

AFRO-MEXICANS AND THE MAKING OF MODERN MEXICO:
CITIZENSHIP, RACE, AND CAPITALISM IN
JAMILTEPEC, OAXACA (1821-1910)

By

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ABSTRACT

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In 1910, Mexican citizens violently rejected dictator Porfirio Díaz. Over the course of more than three decades, Díaz had isolated Mexico's popular classes in regions like Jamiltepec, Oaxaca. In this region, the majority indigenous population joined the revolutionary army and demanded citizenship rights, restoration of communal land, and control over their own pueblos. Jamiltepec's Afro-Mexican residents shared many of these goals and revolted against Díaz as well. They fought to preserve the autonomy of their pueblos, the ability to choose their own elected officials, and the cotton economy that allowed farmers to support their dependent families. Interestingly, even though these two groups of citizens in this isolated coastal region shared similar grievances, they backed different revolutionary factions and fought against one another. Onlookers at the time assumed that racial difference explained these decisions. Scholars working later in the twentieth century incorporated these assumptions into their interpretations of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary violence that plagued the region for decades. This dissertation seeks to understand the root causes of this antagonism by examining how residents of Jamiltepec constructed race and ethnicity in their everyday lives during the nineteenth century.

Evidence from the region challenges assertions that Afro-indigenous relations were inherently and historically antagonistic. Afro-Mexican and Mixtec jamiltepecanos at different times did fight on opposing sides in Mexico's numerous nineteenth century wars. They allied against one another for instance during the independence war and the political conflicts in the

immediate aftermath of nationhood. However, on many other occasions jamiltepecanos from both groups joined together to defend the cultural authority of the Catholic Church, the country from a foreign invasion, or pueblo land and resources. In fact, examples from local, state, and national archives suggest that race and ethnicity played little, if any, role in which side one chose during the nineteenth century. Residents nevertheless maintained separate communities and identities in their private lives. Jamiltepecanos essentially developed an informal system of identity whereby geographic location, linguistic ability, and cultural practices demarcated race nearly as much as one's physical characteristics. At the same time, Mexico's elite journalists, scholars, and politicians attempted to silence Mexico's ties to Africa.

Race and ethnic identity did intersect with notions of citizenship, regional and national politics, and the economy. After the end of the colonial caste system, Afro-Mexicans in the region downplayed race and stressed citizenship when stepping into the public sphere. Mixtecs, in contrast, emphasized their indigeneity and sought to maintain separate "republics" as their ancestors did for three-hundred years during the colonial era. Residents from both groups sought to protect pueblo autonomy, and they mobilized politically in support of national candidates who they believed would help them achieve these goals. Finally, nineteenth century investors worked to restore Mexico's economy after independence, but political instability, foreign invasions, civil war, and natural disasters prevented them from attaining this goal until the 1870s. By this point, the experiences of the cotton-producing Afro-Mexican costeños differed sharply from their indigenous counterparts who lived in the mountains. Mixtecs lost control over land and resources at an alarming rate, but Afro-Mexicans in comparison leveraged inexpensive cotton in exchange for protecting their communities. Thus, the ethnic and racial violence during the 1910 Revolution reflected this socio-economic transformation and had roots in the late nineteenth century.

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INTRODUCTION

“More than one hundred men” deserted Jamiltepec’s Sixth Battalion in 1916 when forced to serve in a racially integrated unit. The mass departure created panic among officers and prompted the return of local hero, General Juan José Baños, to replace his successor Salvador González. The unit’s historian, Dario Atristáin, explained that González caused the desertions when he failed to observe an unwritten regulation separating Mixtec soldiers from their Afro-Mexican counterparts. Upon reassuming command, Baños restored peace by segregating the battalion. This reorganization allowed him to mobilize these troops to prevent another hostile Zapatista invasion that threatened to overrun Pinotepa Nacional. Atristáin surmised that González, who came from Oaxaca City, never understood the dynamics of race in Jamiltepec. However, Baños eased tensions and accommodated everyone without further angering his troops. Atristáin asserted that González’s actions confirmed “one could not mix” soldiers in this manner because “the indigenous and black races were completely antagonistic.” Atristáin’s observation generates an important question for scholars. Why would these two groups be “completely antagonistic” toward each other during a time of social and political upheaval even though they shared similar socio-economic grievances?¹

As a local rancher, Atristáin believed he could recognize the inter-ethnic and racial tensions he described above after living most of his life in the region. On the surface it seems that race and ethnicity played a vital role during the revolution. Afro-Mexicans often supported the more conservative revolutionary leader Venustiano Carranza whereas Mixtecs generally

¹ Dario Atristáin, *Notas de un ranchero: Relación y documentos relativos a los acontecimientos ocurridos en una parte de la Costa Chica de febrero de 1911 a marzo de 1916* (México DF, 1964), 254-255.

fought on the side of Emiliano Zapata in support of his radical land reform program. This dissertation seeks to explore the nineteenth century roots of the racial antagonism Atristáin documented. To do this, I will analyze how people constructed race after the end of the colonial era caste system at three intersecting levels. First I will examine how elites at the national level constructed blackness over the course of the nineteenth century. Journalists, intellectuals, and historians attempted to silence Mexico's ties to Africa even though people of African descent represented roughly ten percent of the population in 1810.² Elites downplayed the contributions of Afro-Mexicans during the fight for independence, and historians followed suit by writing African descendants out of their national histories. In fact, only in the past few decades scholars have begun to address this shortcoming in Mexican historiography.³ Historians have assessed enslaved and free people of color throughout the colonial and early independence eras.⁴ Anthropologists, as well, have demonstrated that Afro-Mexican communities survive today.⁵

² Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 1; Vinson and Vaughn, "Introducción," *Afroméxico*, 15. Ben Vinson challenges these numbers as conflating Mexico's "extreme castes" into a single category that erroneously inflated the Afro-Mexican population. See, Ben Vinson III, *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 107-123.

³ Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México: estudio etnohistórico* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946).

⁴ Vinson, *Before Mestizaje*; Ben Vinson III, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Matthew Restall, *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Vinson and Restall, eds. *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009); Restall, ed. *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Patrick J. Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Adriana Naveda Chávez-Hita, *Esclavos negros en las haciendas azucareras de Córdoba, Veracruz, 1690-1830*, 2a ed. (Xalapa, Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, 2008).

⁵ Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México*. See also, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *El negro esclavo en Nueva España: La formación colonial, la medicina popular y otros ensayos* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994); Aguirre Beltrán, "The Integration of the Negro into the National Society of Mexico," in *Race and Class in Latin America*, edited by Magnus Mörner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Aguirre Beltrán, *Cuijla, esbozo etnográfico de un pueblo negro* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958); Laura A. Lewis, *Chocolate and Corn Flour: History, Race, and Place in the Making of 'Black' Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Bobby Eugene Vaughn, "Race and Nation: A Study of Blackness in Mexico," (PhD diss., Stanford University,

Nevertheless, the experience of people of African descent during the long nineteenth century remains largely unknown.⁶

Therefore the second and third levels of analysis require an examination of how people constructed blackness through their everyday political and socio-economic interactions. By the eighteenth century, in most regions of Mexico, slavery and the slave trade had declined dramatically. Free men of color throughout New Spain fulfilled Spanish defense needs in segregated militia units. Many people of African descent had served in these units while participating in the economy as merchants, muleteers, and farmers. The independence wars provided Afro-Mexicans with an opportunity to join up with prominent *realistas* (royalists), confront slaveholders, fight in insurrectionary armies, and press for citizenship rights. Thereafter, they continued to serve in the military after independence and fight in the numerous nineteenth century wars. In regions like Jamiltepec, Oaxaca, the language of honor, sacrifice, and citizenship defined their interactions with the state and allowed people to preserve the autonomy of their pueblos. However, an end to the mid-century reform wars (1859-67) established a new political regime and a transformation of the local economy. Sacrifice and service to Mexico was no longer an effective way to press the state for demands or preserve autonomy. Indeed, by the time Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada assumed the presidency in 1872 it became a dangerous gambit as politicians embraced Social Darwinism. Afro-Mexicans in Jamiltepec adopted new strategies to control capitalist development threatening to undermine the relative independence of their

2001); Anthony Jerry, "Chasing Blackness: Re-Investing Value and Mexico's Changing Racial Economy," (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2013).

⁶ See, Marisela Jiménez Ramos, "Black Mexico: Nineteenth-Century Discourses of Race and Nation," (PhD diss., Brown University, 2009); Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas, *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004).

pueblos. This transformation becomes apparent when contrasting early nineteenth century appeals to government officials with Liberal Era (1867-1911) legal cases and land disputes.

I argue that residents in the region transformed colonial era caste categories, but they did not end the system. Evidence from court cases, land disputes, and popular appeals indicate that officials ended the practice of identifying one's physical characteristics in terms of race when speaking about Afro-Mexicans. In contrast, authorities continued to identify indigenous residents as "*indígena*" in a similar manner to the colonial era. For Afro-Mexicans, elites created a new racial lexicon consisting of geographic descriptions and cultural practices to serve as a shorthand for blackness at the local level. These euphemisms functioned in a similar manner to caste categories.⁷ Elites used the term *costeño* (coastal dweller) or the geographic descriptor *de los bajos* (from the coastal lowlands) to substitute for the caste categories *negro*, *mulato*, and *pardo*. Understanding this lexicon is essential to interpreting how race and ethnicity intersected with politics and the regional economy. I contend that race sometimes played an important role in political disputes as well as how locals formed partisan coalitions. At times, *jamiltepecanos* divided along racial and ethnic lines to support politicians like Vicente Guerrero or to protect their communities, but at other times, race did not play an important factor during a political dispute, a foreign invasion, or a perceived attack on the Catholic Church.

The Liberal Era is the crucial period for understanding the root causes of the racial and ethnic animosity Atristáin described. The defeat of French forces and the ouster of Maximilian von Habsburg as Mexico's maligned second emperor allowed Liberals to consolidate power

⁷ Ben Vinson points out that these categories were always subject to change through negotiation and racial mixture. He argues that "intentionally or not, [the caste system] may have opportunistically preserved and recreated both blackness and indigeneity." Vinson, *Before Mestizaje*, 37. For more on how people obfuscated caste categories in an urban setting see, R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1600-1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 76-79.

around a single political ideology. This stability had important consequences for Jamiltepec. For the first time since independence, the prolonged period of peace allowed a new generation of foreign entrepreneurs to invest in the region. These men had extensive connections throughout southern Mexico, and they built large textile and ranching enterprises with coastal commodities. The Liberal transformation of the legal system also meant that they could use the law to assume ownership over large areas of land. In indigenous communities, this had a devastating effect as entrepreneurs seized land at an unprecedented rate while income from cochineal, a profitable export, rapidly declined. Essentially, this upended the “moral economy” that sustained these communities for centuries. Conversely, Afro-Mexican producers leveraged their products to form alliances with powerful entrepreneurs who purchased cheap cotton in exchange for helping them preserve pueblo autonomy. This economic transformation resulted in diverging experiences for Jamiltepec’s residents. From this perspective, the racial divisions Atristáin highlighted actually reflected the shifting political and economic environment of the prior four decades rather than a historic ongoing antagonism between Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs.

