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The Land of Disenchantment: Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and Race in New Mexico, 1598–1910

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THE LAND OF DISENCHANTMENT:
SETTLER COLONIALISM, WHITE SUPREMACY, AND RACE IN
NEW MEXICO, 1598–1910

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
History

by
Jacqulyne Ruby Anton
May 2022

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ABSTRACT

Across the North American continent, white supremacy is often taken for granted as a foregone conclusion by the late nineteenth century. Recently, however, scholars of the Greater Reconstruction, Indigenous history, Latinx history, U.S.-Mexico Borderlands history, and historians of capitalism have challenged this assumption by deconstructing narratives that portray white-European American hegemony as inevitable. My research on settler colonialism adds to the discussion of the establishment of white supremacy in the West by analyzing the evolution of white supremacy in New Mexico over time. It argues that the Spanish, Mexican, and American settler colonial regimes actively used white supremacy as a tool to organize all racial categories from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries to ensure Spanish-European and European-American hegemony.

This thesis does not seek to replicate or dictate the order of racial hierarchies in New Mexico. It rejects a hierarchy of suffering and recognizes that the ideological categorization of race does not always translate onto lived experiences. Rather, it seeks to study the social construct of white supremacy over time in New Mexico. It adopts a social-theoretical approach to white supremacy to explain how racism was structured at various historical stages and to prove that the establishment of white supremacy as the overarching social, political, and legal authority was not an inevitable result of the expansion of U.S. settler colonialism in the nineteenth century. As such, this thesis will explore the

changing and often contradictory nature of white supremacy—and whiteness—over time, beginning with Spanish settler colonialism in New Spain and ending with American settler colonialism in New Mexico, while refusing a definitive hierarchical ranking of racial categories. In analyzing the Casta System and settler colonial-Indian frontier relations, the following pages demonstrate the Spanish use of white supremacy to ensure European dominance during Spanish and Mexican settler colonialism. This thesis concludes with an overview of American domination and the subsequent extension of settler colonialism and white European-American white superiority in New Mexico by the end of the nineteenth century.

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INTRODUCTION

Before Spain established itself as a settler colonial power in the Americas in the fifteenth century, diverse Indigenous populations – with their cultures, political systems, and exchange and raiding economies – struggled and survived for centuries. Eventually, two new settler colonial powers entered the region: Mexico, following independence from Spain in 1821, and the United States in 1848. As the Spanish, Mexican, and American settler colonial regimes entered the region, they began implementing, through great effort, distinctive racial hierarchies. While each racial hierarchy was based on regionally and temporally specific categories of race, settler colonialism established white supremacy as the baseline for racial formation during each era of colonization.¹ Beginning with the Spanish conquest of New Spain (1521–1821) and extending into New Mexican statehood in 1912, one's proximity to whiteness determined their status in the racial hierarchies. Over the course of several centuries, white supremacy – in all of its variations, instabilities, and contradictions – became the essential ideological principle through which the settler colonial societies defined racial categories which influenced, if not outright determined, one's position in political, legal, and social hierarchies. Through social constructs of race, the settler colonial societies of Spain, Mexico, and the US established white supremacy as

1. New Spain included present day Mexico, California, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, Florida, and Central America, north of present-day Panama.

the dominant ideological tool that ensured Spanish and white European-American hegemony in a multiracial society.

Settler Colonialism Defined

Imperialism is generally considered to be the extension of power and dominion by one government, nation, or society over another by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political or economic control. Spain's conquest and colonization of New Spain and Mexico's exertion of control over vast territories are widely accepted as imperial ventures. In US history, it is traditionally reserved for post-1898 American intervention in foreign countries. However, **scholars have increasingly argued that the roots of American imperialism run much deeper, especially when considering patterns of settler colonialism across the continent. As one example**, historian Pablo Mitchell has proven, it applies to the American Southwest, particularly to US colonization in New Mexico beginning in the 1880s.² Mitchell argues that in "light of such imposing demographics, the establishment of a racial order in New Mexico presented challenges that American colonizers in Puerto Rico and throughout imperial America would have found most familiar," therefore, "the roots of American imperialism are deep in New Mexico."³ As such, when taking a macroscopic

2. Pablo Mitchell, *Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race and Conquest in Modernizing New Mexico, 1880-1920* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4.

3. Mitchell, 4.

view, imperialism remains the broader definition of Spanish, Mexican, and American ventures in what is today the American Southwest.

With that being said, settler colonialism is a more specific lens through which to view New Mexico's long and complicated history with the Spanish, Mexican, and American regimes. Colonialism and settler colonialism are not antithetical, nor are they always easy to differentiate. Rather, settler colonialism should be understood as a variant of colonialism. Colonialism is the practice of domination that involves the subjugation of one people by another, usually through the transfer of one population to a new territory. These new arrivals become permanent settlers but continue to pledge their allegiance to their country of origin or the colonial authority. Settler colonialism, on the other hand, is a more specific version of colonialism that includes a large settler population but calls for the elimination (rather than just subjugation) of the original inhabitants. In his work on the genocide of Native populations across time and place, Patrick Wolfe characterizes this facet of settler colonialism as the "logic of elimination."⁴ He clarifies, however, that "though the two have converged [settler colonialism and genocide] – which is to say, the settler-colonial logic of elimination has manifested as genocidal – they should be distinguished. Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal."⁵ In other words,

4. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387.

5. Wolfe, 387.

elimination is always a key aspect of settler colonialism, but genocide **may not be**.

While elimination can be achieved through genocide, it can also be achieved through political, social, economic, legal, and historiographic inclusion and exclusion. As we will see with New Mexico, settler colonialism is a complex structure with many iterations. During the Spanish and Mexican periods of settler colonialism, elimination was carried out through settlers' assertion of state sovereignty and judicial authority over Native land where colonial settlers used the state to legally exclude Native people from inclusion in the body-politic, barring them as non-citizens. Through assimilation, the mission system, and the *encomienda* system (legally abolished in 1721 though unofficially continued on New Spain's northern frontiers for much of the eighteenth century), Native peoples were considered wards of the state and unequal subjects of the Crown. This amounted to exclusion from the body-politic and the social, political, and legal privileges associated with citizenship. Spanish settler colonialism's elimination and erasure of the Native population in New Mexico took the shape of religious and legal assimilation through the mission system, New Mexican-Indian kinship networks and slave raiding and trading, and the creation of *genizaro* communities. By forcing the Native peoples to convert to Catholicism, adopt Spanish culture, and learn the Spanish language, they turned them into Spanish subjects and thus erased the Native population and their indigeneity. Of course,

this was more of an ideal than reality, as many Native peoples refused assimilation and conversion and continued their way of life.

New Spain briefly adopted the Constitution of Cádiz in 1812 which extended citizenship to Native and mixed-race peoples but continued to limit citizenship and citizenship rights for Black people in New Spain.⁶ In 1814, however, King Ferdinand VII (r. 1808/1813–1833) returned to the throne and abolished the constitution. Following Mexican independence in 1821, the Mexican republic reinstated the philosophy of the Constitution of Cádiz with the Plan of Iguala and then again in 1824 with the Constitution of 1824.⁷ Both the Plan of Iguala and the Constitution of 1824 extended citizenship to white, Native, mixed-race, and free Black people.⁸ According to historian Martha Menchaca,

6. Any person of African or mixed-race African descent was limited to citizenship via naturalization, excluding enslaved Africans. While the constitution recognized the civil rights of African peoples or those of mixed-race African descent, it denied them automatic citizenship. According to Articles 1, 5, and 10, to obtain citizenship, they would have to obtain naturalization letters, reside ten years in a Spanish territory, or receive freedom from enslavement. “1812 - Constitucion de Cádiz” (Miscellaneous Publications, 2019), https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/hornbeck_spa_4/18, accessed 3-05-2022. .

7. Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), 159.

8. The Constitution of 1824 did not outlaw slavery outright due to arguments positing that it would cause economic crises in places like Veracruz and Acapulco. Rather, a more liberal slave code was passed that intended to “improve their lives and give slave owners time to prepare for emancipation.” While the institution of slavery remained, the constitution outlawed the slave trade in Mexico including purchasing and selling slaves, decreed that slaves purchased in Mexico were to be freed, and that any child born into slavery was to

“the difference between the new republic’s proclamation and Spain’s previous legislation [the Constitution of Cádiz] was that the new racial policy was to be enforced with deliberate speed. This meant that Indians were to be assimilated and incorporated as practicing citizens, even if they refused.”⁹ Similarly, the mission system was to be dismantled because congressmen and federal officers believed that “if Indians were granted full political rights they would choose to acculturate and thus become tax-paying Mexican citizens” who contributed to Mexico’s economy by becoming commercial farmers.¹⁰

This thesis does not attempt to analyze the extent to which Native peoples acculturated to Spanish or Mexican culture. Nor does it aim to speak to the successes or failures of Spanish and Mexican attempts to acculturate Native peoples.¹¹ In fact, Mexican settler colonial attempts to convert or acculturate Native peoples were often unsuccessful. Native peoples and cultures thrived in and around New Mexico despite settler colonial threats to their security, autonomy, and livelihood. It is, however, important to analyze the methods and contradictions in the settler colonial attempts to acculturate Native peoples.

be freed at age fourteen. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 163.

9. Menchaca, 160.

10. Menchaca, 163.

11. For scholarship on this, see: Martha Menchaca, “Liberal Racial Legislation During the Mexican Period, 1821-1848,” in *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002).

Along with the subjugation and settlement of Native land, US colonial settlers primarily focused on eliminating Native people by forcing Native groups onto reservations and into boarding schools, policing their movements, excluding them from the body-politic, and carrying out genocidal practices such as Indian removal and extermination policies.¹² According to Wolfe, even when Native sovereignty was recognized – due to Native peoples ability to make alliances and negotiate treaties with European powers in North America – “ultimate dominion over the territory in question was held to inhere in the European sovereign in whose name it had been ‘discovered.’...The distinction between dominion and occupancy illuminates the settler-colonial project’s reliance on the elimination of

12. Scholars debate where exactly in the US the genocide of Native peoples occurred. Moreover, they debate whether the violence against Native peoples took the form of genocide or ethnic cleansing. Benjamin Madley has expertly proven that the United States government committed genocide against the Native peoples of California through action and inaction at the state and federal level in the form of policies, laws, neglect, financial sponsorship, and massacres. Daniel Richter argues that the Ottawa and the Paxton Boys, a group of Pennsylvania vigilantes, both engaged in a form of ethnic cleansing between 1763 and 1812. Patrick Wolfe argues that the US settler colonial regime attempted to eliminate the Native peoples, often violently, though he differentiates it from genocide. Gary Clayton Anderson denies outright that the US government engaged in genocide against Native peoples. He is even somewhat hesitant in defining it as ethnic cleansing. Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016); Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 2001); Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native”; Gary Clayton Anderson, “The Native Peoples of the American West: Genocide or Ethnic Cleansing?,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Winter 2016, 407–33.

native societies.”¹³ After all, as Anders Stephenson has observed, “Americans wanted land to exploit, not Indigenous peoples to assimilate.”¹⁴

During the American period of settler colonialism in New Mexico, white European-American settlers, though they were a small portion of the population, enacted harsher racial laws that entrenched white supremacy, privileged whiteness, and violently disenfranchised non-white peoples, primarily Indigenous and Mexican peoples. By eliminating their claims to land, and sometimes the Indigenous peoples themselves, settlers removed challenges posed to settler sovereignty in the form of Native people’s claims to land. It is important to note, as Margaret D. Jacobs states, that “settler colonialism, and its demand for land [is] the problem, not indigenous peoples.”¹⁵

In addition to elimination and exclusion, settlers removed challenges to their sovereignty by creating a distinctive identity and false narrative of settler belonging. In a seemingly contradictory manner, settler colonialism necessitates the settler’s elimination of Native peoples and their claims to the land while simultaneously co-opting indigeneity to create a narrative that expresses their difference and independence from their country of origin. Settlers’ idealized

13. Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 391.

14. Anders Stephenson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 26.

15. Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 425.

narratives were based on the perception that Native lands were empty and unused by Native peoples.¹⁶ These narratives crafted racist constructs of Native peoples that reinforced settlers' land claims and supported their violent defense of what they perceive as Native encroachment. Frontier histories and exceptionalist histories of expansion and settlement that portray the demise of Native peoples as inevitable contribute to the elimination of Native peoples while privileging the white male settler. Jacobs argues that these narratives obscure settler conquest, colonization, and violence in favor of portrayals of European settlers as victims and resisters of Native tyranny.¹⁷ As such, settler colonialism may be an even deadlier structure than other extractive forms of colonialism because the "ultimate goal of settler colonialism – the acquisition of land – lends itself to violence."¹⁸ Therefore, elimination policies such as forced removal, the dispossession of land, the denial of rights and citizenship, as well as outright violence are central to the development of settler colonies.

16. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 4. For more scholarship on purposely crafted narratives regarding empty, unused, or misused land, see: Yvette Saavedra, *Pasadena Before the Roses: Race, Identity, and Land Use in Southern California, 1771-1890* (Arizona: University of Arizona, 2018); Samuel Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006); Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 1893.

17. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 4.

18. Jacobs, 4.

Much of my work on settler colonialism builds on and borrows from the work of historians Traci Brynne Voyles and Kelly Lytle Hernández. In her work on settler colonialism's environmental impact on the Salton Sea, Voyles argues that settler colonialism is a "set of power relations that seeks to colonize Indigenous peoples and claim their homelands as settlers' own through intersecting forces of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, environmental degradation, dispossession, ableism, and capitalism."¹⁹ This thesis will analyze the colonial settler's use of racism (founded on white supremacy) to colonize the native Hispanic and Native peoples in New Mexico, ensure Spanish and European-American superiority, and, ultimately, justify the dispossession of land. According to Voyles, the interrelated relationships reinforce the control over land, unsustainable resource use for capitalist accumulation, the exploitation of racialized workers, and white supremacy.²⁰ Hernández argues that elimination is key to settler colonialism, declaring: "For Indigenous peoples and societies, disappearing is a matter of land and sovereignty. Settlers want their land. To take their land, settlers must extinguish Native peoples as sovereign communities."²¹

19. Traci Brynne Voyles, *The Settler Sea: California's Salton Sea and the Consequences of Colonialism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 6.

20. Voyles, 6.

21. Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 8.

Historian Lorenzo Veracini further complicates settler colonialism by recognizing that it is inherently transnational and transcultural. It is both transnational and translocal “because the relationship between ‘home’ and settler locale institutes a dialectical tension between ‘here’ and ‘there’; transcultural because the relationship between metropole and settler colony is routinely understood as inherently dynamic.”²² The transnational and transcultural dynamics of settler colonialism will become important in the history of settler colonialism in New Mexico as tensions and differences between the metropole and the frontier increase as each settler colonial regime institutes their unique hierarchies and as the local interactions between the colonial settlers and the native Hispanic and Native populations shape the settler colonial society.

White Supremacy, Whiteness, and Social Constructs of Race Defined

Historian George Fredrickson describes white supremacy as “the attitudes, ideologies, and politics associated with blatant forms of white or European dominance over the ‘non-white’ populations” which “involves making invidious distinctions of a socially crucial kind that are based primarily, if not exclusively, on physical characteristics and ancestry.”²³ He elaborates that white

22. Lorenzo Veracini, “‘Settler Colonialism’: Career of a Concept,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (2013): 313.

23. George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), xi; Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 7.

supremacy means more than racial prejudice and discrimination; it also includes “systematic and *self-conscious* efforts to make race or color a qualification for membership in the civil community.”²⁴ I will use Frederickson’s conceptualization of white supremacy to discuss the ideological and material conceptualizations of race in New Mexico between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. Using Pablo Mitchell’s conceptualization of whiteness, this thesis defines whiteness as “the historically specific melding of physical characteristics...with economic and political power” that “generally equates the physical characteristics of being ‘white’ with voting rights, civic leadership, and legal protections.”²⁵ It is important to note that during the Spanish and Mexican periods, race and whiteness were not simply based on phenotype or skin color. Rather, it was a combination of one’s age, sex, place of residence, race, legitimacy or illegitimacy, civic status, occupation, wealth, parentage, and skin color which meant that there was relative fluidity within and between the racial classifications.²⁶ Nevertheless, as the general rule, the physical characteristics of whiteness merged with economic

24. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, xi, emphasis added.

25. Mitchell, *Coyote Nation*, 5-6.

26. James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 317; Ramon Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 191–94, 233; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 328.

and political power to provide social, political, economic, and legal privileges to those with the physical characteristics associated with whiteness.

Racial classifications and social constructs of race are regionally and temporally specific. Moreover, they are largely subjective and depend on whether or not the classifications are assigned externally or self-identified. While they are, at times, difficult to define, it is important to do so. Throughout my work I employ the terms Spanish, Spaniard, Native, Indigenous, Indian, Hispanic, and white European-American to describe the diverse peoples of New Mexico. Here, Spanish and Spaniard refer to those with real or imagined Spanish-European ancestry who could thus claim whiteness due to their European ancestry and European culture. Native, Indigenous, and Indian are all used interchangeably to refer to those native to the Americas who reside in or travel through New Mexico. I define Hispanic as people of mixed Spanish, Indian, and African ancestry, distinguished from those solely of Indian and African ancestry. I employ this term primarily during my discussion of Mexican settler colonialism to refer to the mixed-race Mexican citizens in New Mexico. Lastly, white European-American is defined as white-skinned Americans of Northern or Western European ancestry who, throughout the nineteenth century, came to see themselves as united across ethnic and national lines as one single white race.

In looking at the importation of white supremacy into New Mexico through settler colonialism, I will explain how each racial group –Native/Indian, Hispanic, Black, Spanish, and white European-American – was racialized over time. Due to

the centuries of conflict and negotiation between the Spanish, Hispanic, Native, Black, and white European-American populations in New Mexico – and the three competing settler colonial regimes – New Mexico was subject to multiple racial hierarchies, each with their own unique concepts of race. Though the constructs of race varied in these hierarchies, these settler colonial regimes used white supremacy as a tool to organize all racial categories from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries where whiteness and European culture and ancestry afforded cultural capital (“knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications”) to those who could claim it.²⁷

As Voyles notes, settler colonialism is an “aspirational process” that is “far from perfect. In fact, it often fails.”²⁸ Furthermore, Hernández recognizes that,

Targeted communities always fight back, finding many ways to elude elimination and undermine disappearance. Therefore, what matters in the analysis of settler societies is not so much whether processes of native elimination and racial disappearance are consistent or ever achieved but, rather, how settler fantasies perpetually trend settler societies toward these ends.²⁹

Nevertheless, while individuals from the various racial groups may not have abided by white supremacy in their day-to-day lives, as a tool of settler colonialism, white supremacy was key to structuring and restructuring the racial

27. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 14.

28. Voyles, *The Settler Sea*, 7.

29. Hernández, *City of Inmates*, 8.

hierarchies at the national and local levels through social constructs of race and the legal system.

This thesis does not seek to replicate or dictate the order of racial hierarchies in New Mexico. Nor does it claim that race was the primary factor that determined how one was viewed in society. It rejects a hierarchy of suffering and recognizes that the ideological categorization of race does not always translate onto lived experiences. Rather, it seeks to study the social construct of white supremacy over time in New Mexico. It adopts a social-theoretical approach to white supremacy to explain how racism was structured at various historical stages and to prove that the establishment of white supremacy as the overarching social, political, and legal authority was not an inevitable result of the expansion of US settler colonialism in the nineteenth century. As historian Matthew Frye Jacobson has astutely noted, “whiteness itself has been subject to all kinds of contests and has gone through a series of historical vicissitudes.”³⁰ As such, my work will explore the changing and often contradictory nature of white supremacy – and whiteness – over time, beginning with Spanish settler colonialism in New Spain and ending with American settler colonialism in New Mexico, while refusing a definitive hierarchical ranking of racial categories.

