisy goes by the federally-run shelter like a visitor, and obviously has no strong relationships with the Tarahumara living there. She visits Minita's home often to donate food from the government, to spend time with Minita, and to share information of resources available to both of them. Despite her social work background it seemed that Minita had more information to share than she did. The difference in feeling between the federally run shelter and Minita's shelter was strong, Minita's place feeling more comfortable and open and Deisy's more isolated and closed. There are many reasons for these differences, but I mention it here because I believe part of it is due to Minita's familiarity with the Tarahumara, having been raised with them, and Deisy's total unfamiliarity with them. She does not speak Rarámuri, she knows little of their life in the mountains, she does not have personal relationships with the people in the shelter, and her "logic of practice" is virtually non-existent. Her intentions are good, but the depth of experience and knowledge simply is not there. Her lack of natural ease and familiarity in Tarahumaran culture makes it much more difficult for her to work within this particular Tarahumara social network. In addition it leaves her without sufficient cultural knowledge and sensitivity. On the other hand, she is well-equipped with *habitus* in the *mestizo* context and has access to more resources in *mestizo* networks.

Minita is not free of assumptions, biases, or prejudiced thoughts, of course; a person cannot have a perfect embodiment of the unwritten rules of a social context. In 2005, for example, Minita explained that a certain group of Rarámuri women were more beautiful than the rest because they had Spanish blood in their line—a very offensive comment for a people who have tried to maintain separation from Spanish descendents. Though Minita may hold inaccurate assumptions or stereotypes these do not violate the trust people place in her, probably because those ideas are few and relatively powerless in shaping her actions. Her position as a resource for

them is also incredibly valuable; they may opt to ignore offensive or odd acts because they simply are not as important as having her as an ally.

In the exchanges I witnessed she gently persuaded Rarámuri people to go to medical doctors rather than a community healer, yet that push away from traditional healing did not seem upsetting to them because of her ability to work within their social network. The following conversation is between Minita and Lencha, a friend from Baquiachi.

Minita: Pero no tiene guzanos mi hija, ¿usted si tiene?
Lencha: Yo creo que si, si no puedo mover asi. Pero costaba dinero, ¡pues cobra mucho!
Minita: Si, pero vamos al Centro de Salud, y le cobran menos. No mas que allí no sacan los guzanos así. Asi le dan para tomar para que se salgan.
Lencha: Mm hmm.
Minita: No, no es guzano mi hija, eso no es.
Lencha: ¿Quién sabe? Se sacó un bolito chiquito. Se sacó una bolito.
Minita: ¿Quién lo sacó?
Lencha: Jose Luis.
Minita: Si. ¿Y cuánto cobra el cesario?
Lencha: Pues yo nunca. . .50 pesos
Minita: ¿50 pesos?
Lencha: Si.
Minita: Pues no son nada mi hija, si eso le cure.
Lencha: Pues si, yo voy alli cuando me voy a la Sierra.
Minita: No, pero tiene que ir primero como le dije al sector, y luego ya vas para la Sierra.
Lencha: Pues si, pues ya quiere [sic] ir porque esta esparando mi hija.
Minita: Y el jueves va, el viernes o jueves?

Minita: But you don't have worms, daughter, or do you?
Lencha: I think so, I can't move my arm this way. But it costs money, they charge a lot!
Minita: Yeah, but we'll go to the Medical Center and they'll charge you less. Only they don't take the worms out like this, they give you something to swallow and the worms leave.
Lencha: Mm hmmm.
Minita: It's not worms, daughter, that's not it.
Lencha: Who knows? They took a little ball out. They took a ball out.
Minita: Who took it out?
Lencha: Jose Luis.
Minita: Yes, and how much did that surgery cost?
Lencha: Well, I never...50 pesos.
Minita: 50 pesos?
Lencha: Yes.
Minita: Well that's nothing, daughter, if that heals you.
Lencha: Well, yes, I'll go there when I go to the Sierra [to see the Tarahumaran healer].
Minita: No, first you have to go, like I told you, downtown, then to the Sierra [she means to the Mexican doctor].
Lencha: Well ok. I want to go now because my daughter is waiting.
Minita: And thursday you'll go? Friday or thursday?

I include the conversation above because Minita gently persuades Lencha that the things in her arms are not little worms or bugs under her skin, and that she should go to the Centro de Salud or

hospital, not a Rarámuri doctor again. The full conversation is not included, but during the course of it Minita also mentioned the curanderos, or Rarámuri healers she herself has visited and suggests that she will help pay for a visit to the Mexican doctor. Minita also asks how Rarámuri doctors get the worms out—do they kill a chicken, do they dream, do they dance? She demonstrates knowledge and respect for their practices but simultaneously pushes Lencha toward a Mexican doctor for help.

For example, in 2006 Minita explained again that the Tarahumara traditionally heal with medicinal plants and dreams, both of which she says are beautiful customs. Her next comment exposed her familiarity with their culture, the trust they place in her, her own ability to play the game appropriately, and her preference for Mexican medical care. With a grin she explained that in the past, when a Tarahumaran patient would not receive treatment from a Mexican physician, she has lied and said that in a dream she saw that the individual was cured by going to a doctor. In retrospect she has thought about that action as both humorous and useful. At the time, however, she was simply drawing upon her experience with the Tarahumara and using an extremely effective method to help the person get adequate medical help.

Though I say less about Minita and *habitus* in *mestizo* society it is also essential in her ability to transfer resources from the Mexican medical organization to the Tarahumara. Years of experience as a registered nurse make many medical diagnoses and treatments almost natural reactions. This, in turn, gives her credibility and legitimacy with medical institutions. Similarly, time spent working in the hospital and visiting medical clinics with patients have instilled in her the culture, customs, and language of those places. It is her connections and charisma in the hospitals and health centers that have secured her role as one known and respected to many medical staff members.

Juan Daniel and Horacio. I was not able to spend as much time observing Juan Daniel and Horacio within the social context of the Tarahumara though each spends time in the villages and with the Tarahumara living in their towns and in surrounding areas. What sets Minita apart

from both of them, however, is that her daily life is spent living with the Tarahumara. Both Juan Daniel and Horacio live split lives. Juan Daniel and Horacio are both married to Mexican women, have several children, and they spend much of their day in a more Mexican/*mestizo* context than Minita. Their experiences and time spent with the Tarahumara are indeed extensive, but it is more separated from their daily life than in the case of Minita.

I first met Juan Daniel in 2002. At that time I visited his home and spent time with he and a student group in a Tarahumaran community. In 2006 I interviewed Juan Daniel in his home in Creel, a small town at the foot of the Sierra Mountains. When I interviewed Juan Daniel he sat back in a comfortable chair with a cup of coffee and pack of unfiltered cigarettes, literally ready to tell all I wanted to know. He spent considerable time during the interview giving a detailed history of his interaction with the Tarahumara and experience becoming a liaison between them and outside groups. All of his explanations were riddled with his personal philosophy of sustainable development, cultural respect and boundaries, and life stories.

Juan Daniel was born and raised among *mestizo* ranchers in a town close to the Sierra mountain range. His grandfather employed Tarahumarans for manual labor and told Juan Daniel in his younger years that the Tarahumara were not as good as *mestizos*. Like Minita he has rejected notions of the *mestizo* lifestyle and ideology in favor of Tarahumaran practices. For example, he wears *huaraches*, which are Tarahumaran sandals made from used tires and leather straps. He hikes through mountain terrain in huaraches, like a Tarahumaran man, with the calloused, dry feet that result. His wife, Adreana, born to a wealthy family in Mexico City, has also rejected much of what she was born in to.

Because Juan Daniel does not live in the communities permanently, and is not Tarahumara, he easily separates himself from it to be able to reflect on and explain Tarahumaran philosophy and life. He has spent extensive time in the communities, first as a priest and currently. So permanent is his presence in one community, Rowerachi, that they have built a home for him—one larger and more elaborate than their own. His knowledge of their culture is

also so much a part of him that he unconsciously knows what to say and how to act. When we ran into a community member in Creel the exchange was familiar, excited, and happy. He feels accepted by community members and knows that they generally enjoy the work related projects that go on there; he has even been trained to lead dances at various celebrations, making him important in the cultural context of the Tarahumaran social network. He is humble, however, in saying this, asserting that he does not claim to be one of them.

All of his familiarity, experience, and relationships in the communities are necessary for his role as a bridge. His cultural understanding of the people and his unconscious knowledge of appropriate words and actions are what make him a valuable resource to outside groups hoping to access the Tarahumara and to the Tarahumara in the five mountain communities he works in. His unconscious familiarity with the social fields of the Tarahumara and *mestizos* facilitates his ability to build relationships with people in both Tarahumara and *mestizo* networks. That same familiarity gives him the cultural familiarity necessary to be conscientious of individual and group needs and preferences as he works with people of opposing cultural groups.

In this sense his position is extremely valuable, although the data suggests that his current level of understanding regarding their culture is not necessary to complete projects among them. After declining the ordination to be a Father Juan Daniel began working among the Tarahumara. At that time he was familiar with their culture, spoke their language, and had been accepted by some in 2 communities where he worked—this is important because it shows that he already had an amount of cultural sensitivity and *habitus* and was at least partially embedded in some of the communities. However, he was not very sensitive to how much the projects he did there were truly wanted by the communities:

Depues de cuatro, cinco años trabajando muy intensamente en muchos proyectos, a lo mejor muy exitosos, pero me decía, ‘Bueno, ¿qué tanto lo quiere la gente, no? ¿Qué tanto es de ellos y que tanto es mío, no?’ Esto así me estaba cuestionando en toda mi vida, no?

Era una mentalidad muy mestiza, no? Para mí el bienestar es que tengan demás, no? Que no me falte comida, y que hay todo en abundancia, etcetera. Y creo que después de eso yo dije, ‘pues no,

esto no es lo que quiero que se haga,' no? Igual puedo sugerir muchas cosas pero que es lo que quiere la gente, no?