Blackness and Citizenship

This dissertation builds on analyses of race and citizenship in Mexico as well as other areas of Latin America. In 1946, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán essentially established this field of inquiry in Mexico when he rejected over a century of racial silencing. In his book, *La población negra de México*, he insists that even though slavery was an essential component of Mexico’s history scholars must analyze Afro-Mexican experiences during the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries.⁸ Historians of the colonial era nevertheless dominate the historiography. Colin Palmer influenced the next generation of historians researching Mexico's colonial era with his analysis of the slave economy.⁹ These scholars demonstrated that Spanish officials reaped massive profits from their colonies in the Americas due to the labor of enslaved Africans. Recent scholarship expands this scope and moves beyond the slave economy. Ben Vinson and Herman Bennett are the most representative of this approach by focusing on Afro-Mexican identity. Vinson explores how Afro-Mexican soldiers in segregated militia units gained "added privileges and status" while also pronouncing a racial identity of their own choice.¹⁰ Bennett assesses how people of African descent developed a "legal conscious" through disputes over marriage rights and argues that these cases proved vital to forming separate identities in the public sphere.¹¹ In his most recent work, he analyzes relationships between Afro-Mexicans and concludes that these networks illustrate "the critical importance of blackness" during the colonial era.¹²

Post-revolutionary ethnographies of blackness also dominate the literature. Aguirre Beltrán's *Cuijla* marks one of the first examinations of Afro-Mexican linguistic practices, marriage customs, and architecture during the twentieth century. Several years later anthropologist Véronique Flanet examined Afro-Mexican and Mixtec violence in Jamiltepec.

⁸ Aguirre Beltrán also studied indigenous pueblos and customs. For one highly influential example see, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *Problemas de la población indígena de la cuenca del Tepalcatepec: Índice analítico de Susana Uribe Fernández de Córdoba* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1952). Aguirre Beltrán, *Cuijla*, 9.

⁹ Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976). For more on studies of slavery and the slave economy in Mexico see, Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz*; Naveda Chávez-Hita, *Esclavos negros en las haciendas azucareras de Córdoba*. For more on similar studies outside Mexico see, Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970); Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty*, 5.

¹¹ Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 2.

¹² Herman L. Bennett, *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 21.

She argues that the post-revolutionary violence had nineteenth century roots because Afro-Mexicans “consider[ed] Mixtecs as subjects” to elites while Mixtecs associated blackness with “impulsiveness and criminality.”¹³ My project seeks to bridge the gap between colonial era histories and twentieth century ethnographies. However, I argue that the racial antagonism Flanet observed was not always present during the nineteenth century. There were episodes of cross-racial and inter-ethnic violence, but this dissertation will show that there were also a number of cross-racial alliances. In this regard, my study lines up more closely with what anthropologist Laura Lewis concludes in her study of Afro-Mexican identity in coastal Guerrero. She posits that blackness was a cultural identity “rest[ing] on phenotype blended with history, space, place, language, clothing, and cultural practices.”¹⁴ In Jamiltepec geographic location, linguistic ability, and culture demarcated race perhaps more than one’s physical characteristics.

Theodore Vincent is one of the first scholars to bring these two strands of literature into conversation. He traces black identity in Mexico through a biographical examination of Afro-Mexican independence war hero Vicente Guerrero. Vincent argues that the 1812 Cádiz Constitution drove large numbers of Afro-Mexicans to join the independence armies because the new law denied them citizenship rights in the Spanish Empire. In fact, they served in independence armed forces in numbers far greater than their share of Mexico’s population, a factor that led to abolition in 1829. However, their support could not save Guerrero’s presidency as he tried to form “a multiracially run nation-state.”¹⁵ Paul Hart examines the erasure of Afro-Mexican identity among laborers in Morelos. He concludes that “black and mulatto field hands

¹³ Véronique Flanet, *Viviré, si Dios quiere: Un estudio de la violencia en la Mixteca de la Costa* (México DF: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1977), 37.

¹⁴ Lewis, *Chocolate and Corn Flour*, 7.

¹⁵ Theodore G. Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero: Mexico’s First Black Indian President* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 4.

and sugar workers” created “their own localized version of the mestizo” on plantations in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ He argues that this regional identity among exploited peasants helps explain the appeal of Zapatismo during the revolution. Marisela Jiménez Ramos analyzes a two-part, century long process of erasing blackness at the national level during the nineteenth century. She contends that “Blacks ‘disappeared’ through omission from nineteenth-century discourses of race and nation” because elites feared Afro-Mexican proclamations of citizenship.¹⁷ Evidence from Jamiltepec differs in some important ways. My study analyzes how elites as well as ordinary people constructed blackness at both the national and local levels. In Jamiltepec Afro-Mexicans, mestizos, and Mixtecs maintained separate communities rather than forming a regional mestizo identity that transcended colonial era caste categories. Finally, elites were never able to erase blackness at the federal, state, or local levels. They tried to silence Mexico’s African heritage, and these attempts influenced how locals constructed race in Jamiltepec. Nevertheless, Afro-Mexicans proclaimed their rights as citizens and contributed to local, regional, and national politics.

Historians have long considered the cultural contributions people of African descent made to societies throughout the Americas.¹⁸ Notably, Sidney Mintz and Richard Price conclude that West African culture did not survive the Middle Passage. In their estimation, Africans and their descendants throughout the Diaspora helped create creole cultures that bore little

¹⁶ Paul Hart, *Bitter Harvest: The Social Transformation of Morelos, Mexico, and the Origins of the Zapatista Revolution, 1840-1910* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 19.

¹⁷ Jiménez Ramos, “Black Mexico,” 8.

¹⁸ See, Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, 3rd ed. (New York: Knopf, 2013).

resemblance to the myriad societies they left behind.¹⁹ John Thornton expands on this idea and explores how enslaved and free Africans transformed regional and religious culture in the Americas. He concludes that enslaved Africans engaged in “a process of exchanging and evaluating revelations.”²⁰ Scholars more recently have challenged these assumptions and analyzed the ways in which people preserved West African linguistic, cultural, and religious practices in the Americas. In his book, *Recreating Africa*, James Sweet focuses on “the pervasiveness of specific African beliefs and practices” in colonial Brazil.²¹ Finally, the editors of *Africans to Spanish America* argue that scholars must expand the boundaries of the Diaspora itself beyond the Atlantic basin and analyze how Afro-Latin Americans contributed to societies in “lesser known geographic areas.”²² “Afro-Mexicans and the Making of Modern Mexico” contributes to such an expansion and illustrates that people of African descent made important cultural, economic, and political contributions in this isolated region on the Pacific coast.

Scholars of the African Diaspora have also shown how Afro-Latin Americans have contributed to forging new nations, founding popular movements, and participating in radical liberal projects. C.L.R. James in his now classic work *The Black Jacobins* illustrates that Afro-Haitians demanded abolition and citizenship rights during the Haitian Revolution.²³ More

¹⁹ Sidney Wilfred Mintz and Richard Price, *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976).

²⁰ John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 255.

²¹ James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 2. See also, Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

²² Sherwin K. Bryant, Ben Vinson III, and Rachel Sarah O’Toole, “Introduction,” in *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora*, edited by Sherwin K. Bryant, Rachel Sarah O’Toole, and Ben Vinson III (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 13.

²³ C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. Rev. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 154-155.

recently, Aline Helg places Afro-Colombians at the center of the independence movement. She concludes that this service ultimately led to the silencing of Afro-Colombian identity because they avoided racial pronouncements in the public sphere and insisted on an end to the “colonial hierarchical caste society.”²⁴ Alex Borucki focuses on black identity in Uruguay and concludes that during decades of warfare Afro-Uruguayan soldiers “participated actively in politics” to such a degree that some military officers eventually “built their political careers on the support of black troops.”²⁵ My study ties in closely with these conclusions. Afro-Mexicans certainly made important political contributions while fighting for independence and proclaiming their rights as citizens. In addition, people of African descent in Mexico acted in a similar manner to Afro-Colombians when stepping into the public sphere. They downplayed race in Jamiltepec and identified only as citizens, soldiers, and fathers. Finally, Vicente Guerrero and Antonio López de Santa Anna built much of their political careers with the support of the Afro-Mexican troops who served in their respective armies.

Historians examining citizenship and state formation processes connect Afro-Latin Americans with the rise of republicanism across the Atlantic world. James Sanders assesses the roots of this political philosophy in Colombia and concludes that while cross-racial alliances “frightened” many elites such partnerships were politically necessary after independence.²⁶ Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Laurent Dubois analyze how Afro-Haitians contributed to notions of

²⁴ Aline Helg, *Liberty & Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 6-7. See also, Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795-1831* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).

²⁵ Alex Borucki, *From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Río de la Plata* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015), 117.

²⁶ James E. Sanders, *Contentious Republicans: Popular Politics, Race, and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

liberty and citizenship during the French and Haitian revolutions. Trouillot insists that subsequent analyses of these two revolutions “silenced” Afro-Haitian contributions so as to protect “a narrative of [European] global domination.”²⁷ Dubois turns this idea on its head and shows how Afro-Latin Americans “transformed Europe and the Americas.”²⁸ He argues that their insistence on abolition and citizenship for all “shaped the debates and struggles over slavery that engulfed the Atlantic world during the next decades.”²⁹ Finally, George Reid Andrews’ sweeping analysis of Afro-Latin America provides another theoretical framework for this study. Andrews argues that warfare was the primary catalyst to ending slavery in Spanish America, and he contends that Afro-Latin Americans “played a central and crucial role in transforming the political, social, and cultural life of the region.”³⁰ Afro-Mexicans in Jamiltepec embraced various political ideologies after independence. Yet, this played out differently in Mexico than in Colombia or the Caribbean. People of African descent in the region contributed to Liberal notions of citizenship, but other individuals in Jamiltepec also defended the church’s cultural authority while fighting alongside Conservatives.

²⁷ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 105-106.

²⁸ Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 2.

²⁹ Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 165.

³⁰ Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*, 9. See also, Darién J. Davis, *The African Impact on Latin America and the Caribbean* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1995); Richard Graham, Thomas E. Skidmore, Aline Helg, and Alan Knight, eds. *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

State Formation, the Moral Economy, and Violence

Postcolonial interpretations of state formation also inform my analysis. Florencia Mallon examines this process in nineteenth century Morelos in *Peasant and Nation*. She argues that the popular classes in the countryside “took up the challenge of national-democratic discourse and attempted to create their own version of a more egalitarian” society.³¹ In her estimation, elites coopted these popular notions at the federal level and used them to create a ruling consensus after mid-century. Peter Guardino analyzes how local actors internalized and transformed national political objectives to suit their own localities. He concludes that “the state, although national in conception, was (and is) experienced historically through the actions of individual local officials.”³² Guy P.C. Thomson and David LaFrance argue that this process was more about personal connections that ultimately led to broad coalitions rather than the widespread appeal of Liberalism as a political ideology.³³ Michael Ducey instead focuses on how people used violence at the local level to contribute to “the creation of a republican state.”³⁴

I employ a similar methodology but reach different conclusions. Local actors took part in a process of state formation from below after independence. They supported politicians at the local, state, and national levels and used various methods to voice their displeasure when necessary. Elites at the state and national level nevertheless seemed less concerned about these

³¹ Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 9.

³² Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 11.

³³ Guy P.C. Thomson and David G. LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), xvii-xviii.