As Ira Berlin has argued, “race is not simply a social construction; it is a particular kind of social construction – a historical construction” that “cannot exist

30. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 4.

outside of time and place.”³¹ Additionally, E.P. Thompson has shown that race is “a fluency which evades analysis if we stop it dead at any given moment and atomize its structure.”³² Therefore, this thesis recognizes the historicity of race while simultaneously rejecting the neat, clear-cut periodization of race. Following Marc Bloch’s warning against the idol of origins and a definitive periodization of history, my analysis operates on the possibility of existing in multiple periodizing worlds at the same time.³³ While the settler colonial regimes may not have overlapped in the traditional sense, their influence and legacies did not disappear once the succeeding regime came to power. New Mexico was subject to competing but often reciprocally influential ideologies, cultures, governments, and ways of life over the centuries where race and white supremacy were continuously redefined. As historian Herbert Gutman notes with binary historical opposites, the definitive periodization of race and the hierarchical ranking of

31. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2004), 1.

32. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 9.

33. Marc Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1954), 30–32. Marc Bloch recognizes that the origin of a particular phenomenon doesn’t fully explain why or how it came about; it is only one aspect among many that combine to create it. Furthermore, he urges historians to abandon the traditional periodization of history (centuries and nomenclature based) to introduce more accuracy and exactness into the distinctions through research, observation, and critical analysis.

racial categories “do little to capture the messy, inchoate reality of history as lived.”³⁴

With that being said, while the theorization of race and white supremacist ideologies reject definitive periodization, we will find that by the twentieth-century settler colonialism established white supremacy as the principal organizational tool for the racial orders in New Mexico. Historians and scholars of the Greater Reconstruction (1836–1877) have demonstrated that, beginning in the 1830s and extending into the late nineteenth century, white supremacy was being more firmly entrenched across the North American continent. Stacy Smith has identified the “US federal government’s battle for territorial, legal, and political sovereignty against other nation-states and competing polities within its own borders; an accompanying struggle over the power of the federal state to institute liberal notions of citizenship in the West; and an equally contentious federal campaign to impose free wage labor on western communities” during the nineteenth century.³⁵ Scholars of the American West have shown how Mexican and Native peoples were some of the primary targets of white supremacist ideology and, in turn, were central to these events.³⁶ Furthermore, by the 1920s,

34. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 5.

35. Stacy L. Smith, “Beyond North and South: Putting the West in the Civil War and Reconstruction,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December 2016): 574.

36. For more information on white supremacist ideology and Native and Hispanic peoples in the American west, see: Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York

the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) reached its apex with chapters arising throughout the Midwest and West; recent scholarship has located the KKK in California and Oregon as early as 1868.³⁷ My research adds to the discussion of the establishment of white supremacy in the West by analyzing the evolution of white supremacy in New Mexico over time and examining social constructs of race spanning the periods of Spanish settler colonialism in the fifteenth century, Mexican settler colonialism in the early nineteenth century, and continuing to American settler colonialism in the twentieth century. In doing so, it reveals the socially constructed nature of race (whiteness in particular) and white supremacy over the period of four centuries. It deconstructs master-narratives of European imperial and settler colonial domination, specifically those that purport that white supremacist ideology and white European-American dominance were inevitable by the end of the nineteenth century. It complicates local, regional, and national

University Press, 2018); Mitchell, *Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race and Conquest in Modernizing New Mexico, 1880-1920*; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965*; William Carrigan and Clive Webb, “The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 411–38; Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011); Jason E. Pierce, *Making the White Man’s West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West* (Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2016).

37. Kevin Waite, *West of Slavery: The Southern Dream of a Transcontinental Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

histories of Indigenous removal, anti-blackness, settler colonial expansion, state violence, and the control of resources, where much work still needs to be done.³⁸

38. Unlike traditional theses, my historiography is spread throughout the chapters of the work. This decision was due to necessity. My research builds on Indigenous History, Settler Colonial Studies, Whiteness Studies, and Relational Race Studies which are interconnected with one another. However, it is also located in three fields of history that remain largely removed from one another: Spanish, Mexican, and American history in the US-Mexico borderlands. Furthermore, it is impossible to examine how white supremacy and social constructs of race evolved over time without simultaneously discussing the historical context and historiographical arguments that they were products of. Therefore, in order to avoid organizational or narrative confusion, my thesis (the chapters and the content within) is organized chronologically beginning with Spanish settler colonialism, then Mexican settler colonialism, and, finally, American settler colonialism.

CHAPTER ONE

SPANISH SETTLER COLONIALISM (1598–1821): THE CASTA SYSTEM AND WHITE SUPREMACY IN NEW MEXICO

Spanish settler colonialism in New Spain (present-day Mexico, the American Southwest, Central America, South America, the Philippines, and Guam) began in 1519 with Hernán Cortés' (1485–1547) expedition of the eastern coast of Mexico. J.H. Elliot astutely observed that “the Spaniards began constructing for themselves, from the very early stages of their movement overseas, something more akin to an empire of conquest and settlement.”³⁹ Following the conquest of the Aztec Empire and the fall of Tenochtitlán in 1521, Spanish Emperor Charles V (r. 1516–1556) established the viceroyalty of New Spain and set about settling the land and the populations inhabiting it. This was often accompanied by violent conquest, displaced cycles of violence, forced conversion and acculturation, and rapid changes to the Native social, cultural, economic, and political ways of life as the Spaniards constructed societies that were emblematic of those they knew back home. However, the Spanish were not the sole forces of change. Spanish colonization, “like all colonization, consisted of a continuous interplay between imported attitudes and skills, and often intractable local conditions which might well impose themselves”

39. J.H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006), 18.

on the colonizers.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the Spanish began settling and colonizing the region and the peoples within it with the hope of creating a permanent Spanish settlement resembling the ones they left at home.

At the beginning of Spanish colonization, rather than land, the Spanish set their sights on vassals in the form of Native peoples as the key to success in the new empire. However, to obtain vassals, the Spanish settlers needed to subjugate the land with the most vassals. According to Elliot,

Those Spaniards who commanded the services of tribute-paying Indians could look forward to enjoying a seigneurial income and life-style without the trouble of developing large estates...Consequently, the subjugation of those regions most densely settled by the Indigenous population was the immediate priority for the conquistadors and first settlers from Spain.⁴¹

Motivated by their diverse interests, expeditions into the interior of New Spain took place throughout the sixteenth century as Spaniards searched for riches, laborers, and religious converts in the Americas, all of which were to be achieved through territorial acquisition and violence. Writing in 1542, historian and social reformer, Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566), states that “in the year one thousand five hundred and eighteen, Spaniards who called themselves

40 Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, xiv.

41 Elliot, 37–38.

Christians went [to New Spain] to massacre and kill, although they said their aim was to settle Christians in the province.⁴²

The history of Spanish exploration in New Spain has been meticulously detailed elsewhere.⁴³ The main concern here is the establishment of the Santa Fe de Nuevo México colony, what we know today as New Mexico, and the events that led the Spanish settler colonial elites to further entrench white supremacy in New Mexico. With this focus in mind, I will cover Spanish settler colonialism in New Mexico and the history of racial mixing that led Spaniards to craft the Casta System, a racial hierarchy that sought to reaffirm white supremacy and Spanish superiority. I will conclude with an analysis of the social constructs of race that the Spanish crafted to racialize Spanish, Native, Black, and mixed-race peoples.

42. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, trans. Herma Briffault (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 57.

43. For a detailed history of Spanish exploration in New Spain, see Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*; James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For a detailed history of Spanish exploration in New Mexico, see Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

General Overview of Spanish Settler Colonialism in New Mexico (1598–1821)

Following Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's (1514–1554) expedition in 1540, Franciscan missionaries organized two more expeditions into New Mexico in 1581 and 1582 with the hopes of “lead[ing] the Indians ‘out of the darkness of paganism and the somberness of death’ and into the ‘Father of Light.’”⁴⁴ After hearing the positive reports by the Franciscans in 1595, King Philip II (r. 1556–1598) contracted Don Juan de Oñate (1550–1626) to lead an expedition into the Kingdom of New Mexico. On September 1, 1595, Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco (1511–1564) appointed Oñate to “carry out the discovery, pacification, and conquest of the provinces of New Mexico” for which he was allowed to recruit settlers in any of the Spanish provinces he saw fit.⁴⁵ However, Oñate did not leave for New Mexico until 1598 after facing several setbacks regarding the approval of his expedition.⁴⁶ Reports vary but it is estimated that Oñate's

44. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 46, 71.

45. “Contract of Don Juan de Oñate for the Discovery and Conquest of New Mexico,” in *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, vol. V, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 42–57, 53.

46. After receiving word that Oñate was unfit and unprepared to lead an expedition into New Mexico, the Spanish crown favored Don Pedro Ponce de León as the leader of the expedition between 1596 and 1597. In 1597, however, de León fell ill resulting in his inability to lead an expedition and ultimately ensuring that Oñate's expedition was to move forward in 1598. “Council of the Indies to the King, February 18, 1597,” in *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, vol. V, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New

expedition consisted of over 700 soldiers, 1,250 Franciscans, and 130 families for the settlement and colonization of New Mexico, many members of which deserted or perished due to the hardships associated with the trek into New Mexico.⁴⁷ Indeed, Spain would face hardships populating New Mexico with Spanish citizens well into the nineteenth century. Many Spanish officials and settlers wrote to the government in Central Mexico asking, and sometimes pleading, for additional settlers to be sent to New Mexico to help populate and pacify the region and the Native inhabitants. Nevertheless, by September 1598, Oñate “received the submission of the chiefs of seven provinces” in Santo Domingo and erected a church in the pueblo of Caypa, now San Juan, New Mexico.⁴⁸ With the establishment of a capital and the creation of pueblos and missions, New Mexico was now under Spanish control, if in name only.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Spanish settler colonialism slowly continued. In the northern frontier regions, New Mexico included, settlement took

Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 193–94; “The King to Count of Monterrey, April 2, 1597,” in *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, vol. V, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 196.

47. L. Bradford Prince, *The Historical Sketches of New Mexico From the Earliest Records to the American Occupation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Leggat Brothers, 1883), 162; George P. Hammond and Rey Agapito, ed., *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, vol. V, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 229–300.

48. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands*, 173.

the form of missions and the creation of Indian towns which the Spanish crown believed would seem less threatening to Native peoples unaccustomed to state systems.⁴⁹ The first missions were established in northern central Mexico in 1591 by Indian colonists (the Tlaxcalan). Large-scale missionization in New Mexico did not take place until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however. By 1680, there were approximately twenty seven Spanish missions in New Mexico, many of which were destroyed or damaged during the Pueblo Revolt (1680), which will be discussed shortly. During the reconquest of New Mexico in the eighteenth century, many of the destroyed missions were restored and repopulated with missionaries and Spanish settlers, including Spaniards and those of mixed-race ancestry. By 1753, there were sixteen Spanish settlements and twenty-two subdued Indian towns throughout New Mexico.⁵⁰

As Spanish settler colonialism slowly continued with Spanish immigration and the establishment of permanent settlements, New Mexico and the Native peoples within came under direct control of Spanish colonial settlers. The increasing contact between Spanish colonial settlers and the Native peoples of New Mexico created tensions between the two groups, particularly due to Spanish explorer's, settler's, and missionaries' violence towards the Native

49. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 78.

50. For a detailed list of Spanish settlements and Indian towns by name, see: Robert Ryal Miller, trans., "New Mexico in Mid-Eighteenth Century: A Report Based on Governor Vélez Cachupín's Inspection," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (October 1975): 161–81.

peoples. Even the earliest Spanish expeditions engaged in violence towards the Native peoples. Some of these expeditions include the explorations of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado in 1540, Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado and Fray Agustín Rodríguez from 1581 to 1582, Antonio de Espejo from 1582 to 1583, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa from 1590 to 1591, and Francisco Leyva de Bonilla and Antonio Gutiérrez de Humaña in 1593.⁵¹

Even though there were royal ordinances mandating the protection and good treatment of Native peoples – such as the Laws of Burgos in 1512 and the Ordinances of Pacification in 1573 – many Spanish settlers disobeyed the royal orders, abused the legal rights of the Indians, and exploited them for free labor. Many Spanish settlers abused the *repartimiento* system - a system through which settlers could recruit Native peoples for forced labor with permission from the crown – and the *encomienda* system – agricultural estates carved out of land occupied by Native peoples. These systems were of the utmost importance to the settlers “since land was useless unless it had people to farm, construct buildings, and work as domestic servants”; settlers looked towards Native peoples for this work as settlers were scarce during this time and they could exploit Native peoples for free labor and they received tribute from the Native

51. For detailed information on Spaniards abuse of Native peoples in New Mexico, see George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, eds., *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1966); Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies*.

peoples in the form of money, crops, farm animals, textiles, ceramics, and beverages.⁵² The repartimiento and encomienda systems were, in effect, “a legal method of enslaving Indians and dispossessing them of property.”⁵³

In 1542 – before New Mexico was officially established as a Spanish settlement – Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote, *Among the Remedies*, in which he attacked the encomienda system and gave twenty reasons why it should be abolished. His writings, while discussing regions other than New Mexico, foreshadowed the abuses, violence, and devastation that the *encomienda system* would bring to New Mexico from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. He charged the *encomienda system* and *encomenderos* (the holder of an encomienda) with preventing the conversion of Native peoples to Christianity and Spaniards with “greed and avarice...because of which they neither wish nor permit the religious to enter the towns of Indians entrusted to them” because it prevents them from laboring.⁵⁴ His writings, together with complaints from clergy members in New Spain, influenced the Council of the Indies and the Spanish crown to enact the *New Laws of the Indies for the Good Treatment and Preservation of the Indians* in 1542 which legally abolished Indian slavery and the encomienda system. Unofficially, however, both the enslavement of Native

52. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 91.

53. Menchaca, 51.

54. Bartolomé de Las Casas, “Among the Remedies,” in *Witness: Writings of Bartolomé de Las Casas*, trans. George Sanderlin (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1971).

peoples, forced servitude, and the encomienda system continued well into the eighteenth century with Spanish New Mexicans raiding and trading Native peoples for captives who were forced into slavery and peonage systems.⁵⁵

Complaints regarding the Spanish settler's mistreatment of and violence towards Native peoples emerged as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century. In *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*), Las Casas detailed the cruelties that the Spaniards committed against the Native peoples in the Americas. Las Casas claims that from the beginning of Spanish settler colonialism in New Spain in 1518 to the time that he was writing in 1542, "the climax of injustice and violence and tyranny committed against the Indians has been reached and surpassed...Because among so many and such different nations they [Spaniards] have committed and continue to commit so many acts of cruelty, such terrible ravages, massacres, destructions, exterminations, thefts, violences and tyrannies of all kinds."⁵⁶ Las Casas continues on to state:

The Spaniards have killed more Indians here in twelve years by the sword, by fire, and enslavement than anywhere else in the Indies. They have killed young and old, men, women, and children, some four million souls during what they call the Conquests, which were the violent invasions of cruel tyrants that should be condemned not only by the law of God but by all the laws of man...And this does not take into account those Indians

55. Raiding and trading between Spanish New Mexicans and Native peoples will be discussed in further detail in the section titled, "Race-Mixing and the Creation of the Casta System."

56. Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies*, 57.

who have dies from ill treatment or were killed under tyrannical servitude.⁵⁷

In fact, just eight years after Oñate settled New Mexico, Oñate was recalled to Mexico City where he was tried and convicted of abusing the Native peoples and the settlers under his rule. Throughout Spanish settler colonialism in New Mexico, Spaniards in civil and ecclesiastical positions of power (viceroy, governor, captain-general, archbishop, bishop, and priest) as well as Spanish settlers were charged with various abuses of Native peoples.

The abuses by the settlers generated feelings of resentment among the Native peoples of New Mexico, notably the Acoma, Pueblo, and Apache peoples, beginning from the period of first contact. The Acoma revolted against Spanish settlers after they heard that the Spanish planned to conquer and colonize them by force. Unwilling to convert to Catholicism, be forced into servitude through the encomienda system, and move to a new village, the Acoma planned an uprising in December 1598. The Spanish and Acoma accounts of the revolt differ greatly, though both agree that the revolt ended in January 1599. According to Acoma oral tradition, the Acoma surrendered because they knew that resistance would lead to the massacre of the entire tribe.⁵⁸ According to Spanish sources, the

57. Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies*, 58.

58. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 88.

Historia de la Nueva Mexico in particular, however, Spanish forces conquered and pacified the Acoma by force and set the pueblo on fire.⁵⁹

In 1680, the Pueblo peoples revolted against Spanish dominion (religious, economic, and political institutions) and abuses by Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Together, the prolonged drought that began in the 1670s, subsequent famine and internecine raiding with other Native peoples, and the abuses by Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities led to an organized revolt by the Pueblo and Apache peoples.⁶⁰ The day before the planned revolt on August 9, 1680, Spanish forces learned of the plot from chiefs of the Tanos, San Marcos, and La Ciénaga peoples who alerted the Spanish that two Indians, Catua and Omtua, ordered them to participate in the revolt. The news reached the Spanish too late and on August 10, 1680, pueblos throughout New Mexico violently revolted, protesting forced religious assimilation and persecution and the encomienda system. New Mexican governor, Antonio de Otermín (r. 1679–1682), took a statement from “one of the rebellious Christian Indians,” Don Pedro Nanboa, who stated that the reason for the rebellion was “the Spaniards punished sorcerers and idolaters” and that the Native peoples “do not want

59. Gilberto Espinosa, trans., *History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà, Alcalá, 1610*, vol. IV (Los Angeles: The Quivira Society, 1933), 246–51. We will discuss how Villagrà’s account depicts the racialization of the Spanish and Native peoples in the subsection, “Social Constructs of Race and Racialization.”

60. The Pueblo Revolt and the ties between the Pueblo and Apache peoples during the revolt will be further discussed in the “Social Constructs of Race and Racialization” section.

religious or Spaniards.”⁶¹ The use of the words “sorcerers” and “idolaters” are likely not the words used by Don Pedro Nanboa himself. His statement was taken and translated into Spanish by Captain Sebastián Montaña who presumably substituted the words based on his own biases.⁶²

As Spanish settlements and missions in New Mexico expanded and encompassed more territory, Spaniards encountered diverse Native populations with whom they attempted to colonize. If, and when, colonization and forced assimilation proved unsuccessful or impossible, Spaniards engaged in the reciprocal raiding and trading of women and materials. In addition to the conflicts and negotiations that occurred between Spanish and Native peoples, intermarriages and the sexual exploitation of enslaved African women and Native women also occurred. The miscegenation and the consequent creation of mixed-race offspring generated fears among the Spanish settler colonial elite who wished to create a hierarchical racial order that place white Spaniards at the top and ensured they received social, economic, and political privileges due to their position in the racial hierarchy.

61. Antonio de Otermín, “Declaration of One of the Rebellious Christian Indians Who Was Captured on the Road,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, ed. George P. Hammond and Rey Agapito, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 61.

62. Spanish biases and perceptions of Native peoples and their religions will be further discussed in the “Social Constructs of Race and Racialization” section.

Race-mixing and the Creation of the Casta System

By the time settler colonialism began in New Mexico, New Spain had already experienced years of racial mixing in the interior of the empire. Beginning with the first centuries of Spanish colonization, Spaniards mixed with those of African and Native ancestry which created a racially mixed population from the empire's inception. During the colonial period, church officials encouraged settlers in New Spain to marry their Native concubines which they believed would contribute to the acculturation and religious assimilation of the Native peoples. Additionally, the sexual exploitation of enslaved African women created mixed Spanish-African offspring. The Spanish saw the importation of people from Africa as a necessity for the colonization of New Spain as they believed that one "Black person could equal the labor output of four Indians."⁶³ Consequently, the importation of enslaved Africans occurred from the beginning of Spanish colonization in New Spain. Beginning in the sixteenth century, intermarriages and the sexual exploitation of Native and enslaved African women led to the creation of a mixed Spanish-Indian population.

Therefore, many of the first Spanish settlers in New Mexico were racially mixed. Laura E. Gómez observes that "Spanish colonial officials and priests frequently characterized settlers in New Mexico as...deeply mixed among Indians, Africans, and Spaniards."⁶⁴ In fact, the very first Spanish settlers of New

63. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 61.

64. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 55.