After four, five years working very intensely in a lot of projects, probably very successful ones, I said to myself, 'Well, What of all this do the people want, huh? What is theirs and what is mine?' And this is what I've been asking myself my whole life, ok?

It was a very mestizo mentality. For me wellbeing is that one has a lot of stuff, right? That I don't lack food, and there everything is in abundance, etc. And I believe after this is when I said, 'well, no, this isn't what I want done,' right? I can suggest many things but what do the people want?

This is, in part, *el proceso*. I include this because it demonstrates that Juan Daniel was not as culturally sensitive before as he is now, yet he was able to work very hard among the Tarahumara and complete multiple projects.

Juan Daniel's possession of cultural sensitivity influences his ability to return to any one community and complete projects that the people approve of. For example, an organization, like the government, can do a project and get it completed, possibly with Rarámuri help, and be "successful" without possessing much cultural sensitivity or experience in the community. However, if that project was only wanted by a handful of people in the community, or if it does not meet their needs, the workers may not be received well the next time they come or the project will never be fully implemented.

Like Juan Daniel, Horacio also lives his daily life apart from Tarahumaran people. Also like Juan Daniel there is an element of mixing his two worlds together, though his day to day life is very *mestizo*. He is at ease and comfortable in Tarahumaran communities and he claims to feel most natural or at home there, as opposed to the role he plays in the educational bureaucracy. His embodiment of the cultural rules of the people is apparent in this, whereas in the academic setting he makes much more of an effort to impress and fulfill the position he is in.

Interviewing Horacio was entirely different in the way he treated me. He was much more soft spoken than the others, got closer in proximity to me, addressed my questions by beginning with my name, and very gently explained things. Minita had this gentleness about her as well, more than Juan Daniel, but no one was as soft spoken as Horacio. When Horacio is in an academic setting, however, he is very animated, boisterous, and even loud, but it very obviously

wears him out. In the communities he is quiet, calm, and in our interview he was the same. He was much less prone to explain his personal philosophies than Juan Daniel, though he did explain a bit about the need for sustainable development in the communities and improved cultural understanding from the government. He also talked less about specifics than Minita or Juan Daniel: he refused to mention names of people or organizations, he emphasized that what was important is doing work that helps the indigenous people help themselves.

Horacio never fully separated himself from the indigenous context when he spoke; he used the pronoun “we” when answering questions about the broader indigenous community. Though he does not live with them his thinking is with them. With Minita and Juan Daniel it was easy to find examples of sensitivity and insensitivity in the stories they told and things they said. This was not true for Horacio, in part because he never separated himself from the people. His identification as an indigenous person appears to equip him even more with the beneficial knowledge and practice that come with time spent in a social context.

Horacio’s home is open to everyone. He works Monday thru Friday in Chihuahua, over a 2 hour’s drive away, yet on the weekends he holds meetings in his home, has guests over, helps personal friends, and does interviews with newspaper reporters. Every time I saw him he looked exhausted. Though his work is no longer in the Sierra he still visits people he knows there, helps them access education for their youth, and even takes his family with him on those trips. Unlike some government bureaucrats working on the Tarahumara “situation,” he is in constant contact with the people in the mountain communities—families, youth, teachers, and community leaders—maintaining the personal ties he has established. Though during the week he is an expert in his field and wears a suit and tie, when in the communities he gladly sits on dirt floors, eats food offered to him, and speaks Rarámuri. About this he says:

Me conocen como uno de ellos, como uno más. Porque si es comunidad Rarámuri, llego, hablo Rarámuri.

They know me as one of their own, like one more. Because when I arrive in a Rarámuri community, I come speaking Rarámuri.

There he presents himself as simply Horacio, an educator yes, but principally a Native Mexican.

Horacio is very skilled at demonstrating his knowledge of the appropriate customs, vocabulary, and actions that will prove his competence in whatever social situation he is in. He knows which clothes to wear, what language to use, and how to behave appropriately—demonstrating how the culture of both *mestizo* and Tarahumara fields is now part of him.

Section 2: Connections, embeddedness among the Tarahumara.

In asking if embeddedness plays a valuable role in the positions the respondents maintain as cultural bridges I am essentially asking whether or not trust is important in their ability to transfer information and resources across networks. Embeddedness implies being known by members of a social circle and accepted as a trustworthy correspondent; that trust does not require that social actors have intimate associations with members of the social circle. The data for this section comes from responses to questions one, two, and three.

Minita. Though the Tarahumara in the homeless shelter generally shied away from me, a white American sometimes holding a video camera, they would open up and become comfortable with Minita at my side. With her present they not only shared their customs with me but told stories about their struggles, illnesses, and pasts. She is very well known among the Tarahumara from Baquiachi, having been part of their community since childhood.

Pues yo siempre, siempre, de veras, desde chiquita—pues yo nací con ellos y me creía con ellos. Dicen que me cargaban en la espalda cuando yo era chiquita. Si, ellos me querían mucho desde chiquita. Y yo también a ellos.

Well I always, always, in truth, from the time I was young—well I was born with them, I grew up with them. They say that they carried me on their backs when I was little. Yes, they've loved me from the time I was a little girl. And I loved them back.

Those who already know her communicate their trust in her to other Tarahumara and *mestizos*.

Being known and trusted by many acquaintances appears to be extremely important for her ability to network and administer care to large numbers of people. Throughout the day she gives

medical counsel, administers care, and distributes medicine to native people from numerous Sierra communities, *ejidos*, and towns.

These connections provide resource and information transfers in that they allow Minita to deliver medical care and shelter to hundreds of Tarahumara a year, something difficult for other *mestizos* due to few direct connections with Tarahumaran people. As explained in network theory, relationships with individuals allow Minita to form bridging ties (Lin 2001, Burt 1992). The majority of her ties are with women, including female leaders in the *ejido*, mothers and grandmothers in the *albergue*, and other women who come to her for medical care. It is generally women who bring their children for medical treatment, and though the majority of Tarahumaran women at the shelter work, those who stay to take care of everyone's children are women. She does have a lot of contact with men since Tarahumaran families generally travel as families, even to the doctor. There are also many men from Baquiachi and the *albergue* who come to her for medical treatment. The majority of her relationships are with average Tarahumarans; she does not purposefully seek out authority figures within Tarahumaran groups.

An example of a connection is Lencha, a life long friend of Minita's. Lencha came to the *albergue* to talk about her health and a new baby that had been born to another woman. The mother of the baby was extremely reserved and did not want to go to Minita's, let alone the hospital, though she allowed other Tarahumaran women to take her baby to Minita's. Though Lencha already knows the value of breast feeding, and does not intend to have more children, Minita sat and discussed bottle-feeding versus breastfeeding during their conversation, asking Lencha whether she had breast or bottle-fed her own children. During this exchange Minita was encouraging Lencha to talk to the new mother about the importance of breast-feeding. She repeated numerous times, more than would be appropriate in a simple conversation, that breastfeeding is best for the baby, and that bottle-feeding shouldn't be used. She also used this conversation as a means to encourage the new mother to go to the Centro de Salud to get help for herself and the baby. Minita can talk to Lencha, an old friend and a valuable connection, and get

very far because Lencha will tell those she knows—she will help transmit the medical advice she has received from Minita to Tarahumarans outside of the *albergue*.

Resources, the type that Minita helps people access, come in many forms, some of which are medicines; doctor visits; helpful social connections in medical centers; basic medical care received in her home; a place to live, cook, and sleep; food; and advice. Among the Tarahumara her nursing degree is not as important as her abilities as a healer. It is her wisdom in prescribing appropriate medicines, her occasional use of medicinal plants, her own ability to heal, and her guidance in getting them to the right doctors that communicates to them that they can trust her. Her fluency in Rarámuri and familiarity with Tarahumaran Spanish, cultivated when she was young and consistently used with Tarahumaran acquaintances, allow her to communicate with many who are too shy or illiterate to go to a Mexican doctor. Knowledge regarding the culture and customs of the Rarámuri people is also important for Minita's work in that it gives her a high degree of sensitivity to their specific superstitions and reservations when it comes to Western medicine.

With the Tarahumara her skill as a healer is useful in direct care and advice but also as a tool to help the Tarahumara navigate in the medical institutions of Mexicans. Quite often she sends them to get medical help with a piece of paper that is filled out according to what illness they indicate to her. The papers have pictures of people with various ailments and a line to fill in more information about the condition. This part of her work will be described more below, but for now what is important is that with one of the papers the Tarahumara know they can show a doctor what is wrong, trusting Minita implicitly. This is what she said regarding this aspect of her work:

M: Para ellos y para uno es muy difícil mandarlos. Porque ellos van solo si les den un papel, si no, no van. Y luego, ellos tienen uno que hablar, como hablan ellos. Por ejemplo, si un Tarahumar me dice, 'yo quiero ir al hospital,' entonces, me dicen a mí, 'yo quiero venir al hospital.' Entonces yo ya sé, verdad? Pero el médico no sabe. Ellos dicen al contrario las cosas.

J: Entonces, no se entienden muy bien?.

M: No se entienden, no se entienden. Hay unos que hablan muy bien pero otros. . . . Pero yo ya sé, digo, 'que vas a hacer?' Entonces me dicen, me duele la cabeza, me. . .

M: For them and for anyone it is difficult to send them (to the doctor). Because they only go if they're given a paper, if not, they don't go. And later, they have to have someone who talks like they talk. For example, if a Tarahumara tells me, 'I want to go to the hospital,' they would say, 'I want to come to the hospital.' So I already know that, right? But the doctor doesn't know. They say things backwards.

J: So, they don't understand each other very well?

M: They don't understand each other, they don't understand. There are some who speak very well (Spanish). . . . But I already know, so I say, 'What are you going to do?' And they tell me, my head hurts, my...

Minita fills out a paper for them to help facilitate understanding between them and the medical staff. This process demonstrates the trust the Tarahumara place in her.