³⁴ Michael T. Ducey, *A Nation of Villages: Riot and Rebellion in the Mexican Huasteca, 1750-1850* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 4.

popular ideologies as Liberals consolidated power. Local actors adopted new strategies rather than simply joining the Liberal coalition after mid-century even though these methods proved increasingly ineffective when attempting to protect pueblo land and resources. The political violence Ducey examines in the Huasteca region certainly corresponds with early nineteenth century Jamiltepec, but after the French Intervention this became less effective as a political strategy. The relative peace in Jamiltepec therefore does not suggest a political consensus, or a Liberal hegemony, as Mallon concludes in Morelos.³⁵ In fact, nineteenth century Jamiltepec indicates the opposite. As a new generation of elites transformed the economy and privatized land at an alarming rate locals employed various strategies, including violence, to halt this process. In 1910, residents joined the popular uprising against the Liberal order and organized into at least two major political factions to reshape politics in Mexico.

This work also incorporates E.P. Thompson's concept of "the moral economy." Thompson coined the phrase while analyzing England's turbulent transition to capitalism. He argues that prior to this transformation peasants and elites formed "a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and... illegitimate" socio-economic practices.³⁶ The economic upheaval

³⁵ Mallon concludes that local hegemonies defined regional politics in "decentralized sites of struggle." The process of contesting local political developments through institutions thus was evidence of the state's hegemony with Liberal elites eventually co-opting these discourses after 1867. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation*, 9-19. I employ Antonio Gramsci's definition of cultural hegemony here as cultural practices and social norms superseding other interests and duping unwitting individuals to support regimes working against their best economic interests. See, Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Gregory Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971). For a scathing critique of Gramsci's concept see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 304-350. For more on hegemony in Porfirian Mexico see, Matthew D. Esposito, *Funerals, Festivals, and Cultural Politics in Porfirian Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 6-19. For an excellent argument about how hegemony held the post-revolutionary state together see, Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, "Popular Culture and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, eds., Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). For a critique of this argument see, Benjamin T. Smith and Paul Gillingham, eds., *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

³⁶ E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present*, no. 50 (1971), 79.

destroyed this consensus and helped create a new working class. James Scott modifies this concept to examine a similar process in rural Southeast Asia and argues that any change in the common “notion of economic justice and... working definition of exploitation” represented a lapse in the moral economy and led to social unrest.³⁷ Benjamin Smith flips this model in the Mixteca Baja region of Oaxaca and argues that the preservation of the moral economy explains the region’s unprecedented political stability because elites “adjusted ‘the balance of reciprocity’ to maximize profit, while at the same time minimizing the chances of revolt.”³⁸ Jamiltepec provides a fascinating case study. Elites did “adjust ‘the balance of reciprocity’” in Afro-Mexican cotton producing areas as Smith concludes they did in the Mixteca Baja, but in Mixtec communities, where the only valuable product was land, they did not. In these communities people lost cochineal and rents from *haciendas volantes* as critical sources of revenue after mid-century. Elites successfully privatized pueblo lands in these communities as well. Thus, Mixtec residents had few means to protect land and resources. In comparison, Afro-Mexican farmers had more options to leverage cotton in return for the preservation of the regional moral economy.

Atristáin and others have emphasized violence when describing indigenous and Afro-Mexican interactions in Jamiltepec. By portraying “the indigenous and black races” as “completely antagonistic” Atristáin asserts that violence defined Afro-Mexican and Mixtec relations. Flanet also focuses on violence and racial antagonism during the late twentieth century.³⁹ Such characterizations likely date back to the colonial era. Historians for centuries

³⁷ James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976), 3.

³⁸ Benjamin T. Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism in Mexico: Catholicism, Society, and Politics in the Mixteca Baja, 1750-1962* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 8.

³⁹ See also, Alfonso Fábila Montes de Oca, *Mixtecos de la costa: Estudio etnográfico de Alfonso Fábila en Jamiltepec, Oaxaca (1956)* (México DF: Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2010),

have read the abundant descriptions of interracial violence preserved in archives and assumed these accounts suggested tensions began with the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in the Americas.⁴⁰ Scholars more recently have attempted to change this narrative and established an equally misleading paradigm that overemphasizes either violence or peace when describing Afro-indigenous interactions. Douglas Cope, for example, illustrates that intermarriage and flexibility were common among working class Mexico City residents, but concludes that “racial differentiation” contributed to “divisiveness” in the city.⁴¹ George Reid Andrews suggests peace was more common because elites frequently expressed fears that “the Indian population might have joined” one of the occasional slave revolts during the colonial era.⁴²

Matthew Restall questions how scholars have framed this debate in his edited collection *Beyond Black and Red*.⁴³ Patrick Carroll convincingly argues in his contribution to the volume that scholars have mistakenly overestimated racial and inter-ethnic violence due to biases in the archival record. Such interpretations more accurately reflect how notaries, judges, and administrators interpreted race because they had no reason to record racial harmony during prolonged periods of peace. Carroll charges that historians emphasizing racial and ethnic

22-228; Francie Chassen-López, “Maderismo or Mixtec Empire?: Class and Ethnicity in the Mexican Revolution, Costa Chica of Oaxaca, 1911,” *The Americas* 55, no. 1 (July 1998), 104-105.

⁴⁰ D.A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 21-25. See also, William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979); Palmer, *Slaves of the White God*; Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México*.

⁴¹ Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 49.

⁴² George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 37.

⁴³ Matthew Restall, “Introduction: Black Slaves, Red Paint,” in *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 4. The violence/peaceful paradigm applies to other regions of the Americas. For some examples see, Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 150-186; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: Norton, 1975), 250-270; Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society*, 470-479; Herbert S. Klein and Ben Vinson III, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 182-185 (originally published in 1986); Sanders, *Contentious Republicans*, 12-15; Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Colombia*, 9-11.

violence have therefore misread the evidence and “perpetuated a myth of general hostility.”⁴⁴ My study demonstrates that there were instances of ethnic and racial hostility after independence. The 1910 Revolution and the War of the South suggest that race did play a role in popular mobilizations. These examples nevertheless represent exceptions that fail to encapsulate everyday Mixtec and Afro-Mexican interactions. Examining other instances of nineteenth century violence reveals that race played no factor in numerous political disputes. The evidence, in fact, supports many of Carroll’s conclusions about elite racial attitudes. Local officials in Jamiltepec worried most ardently about cross-racial coalitions due to the frequent warfare and political instability common during the nineteenth century.

Methodology, Terms, and Structure

This study relies on archival research in state, regional, and national collections in Oaxaca and Mexico City. The primary collection on the District of Jamiltepec holds a number of land dispute cases, court proceedings, military documents, and official correspondence. In addition, my research focuses on notarial records, correspondence in the national archive in Mexico City, and nineteenth century newspaper accounts. These collections, while incredibly rich source material, also produce limitations when trying to draw conclusions about largely

⁴⁴ Patrick J. Carroll, “Black-Native Relations and the Historical Record in Colonial Mexico,” in *Beyond Black and Red*, 252. See also, Restall, *The Black Middle*, 222-226; Rachel Sarah O’Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2012), 29-33; Dana Velasco Murillo and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, “Mine Workers and Weavers: Afro-Indigenous Labor Arrangements and Interactions in Puebla and Zacatecas, 1600-1700,” in *City Indians in Spain’s American Empire: Urban Indigenous Society in Colonial Mesoamerica and Andean South America, 1530-1810*, edited by Dana Velasco Murillo, Mark Lentz, and Margarita R. Ochoa (Brighton: Sussex Academies Press, 2012), 104-106; Vinson, *Before Mestizaje*, 132-133.

illiterate populations. I have found it necessary to read both “along the archival grain” as Ann Stoler suggests as well as against it.⁴⁵ Reading along the grain provides insights into how people at the local level created a lexicon of race after independence. I found it necessary to look for what was not there, or as Trouillot might say where the archive went “silent.”⁴⁶ Once I discovered a few clues about the silencing of blackness as a racial descriptor, I concluded that such silences were everywhere in the historical record. Thus, reading along the grain in terms of race unlocked how identity played into popular mobilizations and regional political alliances. Nevertheless, elites regularly wrote the documents I use in this dissertation. I found it necessary to try to read past the person writing the document to gain insights into the mostly illiterate men and women behind court testimonies, land disputes, and military recruitment initiatives.

I have elected to use the term Afro-Mexican to describe people of African descent in nineteenth century Jamiltepec. Following the lead of Bobby Vaughn and prominent scholars of African descendant people in Mexico, the term “stems from the recognition that this population is a historical product of the same trans-Atlantic slave trade that brought Africans to nearly every part of the Americas.”⁴⁷ The term nonetheless has many critics. For example, the former president of the Association of Pueblos Negros Jorge Morgan told me during an interview in 2016 that he preferred the term “*negro*” because it is more accurate. He explained that he knew nothing of Africa, and that he was in fact a “black Mexican.”⁴⁸ I believe that the term Afro-Mexican offers distinct advantages to scholars because it avoids focusing solely on one’s

⁴⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁴⁶ While Trouillot was speaking of silences in historical narrative I argue that this often extends to the archive itself. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1-30.

⁴⁷ Vaughn, “Race and Nation,” 9.

⁴⁸ “*Soy mexicano y soy negro*” is what Morgan said several times during the interview. Interview in Oaxaca City, May 2016.

phenotype, physical description, or skin color without considering how geography, language, and culture factored into racial identity. Morgan provides an important counterpoint, but I have elected to use Afro-Mexican since I have not, to date, found evidence how African descendent people identified themselves during the nineteenth century. In some cases, I employ the term *costeño*, or coastal dweller. This term is specific to the Jamiltepec region and denotes the post-independence geographic descriptions locals applied to people of African descent living along the coast. When possible, I also provide an author's original racial term without a translation when quoting contemporary accounts directly. For the region's indigenous residents this illustrates how colonial caste categories survived while also highlighting where similar terms that historically applied to Afro-Mexicans fell out of use after independence.⁴⁹

In terms of organization, I have arranged the chapters both thematically and in a narrative format. Chapters 1 and 2 are thematic. In Chapter 1 I analyze how elites at the national level silenced blackness. Beginning immediately after independence, historians, politicians, and journalists emphasized criminality and relegated Afro-Mexicans to the distant past. Chapter 2 moves south to Jamiltepec and provides a brief overview of the region's history and economy. The next four chapters then move to a narrative format where I weave everyday political and socio-economic interactions together to provide a picture of how race and ethnicity factored into the formation of alliances. Chapter 3 begins with the aftermath of the independence war and

⁴⁹ For more on the use of terms in Mexico see, Theodore Cohen, "In Black and Brown: Intellectuals, Blackness, and Inter-Americanism in Mexico after 1910," (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2013), 16-17; Bobby Vaughn, "Los negros, los indígenas y la diáspora: Una perspectiva etnográfica de la Costa Chica," in Ben Vinson III and Bobby Vaughn eds., *Afroméxico: Herramientas para la historia* (México DF: CIDE, 2004), 75-76; Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty*, 241, n. 2; Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 197-99, n. 2. Laura Lewis concludes that Afro-Mexicans preferred the term *moreno* in the wake of post-revolutionary indigenismo. See, Lewis, *Chocolate and Corn Flour*. For the use of terms describing African descendent people throughout Latin America see, Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*, 3-10.

shows how Guerrero's removal from the presidency exposed significant racial divisions. Defense of the church and eventually the nation provided an opportunity to form cross-racial coalitions. Chapter 4 moves to the post-war years and examines how people supported Santa Anna a final time before the arrival of the Liberal regime. Chapter 5 analyzes popular mobilizations and politics during the War of the Reform and French Intervention. Finally, Chapter 6 moves to the lengthier Liberal Era and explores the capitalist transformation during the unprecedented political stability of the Porfiriato.