Mexico, who arrived with Coronado's expedition in 1540, included more people of mixed and Indian ancestry than Spaniards. Oñate's 1598 expedition included Spaniards, those of mixed-races, Native peoples, and approximately five Black people.⁶⁵ Those that were single looked for sexual and marital partners in Indian women (captive and non-captive) and enslaved African women which contributed to the creation of a mixed-race population in New Mexico.⁶⁶

Further complicating the racial makeup of New Mexico was the slave-raiding economy of the New Spain's northern frontier. Here, both Native and Spanish peoples took part in captive raiding and trading where women and children were the most valuable objects. In fact, from the inception of the settler colonial society in New Mexico, "New Mexicans became dependent on Indian slaves for most of their basic needs and as a form of capital."⁶⁷ The slave raiding and trading economy produced mixed-race offspring between Spanish and

65. According to Don Lope de Ulloa's 1597 inspection of Oñate's men, there were 126 *peninsulares* (Spaniards who were born in Spain), seventy-seven of which were *criollos* (Spaniards who were born in the New World) or *mestizos* (offspring of one Spanish parent and one Native parent). During the inspection, nativity, rather than race, was the main variables used to identify and describe the men. Therefore, we face difficulty when attempting to determine their racial backgrounds. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans*, 83; Don Lope de Ulloa, "Inspection of the Expedition to New Mexico by Don Lope de Ulloa, June, 1596, to February, 1597," in *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. V, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 150-68.

66. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 55.

67. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 104.

Indian peoples. Historian James Brooks recognizes the importance of the slave-raiding economy as “captive women and children in this system often found themselves integrated within the host community through kinship systems – adoption and marriage in the Indigenous cases or *compadrazgo* [godparentage] and concubinage in the Spanish colonial cases – they participated in the gradual transformation of the host society.”⁶⁸ The incorporation of Indian women and children into Spanish society, and the consequent race mixing that occurred due to intermarriages and the sexual exploitation of Indian women, created a racially mixed society in New Mexico that necessitated clear categorization and control in the eyes of the Spanish settler colonial elite.

Ramón Gutiérrez found that since “maternity was undeniable and paternity was not, aristocracy could only be preserved from pollution by guarding the sexual purity of females and frowning on marriage with members of lower classes.”⁶⁹ Women’s bodies thus became sites of concern for the Spanish settler colonial elite and New Mexican nobility who feared the loss of their privileged status based on their Spanish blood. Between 1760 and the 1820s, New Mexican nobility petitioned the Church to allow them to marry close relatives. The nobility argued that if they were not allowed to marry their relatives, the women

68. James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 34.

69. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 334.

would be forced to marry racial inferiors which would taint their “pure aristocratic [Spanish-European] blood.”⁷⁰ Throughout Spanish settler colonialism, two contradictory trends became apparent: first, race and culture mixing occurred frequently and was inevitable, and second, this mixing of races created the need for strict formal racial categories.⁷¹

Elliot observes that in Spanish America, cohabitation took place everywhere “and the effect of it was to blur the lines of division which the Spanish authorities in church and state had originally planned to draw between the different communities.”⁷² As intermarriages and the sexual exploitation of Indian women and enslaved African women contributed to the creation of a mixed-race population, fears of blood pollution and miscegenation arose among the Spanish settler colonial elite. These mixed-race offspring endangered Spanish blood purity and threatened Spanish superiority by creating mixed-race peoples who could obtain civil and ecclesiastical positions typically occupied by Spaniards.

It was due to this race-mixing that the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities established the *Sistema de Castas* (Society of Castes) – based on the medieval Spanish idea of *Limpieza de Sangre* (blood purity) – in the late sixteenth century to explain the existence of mixed-race families to authorities in

70. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 334.

71. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 57–58.

72. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 83.

Spain. In the early years, the system included three racial groups: European (Spanish), African (Black), and Indian. From the beginning of Spanish colonization in the Americas, however, the three groups began producing mixed-race offspring that were looked down upon by the Spanish elite. As time progressed and racial mixing continued, the Casta System became more complex and specific as Spanish elites in New Spain felt the need to delineate mixed-race offspring and establish European (Spanish) superiority. The Casta System, a race-based hierarchically ranked system, assuaged the fears of the Spanish elite by placing those of European descent at the top of the hierarchy, privileging whiteness, and, ultimately, ensuring Spanish superiority.

Similar to the *Limpieza de Sangre* in Spain, the Casta System proclaimed that one's behavior, personality, and social status were inherently tied to race and carried from generation to generation. In New Spain, *Limpieza de Sangre* referred to those of European descent; those without *Limpieza de Sangre* were not of European descent (Africans, Indians, and mixed-race *castas*).⁷³ In the hierarchy, "Spaniards of course ranked at the top, and the principle for ranking the others was their degree of resemblance to Spaniards."⁷⁴ One's ranking in the

73. In Spain, the *limpieza de sangre* prohibited anyone of Jewish or Muslim blood from church or government offices, royal service, and attending certain schools. It referred to "Old Christians" (those without recent ancestry from people who had been non-Christians) in contrast to "New Christians" (Jews and Muslims). Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 51.

74. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 130.

system depended upon the portion of Spanish blood they could claim they possessed; the more Spanish blood one had, the higher one ranked in the Casta System. At the heart of the system lied a basic principle: European (whiteness) was the most desirable category and African (Blackness) was the least desirable category. While the Spanish did not desire or value Native ancestry, it was, at least theoretically if not socially, redeemable with the inclusion of Spanish ancestry.

As noted above, within the Casta System there were three main categories: *Europeans*, Hispanic peoples originating from the Iberian Peninsula; *Indios*, Indians; and *Negros*, Africans. Within each of these main categories were sub-categories. In the European category, there were *peninsulares*, Spaniards who were born in Spain, and *criollos*, Spaniards who were born in the New World; *peninsulares* and *criollos* essentially had the same social status and rights. James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz state that,

Both components of the Spanish sector [*peninsulares* and *criollos*, also known as *españoles*] were equally 'Spaniards,' undifferentiated as to ethnic category and very well differentiated as to function in society. The role of 'Spaniard' was essentially a unitary one; the immigrant brought renewal and growth, but his striving was to join the local Spaniards already established in certain social and economic functions.⁷⁵

In central New Spain and the frontier regions, Spaniards typically occupied prominent positions in government, the clergy, and the commercial sector, which involved both the international and local economy, whereas non-Spaniards –

75. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 132.

Indians, Africans, and the *castas* – occupied the lower positions of society and were relegated to the domestic commercial market. For example, *peninsulares* were given positions such as viceroy, governor, archbishop, bishop, and captain-general while *criollos* were appointed to positions such as “comptroller of the royal exchequer, judge, university professor, and mid-level administrative positions in the church (i.e. priests or directors of schools.”⁷⁶ This meant fewer economic and social opportunities for those of mixed-race ancestry and, in the case of Indians and Africans, could result in their enslavement or forced servitude.

Anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán found increasingly specific categories for African peoples or those of African ancestry based on skin tone. He argues that not only were they labeled *negroes* in accordance with their skin color, but distinctions were also made between the hues of this skin color.⁷⁷ Beltrán identifies *atezados*, which were those of darker complexions, “who were sometimes also called ‘negroes retinos,’ that is to say, ‘double eyed’ or extreme Negroes.”⁷⁸ They were then broken down into more specific sub-groups such as *albinos*, *tornatrás*, *sambayos*, *cambujos*, *albrizados*, and *barcinos*. Those of

76. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 63.

77. Aguirre Beltrán, “Races in 17th Century Mexico,” *Phylon* (1940-1956) 6, no. 3 (1945): 213; Douglas Richmond, “The Legacy of African Slavery in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1810,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 2 (2001): 3.

78. Beltrán, “Races in 17th Century Mexico,” 213.

lighter complexions were labeled *amembrillados*, often referred to as *negros amulatados*, or “mullatto-like.” From there, they were broken down into sub-categories based on hair texture. Additional labels for those with white, light, and dark skin included *mulatos blancos*, *claros*, and *moriscos*.⁷⁹ According to Beltrán,

The dark mulattoes were, without a doubt, the most numerous single group in New Spain, and their skin color inspired a curious and varied series of adjectives. They were said to have ‘*color pardo*’ (dark color), ‘*color de rapadura*’ (color of molasses), ‘*color champurrado*’ (color of chocolate), ‘*color amarillito*’ (yellowish color), ‘*color de membrillo*’ (quince-color), ‘*color quebrado*’ (broken color), ‘*color cocho*’ (color of stew), ‘*color zambaigo*’ (bay color), ‘*color loro*’ (parrot color), and several others.

Classifications based on race and skin tone served to separate those of European (Spanish) descent from those of African (Black) and Indian descent, as well as those of mixed-ancestry.

While race mixing did not become a problem in the eyes of the Spanish elite until the late seventeenth century, by the sixteenth century this mixture had already begun to complicate the original three-tiered hierarchy of European (Spaniard), African (*Negro*), and Indian (*Indio*), adding what would come to be known as the *castas*.⁸⁰ The *castas* – everyone not considered a pure-blood Spaniard, Indian, or African – “in a sense were a single intermediary category and as such were sometimes referred to as *castas*.”⁸¹ Following the main

79. Richmond, “The Legacy of African Slavery in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1810,” 6.

80. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 129.

81. Lockhart and Schwartz, 131.

categories, there were *casta* categories for the offspring born from combinations of the main categories: *mestizos*, the offspring of one Spanish parent and one Native parent; *mulattos*, originally meant anyone of mixed ancestry but increasingly came to refer to the offspring of one Spanish parent and one African parent; *castizo*, *cholo*, and *pardo*, a person with various amounts of Spanish and Indigenous mixture; and *zambo*, *chino*, and *lobo*, someone with various amounts of Indigenous and African mixture.⁸² By the late seventeenth century, these mixed-race offspring increasingly threatened Spanish superiority. By 1646, there were approximately 109,042 *mestizos* alone in Mexico.⁸³

Menchaca posits that while Native peoples were, in theory, economically privileged compared to *mestizos* because they were able to hold title to large portions of communal land protected by the crown and the church under the *corregimiento* system, they “were accorded little social prestige...and were legally confined to subservient social and economic roles regulated by the Spanish elite.”⁸⁴ Native peoples were considered wards of the church and were often

82. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 196–99; Illona Katzew, “Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico,” *New World Orders: Casta Painting and Colonial Latin America*, 2015; Adrian Bustamante, “The Matter Was Never Resolved: The Casta System in Colonial New Mexico, 1693-1823,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 66, no. 2 (1991): 143–64.

83. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 57.

84. Menchaca, 63. While the crown retained the legal title to Native lands, under the *corregimiento* system, it recognized the Native people’s occupational use rights and allowed them to transfer land use rights from one generation to the next.

forced to live under some form of authority, whether it was by the state, the church, or Spanish landowners. *Mestizos*, on the other hand, were given higher social prestige, but much like the Native peoples, were considered inferior to the Spaniards. They were barred from obtaining high and mid-level royal and ecclesiastical positions

Afromestizos – those of mixed Spanish, Indian, and African descent – were given the same legal privileges as *mestizos* but faced social stigmatization and were considered inferior to both *mestizos* and Native peoples due to their African ancestry. The Spanish crown enacted laws intended to distinguish *afromestizos* from *mestizos*. In 1774, a law was added to the *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reynos de las Indias* that prohibited *afromestizo* women (*afromestizas*) of noble birth from wearing the traditional clothing of Spanish women or a person of high social standing. If an *afromestiza* was caught breaking this law, she could legally be publicly humiliated and the items were to be confiscated.⁸⁵ Moreover, free *afromestizos* were subject to special taxes due to their African ancestry. Local authorities kept registries of *afromestizos* in order to levy the taxes.

In New Mexico, the two main groups were Spaniards, often of mixed ancestry but able to claim European ancestry, and Pueblo Indians. Spaniards were denoted by their national origin, labeled *español europeo*, *español*, or *español mexicano*, whereas Indians were simply recorded as *indio*, sometimes

85. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 64.

followed by language group or *ladino* if he or she spoke Spanish. Detribalized Indian slaves who had “forcibly or voluntarily left their communities to join Spanish-speaking settlements and who had acculturated to varying degrees” were called *genizaros* which differentiated them from Pueblo Indians who were simply recorded as *indio*. According to Gómez, Pueblo Indians were below *genizaros* in the racial hierarchy.⁸⁶ The *genizaros*’ assimilation and acculturation to Spanish society gave them a privileged position within the Spanish settler society of New Mexico. Even though the Pueblos were in regular contact with Spanish settlers, they lived in separate pueblos segregated from Spanish settlements and were not fully acculturated to Spanish society. Following the Pueblos, then, were the Apaches, Comanches, Navajos, Utes, and other nomadic and semi-nomadic groups who “resisted Spanish domination to the extent that they operated outside the colonial society.”⁸⁷

As the *Casta* System was designed to delineate between white and non-white peoples to ensure Spanish-European superiority, it also contributed to the erasure of the Native peoples in the settler colonial society of New Mexico. In New Spain at large, they believed that over the course of three generations, successive marriages to the *casta* ranked above could remove tainted Indian blood, but never African. As one scholar has explained, at the heart of the *Casta* System lay a basic principle: “Spanish or white blood is redeemable; Black is

86. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 56.

87. Gómez, 56–57.

not.”⁸⁸ Therefore, if a person of mixed Spanish-Indian ancestry married someone with Spanish-European ancestry (and this cycle continued for three generations), they could improve the racial, social, political, and economic position of their progeny, at least theoretically. Since Spanish-European ancestry was privileged and accompanied by privileged positions, scholars and historians safely assume that non-white and non-European peoples in New Spain desired and attempted to obtain whiteness and Spanish-European ancestry. Ideologically, this served to eliminate the Native peoples from Spanish settler colonial society. Once again, this was more of an aspiration than it was a reality as many Native populations persisted and thrived despite Spanish settler colonial efforts.

While there was no direct correlation between race and physical skin color, Chilean sociologist Alejandro Lipschütz termed the racial system of Spanish America a “*pigmentocracy*” because skin color and phenotype played a role in denoting one’s social and economic status, honor, and prestige.⁸⁹ In said pigmentocracy, “the whiter one’s skin, the greater was one’s claim to the honor and precedence Spaniards expected and received. The darker a person’s skin, the closer one was presumed to be to the physical labor of slaves and tributary Indians, and the closer the visual association with the infamy of the conquered.”⁹⁰

88. Katzew, “Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico,” 5.

89. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 198–99.

90. Gutiérrez, 199.

In Spanish America, there was a correlation between one's legal color, actual physical color, and phenotype, all of which made up one's racial definition. Here, race came to represent or signal one's honor, prestige, and position in the social, economic, and racial order.

It is important to note that scholars of Spanish colonization in the Americas recognize that, prior to 1760, race was rarely an indicator a person's status. Rather, in New Mexico alone between 1693 and 1759, the vast majority of individuals in the matrimonial investigations were categorized by a civic status instead of racial status.⁹¹ When racial status was mentioned, it was simply *español* (Spaniard) or *indio* (Indian). This is because, between the sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Spaniards in New Spain articulated a two-sector society: Spanish and Indian. According to *Gutiérrez*, "[o]ne was either a Spaniard or an Indian, there being a few intermediate hues."⁹²

This is not to say, however, that Black people or those of mixed African and Indian ancestry did not exist or did not experience discrimination before the late eighteenth century. As previously noted, the enslavement of and discrimination against African and Indian peoples is inseparable from the history of Spanish colonization in the Americas. Rather, the importance placed on the distinction between European (Spanish) and Indian ancestry is emblematic of

91. *Gutiérrez*, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 193.

92. *Gutiérrez*, 196.

three things. First, the Spanish valued European ancestry and whiteness and denigrated Indian ancestry. Second, by the mid-eighteenth century, Black people in New Spain and New Mexico “had so interbred with the Indian and European-origin population that their former distinctiveness” was no longer discernable.⁹³ And lastly, because of anti-black racism, “blacks and black mestizos [had] even greater incentives to ‘improve’ their racial status via strategies such as marriage, moving to the frontier, or wealth accumulation.”⁹⁴ In a place where whiteness affords one cultural capital in the social space, the privileging of whiteness and establishment of white supremacy creates a drive towards whiteness which contributes to the elimination of non-Spanish peoples.

The distinction between a two-sector society began to change in the 1750s. As the Christianization and acculturation of Pueblo Indians increased and miscegenation between Spaniards and those of African, Indian, and mixed-race ancestry continued, a need arose among the Spaniards in New Spain to categorize the mixed-race offspring to establish a racial hierarchy that privileged Spanish ancestry and Spanish culture, ultimately ensuring Spanish superiority over non-Spanish peoples. According to Illona Katzew, roughly one quarter of the total population of Mexico was racially mixed by the end of the eighteenth

93. Gutiérrez, *Manifest Destinies*, 198.

94. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 57.

century.⁹⁵ To make sense of the racial changes, those who could claim Spanish ancestry, whether real or imagined, turned to legal color categories. An analysis of matrimonial records shows that between 1760 and 1799, “*race became a major concern.*”⁹⁶ This is when the categories of the Casta System became increasingly specific, even though the implementation of the hierarchy remained elusive.

By the eighteenth century, the Casta System entered what Lockhart and Schwartz term a “crisis of social organization” in that the labeling and categorization of society’s members became increasingly difficult due to the amount of race mixing and acculturation taking place.⁹⁷ While settler colonialism and settlers themselves privileged whiteness and Spanish descent, the emphasis on acculturation to Spanish culture created a relatively fluid Casta System where upward movement was possible. Similarly, social status was not fixed solely by race; rather, it was a combination of one’s *calidad* which included age, sex, place of residence, race, legitimacy or illegitimacy, civic status, occupation, wealth,

95. Katzew, “Casta Painting: Identity and Social Stratification in Colonial Mexico,” 4.

96. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 194.

97. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 316. There were numerous ways in which an individual could improve their racial status. For an exhaustive list on the means for social and racial mobility see, Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*; Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*; Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*; Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*.

parentage, and skin color.⁹⁸ As such, mestizos were often accepted as Spaniards in part due to the extent of race-mixing, illegitimacy, frontier Spanish-Indian relations, and because individuals were often arbitrarily assigned to racial categories based on phenotype, all of which further complicated the fluidity of the Casta System. Furthermore, one could adjust their position within the Casta System by improving their social standing, which could be achieved through improved economic status or marriage.

The fluidity of the Casta System suggests that racial identity had a strong performance aspect in Spanish America, especially on the frontier, and in New Mexico in particular. Here, “people knowingly and variably performed race in different social contexts.”⁹⁹ Through marriage, acculturation, religious conversion, and improved socio-economic status, even those with impure Indian blood could transform into “civilized” people in an “uncivilized, Indian-dominated frontier.”¹⁰⁰

David Weber further complicates the fluidity of the Casta System in his analysis of the Spanish frontier. He states that while racial purity was a requisite for elite status in Spain and the colonies in the Americas, it “proved less essential for upward mobility on the frontier than in core areas of the empire.”¹⁰¹ For

98. Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*, 317; Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 191–94, 233; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 328.

99. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 54.

100. Gómez, 54.

101. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 326.

example, New Mexico gave *mestizos* some social and economic mobility. While there were still positions reserved solely for Spaniards – town councils and presidio or garrison generals – *mestizos* (if they were the head of household) could receive a plot of land and could be exempted from taxation for ten years.¹⁰² Additionally, the inherent messiness of the Casta System, often due to differing interpretations by local authorities, sabotaged the strict implementation of the system in frontier regions like New Mexico.¹⁰³ Weber credits this to the weakness of settler colonial institutions, which were unable to maintain rigid racial boundaries and therefore allowed social promotion to occur more rapidly than in the core areas of New Spain.