Minita's contacts among many of the Tarahumara she interacts with were not purposefully made but came about because she grew up with them. Her ability to navigate within their social sphere is also the result of this, though it is maintained through consistent upkeep and interaction with Tarahumara from Baquiachi and elsewhere. The main strategy she uses in maintaining her relationships and connections among the Tarahumara who come to her for help and who stay in the *albergue* is casual, daily conversation. A word that resurfaced many times in interviews was *platicar*, or converse. Whenever a new family or individual comes to stay in the shelter she feeds them, gives them coffee, and converses with them for a time, getting to know their current situation. Visitors too receive food and/or coffee as they sit and talk about their lives. Whether visiting, seeking medical help, or seeking shelter, she engages people in casual conversation; through conversation she reinforces shared memories between herself and the Tarahumara around her, reestablishes connections, and builds new relationships.

Juan Daniel and Horacio. Juan Daniel's contacts in Rarámuri communities began years ago during his time training to be a Father for the Catholic Church. Shared experience in work, cultural festivals, and a lot of conversation (*platicar*) have solidified many connections and friendships among community members permitting him to better understand needs in the communities. Even though Juan Daniel is much more embedded in the communities now, knows more of the people, and understands much more how to work with them, he is still *mestizo* and

therefore not a fully integrated part of the community—and he feels that distinction. He explained that though he is accepted in the communities not everyone is always in favor of the *mestizo* presence he represents. That feeling has generally changed with time, though it has never completely disappeared, he is still marginal in Tarahumara social networks.

Siempre hay como una raya pintada, no?

There is always a line drawn, you know?

Yet he works with these people often, implementing various projects and working side by side with them. In fact, they have trained him to lead dances at community gatherings and he joins in many community meetings—he is definitely trusted and an integral part of their communities. Watching him interact with community members in and outside of the communities it is obvious they see him as a friend, ally, and brother. How well the people know and trust him is central to his ability to work with them. His most important contacts for introducing and completing projects are male community leaders, though he also is in touch with male and female educators who teach there and the many friends, of both sexes, he has made over the years.

Connections have not always been easy for him to establish. He shared a story of one elderly community member who did not want him in the area, but who, after years of trust building, became one of Juan Daniel's closest friends. The man also became a great ally, or connection, in that he held sway in the community's decision making processes which helped Juan Daniel introduce projects more easily into the group. Juan Daniel makes it a point to approach every project in a community by first discussing it with the community leaders, generally men, after the initial project has been requested by a community member. He presents the idea, what commitments have been made, and waits for the leaders to confer with the entire community to decide if they will accept and work on the project or reject it. Now it is easier for him to approach the leaders since many of them were his friends before being chosen as leaders.

The respectable and trusted position Juan Daniel has achieved within the Rarámuri field is the result of what he calls “el proceso,” or the process. “*El proceso*,” is the process wherein

Juan Daniel becomes acquainted with a community, talks with the people there, works with them, and in that way comes to know and understand their society and culture. That part of the process has taken him many, many years to accomplish. The other part of the process is one that takes place for each, individual project. What is important in this part of the process is truly understanding what the people want and need, but also doing what was mentioned above: meeting with community leaders and through consensus with the entire community agreeing on what should be done. Through the process he comes to understand where conflicts arise, how they are settled, what the issues and difficulties in the communities are —hundreds of details and nuances missed by groups who wish to help but do not take the time necessary to know the people in depth. He becomes embedded in the communities and builds significant relationships with community members.

Hay muchos detalles que en el proceso se va uno dando cuenta y puede ir uno como conciliando, corrigiendo. Pero eso se requiere mucho acompañamiento, mucha cercanía. Entonces esto es muy padre, más es lo que yo quiero, pues. Como, trabajar junto *con*. Pues he hecho muchísimos amigos en todas las comunidades donde voy yo me siento como en familia, no?

There are a lot of details that in the process one realizes and can work on rectifying, correcting. But this requires a lot of accompaniment, a lot of physical closeness. So this is really cool, and that's what I want. Like, to work together *with*. I've made a lot of friends in all of the communities where I go and I feel like I'm with family.

He prefers this to taking materials or food to the communities and dropping them off, though he says that would be easier for him. This dedication on his part explains why he refuses to work in any more communities besides the five he currently works with, despite having been offered paid government positions to work in 50 or more communities. It also says something about the types of relationships he has in that network: some are instrumental, some are personal, but none of them are without emotional and cultural bonds to some extent.

The resources Juan Daniel provides to the communities also come in various forms. Tools and supplies for irrigation and catching rain water, other farming knowledge and tools, human labor from outside groups, and donated food are the most common things he brings into the communities.

Horacio has also done important work in Sierra communities, as mentioned previously. His work has taken him to many, many communities in different parts of the Sierra making his contacts more extensive than Juan Daniel's. However, his most personal connections are in just a handful of communities where he has spent extensive time.

The main example is Samachique, where he established the first Rarámuri high school in the Sierra. Completion of that project required relationship building, the garnering of a lot of trust, embeddedness within the community, knowledge of the people and their daily lives, and connections with the various families and potential students. The high school was a success with 96% of the student body being Tarahumara and the instructors using a curriculum that focused on reading, writing, and skills needed in community life. He is still known there and respected as the maestro who not only established a school, but a school that is sensitive to their needs as an indigenous community.

It is projects like that which have allowed Horacio to become known and trusted in various communities. He has thus built a history with the people there and has firmly established a trusted role as a teacher, friend, and great help. During the interviews with Horacio the term *platicar* (converse) also surfaced often. When he is in the communities he takes time to sit in the homes of the people, to talk about their lives and the difficulties they face, and he makes their lives his personal concern. Like Juan Daniel he has been trained to lead some dances in celebrations and is very trusted, though Horacio feels less of a barrier between himself and them due to his ethnic identity as an indigenous person. The interviews with Horacio indicate that despite the fact that he was not raised in an indigenous community it was extremely easy for him to feel comfortable there, to speak Rarámuri, and to be accepted there.

Horacio did not stress or even mention approaching a community through its leaders. This may be because the communities he works in are simply different than those Juan Daniel knows, but it is probably also because he has a different approach. His current work does not involve entire communities since he finds individuals who aspire to leave the communities and

attend university. Thus his contacts are more commonly with families and the members in them. It is through those familial ties that he can encourage specific youths to pursue education in the university; it also gives them a personal connection through which to access higher education. In his work, resources more commonly come in the forms of money or supplies for schooling, the shaping of curriculum to better meet Tarahumaran needs, and social connections that link the Tarahumara to educational resources.

Section 3: Connections, institutional legitimacy, and strategies with mestizos

Important for the role each respondent plays is their understanding of Tarahumaran culture, but also *mestizo* culture. Understanding both *mestizo* and Tarahumaran culture allows each respondent to connect the two without necessitating a high degree of mutual understanding and without deeply compromising their cultural differences. The connections they have established in both networks, and the resultant trust with each group, allows them to carry the comprehension and trust necessary for resource transfers to take place. This section addresses questions one, two, and three.

Minita. Minita is now over 70 years old, thus most of her connections are many years old, including those within the local medical establishments. Before opening the *albergue*, Minita worked in the hospital in Cuauhtémoc and later as a nurse in the homes of elderly people, requiring continued contact with local health centers. The people at the hospital, pharmacy, and Centro de Salud know Minita by name, know what her work is, and seem to respect her as a seasoned nurse. However, she has few intimate relationships with the people in those places. Because her status within the Cuauhtémoc medical network is somewhat marginal her contacts there do not appear to be redundant. In 2005 I went to the Centro de Salud (Health Center) with Minita and a *mestizo* friend who needed medical help. The people at all the counters knew Minita and chatted with her for a moment as did people passing us in the halls and corridors. She has been volunteering or working with the Centro de Salud for 45 years now and her extensive contacts with nurses, secretaries, and doctors allow her quick access to medical care, medicines,

and information. In 2006 I gave Minita a ride to the hospital for a doctor's appointment. There the people knew her just as well, and while those in the waiting room had to wait hours for an appointment she got into her appointment in about 15 minutes. The way she conducts herself in these places is with ease, familiarity, and authority. She is extremely well connected with the doctors, nurses, and secretaries:

J: Y usted conoce a muchos allí en el hospital?

M: Sí! Casi todos, es que yo voy mucho por allá. Sí, y ellos me conocen todos a mí.

Es que voy mucho allí.

J: Y se llevan bien?

M: Si, muy bien. Muy bien, si entro en la hora que voy. Porque ya no le dejan entrar, hasta la hora de visita, y yo si entro en la hora que voy. Es que nosotros tenemos permiso para entrar y visitar en la hora que vamos.

J: And do you know a lot of people in the hospital?

M: Yes! Almost everyone, I go there a lot. Yes, and they know me. I go there a lot.

J: And you all get along?

M: Yes, very well (this was a very quick reply, like 'of course we do'). Very well, I can get in at whatever time I go. Because they don't let people in until visiting hours, but I get in whenever I go. We have permission to enter and visit at whatever hour we arrive.

Some of those relationships are many years old, but Minita continues making new contacts as she escorts Tarahumaran people to hospitals and has health care workers attend people in her home.

In hospitals and health centers Minita's connections are generally with lower-level staff. She knows the nurses, the secretaries, and a few doctors in the hospitals—she does not work with the hospital directors or people making large decisions about the medical bureaucracy. Many of those acquaintances are female, including the doctor she herself sees. Outside of those structures the pharmacists, social workers, secretaries of other organizations are also allies, and also mostly women. One of the only exceptions I noted was a man who had connections to cheap prescription drugs, though there were others. In all of the situations a trusting relationship was apparent; highly personal or deep relationships were not apparent.

Sometimes these relationships result in improved health care, other times in cheaper medicine, other times in lower utility bills, as in the case of a young woman from the water company who knows Minita and knows to charge her less than she owes every month. She told a story about going there when the young woman wasn't there. The other woman working was

going to charge her full price, which is basically impossible for Minita to pay. So when the second woman wouldn't charge her less she said she would come back when the woman who charged her less would be there. She did, and she ended up paying less.