The evidence from Jamiltepec makes clear that attempts to silence Afro-Mexicans in a broader project of *mestizaje* (Euro-indigenous racial mixture) failed. Afro-Mexicans along the coast maintained distinct communities and participated as both Conservatives and Liberals throughout the nineteenth century. They did so as ordinary Mexican citizens while preserving separate racial identities in their private lives. In this regard, there are important parallels to Colombia where escaping the racial biases of the caste system and embracing citizenship also contributed to silencing blackness in national narratives. In fact, this continued throughout the twentieth century in Mexico. After the 1910 Revolution, leading intellectuals embraced *indigenismo* and pronounced that Mexico was a mestizo nation.⁵⁰ While this corrected many of the biases lingering from the nineteenth century, such pronouncements disregarded evidence that Afro-Mexicans helped make modern Mexico.⁵¹ Authorities have only recently altered these positions and extended official recognition to Afro-Mexicans as a vital cultural and political component of the modern Mexican nation. Many of the old racial attitudes nevertheless persist

⁵⁰ David Brading defines official post-revolutionary *indigenismo* as the attempt "to incorporate Indian communities into the national society of modern Mexico." David A. Brading, "Manuel Gamio and Official Indigenismo in Mexico," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 7, no. 1 (1988), 76.

⁵¹ It should come as no surprise that Frank Brandenburg inspired the title to this dissertation. See, Frank R. Brandenburg, *The Making of Modern Mexico* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), 4-18.

today. To understand the roots of these prejudices we must begin by analyzing how elites attempted to silence blackness at the national level.

CHAPTER 1: The National Discourse of Blackness: Silence, Criminality, and Marginalization during the Long 19th Century and Beyond

A large Mexico City crowd commemorated Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's *Grito de Dolores* (shout for independence) on September 15, 16, and 17, 1825. President, and independence hero, Guadalupe Victoria authorized the massive celebration as the first state ceremony featuring Hidalgo's famous proclamation. Officials planned to have "orphans of the heroes in the fight for the patria, and a troop of slaves that would soon receive their liberty" close the performance. President Victoria himself marked the occasion with a speech reminding celebrants that it was everyone's duty "to educate...the orphans of the sacrificed victims in the fight for independence to make them respectable and carry the glorious names of their parents." Then the president turned to the enslaved people and said "slaves, on this day that we celebrate the anniversary of liberty..., in the name of the patria, we award you with your freedom..., to honor and defend" Mexico. Members of "the immense crowd" were "full of enthusiasm" following the speech, and they celebrated late into the night before meeting again on September 17 to wrap up the first sanctioned celebration of Hidalgo's grito.¹

The 1825 ceremony demonstrates that authorities associated enslavement with colonialism following independence.² Numerous officials at the state and local level built on the apparent success of this celebration and incorporated emancipation rituals into their

¹ "¡Viva la Patria!," *Águila Mejicana*, 17 September 1825, 1.

² This was a common theme across the Atlantic world. See, Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, x; James E. Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World: Creating Modernity, Nation, and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*; Greg Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World* (New York: Picador, 2014); David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

independence festivities in the following years. These ceremonies successfully tied the two themes together so well that they seemingly influenced the debate surrounding the future of slavery in Mexico. In fact, officials agreed on abolition within a few short years, and President Guerrero placed Mexico among the first nations to end slavery during the 1829 grito.³ In addition, these celebrations illustrate the vital role Afro-Mexicans played during the fight for independence. The choice to emancipate enslaved Afro-Mexicans while also honoring independence era orphans demonstrated that planners understood this connection. They placed the two groups together to illustrate Mexico's significant sacrifices to transform the nation from Spanish colony to independent republic.⁴ In so doing, planners "invented" a new tradition by incorporating this imagery into what was already a popular custom before 1825.⁵

While some celebrated emancipations and abolition in patriotic ceremonies, other politicians, scholars, and journalists attempted to silence Afro-Mexican voices. This chapter will analyze this process during the nineteenth century. Liberal and Conservative elites downplayed Mexico's connections to Africa and its role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade immediately after abolition, but they continued contrasting slavery with freedom. In this case, however, journalists

³ For more on abolition see, Theodore G. Vincent, "The Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President, Vicente Guerrero," *The Journal of Negro History* 86, no. 2 (Spring 2001), 148-159. Dennis Valdés argues that in Mexico slavery "appeared to wither away." Dennis N. Valdés, "The Decline of Slavery in Mexico," *The Americas* 44, no. 2 (October 1987), 167.

⁴ Michael Costeloe, "The Junta Patriótica and the Celebration of Independence in Mexico City, 1825-1855," in *¡Viva México! ¡Viva la Independencia!: Celebrations of September 16*, edited by William H. Beezley and David E. Lorey (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2001), 47. "Solemnidad nacional," *Águila Mexicana*, 3 September 1825, 1.

⁵ Even though leaders eventually dropped the emancipation component, the grito has grown into the largest state celebration in Mexico. For more on inventing traditions see, Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-14; Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, translated by Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Mary Ryan, "The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

compared Mexico with slaveholders in Texas and the U.S. as a call to arms to defend Mexican sovereignty. After the U.S. invasion, they published infrequent stories that emphasized Afro-Mexican violence and criminality. More often, editors downplayed Mexico's ties to Africa in favor of stories that championed Mexico as a *mestizo* (a descendant of a European and indigenous person) nation.⁶ This had important repercussions among the era's leading intellectuals who were the first to analyze the colonial era and the fight for independence. Carlos María de Bustamante, José María Luis Mora, and Lucas Alamán downplayed Afro-Mexican contributions to the independence war and relegated people with African ancestry to the early colonial era.⁷ These scholars wrote the first formal histories of Mexico, and their choice to minimize the country's ties to Africa and stress that Mexico was a nation with primarily indigenous and European heritage had surprisingly long-lasting consequences. In fact, this identification dominated Mexican historiography for a century and had a profound influence on the national post-revolutionary racial discourse proclaiming Mexico a mestizo nation.⁸

Following mid-century, and the passage of Liberal reform laws, the conversation shifted dramatically. Newspaper editors assigned a spatial category and located blackness on the

⁶ Several scholars have analyzed this discursive strategy to instill nationalism. See, John D. P. Fuller, "Slavery Propaganda during the Mexican War," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1935), 235-45; Peter F. Guardino, "Gender, Soldiering, and Citizenship in the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848," *The American Historical Review* 119, no. 1 (2014), 26-46.

⁷ Carlos María de Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico de la revolución mejicana, comenzada en el 15 de septiembre de 1810 por el ciudadano Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, cura del pueblo de Dolores, en el obispado de Michoacán*, 3 vols., 3ª Edición (México: Imprenta de Juan Navarro, 1854); José María Luis Mora, *Mejico y sus revoluciones*, 5 vols. (París: Librería de Rosa, 1836); Lucas Alamán, *Historia de Méjico: Desde los primeros movimientos que prepararon su independencia en el año de 1808, hasta la época presente*, 5 vols. (Méjico: Imprenta de J. M. Lara, 1849). For more on the importance of these three scholars see, Ben Vinson, III, "La historia del estudio de los negros en México," in *Afroméxico: El pulso de la población negra en México, una historia recordada, olvidada y vuelta a recordar*, edited by Ben Vinson, III and Bobby Vaughn (México, DF: CIDE, 2004), 34-39; Agustín Basave Benítez, *México mestizo: Análisis del nacionalismo mexicano en torno a la mestizofilia de Andrés Molina Enríquez* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992), 22-23; Eric Van Young, *Writing Mexican History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 127-28; Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 75-77.

⁸ For an excellent overview of the nineteenth century historiography of blackness see, Vinson, "La historia del estudio de los negros en México," 33-45.

margins of the country's borders along the coast, describing these areas as remote, lawless, and dangerous. Business leaders who sought to exploit these isolated Afro-Mexican regions for economic gain published essays promoting African American and Afro-Caribbean immigration. They argued that coastal regions represented a lost opportunity that only needed African descendent immigrants with the supposed genetic ability to withstand the hot climate. Ethnographers, in contrast, wrote that blackness was a foreign phenomenon located in other parts of Latin America, the U.S., and Africa. They incorporated Social Darwinist assumptions into their ethnographies emphasizing racial difference. Other authors used examples of segregation, lynchings, and repression in the U.S. to contrast what they argued represented Mexico's exceptional system of citizenship.⁹

Liberal Era intellectuals downplayed race in their highly influential ethnographies, geographies, and histories. The era's leading historians limited their analyses of the Afro-Mexican population to the colonial era and once again emphasized Euro-indigenous mestizaje. Leading cartographer, Antonio García Cubas, left Afro-Mexicans off the cultural map altogether. Liberal Era elite racial constructs persisted through the 1910 Revolution and into the 1940s. Analyzing this national discourse of blackness illustrates that elites seized on the opportunity to end the colonial era caste system and write Afro-Mexicans out of the independent Mexican nation. Much like in Colombia, Afro-Mexicans who avoided identifying their race in the public sphere contributed to this silencing process. Thus, downplaying Mexico's ties to Africa was a

⁹ For more on race during the nineteenth century see, Cohen, "In Black and Brown," 40-51; Moisés González Navarro, "Las ideas raciales de los científicos, 1890-1910," *Historia Mexicana* 37, no. 4 (1988), 565-83. Positivism often went hand-in-hand with such thought. See, Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Leopoldo Zea, *El positivismo en México: Nacimiento, apogeo, y decadencia* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968).

two-part process. We will begin in this chapter by examining the first part that elites at the national level initiated immediately after independence.

Part 1: Performing Freedom: Slavery, Abolition, and War

Intellectuals, politicians, and journalists defined independence and citizenship as the antithesis of slavery prior to the 1850s. Editors published a number of articles that contrasted independence and Spanish colonialism in this manner during the short time that slavery persisted. National festivals and state-level emancipation performances symbolized the nation's evolution from slavery to liberty. This corresponded with a debate on the future of slavery itself. Editors often printed stories that emphasized the barbarity of slavery and advocated abolition. Guerrero understood this connection and used the 1829 grito to decree "the abolition of slavery throughout the republic" so as to "emphasize the symbolic significance of that measure and the association of independence with liberty."¹⁰ Independence era leaders, intellectuals, and journalists defined blackness in Mexico as a condition of the Spanish slave trade. Authorities therefore used the trope of slavery to inspire patriotism and mobilize its free citizenry to take up arms to defend Mexican liberty.