An analysis of immigration into New Mexico is another explanation for the fluidity of racial classifications and the lax enforcement of the Casta System in the frontier regions. Following Oñate's 1598 expedition, immigration into New Mexico from New Spain slowed. However, after the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, in which the Pueblo Indians rebelled against Spanish control and completely expelled Spanish settlers from New Mexico for twelve years, immigration into New Mexico picked up once again when the Pueblos established peace with the surviving Spanish settlers who returned to New Mexico after they fled during the revolt. In 1692, the new immigrants were predominantly of mixed Indian-Spanish and

102. Menchaca, *Recovering History, Constructing Race*, 64.

103. Bustamante, "The Matter Was Never Resolved," 150.

Black-Spanish descent.¹⁰⁴ According to the Governor of New Mexico, Thomas Vélez Cachupín (r. 1749–1754/1762–1767), there were twenty-two Spanish settlements populated with Spaniards, *mulattos*, and *mestizos* by 1753.¹⁰⁵ Immigration patterns, coupled with interracial marriages, the sexual exploitation of Indian women, and mixed-race offspring, challenged the strict racial classifications of the Casta System while simultaneously necessitating its implementation in the eyes of the Spanish settler colonial elite.

Nevertheless, while the frontier regions like New Mexico were hotspots for racial mixing and upward racial-social mobility, Weber notes that Spanish-European ancestry, and the term *español* in particular, “never erased memories of a person’s racial origins among his neighbors...Nor did the designation *español* ever become so elastic that it included all social inferiors.”¹⁰⁶ He attributes this to the Spanish elite’s need to keep people below them against whom they could define themselves and ensure their superiority. In his examination of the *genizaro* town of San Miguel del Vado from 1794 and 1817, Adrian Bustamante found that whereas nearly all casta designation disappeared (casta meaning mixed races in this case), *españoles*, “whether valid or self-

104. Jose Antonio Esquibel, “The Formative Era for New Mexico’s Colonial Population, 1693-1700,” in *Transforming Images: New Mexican Santos in-between Worlds*, by Claire Farago and Donna Pierce (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

105. Miller, “New Mexico in Mid-Eighteenth Century,” 170.

106. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 328.

ascribed, were always identified, as were *indios*.”¹⁰⁷ Gutiérrez extends this trend by about sixty-three years from 1760 to 1846 in his examination of the *calidad* of matrimonial candidates in New Mexico.¹⁰⁸ This trend is emblematic of two things: first, that upward racial mobility was possible; and second, that over the centuries of Spanish settler colonialism, whiteness remained the central and privileged organizing principle for racial categories and was thus desirable.

Social Constructs of Race and Racialization.

The social constructs of race – Spaniard (European), African, Indian, and the mixed-race *castas* – were informed by Spaniard’s racist perceptions of non-European and non-white peoples which they formed through direct and indirect interactions with these peoples. The Casta System, and the categories of race within it, were simultaneously measured by the proximity to Spanish ancestry and distance from African ancestry. In Spanish society, whiteness and Spanish ancestry were a form of cultural capital as they were privileged (both ideologically and materially) by those in power (white Spaniards). In the words of historian Magali Marie Carrera,

The Spaniard's positive self-definition as pureblooded...was constructed in tandem with perceived negative traits of the Indians, Black Africans, or castas...Thus the identities of both Spaniard and casta [as well as Indian and African] were constructed within this positive/negative complex of

107. Bustamante, “The Matter Was Never Resolved,” 157.

108. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 193.

signs and practices and were inseparable, entangled, and unstable identities.¹⁰⁹

In the “positive/negative complex of signs and practices,” whiteness and Spanish ancestry were positive and, thus, afforded cultural capital to those who could claim it.

Spanish racial constructs were perhaps first and foremost defined by their perceptions of African peoples. While there is little evidence for the presence of large numbers of African peoples in New Mexico during the sixteenth to early nineteenth century, it is important to cover Spanish perceptions and social constructs of race for African peoples for a few reasons. By ignoring their presence and privileging assimilation, creolization, and *mestizaje* (the process of race-mixing in Mexico), scholars contribute to the continued erasure of the African presence in New Spain which began during the inception of the empire. The erasure of the African history of Mexico has contemporary repercussions such as the lack of government-sanctioned historical and cultural preservation and the denial of rights. Moreover, it prevents us from fully understanding what social constructs of race and racialization looked like for Spaniards, Native, African, and mixed-race peoples in New Spain. Spaniards infused their racial constructs with derogatory notions of blackness that not only impacted the lives

109. Magali Marie Carrera, *Imagining Identity In New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body In Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 16.

of Black people, but also affected the lives of Native and mixed-race peoples, as well as Spaniards.

It is evident that people of African descent played a crucial role in the development of New Spain; they were explorers, military assistants, and laborers, both free and enslaved. The first Africans arrived in New Spain during the early sixteenth century with the early expeditions of Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) and Pánfilo de Narváez (d. 1528). Soon after colonization in New Spain began, so too did the enslavement of Africans. Spanish enslavement was accelerated by the introduction of Spanish diseases and forced labor systems to the Native populations of New Spain which had devastating consequences for Native peoples. There were roughly 25 million Native peoples in Mexico in 1519, but by 1548, the numbers plummeted to 6 million and then 1.5 million by 1600.¹¹⁰ Consequently, the Spanish turned towards the enslavement of Africans as a solution to the shortages in forced labor. The racialization of Africans and their enslavement was motivated and justified by the belief that Africans were “infidels, culturally inferior, and probably racially inferior to Spaniards.”¹¹¹

Based on their previous experiences with the trans-Atlantic slave trade, sixteenth century Spaniards believed that Africans were immune to Old World

110. Richmond, “The Legacy of African Slavery in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1810,” 2.

111. Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3.

diseases and were biologically predisposed for hard labor. In response to complaints by the Native peoples of Zongolica, Veracruz, Viceroy Manrique de Zuñiga (r.1585–1590) wrote:

Me ha sido hecha relación que ellos acuden con treinta indios ordinarios cada semana al beneficio de dicho ingenio en el cual padecen notable trabajo y vejación porque asisten al fuego de las calderas y a otros efectos trabajosos e intolerables que son competentes a esclavos negros acostumbrados a trabajar en bras pesadas y no de indios débiles y flacos y de poco sustento y fuerza.¹¹²

[I have been told that they go with thirty ordinary Indians every week to the benefit of said mill in which they suffer considerable work and vexation because they attend the fire of the boilers and other laborious and intolerable effects that are competent to black slaves accustomed to working in heavy fibers and not of weak and skinny Indians and of little sustenance and strength.]

Lacking an understanding of immunity and inoculation, Europeans, the Spanish included, attributed this to their race. In turn, the racialization of Africans as biologically suited to hard labor and immunity to Old World diseases justified their enslavement and relegation to the bottom of the racial-social hierarchy.

In his defense of Native peoples against the exploitation of their labor and Spanish encroachment on their lands, Spanish historian and social reformer, Bartolomé de Las Casas, perhaps unintentionally provided the Spanish crown with biological justifications for the enslavement of Africans. While he was not the first to advocate for the use of enslaved Africans—Dominican friars, Jeronymite commissioners, and court officials made similar suggestions around this time—he

112. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran, *La Población Negra de Mexico, 1519-1810* (Ediciones Fuente Cultural: Mexico, 1946), 184.

was the first to secure the right from the king for Spaniards to bring “a dozen Negroes” to Spain’s colonies in 1518.¹¹³ Las Casas declared that if the colonists were allowed to import African slaves, they “would give up their Indians so these Indians could be set free.”¹¹⁴ In 1516, he advised the king that if they brought twenty African slaves for communal use in the mines, they would “produce more gold than twice that number of Indians.”¹¹⁵

Writing in the third-person, he later rescinded his advocacy for all forms of slavery in 1522 stating that he “found himself regretting this counsel he had given, and judged himself guilty through carelessness. For since he later observed...that the Negroes’ captivity was as unjust as the Indians’, the remedy he had recommended – to bring Negroes in order to free the Indians – was not a prudent one.”¹¹⁶ This was too late, however, as Spain was already heavily involved in the enslavement of Africans by the sixteenth century with populations measuring up to 10,595 African peoples and 11,645 *mulattos* in Mexico City

113. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Obras Escogidas de Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, V. Opúsculos, Cartas y Memoriales*, ed. Juan Pérez, vol. V (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1957), 487.

114. Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Obras Escogidas*, 487.

115. Robert L. Brady, “The Role of Las Casas in the Emergence of Negro Slavery in The New World,” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 61/62 (1966): 44.

116. Las Casas, *Obras Escogidas*, 488.

alone by 1560.¹¹⁷ In New Mexico, the enslavement of Africans was not as widespread as in much of New Spain. Rather, New Mexican colonial settlers relied on the enslavement and forced labor of the Native populations. Nevertheless, notions of race, associated with the enslavement of African peoples and the belief that they were racially and culturally inferior, infiltrated New Mexican society as they were widespread throughout the colonies of New Spain.

Throughout the eighteenth century, biological notions of race began to arise in Europe and then throughout the Americas, New Spain included. When the colonization of New Spain and the development of the Casta System were underway during the sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries, the Spanish associated black skin with the “evil of Cain; with a pejorative assessment of the weakened content and ability of the African female mind; and/or with the problems of Black African physiology.”¹¹⁸ By the mid-eighteenth century, Enlightenment thinkers and writers in peninsular Spain further developed these understandings of black skin and argued for a biological understanding of the separateness of the races. This discourse correlated black pigmentation with the inability to comply to natural law and accepted (European) morals. Carrera articulates this transformation as follows: “These eighteenth-century discussions

117. Richmond, “The Legacy of African Slavery in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1810,” 3.

118. Carrera, *Imagining Identity In New Spain*, 12.

of black skin transformed the physiological explanations for the skin of Black Africans into a pejorative discourse on the debased social meaning and moral content of people with dark skin color.”¹¹⁹

In New Spain, the new biological understandings of race (based on physiognomics) was used in conjunction with the previous understandings of race (based on lineage, blood purity, and one’s *calidad*) to inform notions of anti-blackness. As previously mentioned, it was believed that Spanish blood could redeem, or lighten, one’s racial classification and return their descendant to full Spanish blood after three successive generations. For example, if a *mestizo* (the offspring of one Spanish parent and one Native parent) and a Spaniard had a child, the child would be a *castizo* (a person of three-quarters Spanish descent and one-quarter Native). And if a *castizo* married a Spaniard, their offspring could (at least theoretically) return to full Spanish decent with pure Spanish blood. This, however, only applied to Spaniards and Native peoples. For a person of African ancestry, he “can never leave his condition of mixed blood” because, according to Spaniards, “it is the Spanish element that is lost and absorbed into the condition of a Negro.”¹²⁰ Spanish merchant Pedro Alonso O’Crouley (1740–1817) states, “to those contaminated with the Negro strain we may give, over all, the

119. Carrera, *Imagining Identity In New Spain*, 12.

120. Seán Galvin, trans., *A Description of the Kingdom of New Spain by Sr. Dn. Pedro Alonso O’Crouley 1774* (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1972), 20.

name *mulatos*, without specifying the degree or the distance direct or indirect from the Negro root or stock, since, as we have clearly seen, it colors with such efficacy...even the most effective chemistry cannot purify.”¹²¹ Not only does any trace of African blood erase the presence of Spanish blood, but the introduction of African blood is permanent and even the successive addition of Spanish blood, the “most effective chemistry,” cannot purify the contaminated blood.

Historian Douglas Richmond argues that the Spanish “brought Africans into a society that deemed them weak, hedonistic, subservient, and fit only for bondage.”¹²² This is emblematic in the way Spaniards spoke about African peoples in travel narratives, ethnographies, autos, and accounts of conquests. In his 1542 *Relación*, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (1490–1559) gave an account of his time with the expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez. In his account, he discusses the aid they received from Estevanico, an enslaved Black man, however, he only refers to him as “un *negro*.”¹²³ In New Spain, African peoples were relegated to the bottom of the racial-social hierarchy.

121. Galvin, *A Description of the Kingdom of New Spain*, 20–21, emphasis added.

122. Richmond, “The Legacy of African Slavery in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1810,” 1.

123. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, eds., *The 1542 Relación (Account) of Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

The Spaniards of New Spain held conflicting views of Native peoples. The Catholic Church, for example, believed that Native peoples were descendants of the lost tribe of Israel which afforded them humanity. In 1512, the Laws of Burgos declared that the Native peoples were wards of the church and the crown and were to be protected, Christianized, and acculturated.¹²⁴ The laws state that the Native peoples “should forthwith be brought to dwell near the villages and communities of Spaniards who inhabit the Island [Hispaniola], so that they may be treated and taught and looked after as is right and as we have always desired.¹²⁵ The Native peoples were given to the Spaniards under *encomienda* where they were supposed to be taught the Catholic faith, treated when sick, be given the sacraments Christians are obligated to receive, and “serve with less hardship to themselves and with greater profit to the Spaniards.”¹²⁶ The decree continues, at length, to note how Spanish supervision will improve the lives of the Native peoples. Those that were put in charge of Indians were required, by law, to do so “with much care, fidelity, and diligence, with greater regard for the good treatment and conversion of the said Indians than for any other respect, desire, or interest, particular or general.”¹²⁷ Even though the Laws of Burgos were

124. Lesley Byrd Simpson, trans., *The Laws of Burgos of 1512-1513: Royal Ordinances for the Good Government and Treatment of the Indian* (San Francisco: J. Howell, 1960).

125. Simpson, 14.

126. Simpson, 14.

127. Simpson, 16.

passed in 1513, before the colonization of New Spain began, they were rarely enforced in New Spain as it remained far away and largely removed from peninsular Spain and the governance of the Crown. Evidence of this is seen in the travel narratives and ordinances where explorers and viceroys call for the persecution of those who treat the Native peoples poorly. In 1595, Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco instructed Oñate to “impose the most severe penalties on transgressors.”¹²⁸

Although the Catholic Church attempted to protect the Native peoples, they did not believe that they were equal to Spaniards. They viewed them as children who needed protection and the Christian faith to civilize and protect them and save their souls. According to the laws, this improvement and security can only come under the supervision of the Spaniards and through conversion to the Christian faith. Without it, the Native peoples “return to their dwellings where, because of their own evil inclinations, they immediately forget what they have been taught and go back to their customary idleness and vice.”¹²⁹

The second view, the one held by most Spaniards, viewed Native peoples as barbarous and uncivilized heathen savages. The Spanish operated on

128. Don Luis de Velasco, “Instructions to Don Juan Oñate, October 21, 1595,” in *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, trans. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. V, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 67.

129. Simpson, *The Laws of Burgos of 1512-1513*, 12.

binaries of “civilized/savage, Christian/heathen, pure/impure, honorable/shameful, [and] European/indigenous” with the Native people occupying all of the categories that the Spanish viewed as negative and un-European.¹³⁰ The aforementioned binaries—founded on notions of white supremacy that privileged European ancestry, culture, and whiteness while denigrating non-white peoples and non-European ancestry and culture—formed the social constructs of race and racialization for Native peoples who emerged as uncivilized and un-Christian savage barbarians. The Spanish used the racialization and constructs of race for Native peoples to inform the social constructs of race and racialization of Spaniards where the Spanish emerged as civilized, Christian, European, and white. Depending on the situation, the racialization and social constructs of race became progressively more intricate.

Writing in support of the enslavement of the Native peoples, Spanish scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1450–1573) demonizes the Indians by asserting that they are savage barbarians who were “by nature slaves.”¹³¹ In his 1547 work, *Democrates Alter*, he frames his argument as a discussion between two disputants in which they debate whether Spain’s war against the Native

130. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 53.

131. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter [On the Just Causes for War Against the Indians],” 1547, <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/sepulved.htm>.

peoples in New Spain is just.¹³² One of the disputants, in support of Sepúlveda's argument, differentiates between those who were forced into slavery and those who were slaves by nature. The disputant declares,

The most powerful and most perfect rule over the weakest and most imperfect... Those who surpass the rest in *prudence* and *talent*, although not in physical strength, are *by nature the masters*. Those, on the other hand, who are *retarded* or *slow to understand*, although they may have the physical strength necessary for the fulfillment of all their necessary obligations, are *by nature slaves*, and it is proper and useful that they be so, for we even see it sanctioned in divine law itself, because it is written in the Book of Proverbs that *he who is a fool shall serve the wise*... If they reject such rule, then it can be imposed upon them by means of arms, and such a war will be just according to the laws of nature.¹³³

According to Sepúlveda, one was a slave by nature because they were naturally imperfect, weak, incapable of understanding, foolish, and, by inference, lacking prudence and talent. Relying on the logic of Aristotle, he deduced that this natural slave status meant that they were "born to obey," and, if they were to reject said servitude, the war against them was just because divine law ordered that fools were meant to serve the wise.¹³⁴

132. During this time, it was believed that in order for a war to be waged, it must be a just war. To be considered just, it had to meet one of three criteria: there are no other means to repel force other than by using force; the war is waged to recover "things seized unfairly"; to punish "evildoers," who have gone unpunished, in a manner that will prohibit them from doing wrong again; conquest by force of those who, by nature, must obey others. Sepúlveda, "Democrates Alter."

133. Sepúlveda, "Democrates Alter," emphasis added.

134. Sepúlveda, "Democrates Alter."

Throughout the *Democrates Alter*, Sepúlveda makes clear who the natural slaves are and who the natural masters are. He claims that though the Native peoples of New Spain are thought to be the most civilized of all, their cities are created in a rational way, their kings are elected by popular vote, and they engage in commercial activities “in the manner of civilized peoples,” their public institutions are actually evidence of the “crudity, the barbarity, and the natural slavery” of the Native peoples.¹³⁵ To the Spanish, these institutions, because they are not European and are instead Native, are an example of the barbarous nature of Native peoples and prove that they are slaves by nature. Furthermore,

They have established their nation in such a way that no one possesses anything individually, neither a house nor a field, which he can leave to his heirs in his will, for everything belongs to their Masters whom, with improper nomenclature, they call kings, and by whose whims they live, more than by their own, ready to do the bidding and desire of these rulers and possessing no liberty.¹³⁶

To Sepúlveda, the willingness to submit to the authority of another, without force or pressure, “is a definite sign of the servile and base soul of these barbarians” and by not overthrowing this “servile and barbarous nation” to obtain more freedom, “they have stated quite clearly that they have been born to slavery and not to civic and liberal life.”¹³⁷

135. Sepúlveda, “*Democrates Alter*.”

136. Sepúlveda, “*Democrates Alter*.”

137. Sepúlveda, “*Democrates Alter*.”

Spanish Roman Catholic philosopher, theologian, and jurist of Renaissance Spain, Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546), argues that if there is such a thing as natural slaves, “then none fit the bill better than these barbarians [Native peoples of New Spain], who in fact appear to be little different from brute animals and are completely unfitted for government. It is undoubtedly better for them to be governed by others, than to govern themselves.”¹³⁸ However, he challenges Sepúlveda’s claim that the Native people do not own anything, stating, “it may be argued that they were in undisputed possession of their own property, both publicly and privately” which meant that they were true (natural) masters and could “not be dispossessed without due cause.”¹³⁹ He continues to argue that if the Native peoples were not true masters before the Spaniards arrived, there could only be four explanations; it was either because they were sinners, unbelievers, madmen, or insensate. Vitoria then proves that the even sinners, unbelievers, madmen, and the insensate can be true masters and cannot be denied dominion. Therefore, even if Native peoples are sinners, unbelievers, madmen, or insensate, they too cannot be denied dominion. In conclusion, he contends: “Granting that these barbarians are as foolish and slow-witted as people say they are, it is still wrong to use this as grounds to deny their

138. Francisco de Vitoria, “De Bello Contra Indios (On the War against the Indians),” in Vitoria: Political Writings, ed. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 233.

139. Vitoria, 234.

true dominion; nor can they be counted among the slaves.”¹⁴⁰ Even though Vitoria is writing in support of Native peoples’ right to dominion, he does not believe that they are equal to Spaniards. Additionally, he too racializes them as barbarians. Vitoria’s writings prove that the opposing view—the belief that Native peoples were barbarians without civilized institutions who could rightfully be denied sovereignty and thus be subjected to enslavement and dispossession—was widespread enough to require opposition.