Minita's connection with Deisy, the federal social worker, results in food from federal programs and knowledge about the people in the other *albergue*. Minita says she receives no help from the government for her work, with the exception of food from the other *albergue* and free health care for indigenous people. She said,

No, El Estado no manda nada. . . . No, fíjese, el gobierno no manda nada, nada a mí. Ni para el agua ni la luz ni la medicina.

No, the state doesn't send us anything. . . . No, imagine, the government doesn't send anything, nothing to me. Not for the water or the light or for medicine.

The Centro de Salud, or Health Center, gives Minita some medicines which she gives away for free, otherwise they could not supply her. To pay her utility bills every month she gets money from various sources. She has a niece living in the house who works full time, several friends in the United States who send her money, plus she finds ways to pay less than she owes.

The connections that Minita has cultivated and maintained over the years are, in part, what gives her institutional legitimacy in medical circles though there are several other contributing factors. Her status as a nurse sought after by the Tarahumara, the degree she holds as a licensed and practiced nurse, and the countless experiences and interactions she has had with nurses, office assistants, and doctors at the Centro de Salud and hospital give her institutional legitimacy in those places. She is very experienced in her field not only because she was trained as a nurse but because she was trained to be a nurse in rural areas, outside of hospitals and without the aid of doctors, training which prepared her for situations that many other nurses are not prepared to handle. In that sense she simply knows what she is doing, and that knowledge is especially noteworthy because it extends to working with a population that is generally more difficult to reach. She has had opportunities to work side by side with doctors and nurses in the area who approve of her skill and encourage her work, creating a relationship of trust.

Minita's strategies among *mestizos* are similar to those with the Tarahumara: casual conversation, taking place on a regular basis, is extremely important in building relationships, maintaining connections, and initiating bonds. In the hospitals and health clinics she visits she converses with workers and patrons alike. Walking through the Centro de Salud with her and the downtown area of Cuauhtémoc I was amazed at how many people she knew. She informed me that she knows so many because they come to the *albergue* for treatment, to deliver things, or just to talk.

Juan Daniel and Horacio. Like Minita, both Horacio and Juan Daniel have extensive experience and/or training in their respective fields. The places Juan Daniel has institutional legitimacy, or is respected as someone who can effectively work with the Tarahumara, are in charitable organizations, religious groups, and government agencies concerned with helping the Tarahumara.

With the Catholic Church Juan Daniel's connections are founded in a long history and shared faith and hard, dedicated work. He has spent over 30 years working with nuns, priests, and other Catholic authorities and centers in getting much needed food, clothes, and information to the Tarahumara who live in and around Creel. That past experience, for them, makes him a reliable source. More powerful still in legitimizing his role as a liaison for the Catholic Church to the Tarahumara is his devotion to the Tarahumara, evidenced by the fact that he turned down an important ordination within the Catholic hierarchy and yet remains a valuable resource for the Church to reach the Rarámuri people. Juan Daniel receives a lot of food donations, clothes, medical help, and supplies for other projects from the Catholic Church and a Catholic health clinic in Creel. Connections with other groups began when he worked with the Catholic Church in Sierra communities around Creel. After becoming an independent, non-profit laborer among the Tarahumara groups began to approach him, wondering what work they could contribute to help the impoverished Tarahumara.

Now Juan Daniel's connections are with a variety of groups, from large and bureaucratic to small and not-for-profit. This diversity of groups provides him with varied types of aid and a continual supply. Within each structure he has acquaintances with individuals, the majority of which are in leadership roles. In Native Seed Search, a group based in Tucson, Arizona that funds some of his work, his connection is with the founder, Barry Burns. Burns conducted research in the Sierra over 30 years ago and after that began buying artesian crafts from the Tarahumara and selling them in the U.S. Eventually that venture led him to Huarachi where he saw the projects of Juan Daniel, working to build orchards and improve irrigation—he had founded Native Seed Search in order to fund projects like the ones Juan Daniel was doing. Later a representative from Native Seed Search spent a week with Juan Daniel observing all the work he did and decided it was in their interest to fund his work. They fund the purchase of things like wire fencing to keep goats out of the crops, cement to build dams, and other “cosas que no tiene la comunidad,” or things that the community doesn't have. This connection is extremely valuable to Juan Daniel because the nature of the organization (small, not-for-profit, dedicated to grass roots poverty alleviation) is more conducive to the size, speed, and “success” levels that typify his work. Projects among the Rarámuri can sometimes take a long time due to the communal decision making process that typifies their communities. The completion of projects may also take more time because the Tarahumara do not respond to schedule and time demands placed on them by outside organizations. Juan Daniel refuses to push them or do projects without approval from the community, a fact that makes his approach to development incompatible with other groups' views.

Besides Native Seed Search Juan Daniel has connections with the Rotary Clubs of Cuauhtémoc and other Mexican and Canadian cities, various Chihuahua State Government agencies, student groups from the University of Chihuahua, student groups from Brigham Young University and Utah Valley State College in Provo, UT, and other clubs from Mexico and the

United States that temporarily donate money or time. Many of the leaders of those groups are male, and therefore most of his personal, productive connections are with men.

But why do these groups come specifically to him? The data indicates two possible answers. Juan Daniel's role as a trusted friend to the closed Tarahumara communities makes him unique and extremely valuable for accessing the needs and wants of the people. As explained above, he passes through the process, he knows their culture, he speaks their language, and he is personal friends with the people in the communities. He has background and experience that people from volunteer groups do not have and are not willing to acquire. His skills in farming and irrigation work; his depth of study into Tarahumaran philosophy, history, and culture while training with the Catholic Church; and his commitment to hard work all seem to be other factors that attract organizations to his projects.

Some of the best evidence that he has legitimacy in other institutions is the fact that he has too many groups, agencies, clubs, etc. contacting him to solicit his help in reaching out to the Tarahumara. He mentions several times that organizations, governments, and clubs approach him because of his connections to Tarahumaran communities when they have money, resources, or volunteers.

A...muchos de fundaciones o clubes tengo que decirles que no puedo. . . . Yo creo que el problema también es que no hay mucha gente que esté en comunidades. A mi me llegan muchas solicitudes de, del gobierno, de fundaciones y todo: 'trabaja con nosotros, tenemos como un millón de dólares para hacer...' Pues sí, le digo, pero ya tengo el tiempo bien agotado, no? No puedo hacer más. Incluso quiero hacer menos de lo que estoy haciendo. Pero éste es el problema, éstos tienen recursos pero no hay en como gastarlo. No saben que es lo que quiere la gente. No saben, no hay alguien que esté acompañando éste proceso. Casi no hay gente en las comunidades. Es muy fácil trabajar en una oficina en Chihuahua, una oficina aquí. Pero casi nadie va a los ranchos. Y caminar e ir de casa en casa. No, quieren no más de la oficina mandar, y eso no se puede.

To...a lot of foundations or clubs I have to tell them that I can't. . . . I believe that the problem also is that there are many people that aren't in the communities [people, as in people who know the language and customs and can tell outsiders what the people want to be done]. A lot of solicitudes come to me from, from the government, from foundations and everything: 'work with us, we have like, a million dollars to do...' Well, yeah, I tell them, but I already have no time, right? I can't do more. In fact I want to do less than I'm doing. But this is the problem, these people have the funds but no way to spend it. They don't know what the people want. They don't know, and there isn't anyone going along with this process. There is almost no one in the communities. It's really easy to work in an office in Chihuahua, an office here. But almost no

one goes to the ranches. And walks and goes from house to house. No, they just want to command from the office, and you can't do that.

As a result of his reputation and the confidence people place in his legitimacy with the Rarámuri he is able to get funding in the form of money, tools, and the other items mentioned earlier. In addition Juan Daniel speaks fairly good English, contributing to his ability to communicate with American groups.

Besides engaging people in “la platica,” like Minita, Juan Daniel has several other things he does to maintain those productive relationships. With Native Seed Search his assistant, Mauricio, who is his wife’s cousin, helps Juan Daniel create digital reports showing the impact of the work they do with Native Seed Search funds in order to ensure future funding. Through telephone calls Juan Daniel maintains a good relationship with Barry Burns with whom he shares a similar philosophy about development. With the BYU groups he also presents casual proposals for the work they will do, explaining the benefit he sees from them both for the students and the community members. With other groups, such as the Cuauhtémoc Rotary Club, he cultivates friendships and maintains his reputation as a reliable contact to the Tarahumara.

Horacio’s situation is fairly different from the other two respondents. He has moved around quite a bit in his time as an educator, from working deep in the Sierra in schools to work with the government to work with a university. His connections extend beyond this because he has also been involved with indigenous activism, community development, and founding his own research center to better understand the educational and economic needs of indigenous communities. Currently some of his most valuable connections are with members of the Programa Internacional de Personas Indigenas (International Program of Indigenous People). This organization ensures that a percentage of curriculums in universities be geared to indigenous students and that a portion of the student body have a minimum proportion of indigenous students. The following quote from him will show the importance both of connections and

institutional legitimacy in being able to bridge between the Rarámuri and the Chihuahua State educational bureaucracy:

Y aparte tengo buenas relaciones con muchos funcionarios, con muchos funcionarios. Entonces, yo simplemente hablo y me reciben, sí. Este, porque saben de mi trabajo. Porque aparte de toda esta región ellos saben que una de las personas que más conocen soy yo. Porque puedo estar aquí, conocer a todo el mundo, desde puedo tener reuniones con el gobernador del estado, hasta puedo estar con la gente mas humilde. Y conozco los dos mundos. Esta es una ventaja. Quienes están acá solo conocen una parte de su mundo. Y acá tienen miedo, van así como 'que no me van a recibir o no va a pasar'.