The editors of *El Sol* published one of José María Tornel y Mendívil's speeches to the chamber of *Diputados* denouncing slavery in 1827. Tornel showed members a medallion from London featuring an enslaved man asking "am I not a man like you?" and "am I not your brother?" Tornel answered the rhetorical question with "they are our brothers," and he asserted

¹⁰ Costeloe, "The Junta Patriótica," 48.

that it “is inconceivable that a free republic maintains slavery among their children.” On one hand, he recognized the propagandistic and ideological problems facing the United States by citing contradictions between legalized slavery and ideals of equality published in the Declaration of Independence. On the other hand, he insisted that Mexican leaders could not balance such inconsistencies. Tornel referenced the recently published 1824 Constitution and challenged politicians to “break with... the remnants of the Spanish conquest.” He traced the institution’s long history and recognized that conquistadors forced enslaved men to accompany them during the invasion of Mexico in 1519. He argued that slavery as a legal institution contradicted the ideals of the new republic, and he claimed that “the nation is obligated to protect the rights of men.” Tornel juxtaposed independence with slavery to condemn the last remnants of what he argued was Spanish imperialism.¹¹ In addition, his references to the Spanish conquest and Cortés also injected indigeneity into the discussion. Where slavery was the opposite of freedom the Indian identity represented what Rebecca Earle calls the distinctive nationalism highlighting Mexico’s American or non-European identity.¹²

In 1828, outgoing President Victoria drew a link between slavery and freedom. He condemned one of the many Spanish conspiracies to re-colonize Mexico as an attempt to “return the young republic... to slavery.”¹³ For politicians, such rhetoric could be useful to inspire nationalism, but this was not limited to leaders in Mexico City. More than a year before Victoria’s address, the editors of *El Veracruzano Libre* – the state where sugar plantations and slave labor persisted the longest – penned a column highlighting that Mexicans were “in their

¹¹ José María Tornel y Mendívil, “Sesión del día 8 de enero,” *El Sol*, 17 January 1827, 1-2.

¹² Rebecca A. Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 24.

¹³ Guadalupe Victoria, “Discurso del escmo. Sr. Presidente de la República ciudadano Guadalupe Victoria al abrir las sesiones ordinarias de las cámaras de la Unión,” *El Sol*, 6 January 1828, 1.

seventh year of political emancipation.”¹⁴ They complained that the persistence of slavery, political factions, and Spanish imperialist conspiracies threatened to undermine the nation. One piece in *El Sol* a few days before the 1827 grito discussed the character of liberty. It implored leaders to take advantage of all Mexico’s natural and human resources. The author suggested that new nations “imperfectly manage... the seeds of their destruction.” The author claimed this meant that ignoring the wishes of insurgent leaders and becoming “stupefied by slavery” would eventually bring national destruction.¹⁵ In his address to the state congress in Chihuahua, Bonifacio Rojas took this one step further. He argued that all the leaders of independence, beginning with Hidalgo, would be appalled that slavery persisted. He asserted that “the memory of Hidalgo and our liberators... will upset the perverted American” who attempted to maintain slavery. Rojas believed that the politicians in the Chihuahua congress could enact change and honor the memory of Hidalgo, who pronounced the end of slavery in 1810, with abolition.¹⁶

This kind of discourse coincided with the growth of manumission ceremonies during grito celebrations. Officials planned these ceremonies during independence ceremonies rather than religious holidays to demonstrate that citizens must free themselves of the Spanish state without challenging time-honored cultural practices.¹⁷ For example, General Juan Pablo de Anaya presented a group of enslaved Afro-Mexicans on September 16, 1827 to celebrate independence in Chiapas. Journalists reported that the presence of such individuals reminded

¹⁴ L. EE., “Veracruzano libre,” *El Sol*, 15 Enero 1827, 4. For more on slavery in Veracruz see, Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz*; Naveda Chávez-Hita, *Esclavos negros en las haciendas azucareras de Córdoba*.

¹⁵ I.F., “El genio de la libertad,” *El Sol*, September 10, 1827, 3-4.

¹⁶ Bonifacio Rojas, “Proposición presentada por el diputado ciudadano Bonifacio Rojas en sesión del día 30 de julio al honorable congreso del estado libre de Chihuahua,” *El Sol*, August 28, 1827, 2. For more on Hidalgo see, Ted Vincent, “The Blacks Who Freed Mexico,” *The Journal of Negro History* 79, no. 3 (Summer 1994), 259.

¹⁷ For more on nineteenth century the religious revival and the use of state ceremonies to harness similar emotions for the state see, Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, 13-14.

everyone of “the sad pages of a disagreeable [national] history.” The freeing of enslaved people represented a “blessing at the happy time of our regeneration.”¹⁸ At the same time, Vicente Romero and José Marquez reported that the government of San Luis Potosí would work with all of the state’s slaveholders to achieve emancipation within the year. Romero and Marquez announced that the state decided to carry out this large task during the September 16 grito. They instructed slaveholders to “present themselves to the municipal authorities where they reside with their titles of acquisition.” Officials would then work on a case-by-case basis to reimburse slaveholders for their lost property. Then, on “precisely September 16 of the following year they will free every slave residing in the state.”¹⁹ In this case, statewide manumission overlapped with two independence celebrations further imbricating Hidalgo’s memory with abolition.

The San Luis Potosí declaration touched on one of the primary objections to emancipation. Enslaved Afro-Mexicans were legal property under Mexican law, and officials feverishly debated whether or not to reimburse slaveholders. Florentino Martínez assured slaveholders in 1827 of their “right to property.” Nevertheless, he objected to slavery. He argued that slavery in Mexico “has been unjust,” and urged that all of “humanity resist slavery.” Agustín Viesca contended that “slavery is inconsistent with our institutions, and slaves are not the property of their owners.” Viesca and Martínez apparently both agreed that slavery must end, but property rights suppressed their abolition efforts. Martínez added that there were “slaves living in the republic” and all of them had owners with property rights that must be “respected.” Francisco Molinos concluded that property rights were “the primary reason slavery lingers” in the United

¹⁸ “El ciudadano general de brigada Juan Pablo de Anaya, comandante general del estado de Chiapas al presentar los esclavos que se libertaron en celebridad del 16 de septiembre al ciudadano gobernador del mismo, pronunció el discurso siguiente,” *El Sol*, October 31, 1827, 2-3.

¹⁹ Vicente Romero y José Marquez, “Noticias nacionales,” *El Correo de la Federación Mexicana*, September 7, 1827, 3.

States. He suggested that Mexico had higher standards, and a number of senators agreed to continue discussing the future of slavery without referring to humans solely as property.²⁰

After abolition, slavery factored into debates surrounding federalism and centralism during the mid-1830s. One author warned in 1835 of a Cuban filibuster that several “foreign henchmen” led with the “hope to establish [slavery]... in the disgraced state of Yucatán.” The author referenced a report that surfaced describing a number of foreign entrepreneurs who passed through the port of Veracruz on their way to establish haciendas on the Yucatán Peninsula.²¹ The article provided few other details about the supposed arrival of slavery in Yucatán, but it does highlight common conspiracy theories in the popular press that slavery persisted in isolated regions. The editors of *El Mosquito Mexicano* reprinted a portion of the newly formed Republic of Texas constitution to illustrate the point. In September 1836, approximately five months after gaining independence from Mexico, the newspaper decided to publish a story from the *New York American*. The editors highlighted only “two clauses” printed in the U.S. publication for “the lovers of liberty that very fervently sympathized with the Texas fight.” The first clause from Section Nine of the document stated that “those individuals of color that were kept as slaves before Texas independence... will remain in the same state of slavery.” Section Ten recognized African Americans as citizens, but officials provided no further guidance as to how this would work in conjunction with the prior clause.²² The editors apparently reprinted select portions of the document so that readers in Mexico would understand that traitors of freedom in Texas only fought for independence to preserve slavery.

²⁰ “Cámara de Senadores: Sesión del día 17 de enero,” *El Sol*, January 22, 1827, 1-2.

²¹ “Estado de Yucatán: Nueva Berbería,” *El Mosquito Mexicano*, September 15, 1835, 1.

²² “Batalla de los libres en Tejas,” *El Mosquito Mexicano*, September 6, 1836, 1-2.

People frequently associated blackness at the national level as a condition of chattel slavery. Some authors took this further and situated Mexico's history of slavery within a broader context of the Atlantic world. An anonymous author identified as S.C. wrote a lengthy and dismissive article in *El Mosaico Mexicano* analyzing elite Africans' role in the slave trade. The author asserted that so-called "African society" was despotic where men wielded patriarchal powers over their families and numerous wives. Slave traders supposedly exploited the "very brutal and violent passions" among Africans by offering to trade European goods "that made the *negros* eyes shine." The editorialist declared that elites on the West African coast had "only one preoccupation" during the slave trade and that was "the exchange of their fellow men for the garbage from the factories and manufacturers of Europe." The author presumed the trade would have continued for many additional years, but Europeans during the eighteenth century arrived on the African coast and "moralized" the inhabitants. This contact led to the end of the slave trade, and the author only mentioned Mexico as forming a small part of the process.²³

Opinionmakers like the above example provided their readers with a Euro-centric and condescending interpretation of Africans. Other essays pointed out cases of Atlantic world exploitation. The editors of *El Imparcial* published a lengthy discussion in 1841 detailing what they argued represented English hypocrisy. They observed that in the wake of abolition English colonists in the Caribbean still required a large and economical labor force. To meet this demand the editors asserted that, rather than enslaving people, English recruiters duped unwitting West

²³ S. C., "Los negros," *El Mosaico Mexicano*, no. 7 (January 1, 1837), 372-73. The author's argument regarding trade between elites became popular among some Africanists in the 1960s, without the racist overtones and dismissive attitude toward West African people. In particular, Walter Rodney argued that elite Africans and Europeans conspired with each other and prospered in the trade. The slave trade was thus a class-based elite conspiracy. Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *The Journal of West African History*, 7, no. 3 (1966), 431-43.

Africans into highly exploitative work contracts on sugar plantations before 1833. Employers then pressed laborers into terrible working conditions where they performed tasks that enslaved people had in prior years often on the same plantations. The editors claimed that English abolitionists rarely objected to such treatment. They argued that abolition in the English colonies was “a disastrous experiment” whereby English colonizers conceded to “negros a premature emancipation.” The editors asserted that abolition in the Spanish colonies Cuba and Puerto Rico would also be “disastrous.” The pro-slavery article left Mexico completely out of the conversation even though by 1841 it had over a decade of experience with abolition.²⁴

The slave-free paradigm became even more powerful as a rhetorical strategy during the U.S. invasion (1846-48). After the U.S. annexed Texas in 1845, the editors of *El Monitor Republicano* reprinted a portion of the state constitution illustrating that slavery would continue to play a central role.²⁵ An anonymous author in León invited all Mexican men to prevent slavery at the hands of U.S. invaders. This author warned against an affront to masculinity and asserted that “the weak sex” bravely faced the dangers of war while Mexican men lacked the will to defend the nation or Mexican women. The author called on men to fight “before bowing down to the slavery that [the U.S.] is preparing.” This presumably offered men “the sweet satisfaction of having liberated your patria of the vile chains of slavery.”²⁶ Rafael Herrera assessed that the people living in Monterrey “missed” the call to unite, and the residents there faced the “vengeance and insatiable thirst of the Anglo-Saxon blood.” Herrera charged that such inaction “will return us to carry the chains of slavery.”²⁷ Another notice circulated and published in

²⁴ “Hipocresía de los ingleses,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, October 29, 1841, 1.

²⁵ “Constitución del Estado de Tejas,” *El Monitor Republicano*, March 11, 1846, 2-3.

²⁶ M.S.G. de G., “Invitación a los mexicanos,” *El Republicano*, August 31, 1846, 2-3.