Unlike Vitoria, Sepúlveda held the predominant view of Native peoples. He perfectly summarizes how the Spanish thought of Native peoples when he describes them as “barbarous” and “inhumane peoples” who lack both civil life and peaceful customs.¹⁴¹ To disparage them, he simultaneously uplifts Spaniards and denigrates Native peoples:

Compare, then, these gifts of prudence, talent, magnanimity, temperance, humanity, and religion [attributes possessed by Spaniards] with those possessed by these half-men...in whom you will barely find the vestiges of humanity, who not only do not possess any learning at all, but are not even literate or in possession of any monument to their history except for some obscure and vague reminiscences of several things put down in various paintings; nor do they have written laws, but barbarian institutions and customs.¹⁴²

To him, as to most Spaniards in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Native peoples of New Spain are everything the Spanish are not: uncivilized,

140. Vitoria, “De Bello Contra Indios,” 251.

141. Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter.”

142. Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter.”

lacking virtues, unskilled, uneducated, savage, cruel, barbarous, unmerciful, and intemperate. Sepúlveda asserts that,

If you know the customs and manners of different peoples, [you can understand] that the Spanish have a perfect right to rule these *barbarians* of the New World and the adjacent islands, who in *prudence, skill, virtues, and humanity* are as *inferior* to the Spanish as children to adults, or women to men, for there exists between the two as great a difference as between *savage and cruel races* and the most merciful, between the most intemperate and the moderate and temperate and, I might even say, between apes and men.¹⁴³

He presents his argument as common sense: by simply observing the cultures and traditions of non-Spaniards, non-Europeans, it is evident that the Spanish are superior and are fit to be the natural masters due to their prudence, skill, virtue, and humanity, as well as their superior institutions. Still, if Spanish superiority was not obvious enough just yet, Sepúlveda continues by listing influential Spanish scholars, theologians, philosophers, and astronomers, noting that there are too many other notable Spaniards to enumerate.

The virtues of the Spanish do not stop there. Not only are they adept thinkers, but they also embody “strength, humanity, justice, and religion.”¹⁴⁴ Moreover, the Spanish are more courageous than the Native peoples: “[A]nd since furthermore these Indians were otherwise so cowardly and timid that they could barely endure the presence of [Spanish] soldiers...many times thousands upon thousands of them scattered in flight like women before Spaniards so few

143. Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter.”

144. Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter.”

that they did not even number one hundred.”¹⁴⁵ This narrative of cowardly Indians and courageous Spaniards is replicated in many, if not all, of the travel narratives and ethnographies of the conquest of New Mexico.¹⁴⁶ To close out his praise of Spanish character, society, religion, and virtues, Sepúlveda concludes,

And what can I say of temperance, in greed as well as in lust, when there is hardly a nation in Europe which can be compared to Spain as concerns frugality and sobriety?...And what can I say of the gentleness and humanity of our people, who, even in battle, after having gained the victory, put forth their greatest effort and care to save the greatest possible number of the conquered and to protect them from the cruelty of their allies?¹⁴⁷

Not only are the Spanish superior to the Native peoples of New Spain, but they are also superior to other Europeans in terms of temperance. In addition to a superior ability to abstain from the vices, the Spanish are also kind and benevolent conquerors, at least in the minds of the Spanish. Therefore, due to their

145. Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter.”

146. For examples of Native cowardice when faced with Spaniards, see: Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*; Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942); H. Bailey Carroll and J. Villasana Haggard, trans., *Three New Mexico Chronicles: The Exposición of Pedro Bautista Pino, 1812; the Ojeada of Antonio Barreiro, 1832; and the Additions by José Agustín de Escudero, 1849*, vol. XI, The Quivira Society Publications (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1942); Espinosa, *History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà, Alcalá, 1610*; Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*.

147. Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter.”

virtuous nature and their wise laws, Spaniards “can destroy *barbarism* and educate [the Native peoples] to a more *humane* and *virtuous* life.”¹⁴⁸

The Spaniard’s racialization and perceptions of Native life and people were imbued with white supremacy that privileged European, specifically Spanish, culture and ancestry. It goes without saying, then, that we cannot take Spanish accounts of Native ways of life and Native character at face value. The Spanish had to racialize—categorize or separate according to race—the Spanish and the Native peoples of New Spain. It took self-conscious efforts on the part of the Spanish to racialize the Native peoples and make race (one’s ancestry, *calidad*, and physiognomy) a qualification for membership in Spanish civil community. By racializing the Native peoples as barbarous and uncivilized savages, the Spanish differentiated them from Spanish culture and Spanish ancestry and could thus deny them full inclusion in Spanish society and justify their enslavement and the dispossession of their land.¹⁴⁹

148. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, “The Second Democrates,” 1547, <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/sepulved.htm>, emphasis added.

149. Examples of Spanish travel narratives, ethnographies, and letters to the Crown where Spaniards call Native peoples barbarous are too numerous to detail. For examples, see: Sepúlveda; Sepúlveda, “Democrates Alter [On the Just Causes for War Against the Indians]”; Vitoria, “De Bello Contra Indios (On the War against the Indians)”; Espinosa, *History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà, Alcalá, 1610*; Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*; Carroll and Haggard, *Three New Mexico Chronicles: The Exposición of Pedro Bautista Pino, 1812; the Ojeada of Antonio Barreiro, 1832; and the Additions by José Agustín de Escudero, 1849*; Shelby, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*; Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*.

The views espoused by Sepúlveda resonated throughout New Spain over the course of the sixteenth century and were brought into New Mexico at the beginning of settler colonialism. Spanish explorers, conquerors, and colonial settlers brought their views of Spanish superiority and white supremacy into the region which they used to establish Spanish superiority in the racial-social hierarchy. Upon entering New Mexico, the Spanish settlers met the diverse Native peoples whom they portrayed as “uncivilized, unintelligent, and a ‘people without capacity.’”¹⁵⁰ By assuming racist conclusions about the Native peoples that were rooted in white Spanish superiority, (even though the Spanish had yet to interact with them in a significant way), the Spanish justified their exploitation of Native land, men, and women from the first moment of Spanish-Indian contact.¹⁵¹ Laura Gómez argues that, from the moment of initial Spanish colonization in New Mexico, the Spanish racial order was predicated on two related principles: “first, the identification of the indigenous population as ‘savage’ others and, second, the use of the first claim to legitimize Spanish conquest.”¹⁵²

The tribes that refused to submit to Spanish authority—the Apaches, Navajos, and Comanches—were considered ‘barbarous’ and uncivilized; these groups were sometimes collectively referred to as *los bárbaros*.¹⁵³ In 1582, in his

150. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 52.

151. Gómez, 52–53.

152. Gómez, 52.

153. Gómez, 53.

recount of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition (1581–1582), Hernán Gallegos states that the explorers expected to face dangers from hunger and want, but also, and more obviously, “from war with the innumerable barbarous peoples along the way.”¹⁵⁴ Throughout his recount, he denigrates the various Native peoples they encountered calling them savages, barbarians, and liars. In his description of a meeting between the explorers and an unidentified Native nation, he states that after they were given information by the Native peoples, they “could not help being somewhat apprehensive that, as Indians, they might be lying. Since they were Indians—people who are born liars and in the habit of always telling falsehoods.”¹⁵⁵ This practice is not limited to Gallegos. In Diego Pérez de Luxán’s account of the Antonio de Espejo expedition, Luxán recalls how the “naked and warlike Passaguates” warned the Spanish expedition that the Patatabueyes planned to attack the Spaniards once they entered their

154. Hernán Gallegos, “Gallegos Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez Expedition (1582),” in *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. III, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 68.

155. Gallegos, 79.

land.¹⁵⁶ Luxán states that they “took this as a joke.”¹⁵⁷ Upon entering the Patatabueye territory, the expedition was attacked.

Gallegos often insinuates, or explicitly states, that Native peoples were predisposed to evil and wrongdoing. When recounting an attempt on behalf of the Native peoples to kill the members of the expedition, he states, “we tried to dissuade them from their wicked thoughts, but, as they were Indians, this did not prevent them from doing evil.”¹⁵⁸ He dedicates an entire section to the “evil practices of these people” in which he details Native burial practices, spiritual dances, and marriage customs. He concludes, “for a barbarous people the neatness they observe in everything is very remarkable,” demonstrating that the Spanish believe Native peoples lack civility, organization, and order and, when they do embody these traits, it is extraordinary.¹⁵⁹

The Spanish explorers and colonial settlers were more interested in securing vassals and religious converts than they were in understanding or recoding Native civil and governmental organizations. Therefore, many of the

156. Diego Pérez de Luxán, “Diego Pérez de Luxán’s Account of the Antonio de Espejo Expedition into New Mexico in 1582,” in *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, vol. III, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 158.

157. Luxán, 158.

158. Gallegos, “Gallegos Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez Expedition (1582),” 96.

159. Gallegos, 104.

travel narratives and ethnographies written by Spaniards focus on the Native peoples' clothing, physical appearances, and way so life rather than detailed descriptions of their civil and governmental institutions. For example, Gallegos describes the Raya peoples as a people "very unattractive in appearance" who "go about naked like savages...[and] are lazy, capable of little work, and dirty."¹⁶⁰ As for an unidentified Native group, he asserts that "as a naked and barbarous people they will be difficult to settle and congregate in towns, for they do not even wear clothing."¹⁶¹

Additionally, Gallegos describes the Cabris nation as "handsome, spirited, and much more attractive and intelligent than the people met previously."¹⁶² While he appears to praise the Cabris peoples, it is solely based on appearance and the fact that they are "very well built" and are "cleaner and more modest than the Conchas."¹⁶³ It becomes apparent that the Spanish explorers viewed this group as more intelligent than the others due to their ability to "grow large quantities of calabashes and beans *in the proper season*."¹⁶⁴ From writing such as Gallegos and Luxán, we can deduce that the Spanish held the common belief

160. Gallegos, "Gallegos Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez Expedition (1582)," 70.

161. Gallegos, 75.

162. Gallegos, 70.

163. Gallegos, 70–71.

164. Gallegos, 71, emphasis added.

that Native peoples were uncivilized and, ultimately, un-European because they did not resemble Spanish (European) culture or those of Spanish ancestry.

Even when the Native peoples he encountered resembled European or Spanish society, Native people were still not seen as equal to Spaniards and were still considered to be barbarians. When he describes Native peoples from the Piro or Tigua region, he writes: “These people, like the others, wear clothing. I have decided to describe their attire here because, *for barbarians*, it is the best that has been found.”¹⁶⁵ According to Gallegos,

Some adorn themselves with pieces of colored cotton cloth...with which they cover their privy parts. Over this they wear, fastened at the shoulders, a blanket of the same material, decorated with many figures and colors, which reaches to their knees, like the clothes of the Mexicans. Some (in fact, most) wear cotton shirts, hand-painted and embroidered, that are very pleasing. They use shoes. Below the waist the women wear cotton skirts, colored and embroidered; and above, a blanket of the same material, figured and adorned like those used by the men. They adjust it after the fashion of Jewish women, and gird it with embroidered cotton sashes adorned with tassels...The women part their hair in Spanish style. Some have light hair, which is surprising.¹⁶⁶

Throughout his description, it becomes clear that he praises their clothing because it more closely resembles what the Spanish consider civilized European ways of dressing. That they do not go about naked, that they wear shoes, that the women wear skirts and some form of covering over their breasts, and that the women’s blankets resemble those of Jewish women (likely unintentionally)

165. Gallegos, “Gallegos Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez Expedition (1582),” 85, emphasis added.

166. Gallegos, 85–86.

makes them better barbarians than those who wear no clothing or who wear clothing that the Spanish believe is wholly Native. Moreover, and perhaps even more significant, these Native peoples were “handsome and fair-skinned.”¹⁶⁷ This, however, still did not make them equal to Spaniards. Rather, Native society and Native traditions are seen as something to marvel at, but not in a serious or respected way. Indeed, Gallegos found the Native way of life (quoted above) “very interesting” but undoubtedly unequal to Spanish traditions and culture.¹⁶⁸

Throughout his description, he relates their craftsmanship, ways of sleeping, divisions of labor, and gender roles to those in New Spain and peninsular Spain. He proceeds to speak highly about their productivity and the division of labor between men and women because it, again, resembles what the Spaniards consider European divisions of labor and gender roles. He explains,

They are very industrious. Only the men attend to the work in the cornfields. The day hardly breaks before they go about with hoes in their hands. The women busy themselves only in preparation of food, and in making and painting their pottery... There are millstones on which the natives grind their corn and other foods. These are similar to the millstones in New Spain... The men bear burdens, but not the women.¹⁶⁹

In New Spain, Spanish women enjoyed greater freedoms “as men’s preoccupation with wars and colonizing required women to participate more

167. Gallegos, “Gallegos Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez Expedition (1582),” 85.

168. Gallegos, 86.

169. Gallegos, 85.

actively in the life of the city” and arguably even more so in frontier life.¹⁷⁰ However, these freedoms engendered the belief that women required “special protective enclosure” in the private sphere.¹⁷¹ We see this belief in Gallegos focus on, and praise of, the division of labor and gender roles in this Native society. It is because this Native society resembles Spanish ideals, as close as a society of barbarians can, that Gallegos praises them, at least in relation to other Native peoples. Once again, however, this did not make them racially, socially, or culturally equal to the Spaniards. Instead, Gallegos believed that “they are a very intelligent people [meaning industrious, domestic, and good craftsmen]” and that they were “willing to serve.”¹⁷² From writings such as Gallegos, we can reason that European culture, traditions, ways of life, and institutions were the metric against which the Spanish explorers judged the Native peoples.

Gaspar Pérez de Villagr  (1555–1620), captain and legal officer during the O ate expedition, wrote a first-hand account of the Acoma revolt (December 1598–January 1599). While undoubtedly biased and at times inaccurate, his account highlights the violence of the Acoma revolt. Furthermore, Villagr ’s

170. Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 9. For more information on the division of labor and gender roles in Spain, see: Theresa Ann Smith, *The Emerging Female Citizen: Gender and Enlightenment in Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

171. Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, 9.

172. Gallegos, “Gallegos Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodr guez Expedition (1582),” 86.

account is emblematic of the way Spaniards portrayed themselves in narratives of colonization, pacification, and conquest and how they racialized themselves and the Native peoples they encountered. Villagr  states that Spanish Sergeant Diego Robledo, “like a spitting cat which, snarling and scratching, faces its enemies, arose, and, furious at his discomfiture, charged his oncoming foes and put them to flight.”¹⁷³ Then, “desirous of putting an end to the fearful loss of life,” the sergeant “seeing that victory was accomplished and that further carnage was unnecessary, called to the savages to surrender, giving them his word of honor that they would be treated with mercy and justice.”¹⁷⁴ The Acoma responded by firing arrows, “crying to him to do his best, that sooner than surrender, they, their wives and children would perish at their own hands.”¹⁷⁵ According to Villagr , the Acoma renewed battle, threw themselves in the flames, leaped from the cliff, and “turned their arms upon one another, father slew soon, and son slew father.”¹⁷⁶ Spanish sergeant, Vicente de Zaldívar (c. 1573–before 1650), then urged Acoma

173. Gaspar P rez de Villagr , “Canto Thirty-One,” in *History of New Mexico by Gaspar P rez de Villagr , Alcal , 1610*, trans. Gilberto Espinosa, vol. The Quivira Society Publications (Los Angeles: The Quivira Society, 1933), 248.

174. Villagr , “Canto Thirty-One,” 249.

175. Villagr , “Canto Thirty-One,” 249.

176. Villagr , “Canto Thirty-One,” 249.

leaders to plead with their people to bring an end to this “terrible self-destruction.”¹⁷⁷

These narratives allowed the Spaniards to portray themselves as levelheaded, benevolent peacemakers who were reluctant to engage in unnecessary violence.¹⁷⁸ The disparate, but not altogether independent, depiction of Native peoples as violent and bloodthirsty—but concurrently fearful and cowardly when faced by the Spanish—served to racialize the Native peoples as savages while simultaneously characterizing the Spanish as superior forces. Villagr  vilifies the Native peoples and exalts the Spanish when he blames Zutacap n, an Acoma leader who was instrumental in inciting the revolt, and absolves the Spaniards from responsibility for the violence, destruction, and death:

What did you gain by inciting your peoples to war against the Spaniards? Yours is the blame for all the broken treaties and forgotten pledges. What evil possessed you to stir up such a bloody war? You sought power and authority. Little did you appreciate how unworthy you were of such prizes.

177. Gaspar P rez de Villagr , “Canto Thirty-Four,” in *History of New Mexico by Gaspar P rez de Villagr , Alcal , 1610*, trans. Gilberto Espinosa, vol. The Quivira Society Publications (Los Angeles: The Quivira Society, 1933), 263.

178. Based on ethnographies, travel narratives, and letters to the crown, it is apparent that this representation of the Spanish was a fa ade as they often resulted to violence without provocation. For detailed accounts of Spanish violence towards Native peoples, see: Hammond and Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594*; de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*; de Las Casas, *Obras Escogidas de Fray Bartolom  de Las Casas, V. Op sculos, Cartas y Memoriales*; Espinosa, *History of New Mexico by Gaspar P rez de Villagr , Alcal , 1610*; Carroll and Haggard, *Three New Mexico Chronicles: The Exposici n of Pedro Bautista Pino, 1812; the Ojeada of Antonio Barreiro, 1832; and the Additions by Jos  Agust n de Escudero, 1849*.

If this unfortunate pueblo is no in ashes; if its streets run red with blood; if this Rock is strewn with bloody corpses, yours alone is the fault. You alone are to blame.¹⁷⁹

Narratives, like the one presented in Villagrá's account of the Acoma revolt, elevated the Spanish in the social-racial hierarchy and legitimized their conquest.

In contrast to the nomadic or semi-nomadic Native groups—whom the Spanish viewed as wholly barbarous, savage, and uncivilized due to their nomadic nature and refusal to submit to Spanish authority—the sedentary Pueblo Indians were seen as civilized Indians due to their Christianization, sedentary lifestyle, and proximity and relationships with Spanish settlements. In addition to the binaries of civilized/savage, Christian/heathen, pure/impure, honorable/shameful, and European/Indigenous, which the Spanish used to differentiate between Spanish and Indian, the Spanish distinguished between Native peoples “whom they felt they could colonize (‘civilized Indians’ or neophytes, referring to their conversion to Christianity) and those over whom they did not hope to assert authority (‘barbarous Indians’).”¹⁸⁰ Therefore, the Pueblo Indians, who converted to the Christian faith and were consistently in contact with the Spanish settlements, were above the Apaches, Comanches,

179. Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá, “Canto Thirty-Two,” in *History of New Mexico by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá, Alcalá, 1610*, trans. Gilberto Espinosa, vol. IV, Quivira Society Publications (Los Angeles: The Quivira Society, 1933), 251.

180. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 53.

Utes, Navajos, and others who refused to submit to Spanish authority in the racial hierarchy.¹⁸¹

In his *Exposición*, written in 1812, Don Pedro Bautista Pino (1752–1829) refers to the “wild Indians who surround New Mexico” and the “warlike and wild tribes of this country.”¹⁸² He lists the wild tribes he encountered providing brief explanations of their relationships to the provinces of New Mexico:

The Apaches, the Gileños, a treacherous, cruel, and thieving people, who always go naked; the Llaneros, like the others; the Mescaleros, not so cruel; the Carlanes, not so bad as the Gileños; they wear clothes and are very large; and the Lipanes, exceedingly warlike and expert in the use of the rifle... There are also the Yutas, with whom we are at peace; the Navajoes; and the honorable Comanches; these three are the most powerful nations; they have greatly threatened the loss of the province.¹⁸³

He then differentiates between the “sedentary Indians [Pueblos] and the wild Indians.”¹⁸⁴ For Pino, the Pueblo Indians do not receive much discussion, probably because they were not currently at war with the New Mexican provinces in the nineteenth century. However, the practice of differentiating the sedentary

181. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 56–57.

182. Don Pedro Bautista Pino, “Exposición Sucinta y Sencilla de La Provincia Del Nuevo México: Hecha Por Su Diputado En Cortes,” in *Three New Mexico Chronicles: The Exposición of Pedro Bautista Pino, 1812; the Ojeada of Antonio Barreiro, 1832; and the Additions by José Agustín de Escudero, 1849*, trans. H. Bailey Carroll and J. Villasana Haggard, vol. XI, Quivira Society Publications (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The Quivira Society, 1942), 29, 67, 98.

183. Pino, 128–29.

184. Pino, 98, 104.

and Christianized Pueblo Indians from the warlike and barbarous tribes dates back to the period of first contact between Spanish explorers and colonial settlers and the Native peoples of New Mexico.