I also have very good relationships with a lot of public officials, with a lot of public officials. So, I simply talk and they receive me, yes. This, because they know about my work. Because they know that I am one of the most known people in this area. Because I can be here, meet people from all over, even have meetings with the state governor, and yet I can also be with the most humble people. And I know both worlds. This is an advantage. Those that are here [government or mestizos] only know part of the world. And here [indigenous people] they are scared, they act like, 'they won't let me in, they won't receive me.'

Horacio's acquaintances from the communities have helped him connect some indigenous youth with necessary recourses to be able to study at the university level, recourses which result from hard work and bureaucratic connections and acquaintances. The diversity of his contacts results in continual access to educational resources.

Horacio mentions that when he meets a new person he makes a point to find out their responsibilities so that he knows how their work may benefit his own. He gets what he needs from whoever has it and lets people know that he is the one they need when it comes to indigenous education in the state of Chihuahua:

Entonces, yo me he metido, me he metido con todo el mundo. Trato de conocerles y de saber que responsabilidades tienes tú como funcionario que me puede servir a mí? Entonces me buscan de todos lados.

So then, I have involved myself, I've gotten involved with everyone. I try to meet them all and know what responsibilities they have as functionaries that can help me in my position. So they try to find me on both sides.

Thus we see that for him casual, and formal, conversation are extremely important in establishing and maintaining connections. During the more formal conversations he is able to project his image as an indigenous educator with connections in Tarahumaran communities, his extent of experience in the Sierra, and his knowledge of Tarahumaran culture. Those skills and attributes

are valuable to many who wish to improve indigenous access to education but have no means to do so.

Horacio was less explicit in discussing the specifics of his connections with *mestizos* and other North Americans. My observation was that most of his contacts are with the leaders of charitable, educational, or governmental groups since they are who can authorize funding to the students he helps.

Besides connections with a variety of people Horacio has acquired a good deal of legitimacy in the realm of education. Not only did he study and acquire a teaching credential, he then spent time in some extremely remote Sierra villages where he taught school for years. Then, he began teaching other teachers and designed curriculum that would better address the educational needs of indigenous students. That curriculum was a success. After this he committed himself to furthering his education, acquired a master's degree in education, and continued influencing educational curriculum and policy through a government post with the state of Chihuahua. His next step was into a university setting where he began guaranteeing the placement of indigenous students into college programs. Over the years his experience has become more extensive, though his background in indigenous, mountain communities has made his knowledge and experience not only important but unique. As he has moved around in the educational bureaucracy his contacts in activist groups and various clubs have contributed to his experience and the respect shown him by fellow educators.

Section 4: Emotional vs. professional relationships and respondents' approach to bureaucracy

Part of identifying the strategies used by the respondents in accessing resources for the Tarahumara is understanding the types of relationships they build and maintain with people as well as how they interact with the bureaucratic structures that hold a wealth of resources. This section responds to questions four and five.

Minita. In both social circles, Tarahumaran and *mestizo*, Minita has personal and professional relationships, and many times the line between the types blurs. For example, she

uses endearing terms to refer to people she is acquainted with for business purposes but also uses personal relationships to transmit “business” type information. She gains access to resources from a few intimate friends but also befriends people who may never contribute to her work. For example, Lencha, her life-long friend, brought a baby over and amidst discussing personal things Minita transmitted important information for Lencha to carry to the baby’s mother. When we went to the hospital to see the doctor about Minita’s health, a very instrumental visit, they laughed and talked together as old friends. Though she is close to some *mestizos* and Tarahumara, she is on the margins of both social circles. Perhaps out of necessity, she never seems to fully belong or remain in one social network because she is constantly bridging between the two.

Though Minita has been recognized by the municipal government and community groups for her work among the Tarahumara, her power as a bridge between networks is not derived from relationships with people in powerful positions. In the hospital, for example, she is acquainted with lower level employees—doctors, nurses, secretaries—not with leading members of the hospital bureaucracy or bosses. This is true of her other connections as well, even among the Tarahumara. Her strategy in maintaining relationships with people is not to purposefully contact people in high places. She befriends those accessible to her, and those relationships benefit her greatly, as explained above.

Minita’s relationship with the medical bureaucracies of Cuauhtémoc is positive, though she has dealt with insulting and negative people and behavior. Currently, however, she says they treat the Tarahumara extremely well in the hospitals—their areas are clean and just as well kept as the others. Recent legislation has also made health care free for members of indigenous groups throughout Mexico. However, there is still the complex task of navigating through a foreign bureaucracy, difficult enough if you feel comfortable in *mestizo* culture and Spanish is your first language, much more challenging for an individual from a culturally distinct, closed network whose first language is Rarámuri.

To an extent Minita does not seem to understand why the Tarahumara are still afraid to go alone to the hospitals and clinics. They treat them well, so why does it scare them?, she asks. Her thought is that they are afraid of being treated poorly, a somewhat unfounded fear as she sees it, though she does understand that there is a language barrier. Thus an important part of her work is helping them navigate through the bureaucratic organization. At times she goes with them to their medical appointments, but mostly she discusses what is wrong, initiates a diagnosis, and then sends them to the clinic or hospital with the piece of paper mentioned earlier. This eliminates the amount of communicating the patient and doctor have to do, therefore surmounting what can be a difficult step in the diagnosis and treatment process. She also helps the Tarahumara decipher prescription details on the medicine they receive, she performs many medical treatments so that they can avoid the medical bureaucracy completely, and she teaches about caring for the sick in order to prevent illness. Being well versed in how to navigate the medical bureaucracy she at times uses her knowledge to help people through it and other times avoid it—whatever is most useful to herself and those she treats. When helping her patients avoid bureaucracy she treats them at her home, dispenses medicine to them directly, and is even a designated site where women can pick up birth control pills.

Juan Daniel and Horacio. Though Juan Daniel is a very personable, friendly person, he keeps many of his relationships with Mexican and American groups more distant and professional than does Minita. He is no less giving or kind, but he is not in contact with groups very frequently unless they are arranging a project or donation. He is able to benefit from the contributions of several groups, whether or not they share his views of the Tarahumara, because he keeps the relationships more instrumental than personal. For example, he mentioned multiple times that he has been frustrated with the government and Catholic Church priests and nuns for their ignorance and haste in working in the communities. Because he disagrees with them he does not work *with* them much; more often he benefits from them in the form of funds, food, and supplies that he delivers to the people. Of course he has friends within the religious and

government apparatuses but they interact little outside of working on projects. His position makes his marginal status in both networks more apparent.

Many of his relationships within these networks and groups are personal, especially in the Catholic Church. Spending time with Juan Daniel would give anyone the impression that he is old friends with half the population of Creel, every Rarámuri man, and almost anyone who visits his home—it's just the way he is. However, upon further study it is apparent that with most of the people who contribute to his efforts he is only in contact with them when it regards some contribution or work with the Tarahumara. He will visit with them for hours, talk about personal matters, but those conversations generally take place within the context of some project in the communities. He may count all those people as his good friends, but they most likely would not be close without his work in the Sierra.

In the communities Juan Daniel's relationships are different. He cannot afford to maintain solely instrumental relationships there—his work could not be successful. In addition he is committed to truly, deeply knowing and understanding the people. This is precisely why he refuses to work in more than five communities, because otherwise he could not know the people adequately to be able to address their needs. Besides his personal commitment to time and *el proceso* he is drawn to the way of life of the people there. In one community he has a plot of land that he works, where he plants his own corn and other foods, and that he can go to whenever he wants. However, due to his ethnicity and the fact that he lives permanently outside the Sierra he is a visitor, he cannot be a fully integrated part of the Tarahumara network.

For the most part Juan Daniel avoids working in bureaucracies and finds ways to access their resources without getting involved in their internal politics. One example is the Catholic Church, which offered him a position as a Father that he refused because the responsibilities as a father would interfere with his work in the communities. A second example is the government, which has offered him paid positions that he has also refused. He gets food and other donations from both but is not required to attend meetings, does not hold a position with them, and refuses

to get intimately involved. He deals with many representatives from the Catholic Church on a personal level but does little to navigate himself or other people through the bureaucracy of that organization. With the government bureaucracy Juan Daniel deals even less. He can do this because he is financially independent; he does not rely on his work in the communities to sustain himself and his family. Also because he gets sufficient money and supplies from small, non-profit organizations like Native Seed Search and others to not make him wholly reliant on the Church and government. His connections are non-redundant (Burt 1992) because they are diversely located, different in approach and class of donation, and because he is a recipient of their resources, not a participant in their internal affairs.

Like Juan Daniel the lines between Horacio's professional and personal contacts are somewhat distinct among *mestizos*: personal relationships are less central to Horacio's ability to access resources. Within the government apparatus he has close friends, but the majority of his contacts are professional acquaintances who help him transfer resources from point A to point B. The majority of the people he works with, though he may count them as his friends, are not involved in Horacio's life outside of his job responsibilities. In fact, his personal/family life and professional/work life are separated not just by distinct and separate relationships but also by distance in physical location, with little, if any, overlap. He is not fully integrated in either circle, since his relationships are diverse and extend to multiple networks.

Among the Tarahumara he, like Juan Daniel, has many more personal relationships. There people embrace him, call him maestro, and view him as a friend. Though he does not live in the Sierra among those people he still visits fairly often, despite having no current assignment to go there. These relationships are still instrumental in the sense that the people recognize Horacio as someone who can help them access better education and resources from outside their communities. His status remains marginal because he is always a visitor. In one community, for example, a family who has accepted him and with whom he has built a significant relationship are benefiting from the relationship because Horacio has made it his personal commitment to seek

out education for their daughter. In his personal life, situations like this one, Horacio says he avoids dealing with bureaucracies. When explaining how he helps acquaintances who need education, food, jobs, or other aid he said he calls friends with connections who will do him personal favors in helping those in need—if they require paper work he says he'll find the help elsewhere. However, only a fraction of his efforts are spent in those endeavors.