²⁷ Rafael Herrera y Pérez, “Remitidos,” *El Republicano*, October 21, 1846, 3.

Durango warned that less than 4,000 “unorganized and undisciplined” U.S. soldiers conquered armies in northern Mexico. Such soldiers “are the dregs of a country where immorality, crime, and debauchery” reign. With their “brutal appetites they will come robbing, looting, destroying, chopping down our fields, deflowering our women, penetrating our churches..., murdering those that fail to submit to their whims, and marking citizens with the irons of slavery.”²⁸

Such juxtapositions of slavery with independence and freedom were powerful rhetorical tools during the debate over abolition after independence. In particular, manumission rituals during independence celebrations played two vital roles. First, they illustrated how Mexicans achieved liberty and ended the metaphorical slavery Spanish imperialists imposed on the population. Second, emancipation ceremonies provided a means for government officials, intellectuals, and journalists to advocate abolition. Authorities and authors quickly abandoned closely associating Afro-Mexicans with independence. Instead, they used slavery as a means to contrast Mexico with the U.S. and inspire volunteers to defend the country. Ironically, many of these recruits were Afro-Mexicans. Yet, few accounts describe the heroism of Afro-Mexican soldiers. Intellectuals during this time focused instead on black violence during independence, associated Afro-Mexicans with royalist forces, and described Mexico and its soldiers as a mestizo nation.

²⁸ “Número 503,” Alcance al Registro Oficial, December 7, 1846. For more on how people in the United States interpreted regular army soldiers serving in the U.S. military see, Peter Guardino, *The Dead March: A History of the Mexican-American War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 38-45.

Part 2: Creating Mexican Historiography and Analyzing Afro-Mexican Soldiers

Afro-Mexicans had a long history serving as soldiers during the colonial era.²⁹ The evidence suggests that they participated in the independence war in large numbers, fighting on both sides as Spanish *realistas* (royalists) and Mexican *insurgentes* (insurgents). Newspaper editors and journalists, who seemingly preferred to focus on slavery, produced stories highlighting Afro-Mexican criminality or emphasizing their royalist connections. At the same time in the mid-1830s, intellectuals began assessing the roles that Afro-Mexican soldiers played during the independence war. These scholars created foundational Mexican historiography, and they had a profound effect on the national discourse of blackness. They constructed blackness as a historic identity that presumably ended with slavery, emphasized Euro-indigenous mestizaje, and ignored the existence of Afro-Mexican communities after independence. These scholars essentially offered up two competing images: the first stressed that people of African descent were prone to violence and criminality; the second downplayed the presence of Afro-Mexicans in independent Mexico and their contributions to the battles for independence. The leading intellectuals used these two broad themes in three works analyzing independence.

Prior to mid-century, journalists and newspaper editors published few stories about Afro-Mexican soldiers and black violence. In one case, editors printed General José María Calderón's letter in *Correo de la Federación Mexicana* in 1827 emphasizing the Puebla army's role during the war for independence. He complained that corrupt politicians had usurped his soldiers' citizenship rights, something he believed their sacrifices had earned them. In his estimation, the

²⁹ See, Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty*.

“black inhabitants of Veracruz” wrongly received the bulk of national praise. Calderón warned that this “unhealthy and fratricidal” population was only a “small faction of men” who had fought for independence.³⁰ Another example from 1857 reads like an excerpt from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The author analyzed a battle involving a young Porfirio Díaz on the Jamiltepec coast with an Afro-Mexican “enemy and terrain absolutely unknown” to the majority of Mexicans. He observed that one of Díaz’s troops, a “valiant and robust negro,” used his machete to defeat their enemies.³¹ The editors presented Díaz’s Afro-Mexican allies and enemies alike as alien, inherently violent, and adept at using machetes in battle.

Several intellectuals studied the fight for independence beginning in the 1830s. Carlos María de Bustamante was one of the first to analyze recent Mexican history when he published, *Cuadro histórico de la revolución mejicana*, a three-volume history of the independence war. He had first-hand experience serving in the insurgent military, and many subsequent historians have considered him one of the few leading nineteenth century intellectuals who championed indigenismo. Bustamante had what David Brading describes as an “idiosyncratic blend of Catholic republicanism and conservative patriotism.”³² In *Cuadro histórico de la revolución mejicana*, Bustamante wrote extensively about Afro-Mexican soldiers. He often stressed that they fought as realistas, and in one case, he asserted that people of African descent along the Oaxaca coast were “always versatile and fickle” in terms of loyalty due to their lack of conviction declaring “one time for liberty, another for Fernando VII.”³³ He rarely identified race

³⁰ José María Calderón, “Alcance de patriota de Puebla,” *Correo de la Federación Mexicana*, June 27, 1827, Tomo III, 3-4.

³¹ “La acción de Ixcapa,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, September 8, 1857, 2-3.

³² D.A. Brading, “Creole Nationalism and Mexican Liberalism,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 15, no. 2 (May 1973), 161.

³³ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo I, 319.

among insurgent leaders with reported African ancestry like Vicente Guerrero and Valerio Trujano, but he did present both men as capable leaders committed to independence.

Bustamante often emphasized brutality among Afro-Mexican realistas. He explained that in Huajuapán Manuel Guendalaín's numerous "negros from his sugar mill" combined forces with Francisco Caldelas from Cortijos who commanded more than "four hundred negros and *mulatos*" (persons of mixed African and European ancestry).³⁴ This large force of realistas surrounded and laid siege to Trujano in Huajuapán for more than 100 days in 1812. Bustamante failed to identify race when detailing the heroic defense that many Afro-Mexican insurgents mounted against the realistas. He analyzed another conflict in Cuernavaca where "some negros from the Yermo hacienda... demonstrated intense rage," not bravery, against the insurgent troops they faced.³⁵ In addition, he suggested that one royalist commander understood how to motivate his Afro-Mexican troops. Félix María Calleja regularly "fooled and amused the negros from the coast" with promises of rape and pillage. Bustamante argued that this helped with morale "and served to make tolerable all the losses" they sustained at the hands of the insurgents.³⁶ In another example, Bustamante complained of the odor emanating from "negros from the coast" due to their diet of "*aguardiente* (sugarcane liquor) and spoiled... food."³⁷

Bustamante saved the strongest language for Comandante Manuel Dambrini and his "one hundred negros from Omoa," located in modern Honduras. Bustamante noted that Mariano Matamoros had earlier destroyed a group Dambrini commanded, but he managed to raise another army after that crushing defeat. Bustamante argued that the troops from Omoa were particularly

³⁴ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo II, 87.

³⁵ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo II, 28.

³⁶ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo II, 48.

³⁷ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo II, 58-9.

vicious describing them as “dressed in red, like monkeys or demons.” He went further and stated that they lacked loyalty because they later joined insurgents as mercenaries. Due to their cruelty and lack of conviction, Bustamante noted that they had “strange impulses, like one could find in King Brack in Senegal.”³⁸ This reference most likely alludes to the Kingdom of Brack in the Senegal and Senegambia region of West Africa. Numerous travel accounts circulated through Europe and the Americas describing the Brack kingdom, and they would have been available to Bustamante. One French traveler, J.P.L. Durand, asserted that “King Brack” had large armies known for plundering. Durand asserted that this was because the king encouraged looting because soldiers had to give “the greatest share” of the spoils to him, and Durand observed that these armies “are obliged to take up arms at their own expense... march without provisions” and gain only “what they can derive from spoliation.”³⁹ It is unclear if Durand’s account inspired Bustamante, but the similarities are striking. Both writers describe undisciplined and duplicitous black soldiers famous for pillaging. Bustamante underlined such cases of violence with references to race, but he rarely associated blackness with insurgent soldiers even among people with known African ancestry.

Charles Hale argues that José María Luis Mora “remains the most significant liberal spokesman” of post-independence Mexico.⁴⁰ Mora wrote numerous works of political theory throughout his career, and he published a four-volume history of the colonial era and independence war, *Méjico y sus revoluciones*, in 1836. Mora’s history, however, contains only a

³⁸ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo III, 32-3.

³⁹ J. P. L. Durand, *A Voyage to Senegal: Or, Historical, Philosophical, and Political Memoirs Relative to the Discoveries, Establishments, and Commerce of Europeans in the Atlantic Ocean from Cape Blanco to Sierra Leone*, Translated from the French (London: Printed for Richard Phillips, 1806), 123. See also, Sylviane A. Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 209.

⁴⁰ Charles A. Hale, “José María Luis Mora and the Structure of Mexican Liberalism,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 45, no. 2 (May 1965), 200.

few clues to how he interpreted Afro-Mexicans. They simply did not figure into his analysis. The few words he did write concerning them were incredibly influential for subsequent scholars. He anticipated an important debate beginning in the 1940s throughout the Americas with his suggestion that “in general Spanish” slaveholders treated enslaved people “more benign and moderately” than other nations.⁴¹ In addition, he asserted that “the number of negros” that “have entered to constitute the actual population has always been small.” Mora held that the few Afro-Mexicans “have stayed on the coasts of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans,” and they “are entirely insignificant.” Furthermore, he predicted that any trace of Mexico’s African cultural heritage would “disappear before mid-century” due to miscegenation.⁴² Thus, Mora established two crucial components of over a century of historiography. First, he along with Bustamante located people of African descent along the coast. This was essential in constructing blackness at the national and local levels. Second, he championed mestizo identity and predicted mestizaje would obscure Mexico’s African heritage but not its indigenous one.

Lucas Alamán, conversely, epitomized Mexican conservatism. Eric Van Young notes that Alamán was an apologist for Spanish colonialism and argues that he “voiced doubt as to whether a nation called Mexico had ever existed at all.”⁴³ In any case, his highly influential and carefully researched five volume *Historia de Méjico* (1849-52) detailed the independence war

⁴¹ Mora, *Mejico y sus revoluciones*, Tomo I, 73. Frank Tannenbaum essentially established the comparative approach in 1946. This inspired a massive amount of responses. See, Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Knopf, 1946).

⁴² Mora, *Méjico y sus revoluciones*, Tomo I, 74. This elite version of “whitening” offers an interesting comparison to attitudes and official policies later in the nineteenth century in other regions of Latin America. For Brazil see, Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*, rev. ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 64-69. For more on Argentina during the late nineteenth century see, David Scott FitzGerald, *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 299-302. For more on the Caribbean and other areas of Latin America see, Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*, 117-153.

⁴³ Van Young, *Writing Mexican History*, 7.

from the late colonial era to liberation from Spain in 1821. Alamán differed from Mora by writing extensively on the numerous roles that Afro-Mexicans played during the war. In addition, Alamán stands out from Bustamante because he identified – and often disparaged – insurgents with African ancestry rather than focusing solely on Afro-Mexican realistas. He expanded on the connection between geography and race in Mexico noting that “the physical makeup” of Mexico “is indispensable to understand political and military history.” He held that mestizos and people of European descent lived in cities primarily located in cooler climates. Ignoring evidence from the Yucatán, he asserted that indigenous people had footholds in cities but preferred to live in mountainous rural villages. Afro-Mexicans, on the contrary, lived “on the coasts of both oceans, and in the hot climate” zones. He also noted that while many coastal regions were sites of blackness, one “could recognize mulatos that have been in large numbers in Mexico City and other populous cities.”⁴⁴

Alamán used strong language to describe both the indigenous and Afro-Mexican populations. He emphasized that “*indios* (a disparaging term for indigenous people) tended to excessively drink and rob.” Alamán asserted that “mulatos” had “the same vices” with robbery being “the first practice they exercised in a secretive and underhanded manner.”⁴⁵ In short, they robbed first and drank later. Alamán presented people in both groups as inherently violent and prone to alcoholism, but in terms of violence and soldiering, he asserted that Afro-Mexicans had the upper hand. He observed that General José María Morelos y Pavón had a large number of “indios” comprising his army. He argued that Morelos duped them into volunteering even though they often had no weapons and were prone to desertion. Alamán claimed that “negros and

⁴⁴ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo I, 3-4, 29.