The Spaniard's favor for the Christianized, sedentary Pueblo Indians is apparent in the records of the Pueblo Revolt in 1680. Throughout the reports, written by different men, the Spaniards refer to the Pueblo Indians as "Christian Indians" while the Apaches are referred to as "heathen Apaches."¹⁸⁵ In Santa Fe,

185. Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., "Autos Drawn Up as a Result of the Rebellion of the Christian Indians. Santa Fe, August 9, 1680," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940, VIII (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., "Auto and Judicial Process [Santa Fe, August 13-21, 1680]," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., "Auto [Santa Fe, August 21, 1680]," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., "Auto of Alonso Garcia [El Socorro, August 24, 1680]," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., "Auto and Judicial Proceeding [Place of La Salineta, September 18, 1680]," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., "Letter of the Very Revered Father Custodian, Fray Francisco de Ayeta [to the Most Excellent Senor Viceroy. El Paso, September 11, 1680]," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942);

the Cabildo (a town council or local government council) agreed that the Pueblo Indians, “after eight-odd years of communication with the Spaniards, many of them are intelligent, are skillful on horseback, and able to manage firearms as well as any Spaniard; and they have a knowledge of all the territory of the kingdom and many of them are familiar with all New Spain from Vera Cruz to Sonora.”¹⁸⁶ Moreover, the Spaniards believed that the Pueblo Indians were convinced, or deceived, into revolting by the “heathen Apaches.” On October 20, 1680, the governor of New Mexico from 1678–1682, Antonio de Otermín, wrote that the Apaches used their “deceits and stratagems to bring the Christian

Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Letter of Cabildo of Santa Fe to the Viceroy. Rio Del Norte, October 16, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., “Opinion of Luis Granillo [Place Opposite El Socorro, August 26, 1680],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Charmion Clair Shelby, trans., “Opinions given in the Junta de Guerra. La Salineta, October 2, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Opinion of the Cabildo of Santa Fe. La Salineta, October 3, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942).

186. Shelby, “Opinion of the Cabildo of Santa Fe. La Salineta, October 3, 1680,” 180.

Indians into confederation with them.”¹⁸⁷ Sargento Mayor Don Pedro Durán y Chávez (c. 1610–1688) laments that “these reasons are that this camp, which now is a destitute, and needy, without stores of arms or enough horses to be able to undertake the conquest of the kingdom of New Mexico, because of the fact that large numbers of Apaches are directing the Christian Indians.”¹⁸⁸

Recounting the revolt in September 1680, General Don Bartolomé de Estrada Ramírez (1625–1687) claims that the “hostile Indians [Apaches], rebelling against the royal crown, confederated with the friendly nations [Pueblos] who were at peace, have revolted, and laid waste and destroyed many pueblos, and have killed the religious teachers and many other citizens and persons.”¹⁸⁹

Though the Spanish believed that the Pueblos were civilized, Christian Indians, they did not believe that they were equal to the Spaniards. In fact, following the revolt, the Spanish called for various forms of punishment for the

187. Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Letter of Antonio de Otermín to the Viceroy. Paso Del Rio Del Norte, October 20, 1680.,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 210.

188. Shelby, “Opinions given in the Junta de Guerra. La Salineta, October 2, 1680,” 169.

189. Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Order of the Governor and Captain-General of El Parral. [San Joseph Del Parral, September 24, 1680],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 184.

Pueblos, all of which necessitated Spanish authority over the Pueblos. In a letter dated September 25, 1680, Don Bartolomé de Estrada (1522– c. 1635) suggested that the “hostile Indians,” both Apache and Pueblo, should be made slaves “for a period of ten years...this to apply beginning with the age sixteen.”¹⁹⁰ He believed that this was a less severe punishment than their “inquiry and wrongdoing deserve[d].”¹⁹¹ On October 12, 1680, in El Paso del Río del Norte, the Cabildo, governor, captain-general, and “other persons” created a memorandum in which they listed the requirements for the reconquest of New Mexico. In the memorandum, they declared that “no Indian, mestizo, or mulatto may carry harquebus, sword, dagger, or lance, or any other Spanish arms, nor may they own beasts or travel on horseback, the latter being permitted only to servants of soldiers on campaign or on the roads.”¹⁹²

190. Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Another Letter of the Same [Don Bartolomé de Estrada] of La Neva Vizcaya, in Which He Advises the Viceroy How He Has Ordered, under Severe Penalties, That No Person from New Mexico Be Admitted into That Kingdom, Because of the Governor [of New Mexico] Having Informed Him That the Spaniards Were Deserting Him. [Parral, September 25, 1680.],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 154.

191. Shelby, “Another Letter of the Same [Don Bartolomé de Estrada] of La Neva Vizcaya,” 154.

192. Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Memorandum and List of Things...Needed for the New Conquest of New Mexico. El Paso, October 12, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 201.

Many of the requested punishments included restricting the movement and settlement of the Pueblos. In 1681, Licenciado Martín de Solís Miranda (b. 1641), the king's fiscal, wrote:

It is very necessary that the said rebel Indians be punished so that such a pernicious example may not remain, they having given sufficient cause for being subjugated by force of arms, especially as rebels and apostates who ought to be reduced to the fold of the church by all possible means, there should be adopted by your excellency all the convenient measures looking to their reduction.¹⁹³

He further suggested that, after being reconquered, the Pueblos should be forced to resettle wherever the governor saw fit so that the "heathen Apaches" were not able to stay among them as they had previously.¹⁹⁴ In a letter to the Viceroy, the Cabildo of Santa Fe requested that the justices of La Vizcaya and other regions "not permit in their territories, under heavy penalties, any native of New Mexico, but rather they order them to go to the pueblos of which they are natives and settle down in them."¹⁹⁵ According to the Cabildo, this would prohibit the natives

193. Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., "Reply of the Fiscal. Mexico, January 7, 1681," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 232.

194. Shelby, "Reply of the Fiscal. Mexico, January 7, 1681," 233.

195. Shelby, "Letter of Cabildo of Santa Fe to the Viceroy. Rio Del Norte, October 16, 1680," 204.

of New Mexico from deserting the pueblos which allowed the “entry of many heathen enemies, who have wrought much destruction in the said pueblos.”¹⁹⁶

Moreover, while the Spanish considered the Pueblos to be Christian and civilized, at least when compared to other Native peoples, they still considered them to be barbarous and naturally idolatrous, ignorant, and inclined to superstitions.¹⁹⁷ In an *auto*, a court order requiring certain rules in which the

196. Shelby, “Letter of Cabildo of Santa Fe to the Viceroy. Rio Del Norte, October 16, 1680,” 205.

197. For evidence of the Spanish’s use of “barbarian” or “barbarous” for the Pueblos, see: Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Letter of the Governor of Parral [to the Viceroy], in Which He Advises Him That He Has Notified His Lieutenants to Aid Each Other in the Event of Any Uprising as a Result of That Which Has Taken Place in New Mexico, and to Go to the Assistance of the People of the Said Kingdom. [Parral, September 7, 1680.],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 87; Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Juan Baptista de Escorsa to Antonio de Otermín. San Juan, September 17, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Auto of Antonio de Otermín. Paraje El Rio Del Norte, October 9, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Certification of the Cabildo of Santa Fe. El Paso, October 12, 1680,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942); Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Reply of the señor Fiscal. Mexico, January 3, 1681,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, vol. VIII (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942).

reasons for the ruling must be stated, Governor Otermín proclaimed that the Spanish needed to bring about the “reduction of the souls of the apostate Indian rebels—who blindly and barbarously have attempted to condemn themselves.”¹⁹⁸ He reasoned that this was necessary so that “the discord of the devil may not gain control among the natives, with *idolatries* and *superstitions*, which is that to which *their stupid ignorance predisposes them*, for they live blindly in *their freedom and stupid vices*.”¹⁹⁹ To the Spanish, the Pueblos’ conversion to Christianity, interactions with Spanish settlements, and sedentary lifestyle was not enough to remove them from barbarity or counteract their supposed ignorance. As Native peoples, they could be better than other Native peoples, but they could not be equal to the Spanish.

Conclusion

By the early nineteenth century, the future of the Casta System looked dismal. Many of the mestizos and Indians, who had been denied equal rights and equal treatment since the fifteenth century, were unsatisfied with their position in the social, racial, and economic hierarchy dominated by Spanish-Europeans. Spain was under pressure to improve the social and economic positions of the

198. Shelby, Charmion Clair, trans., “Auto [of Antonio de Otermín. Fray Cristóbal, September 13 (14?), 1680],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 122.

199. Shelby, “Auto [of Antonio de Otermín. Fray Cristóbal, September 13 (14?), 1680],” 122, emphasis added.

large mestizo and Indian populations who made up a total of 80 percent of Spain's entire population.²⁰⁰ To do so, Spain lifted occupational restrictions on *mestizos* and Native peoples in 1810 and abolished mandatory Indian tributary payments to the Crown making them liable for taxation. In an attempt to forestall Mexican independence – which had been brewing since 1808 – Spain abolished the racial Casta System and promised equality regardless of one's race in 1812. While this did not explicitly include African men or those with African ancestry, “it proved difficult in New Spain to distinguish them when larger population sectors participated in the elections.”²⁰¹ Therefore, many men of African descent and colored *castas* participated in elections. In considering the importance of these changes, Gómez states that they “reflected Spain's instability as a colonial power and proved a harbinger for Mexico's independence from Spain.”²⁰² Rather than a sign of Spain's benevolence, and in light of Spanish settler colonialism in the region, these changes are emblematic of Spain's attempts to erase and eliminate the Indigenous populations through religious and cultural assimilation and legal distinction as Spanish citizens.

What began as an organizational system with sixteen categories in the sixteenth century expanded to include over 100 different racial categories by the

200. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 58.

201. Virginia Guedea, “The Process of Mexican Independence,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (February 2000): 125.

202. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 59.

end of Spanish rule in 1821. It was nearly impossible for the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities to enforce the Casta System for several reasons, some of which include increased racial mixing, the inconsistency of the Casta System itself, the subjective assessment of the census taker, the inherent messiness of the frontier, and personal declaration of one's racial status.²⁰³ Elliot expertly summarizes the history of the Casta System in the following passage: "In the 'pigmentocracy' of Spanish America, whiteness became, at least in theory, the indicator of position in the social ladder. In practice, however, as time went on there were few creoles to be found without at least some drops of Indian blood."²⁰⁴

Nevertheless, "for all the deceptions and ambiguities, colonial Spanish-America evolved into a colour-coded society" where settler colonialism established white supremacy as the organizational ideology and whiteness as the privileged category.²⁰⁵ As an extension of settler colonialism, the Casta System was established to ensure Spanish-European dominance in the multiracial new world of New Spain. Whiteness, achieved through claims of Spanish-European descent and acculturation to Spanish culture, was the

203. For more information on the issues plaguing the classifications of Casta System, see Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*; Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*; Lockhart and Schwartz, *Early Latin America*; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*.

204. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 171.

205 Elliot, 172.

foundation upon which white supremacy was founded during Spanish colonial rule. While the regime changed in 1821, white supremacy did not disappear. In fact, it remained the central organizing principle for the racial hierarchy during Mexican settler colonialism.²⁰⁶

206. More work needs to be done on the on-the-ground relationships between Hispanic and Native peoples in New Mexico during the Mexican occupation. Due to the time constraints and global circumstances under which this project was conducted, I was unable to access a wealth of sources located in libraries and archives in New Mexico that could shed light on nineteenth-century Hispanic New Mexican perceptions of Native peoples.

CHAPTER TWO

MEXICAN SETTLER COLONIALISM (1821–1848):

INTERETHNIC VIOLENCE AND WHITE SUPREMACY

In New Spain, whiteness—and the social, economic, and political privileges associated with it—was often achieved through one’s proximity to European ancestry, specifically, Spanish ancestry. The subsequent settler colonial regimes of Mexico (1821–1848) and the US (1848–present) continued to (re)organize their social, political, and racial hierarchies based on white supremacy. For Mexico, this was rooted in one’s proximity to whiteness, which remained tied to one’s ability to claim European ancestry.²⁰⁷ However, much like the Spanish era, Mexico’s northern frontiers remained largely removed from the happenings in the center of the empire. New Mexico in particular was a world of its own during the period of Mexican colonial rule. While white supremacy remained in New Mexico’s ideological workings, the day-to-day lives of Hispanic New Mexicans, Indians, and Black people were relatively untouched by systematic white supremacy.²⁰⁸ During its time in the Mexican Republic, New

207. Mexico’s territorial possessions underwent many changes between 1821 and 1848. Additionally, the topic of this thesis is only concerned with the northern portions of Mexico’s territory therefore I will not exhaustively detail Mexico’s shifting territorial claims. The portions of Mexican land that I am concerned with include: present-day Mexico and the American Southwest (California, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas), specifically the Nuevo Mexico territory and present-day New Mexico.

208. “Hispanic New Mexican” refers to those of mixed ancestry in New Mexico, as opposed to those of only Spanish, Indian, or African ancestry.

Mexico was preoccupied with reciprocal (and violent) raiding and trading between New Mexican settlers and the Native peoples in and around the region.

Mexican Independence and Racial Equality

Mexico's emancipation from Spain began with the 1808 imperial crisis when French military and political leader, Napoléon Bonaparte (1769–1821), occupied peninsular Spain and declared his brother, Joseph-Napoléon Bonaparte (1768–1844), King of Spain. Historian Virginia Guedea divides the fight for independence into two sectors: politicization and militarization. She suggests that the imperial crisis “not only intensified political activities in New Spain but also generated new forms of political life and thought.”²⁰⁹ Mestizo elites and rural insurgents used this new political culture to articulate their independence from Spain. When Father Miguel Hidalgo (1753–1811) initiated an insurrection against the imperial regime in September 1810, the militarization of the war for independence officially began.

Motivations for participating in the insurgency varied. In addition to regional differences, there were personal and local differences. Many mestizo elites were unhappy with the Bourbon Reforms of the eighteenth century and resented the social, economic, and legal restrictions they faced due to their racial classifications as mestizos. Motivated by anti-colonial ideology, they fought against the colonial regime to improve their social, economic, and political

209. Guedea, “The Process of Mexican Independence,” 116.

positions in a system that privileged European descent and those that could claim European ancestry. Spaniards, on the other hand, fought to protect imperial interests which ensured that they would remain at the top of the social, political, economic, and racial hierarchies. Not all Spaniards were satisfied with the status quo, however. While those from peninsular Spain (*peninsulares*) fought to keep existing conditions, those born in the Americas (*criollos* or *españoles*) wanted more local control and equal standing with Peninsular-born Spaniards. Similarly, rural insurgents fought to protect their local cultures and communal autonomy.²¹⁰ In his work on rural insurgency during the Mexican struggle for independence, Eric Van Young found that rural insurgents, many of whom were Indians rather than mestizos, were motivated by “frustration at personal and professional setbacks; by loyalties based on kinship, friendship, and love; and by longstanding local alliances and feuds.”²¹¹ Scholars of Mexican Independence credit regional and personal differences for the fractured nature of the struggle for independence.

Hoping to establish a new political order and quell the rebellion, Spain issued the Constitution of Cádiz, otherwise known as the Spanish Constitution of

210. Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

211. Joan Bristol, “The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821 by Eric Van Young,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 262.

1812, which enfranchised all adult men of Spanish and Indian descent. Although men of African descent and those with more African or Indian descent were denied the franchise, Guedea recognized that “it proved difficult in New Spain to distinguish them when larger population sectors participated in the elections.”²¹² Therefore, many of the colored *castas* and men of African descent were able to vote. In some ways, things began to look up for those who were previously marginalized in New Spain.

In 1814, however, King Fernando VII (1784–1833) returned to the throne in Spain and abolished the Constitution of 1812, effectively restoring the old regime. Colonial authorities in New Spain proceeded against anti-colonial insurgents, which increased fighting and caused New Spain to invest more money and search for more men that were willing to fight.²¹³ Between 1815 and 1821, political and military fighting continued throughout Mexico.²¹⁴

In March 1820, the constitutionalists (those in favor of the 1812 constitution and against the colonial regime) managed to restore the Constitution of 1812. According to Guedea, the restoration of the constitution “gave New

212. Guedea, “The Process of Mexican Independence,” 125.

213. Guedea, 127.

214. The political and military intricacies of the struggle for Mexican Independence have been detailed elsewhere and are outside of the scope of this work. For more information on the political and military history of Mexican Independence, see Guedea, “The Process of Mexican Independence”; Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*; Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*.

Spaniards the opportunity to further their interests through numerous elections that were held for constitutional *ayuntamientos*, provincial deputations, and the Cortes.”²¹⁵ Although their situation improved, they were convinced that they could no longer remain under the control of peninsular Spain and thus organized against the established regime once again in 1821. Little fighting occurred this time as cities and towns readily accepted the Plan of Iguala, the independence program issued by Agustín de Iturbide (1783–1824), a creole landowner and former officer in the Spanish army who assumed leadership of the Mexican independence movement.²¹⁶ The Plan of Iguala left the church, state administration, and courts largely intact but provided for the establishment of a governing junta, which was a goal of the initial 1808 independence movement.

In July 1821, the Superior Political Chief of New Spain, Juan de O'Donojú y O'Ryan (1762–1821), ratified the Plan of Iguala by signing the Treaty of Córdoba, officially recognizing the independence of the new Mexican Empire. Chosen by Iturbide, the new governing junta was comprised of the capital's elite and officers of the army (many of whom were of Spanish descent) but excluded the former insurgents and republicans, the majority of whom were of mixed or Native ancestry. After Mexican Independence, the Mexican legislature abolished racial distinctions, banned the future importation of African slaves, and mandated

215. Guedea, “The Process of Mexican Independence,” 129.

216. Guedea, 129.

that current Black slaves were to be freed after an additional ten years of servitude.²¹⁷

In 1824, the Mexican government effectively decoupled race from citizenship. They issued a new Constitution that declared everyone born in Mexico a Mexican citizen including those of African descent and *los bárbaros* (such as the Apache, Navajos, and Comanches). Even when conflicts between New Mexican settlements and Comanches, Apaches, and Navajos increased during the 1830s and the 1840s, the Mexican government articulated an inclusive view of *los bárbaros* that folded them into the fabric of Mexican citizenship.²¹⁸ In 1827, in a letter to US Secretary of State Henry Clay (1777–1852), Joel Poinsett (1779–1851) stated, “the government of Mexico does not regard the Indians living within their territory as an independent people in any perspective whatsoever but as a component part of the population of their states, and subject to the laws of Mexico.”²¹⁹

When analyzed through the lens of settler colonialism, this push for racial and social equality should be viewed as assimilationist and elimination efforts rather than as altruistic acts. The extension of citizenship, forced acculturation, and inclusion in Mexico’s economy are examples of Native elimination through

217. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 59.

218. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 158.

219. “Joel R. Poinsett to Henry Clay, Mexico City, April 13, 1827 [Private],” n.d., US Despatches.

inclusion in the body-politic. By granting Native people citizenship rights, they were expected to learn the Spanish language, Catholic religion, and abandon their indigeneity and acculturate to Mexican culture and traditions, land-use practices, and other ways of life. By including Native peoples in the body-politic as citizens, it allowed the Mexican government and Hispanic New Mexicans to take Native land as it eliminated Native people's rights to it. As a country with a large, if not primarily, mestizo population, Mexico was unable to rhetorically or genocidally erase its Native past. Additionally, due to the Native people's military and economic power, genocide was not a feasible option for Mexico. This is true, especially for New Mexico where the Indian and Mexican populations were tied together economically, socially, and genetically. Therefore, the attempted elimination of the Indian populations was achieved through their legal inclusion as Mexican citizens, rather than as separate or distinct autonomous Indian groups.