Horacio's position is to help people navigate through bureaucracy, not avoid it, because he is a part of the educational bureaucracy. I quote him extensively in his description of what he does to help indigenous youth access university education because it perfectly sums up what he does to help natives navigate through the complex bureaucracy of higher, government funded, education:

Para ayudar a que jóvenes indígenas (hombres y mujeres) entren a la Universidad, hemos hecho muchas cosas, desde entregar apoyos personales a dos o tres personas, hasta conseguir que las Universidades les otorguen Becas, etcétera. En los últimos tiempos hemos hablado con el Rector (Decano) de la Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, y hemos acordado que en cada una de las Carreras, entraran un número de indígenas (3 / 4 por ejemplo), y contando el ciclo escolar pasado y este, suman cerca de 120 jóvenes indígenas los que están estudiando alguna carrera (licenciatura o ingeniería) en la UACH.

Este mismo ejercicio lo estaremos haciendo con otras escuelas. Luego nos tenemos que dar a la tarea de buscar los lugares para que vivan, las becas para alimentos, las becas en la Universidad, los apoyos para que estudien, con equipo (computadoras) libros, etcétera, y creo que esta es la parte mas difícil, la que tiene que ver con los recursos materiales y financieros.

To help so that young indigenous people (men and women) attend the university, we have done a lot of things, from contributing personal support from two or three people to getting scholarships from the universities, etc. Lately we have spoken to the Head of the Autonomous University of Chihuahua (UACH) and have made a deal that in every program a certain number of indigenous students enter (3 or 4 for example), and counting last school year and this one, a total of about 120 indigenous youth are studying some career or subject (law or engineering) at UACH.

We're doing this same program in other schools as well. Later on we have to find places for them to live, scholarships to provide food money, money in the university, support so they can study with equipment (computers, books, etc.). I think that this is the hardest part, what has to do with physical and financial resources.

For members of a closed network, with little cultural capital in the *mestizo* field, assistance in navigating around or through bureaucracy is essential. Network theory does not address the role they play in avoiding or navigating through bureaucracy in behalf of a network they are part of.

Again, though all three respondents work to improve the lives of the Tarahumara their network structures have very little overlap. They have heard of one another, specifically through the BYU group that does their work with all three, but besides that have no knowledge of one another and have never worked in collaboration. Yet the work they do does have a degree of overlap. All three are involved in very different sectors of society, and work on improving different aspects of Tarahumaran society (Minita, health and homelessness; Juan Daniel, access to water and general mountain community needs; Horacio, education), but each is also interested in general improvement. Meaning that if an educational issue arises in Minita's community she will respond to it, or if a person from a community known to Horacio needs shelter he will help find it.

Section 5: View of Tarahumara-mestizo relations

Data for research question four is presented here, showing how Minita and the other respondents view the relationship between the Tarahumara and outside groups, and how their views allow them to access the closed network of the Tarahumara. The findings show that the respondents' perception of the relationship between the Tarahumara and outsider groups is influenced by three things: 1) personal experiences having witnessed mistreatment of Tarahumara/other natives by *mestizos*, 2) stories told to them by the Tarahumara concerning poor treatment received at the hand of *mestizos*, and 3) a knowledge of Mexican history which involved many struggles between natives and Spaniards and natives and *mestizos*, including instances when the Tarahumara were forced into slavery or low-paid work. That experience and knowledge has led them to advocate Tarahumaran wants and needs above *mestizo* wants and needs and to promote the value of Tarahumaran culture above *mestizo* culture. What effect does this have on the respondents' bridging between the Tarahumara and outside groups? First, it increases the degree of trust the Tarahumara can place in them simply because they are willing to listen to and believe their stories, as well as react to them, in some instances. Second, it enables them to act as representatives for the Tarahumara to *mestizo* organizations.

Minita. Minita feels a sense of duty to protect the Tarahumara from unequal treatment in the medical centers and in general life at the *albergue*. Defense is not her only view of that interaction, however, she is also committed to helping the Tarahumara access the benefits the medical bureaucracy has to offer. I present several examples that demonstrate how Minita views the relationship between the Tarahumara she works with and the outside agencies she is involved with.

First, I give an example from her neighborhood. During a tour of the *albergue* Minita noticed an old, dirty, dilapidated mattress that had been dropped off in front of the *albergue*. Apparently someone had dumped it there for the inhabitants of the shelter to use.

Este colchón nos trajeron, pero a mi no me gusta que los traigan así las cosas. Yo me molesto porque traen cosas feas. . . . Esto ya que lo tiran, verdad? Ya vamos a ponerlo en la basura.

They brought us this mattress, but I don't like when they bring us things like this. It bothers me because they bring ugly (gross) things. . . . This they bring now that they're done with it, right? We're going to put it in the trash.

Minita tries not to show anger, but in explaining this practice her frustration was obvious. She continued by explaining that it isn't right to give the Tarahumara handouts, and it also is horrible to make them feel that you're just dumping things on them—something she tries not to do herself and tries to prevent others from doing as well.

Second, Minita shared multiple stories with me about confrontations she has had in hospitals and other medical centers, somewhat recently and in her early years, where she protested the unequal treatment of indigenous patients and attempted to rectify bad situations. One story was of a Tarahumaran man who actually died due to a doctor's neglect. She says that currently the hospitals and doctors treat them equally, though she still shared stories about recent conflicts that arose due to poor treatment of Rarámuri people in other Mexican institutions. Her view of the medical institution is very good: she trusts them, she refers people to them constantly, and she goes there herself. However, her commitment is to the Tarahumara and to equally administered, well practiced medicine. This is also demonstrated by her frequent trips to medical

centers accompanying a Tarahumara, or the papers she fills out to help them communicate better with medical staff.

From my observations at the *albergue* I concluded that the Tarahumara not only trust her to give them medical attention, but they trust her as a confidant. They tell her their stories, their experiences, and share instances when *mestizos* mistreat them—currently and in the past. One of my last days there in 2005 a family arrived at the *albergue*, having returned from 2 weeks of work on a ranch where the owner paid them for only a few days work and then kicked them out with no way to get back to Cuauhtémoc. What little work they did make they spent to get to the *albergue*. She shares their frustration though, in that situation, also shares their feelings of powerlessness. Through those experiences they know that she is “on their side.” Her tendency to believe them and do what she can to correct mistreatment is what has allowed her to access the network of the Tarahumara and be involved in their social context.

Juan Daniel and Horacio. Juan Daniel and Horacio are also committed to protecting, helping, and uplifting the Tarahumara, those desires taking precedence over duty to other organizations or ideals. I am positive that if Horacio had not been able to influence school curriculum, get more indigenous students admitted to the university, or make other changes in education, he would have abandoned it. He defends indigenous people, promotes their cause, and works among them to help them improve their life situation. His view of the relationship between the Tarahumara and outside agencies is shaped by his own experience as an indigenous person. When he was young and attending schools he felt separated or distant from other students:

Desde siempre me enteré que los indígenas no teníamos un lugar seguro en los espacios educativos, algo pasaba que sentía una distancia entre los mestizos y nosotros, pero a cada quién las condiciones se le presentan de diferente manera.

Since always I realized that we indigenous students did not have a sure place in educational spaces, something was going on that I felt a distance between the mestizos and us, but for each person the conditions were different.

He talks a lot about making cultural and physical room for native people in education, both at lower and higher levels. This means that *mestizo* views of education must be reformed, not that indigenous students need to be Mexicanized or accept the common approach to education. He stated his goals in improving indigenous education thusly:

Primero, que ellos se enteran quienes son. Que ellos reflexionan quienes son. Segundo, que esta reflexión, se enteran que pueden vivir mejor. Y, sin que vivir mejor signifique que tenemos que adoptar los patrones occidentales. Pueden vivir mejor en su contexto, con su cultura y su religión.

First, that they realize who they are. That they reflect on who they are. Second, that with this reflection, they realize that they can live better. And that living better does not mean that they have to adopt occidental habits. They can live better in their context, with their culture and their religion.

Juan Daniel too is extremely committed to doing what the Tarahumara want to do, in every sense. For example, in an interview I observed that his manner of working in the communities, using *el proceso*, could better preserve the culture of the Tarahumaran people since they are doing what the Tarahumara want, not what the *mestizos* or outside groups want. He said yes, that was true, but it's not about preserving anything. The aim should not be to ensure that they maintain their native dress, or farm in the same way, or continue hiking for miles to get their water. The aim should be to help them in the ways they want to be helped. If they want to change their dress, that's their choice, and they are still Rarámuri even in different dress. It is them who define their culture and what about it should and can change, not outsiders.

Son cosas que les toca decidir a ellos, no? A mi se me hace muy padre que usen su traje tradicional, se ven con más personalidad y todo. . . . pero es algo que he aprendido en la vida...que conservan lo que ellos quieren conservar, no? Lo que me toca a mí es apoyar en lo que ellos quieren. Cambios, seguro que van a haber. Pero es importante que sean cambios que ellos quieren hacer.

These are things that are for them to decide, right? I think it would be really cool if they used their traditional dress, they have more character when they do. . . . but this is something that I've learned from life...they they conserve what they want to conserve, right? My responsibility is to support them in what they want. Changes, of course there will be some. But it's important that they are changes that they want to do.

Of course he is not only committed to doing their will in that context, but in all things, especially when it comes to doing projects in the communities. As mentioned before he will not do a project unless the entire community and that community's leaders have approved it.

Just like Minita, Juan Daniel and Horacio view the relationship between the Tarahumara and outside groups from a historical and experiential perspective: they see a past of Tarahumara victimization by *mestizos* and whites and know from personal experience the racism and stereotypes many *mestizos* feel toward the Tarahumara. It is this tendency to side with the Tarahumara that contributes to their acceptance into Tarahumaran communities. Additionally, their commitment to work toward sustainable development in their communities encourages organizations similarly committed to support him.

Summary

The data collected from the three respondents sheds light on some of the inadequacies of network and cultural bridge theories. Each theoretical camp offers helpful insights into the existence of bridges, though neither completely explains how individuals like Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio are able to access resources and facilitate their transfer from networks so distinct from the Tarahumara. For example, neither mentions what specific cultural and navigational tools are important for making and maintaining contacts within each network or group. Nor do they explore how such tools are acquired, or how people engaged in bridging can fulfill a variety of roles in multiple structures or cultural groups. The additional theoretical concepts of *habitus* and cultural tool-kits help answer these questions.