⁴⁵ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo I, 27-28.

mulatos from the coast” were “strong men... skilled at soldiering.” Their leaders, often themselves people of African descent, were “men of honor” that presented a major obstacle for realistas in battle.⁴⁶

Alamán provided more information than Mora and Bustamante about the battles, leaders, and political decisions during the fight for independence. He argued that the 1812 Cádiz Constitution more than likely propelled a number of Afro-Mexican realistas into the ranks of insurgents. This was because the framers of Spain’s liberal constitution “excluded everyone that had... African blood.” He believed that this “was an unjust and hateful exclusion” that was “unpractical.” Furthermore, Alamán offered a corrective to popular conceptions among Spanish leadership and subsequent historians who underestimated the number of Afro-Mexicans fighting throughout the Americas. He suggested that not granting citizenship rights to African descendent people hurt the war effort beyond coastal defenses since “mulatos... composed a large part of the troops that were fighting throughout the American continent to defend Spain.”⁴⁷ In addition, Alamán identified race when assessing Afro-Mexican insurgent leaders. He designated Valerio Trujano as a “mulato muleteer by birth” that “for Morelos was of high importance” because he was “a man of valor and resolution.” Alamán praised Trujano’s leadership during the siege of Huajuapán, “the capital of the Mixteca” that linked Oaxaca City with Puebla and Mexico City.⁴⁸

Alamán’s more balanced assessment of Afro-Mexican contributions to independence contrasted with Mora’s and Bustamante’s histories of the war. All three men nevertheless provided a framework for subsequent academics, politicians, and journalists to describe

⁴⁶ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo II, 491.

⁴⁷ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo III, 119.

⁴⁸ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo III, 305-06.

blackness in Mexico. They created a literature that downplayed race among insurgents while emphasizing criminality and Euro-indigenous mestizaje. They also identified coastal sites of blackness. Broadly speaking, Bustamante, Mora, and Alamán were also some of the era's leading politicians who helped provide the intellectual framework for the Conservative and Liberal parties from independence through the 1850s. After the Reform at mid-century, these historians influenced a boom in newspaper accounts featuring people of African descent during the second half of the nineteenth century. Porfirian and post-revolutionary scholars built on their conclusions as well and continued to marginalize Afro-Mexicans in their works of history, anthropology, and cartography.

Part 3: Locating Blackness along the Coast

Journalists published numerous stories expanding on these assumptions after mid-century.⁴⁹ Some editors published articles stressing Afro-Mexican criminality in the late nineteenth century. More often, writers and entrepreneurs avoided criminalizing blackness and advocated supplementing the labor force with immigrant colonies of West Indian or African American workers. They believed that people of African descent were better suited to labor in tropical climates where they would be crucial in sugar, coffee, and tropical fruit production, and they argued that immigration would develop widely available Afro-Mexican land. In other cases, ethnographers channeled Social Darwinism and attempted to identify racial characteristics to emphasize difference. This went hand-in-hand with a rise in journalism that located blackness

⁴⁹ For more about the transition of the press in the late nineteenth century see, Pablo Piccato, *The Tyranny of Opinion: Honor in the Construction of the Mexican Public Sphere* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

outside the country while championing Mexico's exceptionalism in terms of race, citizenship, and democracy. Together late nineteenth century journalists created a racial discourse that emphasized otherness and violence while creating sites of blackness at the margins or outside the Mexican state.

Porfirian officials and elites fixated on crime and criminality in urban spaces. Pablo Piccato argues that criminologists believed that "physiognomic, psychological, and cultural traits distinguished criminals from the rest of the population." Elites and politicians asserted that these traits were recognizable among the popular classes and essential to creating what Piccato called a "city of suspects" in Porfirian Mexico City.⁵⁰ Robert Buffington concludes that "criminology as a recognized discipline... came into its own during the Porfirian years," and criminologists encompassed "social categories of class, race, and gender" in their studies of crime in urban space.⁵¹ Officials and elites thus often conflated race and crime in their assumptions about urban crime and criminality. Newspaper editors less frequently followed suit in the case of Afro-Mexicans choosing instead to associate indigenous people with crime. Nevertheless, a small number of examples illustrate how blackness could be associated with criminality in Porfirian Mexico. One particularly famous example from 1879 detailed the murder of a young man named José María del Valle in Piedras Negras. Apparently, del Valle and "two of his friends" stopped at a river so their livestock could drink when from the other side "came a negro soldier" who seemed as though "his only purpose was to cross the river." Once on the side of the young men, the soldier pointed his carbine at del Valle and opened fire killing the fourteen-year old shortly

⁵⁰ Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 3-4.

⁵¹ Robert M. Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 42. See also, Robert M. Buffington and Pablo Piccato, ed., *True Stories of Crime in Modern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009).

after his birthday.⁵² The few details provide virtually no insight into what motivated the man to kill del Valle and fire on his two friends, and the editors offered no commentary. They were sure to include the murderer's race but failed to provide similar descriptions with any of the victims. Perhaps the editors felt the details they selected provided a complete picture.

Journalists at *La Voz de México* in Mexico City went a step further with their decision to publish an anonymous letter from Cuba warning about immigration and crime. The author asserted that "one would see the vices that civilization introduced to these disinherited members of the human race have assumed gigantic proportions, sometimes with repugnant practices that they imported from their obscure patria have penetrated the homes of their owners, and in some cases, have infiltrated... civilized society." He lamented that in Cuba "popular customs and language have suffered unfavorable modifications" due to Afro-Cubans. Interestingly, the author failed to acknowledge the role of the slave trade and the high demand many Cubans had to purchase enslaved Africans.⁵³ Nevertheless, he offered a series of examples to illustrate his point about the dangers associated with large communities of African and West Indian migrants. Some of his examples included: on a busy street "a man of color" robbed "a lady;" near a central part of Mexico City "a man of color" attacked another man; in a different part of town "three men of color" assaulted a man; and near a busy intersection "three men of color" kidnapped a teenager.⁵⁴

⁵² "Alevoso asesinato," *La Voz de México*, December 23, 1879, 3.

⁵³ For more on slavery in nineteenth century Cuba see, Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century*; Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion*.

⁵⁴ "Correspondencia especial para La Voz de México," *La Voz de México: Diario Político y Religioso, Órgano de los Católicos Mexicanos*, April 6, 1882, 3

The author criminalized Afro-Cubans so as to inspire fear among Mexicans, and the editors apparently found his opinion enlightening enough to publish.⁵⁵

The editors of *La Voz de México* billed the newspaper as the publication for Catholics, and their stories generally had a conservative bias. One article attacked a number of Liberal newspapers for publishing unfavorable interpretations of Agustín de Iturbide's turbulent period as emperor. They claimed that other journalists unnecessarily demonized the unpopular leader. One story drew their greatest condemnation because the unnamed source claimed that "the pueblos of *la raza negra*" (the black race) helped Iturbide to build a sacrilegious empire.⁵⁶ In *La Patria de México*, Il Madesimo proclaimed that Afro-Mexicans were the lowest criminal class in the country. He asserted that "the depravation of these delinquents" was due to their lack "of moral and religious education." The author argued that people comprising "*la raza negra*," in the majority of instances, "have no religion of any kind," and as for Afro-Mexican people who embraced Catholicism, he claimed that "religious fanaticism, superstitions, and witchcraft dominated."⁵⁷ One final example from the *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Sinaloa* told readers about a "verified riot" in Tuxpan, Veracruz. Officials indicated that Ignacio García, "*la raza negra* type," was one of the leaders of the uprising. The author provided few other details about the cause of the riot other than to stress García's "very frizzy hair, black eyes, [and] thick lips."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Mexico did not experience the influx of immigrants that other countries in the Americas had by the 1880s, but Yucateco Mayas had numerous experiences living and working in Cuba. See, Moisés González Navarro, *Los extranjeros en México y los mexicanos en el extranjero, 1821-1970*, Tomo I, 1821-1867, (México DF: Colegio de México, 1993), 410-420.

⁵⁶ "Cuestión de bandería," *La Voz de México: Diario Político y Religioso, Órgano de los Católicos Mexicanos*, September 21, 1889, 2.

⁵⁷ Il Madesimo, "Al correr de la pluma: El pez por la boca muere," *La Patria de México*, June 29, 1894, 2.

⁵⁸ "Secretaría de Gobierno del Estado de Sinaloa: Sección de Justicia," *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Sinaloa*, February 6, 1886, 3.

Taken together, these few examples represent a larger body of literature widely available in the penny press criminalizing Afro-Mexicans.

The discourse of blackness at the national level extended far beyond criminality. Journalists, entrepreneurs, and politicians debated colonization projects on both coasts, and they often echoed a series of assumptions involving perceptions about racial difference and the suitability of African descendent people to labor in tropical climates.⁵⁹ As a result, entrepreneurs advocated settling people of African descent in these regions as laborers. They rationalized that people with African ancestry could withstand the hot temperatures, tropical diseases, and harsh labor requirements. Investors argued that this would grow Mexico's export economy and develop unused resources. On June 16, 1865, the *Junta de Colonización* (Colonization Committee) met to discuss a range of proposals to colonize the Gulf coast. Their meeting likely pleased the fledgling Emperor Maximilian von Habsburg's Minister of *Fomento* (Development). One member, Manuel Piña y Cuevas, noted that "*hombres blancos* (white men) could not work" in coastal agriculture. He argued that French and Italian immigrants "had formed two or three colonies" along the Veracruz coast, but that it "was indispensable to make use of *la raza negra* to work that territory." A fellow member agreed that these colonies needed workers, but he offered to import indigenous people from the Yucatán Peninsula who he noted "were born in a climate equally scalding and unhealthy." Members of the Junta eventually agreed and opted to stop

⁵⁹ This was a phenomenon that persisted across the Americas. See, O'Toole, *Bound Lives*, 25-29; Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society*, 65-70; Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 139-41; Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia*. Jim Downs offers an important assessment of paternalistic perceptions among southern whites in the United States. He concludes that they widely assumed African Americans would experience a sharp population decline after abolition. Widespread sickness and death in Union camps during the war seemingly confirmed such expectations and led to the formation of a number of health organizations during Reconstruction. See, Jim Downs, *Sick From Freedom: African-American Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 18-41.