Mexico's New Mexico (1821–1848):
Hispanic and Native Interethnic Violence

While the struggle for Mexican independence and the subsequent fighting between the centralists and federalists encapsulated much of the country, New Mexico remained far removed from the conflict.²²⁰ During the fight for independence, royalists and insurgents were much more concerned with Texas because men and materials could be obtained from Louisiana. Furthermore,

220. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 15.

while New Mexico participated in the fight between the federalists and constitutionalists in Mexico during the late 1830s, the day-to-day life of many New Mexicans remained fairly unaffected.²²¹ Even though New Mexico was removed from the ideological and material conflicts in central Mexico, white supremacy was embedded in New Mexican society due to the previous centuries of Spanish colonization and what Brian Delay described as the “bloody interethnic violence” of the nineteenth century.²²²

As it had been from the fifteenth century on, nineteenth-century New Mexico was characterized by New Mexican-Indian economic, social, and kinship ties (both real and fictive), as well as local-specific connections between the numerous Indian groups in the region and members of Mexican settlements.²²³ In the eighteenth century, when the trade fairs in Taos and Pecos declined, trading between Hispanic New Mexicans and Comanches started to take place in *la comanchería* – eastern New Mexico, west Texas, the lower portion of the Territory of Kansas, and the western part of Indian Territory. Previously, the Native peoples of the surrounding regions traveled into New Mexico to conduct trade. Now, Hispanic New Mexicans traveled into surrounding regions and

221. Guedea, “The Process of Mexican Independence,” 130. During the Mexican Revolution, *ricos* (wealthy and influential Hispanic New Mexicans often able to claim Spanish-European ancestry) favored centralism and sided with the constitutionalists whereas poor Hispanic New Mexicans and Pueblos favored federalism and sided with the federalists.

222. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, xv.

223. Delay, 57.

conducted trading visits. These visits were often accompanied by captive raids where Hispanic New Mexicans took Indian captives, often women and children, and sold them to New Mexicans or Indians back in New Mexico.²²⁴ Captive raiding prompted retaliatory raids by the Native peoples whose goods and relatives were taken from them.

The Comanches found the trade in captives from both Mexican communities and from neighboring Native groups especially lucrative. They raided neighboring settlements, both Mexican and Native, for captives who they would then sell to New Mexicans as captives or as ransom, typically to the captive's family. While the Comanches sold many of their captives, many stayed in *la comanchería* for life where they acculturated to Comanche society. James Brooks argues that the "diverse social traditions of honor, shame [*vergüenza*], violence, kinship, and community met, merged, and regenerated...[as well as] produced an intricate web of intercultural animosity and affection."²²⁵ Delay challenges Brook's reliance on kinship and affection, noting that "Comanches and their allies plainly believed that many Mexican captives were worth more as corpses than cousins."²²⁶

224. While New Mexican authorities occasionally tried to control trading out of New Mexico and into *la comanchería*, it continued well into the late nineteenth century. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 59.

225. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, 9–10.

226. It is important to note and will be demonstrated later, that Native peoples did not have a monopoly on violence. Hispanic New Mexicans engaged

Western Shoshone historian Ned Blackhawk, who also relies less on the kinship paradigm than Brooks, highlights the very real violence, brutality, and Indian hierarchies of power that existed in the borderlands. He found that New Mexico was a site of internecine Indigenous warfare that caused a ripple effect and brought violence into the Great Basin as each community vied for superiority and engaged in captive raiding, reprisals, and military campaigns.²²⁷ Between the 1830s and 1840s, New Mexico was engaged in conflicts between Mexican and American citizens and the various Indian populations in northern Mexico and the Southern Plains, what Delay terms the “War of a Thousand Deserts.” The reciprocal raiding (based on honor, shame, revenge, and the exchange of women and children) between Hispanic New Mexicans and the Navajos, Apaches, Utes, and Comanches produced cycles of violence that often devastated communities economically and emotionally. According to Pekka Hämäläinen, the violence associated with the displaced raiding and enslaving “benefit[ed] some groups more than they [did] others.”²²⁸

in murderous raids and unnecessary violence toward Native peoples. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 136.

227. With his emphasis on the displacement of violence by Spanish, Mexican, and American colonial settlers and Indian peoples, Blackhawk reveals how settler colonialism transformed Indian lifeways, often before settlers themselves arrived in certain regions. Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006).

228. Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 11.

The cycles of violence generated by the reciprocal raiding and trading between Hispanic New Mexicans and the Native peoples surrounding New Mexico produced negative perceptions of one another. On the Mexican settler colonial side, it further entrenched white supremacist views and engendered racist formulations of Indian peoples that would become the driving force of settler colonialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Social Constructs of Race and Racialization

While racial distinctions were abolished and racial equality was enforced on a legal level, social constructions of race remained tied to white supremacy and those of European ancestry continued to be given privileged positions in Mexican society. The people in power in central Mexico and the populations of New Mexico were similar to, if not the same as, those that were present during Spanish colonization. Therefore, the social constructs of race, racialization, and ideologies of white supremacy that were in New Mexico during Spanish colonization were still present during Mexican colonization. Delay contends that Mexican politicians “saw the country’s poor Indigenous and mestizo majority as malleable constituents, as compatriots in waiting, lacking only education and institutional reforms, or as dangerous children to be isolated from the national political arena at all costs.”²²⁹ Moreover, the Mexican government and members of New Mexican settlements believed that if peace could not be established with

229. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 23-24.

a certain Native group, “then they should be attacked vigorously, even *destroyed*.”²³⁰

In Mexico at large, and New Mexico specifically, Delay argues that “while most northerners feared and hated their attackers [Indians], this fear and hatred was rarely conceived of or expressed in terms of a racial divide.”²³¹ As was previously demonstrated, Hispanic New Mexicans did in fact conceive of themselves as superior racial others when compared to Pueblos, Apaches, Comanches, Utes, and Navajos. Yet, unlike white European-Americans, they could not use binary racial dichotomies to create unity against the Indian race when most of the citizens had Native ancestry.²³² Additionally, many of the Native groups in Mexico and the American Southwest were nomadic; the people of central and northern Mexico encountered numerous groups of diverse Native peoples. Therefore, the Mexican government and people could not homogenize

230. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 160, emphasis added.

231. In the US during the nineteenth century, binary racial dichotomies provided clear distinctions between homogenized Indians and white European-Americans. As they expanded west, White European-Americans often encountered Native peoples that resided in specific regions which allowed them to isolate and racialize the Native peoples as homogenous groups upon who they could enact their eliminatory policies. White European-Americans built on the eighteenth-century practice of using hard distinctions that pitted “Indians” against “whites” which allowed frontier communities to transcend their internal differences and wage war against one another. They used tales of Indian violence and American victimhood to create a common “white” identity that united them against “nonwhites.” Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 205.

232. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 206.

their Indian enemies into “uncomplicated racial others” due to the diversity of the Native peoples they encountered.²³³

This does not mean, however, that Mexico or Hispanic New Mexicans rejected concepts of race. Rather, as recognized by Delay, northerners occasionally employed racist formulations even though “[r]ace could never have the same discursive potency for Mexicans as it did for Texans and Americans, for the simple reason that Mexico was a republic comprised mostly of Indians and mestizos.”²³⁴ To distinguish between “friendly” sedentary Indians – Pueblo Indians, Indian ranchers, farmers, and laborers – and Indian raiders, Hispanic New Mexicans relied on the old Spanish practice of referring to Indian raiders as wild, warlike, uncivilized, and “*barbarian, savage, or even caribe.*”²³⁵

In 1832, Don Antonio Barreiro (ca. 1780–1835), Spanish lawyer and politician turned *asesor* (legal advisor) to territorial authorities in New Mexico, wrote the “Ojeada Sobre Nuevo México (A Glance at New Mexico).” Within his writings, he described the Taos Pueblo, a Taos-speaking tribe of Puebloan people. Barreiro wrote, “the inhabitants are known as the bravest in New Mexico, and they have given ample proof of this claim in the continuous campaigns which

233. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 205.

234. Delay, 206.

235. Delay, 206; Ralph Adam Smith, *Borderlander: The Life of James Kirker, 1793–1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 161–67; Frank Reeve, “Navajo Foreign Affairs 1795-1846” (Navajo Community College Press, 1983), no. 30.

they wage against the wild tribes of the north.”²³⁶ Similar to the Spanish period, the Pueblo peoples were not given privileged positions in the social-racial hierarchy because they were seen as racially or socially equal to Spaniards or even those of mixed ancestry. Instead, they were given a favorable position in the racial-social hierarchy because they aided the New Mexican settlements against the seemingly barbarous tribes of the north. As in the Spanish period of settler colonialism, the Pueblos’ sedentary nature, Christianization, and acculturation informed their standing in the racial-social hierarchy as well.

In his *Ojeada*, Barreiro described his anxieties regarding the threats to New Mexico’s potential prosperity, all of which originated from raids by the “warlike and wild tribes of this country” who attacked with “destructive hostility.”²³⁷

Discussing the agricultural potential of New Mexico, Barreiro wrote,

An immense body of land, favored by nature with the proper climate and adequate vegetation for agricultural pursuits, which should promote the happiness of New Mexicans, is completely neglected because of the *wild Indians* who occupy it or who frequently invade it. The insurance of a peace treaty between New Mexico and these *enemies* will enable the province to make use of these delightful lands, where agriculture should attain a high state of development.²³⁸

236. Antonio Barreiro, “Ojeada Sobre Nuevo México (A Glance at New Mexico),” in *Three New Mexico Chronicles: The Exposición of Pedro Bautista Pino, 1812; the Ojeada of Antonio Barreiro, 1832; and the Additions by José Agustín de Escudero, 1849*, trans. H. Bailey Carroll and J. Villasana Haggard, vol. IX, The Quivira Society Publications (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1942), 86.

237. Barreiro, 77.

238. Barreiro, 77, 38, emphasis added.

He stated that, unlike the surrounding regions where each settlement or state had to contend with one Native group, “the type of warfare carried out against the wild Indians in New Mexico is different, even the opposite, of that waged in the state of Chihuahua. Tribes which are at peace with one another are at war with the other, and vice versa.”²³⁹ He believed New Mexico could be a productive part of the Mexican republic if only the wild Indian raiders could be made peaceful or kept in check. He strongly recommended making New Mexico a completely protected military post and sending additional soldiers and settlers due to “the frontier position of New Mexico, its topographical location in relation to the rest of the republic, and its critical situation in regard to the thirty or more tribes of *wild Indians* that surround it.”²⁴⁰

To support his recommendations for the protection of New Mexico, Barreiro emphasized the strength and natural ability of the Native peoples and belittled the abilities of the “meritorious officers” whose “practical experience [was] unavailing against those tactics with which Mother Nature has imbued the wild Indians.”²⁴¹ He described the New Mexican forces as follows:

Their tactics consist simply in harassing the enemy, attacking only when advantages of terrain or numbers are on their side, fleeing hastily whenever a successful outcome of the struggle is doubtful, and fighting until the last drop of blood is shed in case they are given the alternative of

239. Barreiro, “Ojeada Sobre Nuevo México (A Glance at New Mexico),” 76.

240. Barreiro, 74, emphasis added.

241. Barreiro, 77.

fighting or surrendering... How often the troops are worn out, vainly pursuing the wild Indians; and when the troops have withdrawn from the settlements in pursuit, frequently the Indians suddenly attack the then unguarded settlements, thus making sport of their pursuers! How often they have attracted attention in one direction, and at the same time and in united forces, have attacked seven or eight other points!²⁴²

In contrast, he speaks highly of the Native peoples' abilities stating,

In order to enable them to carry out this craftiness, Nature has endowed these Indians with abilities which civilized man does not have in the same proportion. All wild Indians learn by instinct to handle weapons during the first years of their life; their senses are generally extremely keen; as hunters and while living their nomadic life, always exposed to the force of the elements, they acquire astonishing agility and resistance; they easily satisfy their necessities of food and clothing; they endure without great trouble hunger and inclement weather; and they travel enormous distances quickly; they are not stopped by deep rivers, almost impenetrable forests, high and craggy mountains, or horribly extensive deserts without water.²⁴³

An analysis of the language Barreiro uses proves that he did not believe that the Native peoples were actually superior to Hispanic New Mexicans. Rather, Barreiro attributed the Native people's superior abilities to something "Nature has endowed" them. In comparison, Hispanic New Mexicans, while inferior to the Native peoples, were "civilized man."

Barreiro's praise of Native peoples and shaming of New Mexican settlers was part of a rhetorical strategy. In addition to calling Native peoples disparaging names, northern officials also relied on the rhetorical tools of honor and shame (*vergüenza*) to encourage national leaders into taking action against the raiding

242. Barreiro, "Ojeada Sobre Nuevo México (A Glance at New Mexico)," 77.

243. Barreiro, 77–78.

Indians. Letters to officials in Mexico City shamed them for their inability to protect their settlements, hoping that it would lead the officials to aid in the protection of northern settlements. Ironically, the letters implicitly recognized the power of independent Native peoples. According to Delay, the letters implied that “Mexico City had to help because *los bárbaros* were too formidable for northerners to defeat on their own.”²⁴⁴ Barreiro and others like him were essentially asking the central government to prove the inferiority of Native peoples by subduing them. Native raids, not to mention Native dominance, challenged Spanish/Mexican racial constructs and hierarchies that claimed Native inferiority and weakness and Spanish/Mexican superiority and strength. Furthermore, Native raids challenged the project of settler colonialism as a whole, jeopardizing Mexican settlements and the lives of Mexican settlers. Barreiro hoped that by rhetorically invoking the strength of the Native peoples, it would motivate the Mexican government to send money and people to New Mexico for its protection, effectively subduing the Native peoples and preserving the racial hierarchy.

Barreiro was not the only New Mexican to write letters to Mexico City. Many Hispanic New Mexicans wrote letters to the government in central Mexico asking for protection from the “wild Indians who surround New Mexico,” particularly the Navajos, Apaches, Comanches, and Utes.²⁴⁵ In his analysis of

244. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 207.

245. Barreiro, “Ojeada Sobre Nuevo México (A Glance at New Mexico),” 29.

the collective response from Mexican politicians, Delay found that the Mexican government was a “seemingly indifferent audience” that did not take the Native raids seriously.²⁴⁶ Writing in 1834, José Albino Chacón (1806–1876), secretary to Governor Manuel Armijo (r. 1837–1844), lamented that New Mexico was “subject to furious attacks from its *barbaric neighbors* which patriotic love and national honor have made it resist...at the expense and fatigue of its own inhabitants, and certainly the general government has not given assistance, not even one time, of arms and ammunition.”²⁴⁷ Instead, the Mexican government expected the individual states to ban together as “New Mexicans” or “Chihuahuans” to defeat their enemies.²⁴⁸ This spawned individual attempts to eliminate the threat of raids by Native peoples.

In response to increased raids in 1835, New Mexican Governor Albino Pérez (r. 1835–1837) promised to “annihilate the Navajo Indians” during a winter campaign.²⁴⁹ His campaign eventually proved unsuccessful and cost him favor amongst New Mexicans due to the loss of life, supplies, and money. Then in 1837, John James Johnson was looking to capitalize on the government’s offer

246. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 164.

247. Rafael Chacón, *Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth-Century New Mexican*, ed. Jacqueline Meketa (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 23–34, emphasis added.

248. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 199.

249. Delay, 168.

of 100 pesos for the scalps of Native peoples. He lured 20 prominent Apache leaders into a trading session and then fired a cannon loaded with musket balls, nails, and pieces of glass.²⁵⁰ Shortly thereafter in 1838, New Mexican officials contracted prospector, trader, and trapper turned scalp hunter, James Kirker (1793–1852), to hunt and kill Apaches throughout Chihuahua and New Mexico.²⁵¹ While authorities in Mexico City decried this practice, it continued and officials eventually turned a blind eye.

Northern Mexicans disagreed with the inclusive view of Mexican citizenship and insisted that birth did not determine one's citizenship. Rather, it was one's willingness to live under, and abide by, the nation's "pact."²⁵² Thus, Delay contends that when the violence of Indian raiding increased during the 1830s and 1840s, the Mexican government's inclusive views "inevitably clashed with the hard and often murderous policies embraced by desperate northern policymakers" who adopted "brutal, shortsighted war plans that gratified public desire for vengeance and Indigenous slaves but usually exacerbated conflicts with native communities."²⁵³ While I have not found written evidence that proves *New Mexicans* rejected the inclusive view of citizenship, there is ample evidence

250. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 160.

251. Delay, 160.

252. Delay, 158; "Joel R. Poinsett to Henry Clay, Mexico City, April 13, 1827 [Private]," n.d.

253. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 159.

that proves New Mexicans engaged in murderous policies towards the Native peoples surrounding New Mexico (see the campaigns detailed above). In addition to these four documented assaults on Native peoples, we should remember that New Mexicans enacted violence on Native peoples daily. New Mexicans nailed Navajo ears to the walls of the governor's palace in Santa Fe, stole women and children from Indian homelands, burned their homes and crops, and stole animals upon which their livelihood depended.²⁵⁴

Conclusion

Even though New Mexico remained largely removed from what was happening in Mexico City, where the clearest articulations of white supremacy were present, it becomes apparent that white supremacist ideologies were present in the settler colonial society of New Mexico. Spanish settlers who went to New Mexico to pursue economic opportunities brought with them white supremacist ideologies which they established in the settler colonial society of New Mexico. Elite Hispanic New Mexicans articulated a society in which they were the superior authority when compared to poor Hispanic New Mexicans, sedentary Pueblos, acculturated Indians, and *los bárbaros*. Between 1821 and 1848, Hispanic New Mexicans and the various independent Indian groups engaged in reciprocal and violent raiding and trading, often at the expense of women and children. To denigrate independent Indians, Hispanic New Mexicans relied on Spanish practices of referring to various Native peoples as “barbarian,”

254. Delay, 160, 206.

“savage,” or “wild.” Moreover, they used notions of honor and shame to disparage Native peoples and establish Hispanic superiority, although this often had contradictory results. By the eve of US invasion in 1846, New Mexican society privileged whiteness and European ancestry and used white supremacy to organize their social-racial hierarchies, practices that would be continued well into the twentieth century by American colonial settlers.

CONCLUSION

Following the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), New Mexico became a US territory. Though it was resigned to a territorial status for 64 years, US dominion and the institution of white supremacy and white European-American superiority began from the moment New Mexico came under US control. Shortly after New Mexico became a US territory, white European-American colonial settlers began to populate the region in search of land and economic opportunities. They brought social constructs of race with them (imbued with white supremacy) for white European-American, Hispanic, Native, and Black peoples. Once they were in New Mexico and they interacted with the Hispanic and Native populations—competing for resources, power, and money—white European-Americans were forced to reconstruct the social constructs of race and racial hierarchies to establish white European-American superiority in a region where Hispanic and Native peoples held the power. To do so, white European-Americans used white supremacy to racialize the Hispanic, Native, and Black peoples in New Mexico. By the twentieth century, white supremacy and white European-American superiority were deeply entrenched in New Mexican society.²⁵⁵ As we will see, however, this was not a foregone conclusion; white European-Americans had to work diligently to create social constructs of race

255. While it is outside of the scope of this work, it should be recognized that white European-Americans also used white supremacy and the social constructs of race they created with it to justify the legal, political, and economic disenfranchisement of Hispanic, Native, and Black peoples.

and racialize white European-American, Hispanic, Native, and Black peoples in a way that conferred white European-American superiority.

The Mexican-American War (1846–1848): The Extension of European-American White Supremacy into New Mexico

As political and military fighting continued between the federalists and centralists in central Mexico—and raiding and trading continued throughout northern Mexico during the 1830s and 1840s—threats of independence began to erupt with white European-American settlers in Mexican Texas. Following independence in 1821, Mexico believed that colonization and settlement would provide long-term frontier security from Native raiders and imperial rivals.²⁵⁶ Thus, they founded the province of Texas and encouraged Mexican citizens to settle the region. Faced with increasing raids by the Comanches and Apaches, Mexican officials soon realized that Texas would need to be settled much faster if it was going to protect central Mexico from these so-called “barbarian nations.”²⁵⁷ Much debate arose in Mexico about who those colonists should be. Brian Delay summarizes the dilemma as such: “Some insisted on recruiting from elsewhere in Mexico or from Catholic Europe. Others thought these hopes unrealistic, arguing that most colonists must inevitably come from the United States with its booming nearby populations of mobile, land-hungry farmers.”²⁵⁸

256. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 18.