CHAPTER VI: Discussion

In this section I bring together the ethnographic data and the theoretical perspectives presented in the literature review. I show the weaknesses and strengths of network and cultural bridge theories by comparing their insights and predictions to my observations of the respondents

who serve in bridging capacities between culturally distinct networks. Suggestions on how the theories can be supplemented and extended are also included.

Network theories

Network theories are beneficial in understanding the positions of the three respondents interviewed in this ethnography due to its attention to the structure of networks and relationships. However, that same focus on structure is a limitation because social relationships are much more fluid and changing than network theory suggests. Examples from the ethnographic data will provide examples of network theories' strengths and weaknesses.

Structural holes theory predicts that a lack of overlapping networks will provide greater opportunities for resource access and structure (Burt 1992). The lack of overlap between the respondents' networks supports this notion: in their outreaching to various organizations the respondents never access the same networks, meaning that they do not exhaust the resources of their contacts. In fact, there is almost no one else engaging in the same work as them. The fact that the respondents do not have overlapping networks could be a function of physical distance between them, yet they are still close enough that contact would be easy. Each is able to access a unique set of contacts, diversifying the resources they can reach, and making their role as social bridge contacts between *mestizos* and the Tarahumara unique. In addition, their contacts are also extremely diverse. Juan Daniel is the best example of this because he works with numerous organizations, some in Creel, Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua City, various states of the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. The organizations are different in their philosophy of charitable work, in the amount of time they dedicate to his specific projects, and in how they fund his work. That diversity makes his network non-redundant, making him capable of receiving more aid than he actually needs. The other two have similarly made connections with diverse people and agencies, allowing them to access a variety of resources at different points in time through various channels.

The relationship between the Tarahumaran and Mexican networks fits Willer's (1999) assertion that bridged groups need not agree or correspond well to one another in order to be bridged. The three respondents are able to facilitate bridging between them while not necessitating a common culture or shared beliefs. A simple example came about during Horacio's description of the differences between *mestizos* and natives. He said that indigenous people

...tiene muy claro que la madre es la tierra que nos da muchas cosas pero creo que el mestizo no lo tiene muy claro.

...have it very clear that the earth is our mother that gives us many things, but I believe that the mestizo doesn't understand this.

This difference in belief has caused conflict in work between the Tarahumara and government groups, but that difference need not be reconciled if Horacio, who understands and respects the beliefs of both sides, can reach out to other network members to facilitate resource exchanges.

Another strength of network theory comes from Lin's (2001b) definition of networks as informal social structures that define positions, rules, procedures, and proper behavior for a group. This describes the closed and open networks discovered in this ethnography. The bridging roles of Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio do indeed access resources from networks that the Tarahumara could not get on their own because each has a wealth of experience and understanding in working with the positions, rules and procedures of the distinct networks each is involved with. Juan Daniel has extensive experience working with and reporting to NGO's, government organizations, students groups, and others. He knows how to organize work groups, obtain funding and work supplies, and complete projects. Minita's medical knowledge and familiarity with the bureaucratic structure of hospitals gets her access much easier and quicker than many Tarahumaran people could alone. Similarly, Horacio's experience with educational and government organizations informs his actions and allows him to pursue funding for students the students would not know how to look for.

The social or cultural bridges that link between networks are generally on the margins of those networks (Lin 2001b), meaning that a bridge does not completely and fully belong to any network they are part of because they go between multiple. In the descriptions of each respondent I noted that they have abandoned *mestizo* values or lifestyle to a certain extent in favor of Tarahumaran customs. In addition they tend to side with the Tarahumara: defending them, favoring their preferences, and putting their desires before those of *mestizo* groups. Those choices make them different than other *mestizos*, marginalizing them to some degree. However, they are not Tarahumaran either, nor do they live their lives as the Tarahumara do. Minita lives with them every day, but they live in a *mestizo* town, interact with Mexicans constantly, and speak mostly in Spanish. Both Juan Daniel and Horacio divide their time between visits to the Sierra, their Mexican families, and work in *mestizo* towns and cities. The homes they live in, the work they do, the way their families function, and the general culture they live is neither completely *mestizo* or indigenous.

Minita's status as marginal in the medical and Tarahumaran networks supports Granovetter's (1973) notion of the strength of weak ties. She is not part of dense networks; her relationships and loyalties cannot be invested in one social network, if so she would not be able to continually mediate between the interests of both Western/Mexican medicine and Tarahumara cultural difference. Her position also shows the value of Vogt and Albert's (1966) assertion that intimate social relationships with both groups are essential for an individual to fulfill a bridging function. However, *habitus* and cultural tool-kits better explain her ability to maintain both personal and professional relationships in two distinct cultural groups.

As stated above a bridge is a relationship between two people. Those two people fulfill specific positions within network structures from which they can reach out to other networks and the bridging positions in them. Though this definition of bridging may be a more useful concept than that from cultural bridge theories, something that will be elaborated in the next section, it is overly strict and structured. Each of the three respondents engages in bridging relationships, yet

none of them are so rooted in social network structures that they cannot fulfill positions elsewhere simultaneously. During the visit of a *mestizo* health care worker to the *albergue*, Minita fulfilled an insider role within the Tarahumaran social network from which she explained the health of a new born baby and the mother, spoke in behalf of the baby's grandmother, and accepted counsel from the health care worker. Once the health care worker left she fulfilled the role of an outsider, gently persuading the baby's grandmother to take the child to the Mexican clinic and giving advice on breast feeding and general health. At times it is difficult to clearly define which network the respondents are acting on behalf of, though it is possible to tell. The concept of a bridging role must be as fluid as social life dictates it be.

Network theories can extend their scope by elaborating on ideas already present within them, such as bureaucracies and resources. Though concerned with the existence of bureaucracies as a form of network (Wellman and Frank 2001; Willer 1999), network theories do little to examine how individuals navigate through them. Bureaucracies must always be navigated through or around yet network theory does nothing to address the role of bridges or any social actors in that process. In fact, it doesn't even recognize the necessity for getting through bureaucracies at all. Exploring the type of social capital, *habitus*, and expertise that are valuable in bureaucratic structures could fill that gap.

Data from the three respondents shows that dealing with bureaucracies on behalf of the Tarahumara is central to their role as intermediary between the groups. For example, Minita helps facilitate communication within bureaucratic structures by discussing illness and diagnosing Tarahumaran people before they visit the medical clinic. She also helps them avoid the medical apparatus by diagnosing and treating people in her home. Horacio enables indigenous youth to attend college by seeking out scholarships, housing, and other money—a process that may be impossible for a person without knowledge of the educational and linked financial systems. Juan Daniel generally avoids dealing with bureaucracies, yet his work also gets resources to people

who may not be as adept at dealing with outsider, bureaucratic, charitable structures such as the Catholic Church.

Another overlooked factor is the diversity of resources involved in resource transfers. The definition of resources in network literature generally refers to some sort of “material or symbolic goods” (Lin 2001b: 29), ranging from power and prestige (Willer 1999) to property (Burt 1992) to expertise and skills. Though physical goods are included in the official definitions they are never mentioned in the descriptions of resource transfers. In my research resources can be education and cultural skills, but resources also refers to such items as food, beds, a shelter, water, plant seeds, text books, medical supplies, and tools. Network theories have traditionally described resource transfers in business and financial settings, but the theory has great potential in any area of social life where resources are bought, sold, given, or taken—meaning everywhere.

Network theorists define open and closed networks, perhaps presenting them as ideal types, but not offering explanation on networks that have both closed and open characteristics. However, networks cannot be truly closed or open. The Tarahumara, and certainly other closed and impoverished groups, seek outside aid. By choice and force they have adopted outside practices, while generally avoiding assimilation, something closed networks are said to not do. Meanwhile Mexican networks, which would be defined as open, have been somewhat closed by refusing to adopt indigenous practices. Though useful in generally defining groups, social life does not reflect the definitions of open or closed networks, a fact that network theory should account for.

Network theorists mention the necessity of having access to people, information, and resources in order to bridge between networks—all of which are forms of capital. Lin (2001a, 2001b) adeptly combines the two concepts by defining capital as “access to and use resources embedded in social networks” (2001a: 5). Concepts that stress the importance of personal characteristics and how society or culture equips us with the ability to act effectively in networks further our theoretical understanding of the ethnographic data. Individuals or groups who act as

bridges must be capable of not only understanding more than one group or culture, they must possess skills that give people reason to trust them, to lead them, and to help them. For example, a person may have come into a well-structured network and have engaged in bridging relationships, but what if they ultimately prove to lack the cultural sensitivity or social knowledge required of them to make their role successful? Network theory can benefit from a supplementation of other theoretical views of bridges, *habitus*, and cultural knowledge.

Cultural Bridge Theories

Time spent and past experience appear to be indispensable to the respondents' ability to network between the closed society of the Tarahumara and the various organizations they work with. Network literature generally does not mention the value of familiarity, shared experience, or a common history in creating trust or building connections within or between networks, with the exception of Granovetter (1985). Blau (1977) discusses in-groups and out-groups, or different networks, and that time spent with in-groups and out-groups contributes to the rates of intermingling and in-group solidarity. Time spent together and the history of groups must be considered when examining social associations. Experience lends itself to trust and thus to embeddedness; experience and a history of friendship both require time spent together. The experiences of Juan Daniel, Horacio, and Minita confirm these assertions. The description above, on page 47, of a conversation between Minita and Lencha shows how a shared history and years of building trust allow Minita to gently persuade Lencha to go to a Mexican doctor, despite the many factors that make such a trip difficult. Another example is the fact that Minita can get a lower quote for her water bill if the right woman is in the office.