257. Delay, 18.

258. Delay, 18.

Eventually, the pro-US settler faction won out and white European-American settlers, many of whom brought enslaved African men and women with them, began to populate Texas with the requirement that they became naturalized Mexican citizens and converted to Catholicism. Richard White, however, suggests that 40 percent of American immigrants to Texas in the 1820s ignored these requirements.²⁵⁹ By 1830, there were more than 7,000 white European-American colonists and enslaved Africans in Texas compared to 3,000 *Tejanos* (Hispanic Mexican settlers in Texas).²⁶⁰ As American colonization continued, white European-Americans began to hold disdain for the Mexican settlers and eventually established separate enclaves apart from the older intermixed settlements. Similar to the communities in New Mexico, the white European-American colonists in Texas became dissatisfied with the Mexican government's inaction towards raids by Native peoples (never mind the fact that the colonists often instigated the raids and engaged in raiding themselves). In 1828, Mexican military figure and politician, General Manuel y Terán (1789–1832), warned Mexican officials that the white European-American colonists would be the reason Mexico lost Texas “unless measures [were] taken soon.”²⁶¹

259. Richard White, *“It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 65.

260. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 27.

261. Manuel de Mier y Terán, “Manuel Mier y Terán to President Guadalupe Victoria, San Antonio, March 28, 1828,” in *Texas by Terán the Diary Kept by General Manuel de Mier y Terán on His 1828 Inspection of Texas*, ed.

Terán's draftsman, José Maria Sánchez, agreed with Terán and warned that the colonists' unrest with the Mexican government would be the "spark that will start the conflagration that will deprive us of Texas...All because the government does not take vigorous measure to prevent it."²⁶²

American colonists soon posed such a threat that Mexico issued a bill in 1830 criminalizing further American immigration into Texas and encouraging Mexican and European immigration instead.²⁶³ White European-American landholding Texans began to seriously discuss the possibility of declaring independence in 1835 and by 1836 they issued a declaration of independence forming the Republic of Texas. Delay acknowledges that even though the Mexican government refused to acknowledge Texas' independence, it "would never again control Indian policy, or anything else, in Texas."²⁶⁴ The two republics continued to harass one another for the next decade until the US gained territorial control over much of northern Mexico.

In 1845, the US annexed Texas, which resulted in Mexico severing foreign relations with the US. In March 1845, US President James K. Polk (r. 1845–1849) sent US diplomat, John Slidell (1793–1871) to Mexico to negotiate the

Jack Jackson, trans. John Wheat (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 32–33.

262. Terán, "Manuel Mier y Terán to President Guadalupe Victoria, San Antonio, March 28, 1828," 32–33.

263. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 29.

264. Delay, 74.

disputed Texas border, settle US claims against Mexico, and purchase New Mexico and California for 30 million dollars. After being denied an audience with Mexican President José Joaquín Herrera (r. 1848–1851), Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor (1784–1850) and his troops to occupy the disputed area of Texas between the Nueces and the Rio Grande in January 1846. On May 9, Polk received word that Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and attacked Taylor's troops. By May 13, 1846, the US and Mexico were engaged in what we know today as the Mexican-American War, the result of which brought New Mexico under US dominion in 1848.²⁶⁵

Even though New Mexico remained in territorial status for 64 years (it would not achieve statehood until 1912), white European-American colonial settlers introduced a new era of white supremacy into the region from the moment the US assumed control. When settling and colonizing New Mexico, white European-Americans brought with them social constructs of race which were determined by their desire for land, outward violence against Native peoples, and the oppression of Black people. Once they secured power in New Mexico, white European-Americans instituted their social constructs of race and

265. A detailed history of the Mexican-American War is outside of the scope of this thesis. For a detailed history of the Mexican-American War, see: Guardino, *The Dead March: A History of the Mexican-American War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017); Krystyna Libura et al., eds., *Echoes of the Mexican-American War*, trans. Mark Fried (Berkeley: Groundwood Books, 2004). For a detailed history of New Mexico during the Mexican-American War, see: Ray John de Aragón, *New Mexico in the Mexican-American War* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing Inc., 2019).

racial hierarchy that established and reinforced white European-American superiority over Hispanic, Native, and Black populations. By the twentieth century, settler colonialism and white supremacy made the once malleable racial categories – white, Mexican, Native, and Black – rigid, often with violent results for non-white peoples. Anders Stephanson argues that while Indians were recognized as “neither foreigners nor members-to-be of civil society,” the US “always replaced, culturally and legally, multicolored ranges with the stark, unequivocal scheme of black and white: if not wholly white, then wholly black. Shades and variations...could not be recognized within the empire for liberty.”²⁶⁶ However, as this thesis will show, this was not a foregone conclusion before the twentieth century.

Manifest Destiny and the Belief in White European-American Superiority

In the nineteenth century, many prominent US officials and intellectuals were staunch expansionists, including President Thomas Jefferson (1801–1809), President John Quincy Adams (1825–1829), President Andrew Jackson (1829–1837) President James K. Polk (1845–1849), and US Secretary of State William Seward (1861–1869). While there were many diverse and sometimes contradictory motivations for expansion, many expansionists were motivated by a desire for land and financial gain, bolstered by the ideology of national aggrandizement and the belief in Manifest Destiny. In addition to territorial and

266. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 27.

financial motivations, sectional debates over slavery inspired both pro- and anti-expansionist disputes. When looking at the West, white European-Americans justified their settler colonial desires with notions of Manifest Destiny and anti-Mexican and anti-Indian racism, all of which were rooted in white supremacy. Delay argues that by 1846, European-Americans coveted northern Mexico and “felt entitled, even manifest destined, to possess and redeem the region themselves.”²⁶⁷

In his work on the origins of Manifest Destiny, Stephanson argues that “Manifest Destiny did not ‘cause’ President Polk to go to war against Mexico...though certainly conducive to expansionism, it was not a strategic doctrine.”²⁶⁸ Rather, “it could become a force only in combination with other forces and in changing ways.”²⁶⁹ Nonetheless, by the eve of US invasion in northern Mexico, Manifest Destiny was so embedded in American political thought that “it appeared in the guise of common sense” and was “of signal importance in the way the United States came to understand itself in the world.”²⁷⁰ According to Stephanson, Manifest Destiny is a product of post-American Revolution providential and republican ideology that combines sacred

267. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 227.

268. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, xiv.

269. Stephanson, xiv.

270. Stephanson, xiv.

and secular concepts. It posits that the US is a “sacred space providentially selected for divine purposes” and that the “new nation of liberty [is] a privileged ‘stage’...for the exhibition of a new world order, a great ‘experiment’ for the benefit of humankind as a whole.”²⁷¹ The Manifest Destiny idea of America as a “continuous process” that would benefit mankind as a whole laid the foundations for future westward expansion in the 1840s. It was used to understand, legitimate, and even oppose the annexation of territory by others. White European-Americans would argue that they were “destined” to take northern Mexico because “miserable inefficient Mexico” was unable to accomplish “the great mission of peopling the New World with a noble race.”²⁷²

Many historians and scholars have shown how Manifest Destiny was tied to (and buttressed by) white supremacy. As Manifest Destiny evolved from the period of Puritan colonization into the 1840s, it developed in a racialized colonial society “of white dominion in the making” whose identity was determined by violence against Indians and the oppression of Black people at the hands of white European-Americans. Additionally, when Manifest Destiny was arguably at its most powerful, westward expansion was taking place in the name of liberty, “a liberty often also said to be ‘Anglo-Saxon’ in spirit or race.”²⁷³ Historian Tomás Almaguer argues that the mission of Manifest Destiny

271. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 5.

272. Stephanson, 38.

273. Stephanson, xi.

Became the 'white man's burden' – to extend their dominion over all obstacles placed in their path and to bring civilization and Christianity to the uncivilized heathens they encountered...[White European Americans] believed it was their providential destiny to expand to the Pacific coast, bringing with them their superior political institutions, notions of progress and democracy, and their own economic systems of production.²⁷⁴

In the eyes of white European-Americans, territorial expansion and national aggrandizement went hand in hand with violence against Indian populations that stood in their way. When Thomas Jefferson argued that “enlargement was by definition also a step in the liberation of universal man,” he, perhaps unintentionally, declared potential enemies an “objective obstruction to the course of natural freedom, in effect [calling] for elimination and liquidation.”²⁷⁵ Therefore, as expansion brought white European Americans into contact with Indians, white supremacist ideology merged with notions of Manifest Destiny and Indians emerged as an enemy to be eliminated. In stark contrast to how they dealt with competing European powers, white European Americans turned towards ethnic cleansing in the form of “trickery, legal manipulation, intimidation, deportation, concentration camps, and murder” to expropriate Indian land.²⁷⁶

Furthermore, historians have shown how the Mexican-American War was justified by Manifest Destiny and white supremacy. Delay, in particular, has proven that the US used anti-Mexican and anti-Indian racist rhetoric to justify the

274. Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 12, 33.

275. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 23.

276. Stephanson, 24.

Mexican-American War with the belief that it was America's "capacity, even destiny, to do what Mexico could not: redeem the desert, defeat the Indians, and provide security to the long-suffering people of the Mexican north."²⁷⁷ In fact, even though the US wanted Mexican land, it did not want Mexican citizens. US officials agreed with John O'Sullivan's belief that "the entire Mexican vote would be substantially below national average."²⁷⁸ American government officials looking to justify a war with Mexico often used racist rhetoric to denigrate the powerful and formidable Indian populations that were at war with Mexico. In turn, this portrayed Mexico as unwilling and unable to protect its northern territories against Indian raids.

The Comanches were the targets for much of the racist rhetoric, due to their overwhelming presence on the plains and force against Mexican settlements. They were often depicted as weaker than Eastern tribes and as the weakest tribe in the West. This served a dual purpose: in denigrating both the Indian populations and Mexicans, white European-Americans depicted themselves as superior to both racial groups. According to white European-Americans, if Mexico was losing the battle against the weakest of Indian populations (the Comanches), surely Mexico and its citizens were unqualified to domesticate the land and incapable of winning a war against the US. And if the Comanches were the weakest Indian population in North America, the US would

277. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 293.

278. Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*, 45.

have no problem dispossessing them of their land since they had already spent years dispossessing the more formidable tribes in eastern North America of their land. Delay explains that by “dismissing Comanches in comparison to other North American Indians – Indians US political leaders had for years been forcibly removing from eastern North America – Americans could slander the Mexicans who had succumbed to such pathetic foe.”²⁷⁹ Never mind the fact that historians have proven that the Comanches were a formidable force on the Southern Plains who determined European-American dynamics and reactions, with one historian classifying the Comanche confederacy as an empire and imperial power.²⁸⁰

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, during what Delay terms the War of a Thousand Deserts, white European-Americans solidified their racial dichotomies based on binary racial categories of “white” and “nonwhite.” These binary racial categories united white European-American settlers against the Mexican and Indian populations from whom they wished to take land. According to Delay,

Bloody, oft-told tales of massacres and treacheries, a shared sense of outraged victimhood, and perpetual alarms over supposedly imminent attacks helped people discover their common ‘white’ identity and work together against ‘nonwhites.’ Especially as [the War of a Thousand Deserts] progressed, the language of Indian hating often allowed the most confrontational elements of American...frontier society to silence voices of caution and

279. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 240.

280. According to Pekka Hämäläinen, from roughly 1750 to 1850, the Comanches were the dominant imperial power in the Southwest with a “deeply hierarchical and integrated intersocietal order that was unmistakably imperial in shape, scope, and substance.” He argues that European imperialism stalled in the face of Indigenous resistance and was actually eclipsed by Indigenous imperialism. Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 2-4.

conciliation and increase pressure on local political and military leaders to coordinate vigorous and virtuous action against native families.²⁸¹

As a result of the Mexican-American War, New Mexico came under US control. Motivated by economic opportunities such as coal production, land possession, and mining, and facilitated by the expansion of the railroad into the Southwest, white European-Americans further migrated to New Mexico in the late nineteenth century. They brought with them white supremacist ideologies which were the foundation upon which they created racial categories that privileged whiteness and ultimately put white European-Americans at the top of the racial hierarchy. However, they entered a region already populated with Hispanic and Indian populations whom they could not simply displace. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the US agreed to grant citizenship to any Mexican citizen in the annexed territory who voluntarily chose US citizenship or simply chose to remain in the territory without actively changing their citizenship status. Therefore, white European-American settlers in New Mexico came into contact with Hispanic and Indian populations and their existing social, economic, and political organizations, including their racial hierarchy predicated on white supremacy. As white European-Americans settled in New Mexico, they brought with them their own social, political, and economic organizations, as well as a racial hierarchy organized around white supremacy. As the Hispanic-Indian and white European-American racial hierarchies met, clashed, and coalesced, a new racial hierarchy

281. Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 104.

emerged. As Laura Gómez notes, “American racial dynamics...themselves substantially evolved from Spanish colonial [and Mexican colonial] models of race.”²⁸² Once again, through white European-American settler colonialism, white supremacy remained the central organizing principle for all racial categories.

Gómez terms the transition from Spanish-Mexican control to American control “double colonization,” which refers to the fact that the American Southwest was subject to two colonial regimes with a history of multiple racial categories: Spain and the US.²⁸³ She astutely notes that “both the Spanish and American colonial enterprises were grounded in racism, though their precise ideologies of white supremacy differed. American colonizers in New Mexico thus did not start with a clean slate, but rather developed a racial order in the looming shadow of the Spanish-Mexican racial order.”²⁸⁴

282. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 11.

283. Gómez, 11.

284. By focusing on this “double colonization,” Gómez argues that law and colonization “made” the Mexican American race, shaped race relations between white, Mexican, Indian, and Black people in New Mexico, entrenched white supremacy, and was key to restructuring the American racial order at large. I would like to expand Gómez’s double colonization to include Mexico as a third settler colonial regime. After Mexico gained its independence in 1821, Mexican officials established control over the region by settling among the inhabitants, implementing new laws, and reforming the racial hierarchy, or, in other words, colonizing what was not Mexico. Moreover, I would like to add to Gómez’s analysis by adopting the framework of settler colonialism. Using settler colonialism as a lens to investigate racial hierarchies uncovers histories of settler colonial violence such as land dispossession, border policing and militarization, and the inequitable access to resources, to name a few. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 11.

Shortly after New Mexico became a US territory, racial hierarchies in the US at large underwent a grand transformation. White supremacy, as the dominant ideology, united white European-Americans across ethnic and national lines in the borderlands during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In his work on sexuality, race, conquest, and modernization in New Mexico, Pablo Mitchell argues that,

Although it is important when possible to distinguish between those of European ancestry born in the United States and US-born Anglos, the distinction...was relatively minor in New Mexico. Such differences were minimized by the presence of large numbers of Hispanos and Indians. New Mexicans...were far more likely to emphasize the racialized differences between Indian, Hispanos, and Anglos, including both those native to the United States and foreign-born.²⁸⁵

According to sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “the racial categorization of European-Americans as ‘white’ was forged at the national level...by the institutionalization of a racial order that drew the color line *around* rather than *within*, Europe.”²⁸⁶ This overshadowed ethnic and national distinctions between Europeans in the US in favor of a collective racial designation as “white,” where white supremacy – the valuation of Eurocentric cultural criteria and proximity to whiteness – awarded those who could claim whiteness for social, economic, and political opportunities unavailable to those deemed non-white.

285. Mitchell, *Coyote Nation*, 15.

286. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 7.

Historian Linda Gordon states that part “of what made the West the land of opportunity was the chance to become white. But throughout most of the Southwest...that chance was denied to Mexicans; whites made them nonwhite.”²⁸⁷ The same can be said for Native and Black people in the Southwest. Furthermore, Gordon contends that “those secure as whites got to say who else could be white.”²⁸⁸ This became perhaps most evident following the territorial acquisition of New Mexico in 1848 when white European American settlers emigrated to New Mexico and established a racial hierarchy rooted in white supremacy that privileged white European Americans and disadvantaged non-white peoples.

Gómez notes that white European-Americans “exploit[ed] what they perceived as divisions” based on race and class in Mexican society that “provide[d] a wedge for the American invaders.”²⁸⁹ These divisions, whose roots are in the period of Spanish rule, were based on white supremacy and economic status. This privileged those who could claim Spanish ancestry and could therefore monopolize the wealth and power due to their proximity to “whiteness” while simultaneously encouraging the subordination of Indigenous communities

287. Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 104.

288. Gordon, 104.

289. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*, 25.

(particularly sedentary Pueblo Indians) and the vast majority of Mexicans who were of mixed Spanish, African, and Indian ancestry.

Conclusion

The extension and permanent establishment of white European-American white supremacy into New Mexico is evident by the events of the twentieth century: forced Indian removal and confinement through the reservation system and displacement, border restrictions and immigration control, the selective and discriminatory redistribution of resources, the extension of the federal government across the continent, and the execution of state violence towards peoples deemed “not white.” White European-Americans brought social constructs of race with them which they used to inform their racialization of Hispanic and Native peoples in New Mexico. They had to contend with a community built by centuries of conflict, negotiation, and kinship, as well as the social constructs of race that emerged from it. Both the Spanish and Mexican settler colonial regimes used white supremacy to structure their societies, including the racial-social hierarchies. By using white supremacy as a tool of settler colonialism, the Spanish, Mexican, and American settler colonial regimes were able to establish white European American superiority and disenfranchise non-white peoples. Not a thing of the past, white supremacy and settler colonialism continue to structure the lives of those in New Mexico today in a variety of ways, some of which include access to resources, displacement, disenfranchisement, and social acceptance.

In 1866, the New Mexican territorial legislature erected a monument honoring Union Civil War soldiers who fought in New Mexico. On Indigenous Peoples Day in November 2021, Native activists and their supporters occupied the Santa Fe Plaza for three days protesting the controversial war monument at the center of the plaza. The monument, which reads “To the heroes who have fallen in various battles with savage Indians in the Territory of New Mexico,” was toppled by protestors amid nationwide calls for racial justice. Protestors carried signs that read “land back,” “stop the genocide! Honor the treaties; honor the promises,” and “no more trafficking! No more man camps. No more missing, murdered, Indigenous women.”²⁹⁰ This was not the first time protestors objected to the monument. In 1973, the Santa Fe City Council unanimously voted to remove the obelisk from the Plaza but were threatened with the removal of federal funding as the historic downtown square is a National Historic Landmark and on the State Register of Cultural Properties. Therefore, no changes were possible without federal and state legislation. Then around a decade ago, an unidentified man chiseled away the word “savages” on the monument. Prior to the most recent protest that toppled the monument, the Three Sisters Collective, an organization dedicated to Pueblo women centric arts, activism and empowerment, called for the removal of “three racist and white supremacist statues that celebrate oppressors who led genocide and systemic oppression on

290. KRQE Staff, “Santa Fe Plaza Obelisk Torn down by Protesters,” *KRQE*, October 13, 2020, <https://www.krqe.com/photo-galleries/photos-santa-fe-plaza-obelisk-torn-down-by-protesters/>, accessed April 15, 2022.

the Indigenous Peoples of this region, and in particular, on the Pueblo People.”²⁹¹ Not only was white supremacy more firmly entrenched in New Mexico during US settler colonialism, but it was memorialized for its violence against (and suppression of) Native peoples in New Mexico.

More research and critical analysis needs to be done on the relationship between settler colonialism and the establishment of white supremacy. By analyzing social constricts of race and racialization for white and non-white peoples, we can better understand the connections between race, white supremacy, and the distribution of power. We uncover histories of anti-blackness that inform one another and are carried across the centuries. Furthermore, by analyzing settler colonialism and white supremacy, we enrich our understanding of imperialism, settler colonialism, and the elimination and forced removal of Native peoples. Together, we deconstruct the fallacy of white supremacy and white superiority that will hopefully lead to the dissolution of oppressive systems that uphold white supremacy.

291. Daniel J. Chacón, “Santa Fe Mayor Calls for Removal of Controversial Monuments, Statue of Spanish Conquistador,” July 23, 2021, https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/santa-fe-mayor-calls-for-removal-of-controversial-monuments-statue-of-spanish-conquistador/article_3b75859a-b0c4-11ea-b55f-8787d18649d0.html.

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