Boundary maintenance and overcoming cultural boundaries is something the three respondents experience by commonly engaging in casual conversation with Tarahumaran people. Those conversations many times refer to the culture of the people, how they are treated by *mestizos*, what is happening in their personal lives, etc.—all of which help them maintain a sense of distinction and cultural uniqueness. Yet all three respondents also introduce non-traditional

ideas into Tarahumaran society through their work. Those ideas or resources are meant to help them, but regardless they break down the strict cultural boundaries erected between *mestizos* and the Tarahumara. Horacio's work demonstrates how he both maintains and overcomes cultural boundaries. He believes education is important and that education should be designed to compliment and enrich native cultures, not change it. Yet his work to get indigenous youth admitted to universities is an attempt to destroy the extreme differences and distinctions between native and *mestizo* youths' access to higher education—something that will inevitably break down culture distinctions for both groups as they interact and learn together.

Additionally, the respondents' ability to effectively socialize and connect with members of both *mestizo* and Tarahumaran networks is due to their cultural knowledge of and sensitivity to each group. As Vogt and Albert (1966) describe in their study, there are several channels through which culture and positive feelings are transmitted between opposing groups. Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio are such channels. They represent both groups well, attempt to bring the best elements of each group to its opposite, and become a means through which *mestizos* better respect and understand the Tarahumara and vice versa.

The weakness of Blau and Vogt and Albert's work is the assertion that inter-group relations are dependent on a single individual who acts as a cross-cultural or social bridge. This assertion implies that the social characteristics of a bridge are possessed by a single person and that the individual maintains connections within multiple groups and is responsible for the transfer of resources between two entities. Of course, the individual does not act without the assistance of others, but according to Vogt and Albert (1966) bridges "achieve the status of channels through which the content of cultural systems *must* be communicated and transmitted one to the other" (61, emphasis in original). Viewing the individual as a cultural bridge underscores the importance of a person's position within a social network and how the characteristics of social networks can facilitate or hinder resource transfers (Lin 2001a, Burt 1992). For example, Juan Daniel is extremely well-versed in Rarámuri and *mestizo* culture, both

Tarahumaran and *mestizo* people seem to trust him, and he has extensive shared experience with both groups. This would be all that is important for cultural bridge theory. However, according to network theorists the characteristics of the social networks can greatly influence whether or not resources are transferred. If Juan Daniel decided to work for a government agency his network among the Tarahumara would be so extensive as to lose the tight-knit contacts he has and even make it impossible to have necessary weak ties (Granovetter 1973). He would be out of touch with the people due to the structure of the network. Additionally, since his focus in *mestizo* networks would be exclusively with the government (for lack of time to do otherwise) his contacts would be redundant, another limitation on his ability to transfer resources.

Thus, neither network nor cultural bridge theories are completely adequate in helping us understand the activities of the three respondents. For this purpose the concepts of *habitus* and cultural tool kits are discussed in light of the research.

Habitus and Cultural Tool-kits

The sections above include detailed descriptions of Minita, Juan Daniel, Horacio, and Tarahumaran life in order to familiarize the reader with the respondents and the social context they live in. Though difficult to describe my intent was to provide examples of how the society of the Tarahumara is “written into [the] bod[ies]” of the three respondents, thereby demonstrating the usefulness of Bourdieu’s *habitus* concept (Bourdieu 1990:63). Each unconsciously draws on their experience and knowledge of Tarahumaran life in all their interactions with the Tarahumara. Including this concept clarifies how the respondents can so naturally and easily say and do things to garner trust from members of both groups and access resources and information to transfer between them—something network and cultural bridge theories fail to do.

Another purpose of the descriptions was to demonstrate the usefulness of *habitus* in understanding the variation in the degree of familiarity the Tarahumara and the respondents have with *mestizo* society. Within the concept of *habitus* is an allowance for variation, meaning that if *habitus* is a “feel for the game,” or that people possess a familiarity with rules and ideas, then

there are some who have more of the game instilled in them than others. Not everyone is perfectly instilled with the facts and feelings of a certain group. Many Tarahumaran people understand little about *mestizo* society and for this reason rely on the respondents—who are “equipped with habitus” in both Tarahumaran and *mestizo* cultures—to help them benefit from *mestizo* groups. A good player is “the game incarnate [and] does at every moment what the game requires,” but “One’s feel for the game is not infallible; it is shared out unequally between players, in a society as in a team” (63). Even the three respondents vary in the degree to which they embody the rules of the game.

Habitus is important in examining how all three respondents interact with the Tarahumara. The actions they engage in when working with and for the Tarahumara are not based on reason and calculation: “The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice: time is limited, information is restricted, etc. And yet agents *do* do, much more often than if they were behaving randomly, ‘the only thing to do’” (11). This concept can be applied to the behavior of the respondents in *mestizo* social networks as well. Horacio’s ability to perform in his suit and tie as he secures funding for indigenous youth, Minita’s ease in accessing special medical help and free medicine, Juan Daniel’s networking with various organizations to secure money and supplies for the Sierra communities—in all of these situations they draw upon the natural knowledge they have acquired after years of experience working with various people to help the Tarahumara.

As mentioned previously, Swidler’s (1986) notion of the cultural tool-kit further helps us understand how the three respondents can draw upon their social and cultural knowledge to act in ways that bridge between the Tarahumara and *mestizo* organizations. Their experiences in *mestizo* society have equipped them with choices in who to contact, when, and where. They know the appropriate channels to go through and the ways they should request help. Similarly, in Tarahumaran networks they know who to contact, and how, in order to get the information necessary to help them. Swidler seems to allow social actors more agency than Bourdieu since

she more clearly explains that people have multiple choices, or tools, in their kits: they will select what is most appropriate for the situation. Again, it is time spent and experience with a group whereby a tool kit and tools come to be. For example, if Minita had spent little time among the Tarahumara she would not know many of the appropriate things to do and say in order to help them medically. Perhaps she would be more like Deisy, the federal social worker, who lacks the experience and knowledge to effectively select the appropriate words and actions that would allow her to better understand the needs of the Tarahumara in her shelter. How well the respondents understand the culture and social nature of the people they build bridging relationships with is extremely important in whether or not they can access the information necessary to bridge between.

CHAPTER VII: Conclusion

Network and cultural bridge theories provide valuable insights into the process of connecting networks despite cultural barriers. Starting with these concepts I was able to apply theoretical perceptions of cross-network communication to the actions of three people engaged in transferring information and resources between opposing networks.

Network theory suggests that network characteristics and structure will influence the transmission of capital most. Structural holes, embeddedness, weak ties, and the marginal status of those involved in bridging relationships all influence whether a network will be strong and if it is capable of bridging resources from outside networks through bridging ties. Cultural bridge theories emphasize the importance of individual characteristics and the individual's position at the intersection of social circles. In this sense it is a single person's possession of cultural knowledge and past experience with the in-group and out-group that influences the degree of inter-group communication and resource sharing.

Though both groups of concepts are useful in examining the positions of Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio, neither fully explained the ease and familiarity with which the respondents

conduct themselves in both Tarahumaran and *mestizo* fields. Thus the concepts of *habitus* and cultural tools were drawn upon. The unconscious, natural skill each person demonstrated in navigating in *mestizo* and indigenous social groups is described by Bourdieu (1990) as the feel for the game a person acquires after having been in a social context for a time. Swidler (1986) explains it as having knowledge of and access to the appropriate cultural tools. Where network and cultural bridge theories fail to explain what enables the respondents to draw upon culturally and socially appropriate words, actions, and ideas, *habitus* and tool kits show where and how the respondents learned those things.

The characteristics of the social networks each person is involved in support the notion that network strength or effectiveness partly depends on structure, though the notion of network structure and bridging roles within them are too rigid to accurately describe social life. With structural holes Burt (1992) suggests that a low degree of network overlap will strengthen a network and the amount and quality of resources it can access. The networks each respondent accesses have almost no overlap. Each has diverse connections, though ties are not always as weak as Granovetter predicts they should be. Trust is central, however, to their ability to form bridging relationships with people in other groups. Personal characteristics and position proved to be important as well. The characteristics and cultural knowledge of the individual in a bridging role makes a significant difference in how effective they can be in reaching out to members of distinct networks. However, it is a false assertion that a single individual can be a cross-cultural bridge: one person cannot possess the cultural knowledge and social connections to be solely responsible for the transmission of resources and culture between two groups. *Habitus* and cultural tool-kits further explain how a person can become effective in a bridging relationship or tie to another person in another network.

Network structure, personal characteristics, and an unconscious ability to draw on appropriate cultural tools are the key reasons Minita, Juan Daniel, and Horacio are able to fulfill the functions they do. One implication of this research is the usefulness of network theory in

understanding the existence of distinct networks and potential for bridging between them and also the potential for application of other theoretical explanations, including *habitus* and cultural tool-kits, to network theory to extend its explanatory power.

A second implication of this study is the possibility of using the research to help organizations bridge with closed networks like the Tarahumara. The type of relationships the three respondents have with people in Mexican organizations and among the Tarahumara cannot be falsely constructed, but the tools they use to network can be adopted. Network structure, *habitus* (or a feel for the game), and an awareness and possession of cultural tools are central to their effectiveness. Those things come with experience, time, and important lessons learned through relationship building. Grass-roots organizations that hope send people into Tarahumaran communities can equip volunteers with the cultural tools necessary. Through making contacts in Tarahumara communities and in Mexican or other charitable organizations they can access and help transfer resources between networks. By spending time in communities, learning from people already engaged in bridging relationships, they will learn how Tarahumara cultural and social life works, as well as gain knowledge and experience with outside organizations.

Such a process would require time and connections within existent Tarahumara and organizational networks. Those networks and network ties can be used to reach out to people who want help without requiring them to change their culture (Willer 1999) as some government programs have attempted to do. With an adequately structured network, good network linkages between networks with resources and networks without resources, and a knowledge of cultural tools, groups can potentially train grass-roots workers to build relationships and community and thereby reach out to closed societies like the Tarahumara.

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