Yucatecos from leaving to work in Cuba and other areas of the Caribbean. They noted that this would be beneficial and keep them close to home rather than bring people comprising “la raza negra to cultivate” the colonies on the Gulf coast.⁶⁰

One reporter for the Mexico City newspaper *La Libertad* simply named Timón stuck to a familiar theme when opposing Afro-Latin American, African American, and African immigration. The journalist claimed that Mexico’s coastal geography and landscape created an isolated environment. He credited slavery with the development of factories and the economies in New Orleans, Jamaica, and Havana. Timón rationalized that a return to slavery in Mexico was out of the question, but he noted that the country “works without a contingent of appropriate workers.” Timón held that Afro-Mexicans generally lived in isolated coastal towns cut off culturally and economically from the rest of the country. In fact, he characterized the Afro-Mexicans who lived in the Port of Veracruz as “a foreign population.” Nevertheless, Timón argued that enslaved people and others comprising “la raza negra” throughout the Americas “demonstrated an incontestable aptitude... that their naturally adaptable organization” represented a “*dynamic power*” that would be “definitely useful... in the sweltering regions” of the country. However, the author concluded that Mexico’s geography led to the isolation of Afro-Mexican pueblos in the first place, and resettling a large contingent of African descendent people would not end that isolation. Instead, Timón insisted that the plan would perpetuate “a vicious cycle” of Afro-Mexican economic and cultural exclusion.⁶¹

⁶⁰ “Junta de colonización,” *Diario del Imperio*, July 26, 1865, 1-4. For more on nineteenth century and post-revolutionary colonization plans see, Pablo Yankelevich (ed.), *Inmigración y racismo: Contribuciones a la historia de los extranjeros en México* (México: El Colegio de México, 2015).

⁶¹ Italics included in the original story. Timón, “Las mejoras materiales,” *La Libertad: Orden y Progreso*, November 14, 1880, 3.

Porfirian era newspapers often contain numerous remedies to the tropical maladies these newspaper accounts detail so as to combat isolation in coastal communities. One story explained that Dr. Cobberto from Córdoba, Veracruz had a cure for sickness associated with Yellow Fever. He vaccinated all of his patients and reported positive findings. The article stated that Dr. Cobberto's cure was a shot containing "a negro serum," or a small amount of blood taken from an Afro-Mexican donor. The doctor observed that "negros are resistant" to the symptoms of Yellow Fever. The editors questioned the "horror that Spanish, English, or American ladies will feel... having to mix, whether they want to or not, their blood with the blood of a negro."⁶²

Another article published in *Semana Mercantil* in Mexico City further illustrates how people interpreted the health of African descendent people, and in this case, it touched on what by 1895 had grown into a major economic policy issue. The author assessed the pros and cons of resettling West Indian and African American workers in coastal Mexico. He asserted that "la raza negra is impulsive, it is not passive like the indio." He then claimed that "the negro wants to create a home, to work and prosper for their family, and surround themselves with conveniences." Mexico could benefit with a larger workforce, but the rationale also championed the beneficial role new consumers would play in a growing economy. Nevertheless, this journalist anticipated "a commonly heard objection" that "la raza negra is ugly," but he claimed

⁶² "Extraño modo de curar el vómito," *La Patria de México*, January 19, 1895, 3. The question of race and Yellow Fever immunity continues to generate robust debates among scholars today. Kenneth Kiple and Virginia Kiple insist that "West African natives... positively thrived amidst European death" when exposed to Yellow Fever. Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia H. Kiple, "Black Yellow Fever Immunities, as Revealed in the American South," *Social Science History* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1977), 419. Sheldon Watts provides perhaps the most convincing critique of the Kiple thesis in a special issue of the *Journal of Social History* devoted to this debate in 2001. Watts argues that Kenneth and Virginia Kiple ignored evidence that the "West Africans" they studied had been exposed to the disease, Yellow Fever could not be traced back as far as they insist in West Africa, and their theory relied on antiquated race-based science dating back to the 1920s. See, Sheldon Watts, "Yellow Fever Immunities in West Africa and the Americas in the Age of Slavery and Beyond: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2001), 956-961.

that this “confuses esthetic questions with economic ones.”⁶³ The author posited that, as the economy improved, the benefits of African American and West Indian migration outweighed popular objections due to the profitable export market during the unprecedented peace and stability of the Porfiriato.

In 1889, the editors of the Mexico City newspaper, *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, published a series of essays debating colonization as their lead story. Editors outlined what had become a major issue with “the project establishing colonies of la raza negra in hot and unhealthy areas of our coast.” They charged that the “liberal press” that opposes the establishment of various African American and West Indian colonies actually represented the “futile and backward” portion of liberalism. The editors insisted that “they have never seen damnation more unjust and outrageous against one of the races that formed a considerable part of the grand mass of humankind.”⁶⁴ Apparently, the controversy surrounded a contract between “the Secretary of Fomento, Henry C. Ferguson, and William H. Ellis capitalists and industrialists of la raza negra.” Ferguson and Ellis secured a contract stipulating that approximately 3,000 African Americans from the southern U.S. would set up colonies in “Veracruz, Guerrero, Michoacán, and others” within the following three years. The editors boasted that they “were going to employ machinery or instruments of labor” beyond what many farmers used on the largest haciendas. They asked readers to imagine how “the negro colonies were destined to cultivate the *tropical lands* of our coasts,” and this would benefit every Mexican with more food and material to clothe and feed their families.⁶⁵ The editors concluded their four-day exposé supporting the colonization plan by

⁶³ *Semana Mercantil: Órgano oficial de las confederaciones industrial y mercantil de la República y de la Cámara de Comercio de México*, no. 13 (April 1, 1895), pp. 145-46.

⁶⁴ “Los colonos negros y los escritores criollos,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, November 4, 1889, 1.

⁶⁵ Italics included in the original story. “Los colonos negros y los escritores criollos,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, November 6, 1889, 1.

reminding readers that “in the state of Veracruz only the descendants of la raza negra have survived and preserved the lands where their parents arrived.” In addition, they suggested that the only hope to develop unused coastal land was colonization because “only la raza negra, for their African origin, for the riches of their blood, for the vigor of their bodies and the force and resistance of their muscles can brave the malarial fevers, scorching sun, and severe work” of the coastal climate.⁶⁶

The colonies that Ferguson and Ellis proposed never materialized. As the series of articles above illustrate, people in Mexico never fully embraced the colonies. Ellis, in particular, found it incredibly difficult to convince African Americans to move far away, learn Spanish, and adopt a new culture. Ellis’ colonies ultimately failed to meet the 3,000-person requirement within the three-year framework the Díaz government required. He attempted similar ventures in North Africa, but his colonization plan represented virtually the only one to gain a tacit Díaz endorsement. In fact, even the French language Mexico City newspaper, *Le Trait d’Union*, championed the benefits of African American colonization. The editors reminded readers that “on the sugar haciendas located in the states of Puebla and Morelos, the most arduous jobs that their indios refuse to do, they are under the care of those individuals of la raza negra.”⁶⁷ The message, translated and reprinted in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, illustrated to the readers of both newspapers the long history Mexico had with slavery and the millions of free Afro-Mexicans still living in the country. The incident also demonstrates how Porfirian journalists, politicians, and entrepreneurs constructed blackness in Mexico. As evidence at the local level will demonstrate, in their popular practices and public performances Afro-Mexicans often

⁶⁶ “Los colonos negros y los escritores criollos,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, November 7, 1889, 1.

⁶⁷ “La inmigración negra y la inmigración amarilla,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, October 18, 1889, 2.

downplayed race when stepping into the public sphere. Geographically speaking, these cases also illustrate that intellectuals and journalists created sites of blackness along the coast.⁶⁸

Newspapers also printed popular interpretations of people in Africa and throughout the Diaspora. These often complimented ethnographies that illustrate how intellectuals constructed blackness at the national level during the late nineteenth century. In one example from 1887, the editors of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* explained that the authors “do not believe la raza negra has less capacity to perform any of the professions that *la gente blanca* (white people) occupy.” In this case, the authors attempted to discredit an apparently widespread belief that people of color lacked the ability to work in specific professions. They observed that “many people affirm” this idea even when the evidence contradicted such assertions. The authors argued that ill-informed assessments lacked credibility and were responsible for the trans-Atlantic slave trade. They supported this argument with examples from Colombia and New York. First, they compared the Afro-Colombian writer, Candelario Obeso, to William Shakespeare, and they concluded that Obeso’s work stood alongside the famous English author. They shifted focus to the U.S. and analyzed New Yorker Charles Reason’s advocacy of public education. The authors argued that once again Reason’s work was something people throughout the Americas respected. They insisted that both examples disproved popular interpretations of blackness that wrongly disparaged Afro-Latin Americans.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ For more on William H. Ellis and colonization efforts in Mexico see, Karl Jacoby, *The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire* (New York: Norton and Company, 2016); Alfred W. Reynolds, “The Alabama Negro Colony in Mexico, 1894-1896,” *Alabama Review* 5–6 (October 1952, January 1953); Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 209-211; Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 97.

⁶⁹ “Un negro ilustre,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, February 3, 1887, 2.

Editors published a range of stories that challenged or reinforced popular assumptions. *La Voz de México* reported that José Melgar formed the *Sociedad de Geografía de Veracruz* (Veracruz Geographic Society) in 1870 after discovering that the Mayan site Palenque contained evidence that Africans preceded the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. He published his book, *Estudio sobre la antigüedad y el origen de la Cabeza Colosal*, a year later expanding on this theme.⁷⁰ Luiz Iza offered a different kind of assessment. He declared that the government needed to achieve “the moral perfection of the [indigenous] pueblos.” Iza observed that many people in Mexico argued that “the only way to obtain moral perfection... is religion,” but he concluded that most indigenous pueblos supposedly in need of morality already embraced Catholicism. He offered that education represented the key element. He asserted that since “la raza negra is fatalistic like our indios” religious conversion was therefore not an ideal method for integrating them into Porfirian society. He added that French Huguenots reported that people in the Kingdom of Dahomey “practiced fetishism... shaped deities out of... a tree, a river, a serpent, a disgusting animal, or simply a piece of wood, converted barbarously into a human figure.” People in Sweden and Norway, conversely, did not practice Catholicism. Iza rejected geographic determinism and offered that the cool climate did not influence their “truly sweet” nature. Instead, he proclaimed that in Scandinavia “homicide was rare and the death penalty... abolished,” “drunkenness was abnormal,” and the “most important title was professor.” This apparently stood in sharp contrast to the “misery and decadence” found in indigenous pueblos

⁷⁰ “Raza negra – numismática,” *La Voz de México: Diario Político y Religioso, Órgano de los Católicos Mexicanos*, December 6, 1870, 3; José M. Melgar, *Estudio sobre la antigüedad y el origen de la Cabeza Colosal de Tipo Etiopico que existe en Hueyapam del Canton delos Tuxlas* (Veracruz: Progreso, 1871).

and the Kingdom of Dahomey. Race seemingly represented the problem, and Iza believed that education reform could overcome this limitation.⁷¹

Such comparisons provide scholars with insight into how people interpreted Mexico's indigenous population while locating blackness outside the country. By the end of the Porfiriato, newspapers published increasingly offensive depictions of people with African ancestry as intellectuals embraced Social Darwinism. One short article the editors of *La Patria de México* in Mexico City published in 1909 discussed the supposed "origin of negros" as a fable. The editors expressed that "Satan wanted to be human," but the clay that he used to mold his body "came out black." Equating Satan with African descendent people was meant less as anthropology and more as a racist joke, but the editors apparently thought it warranted publication. It seems that few people in Mexico objected to the story.⁷² A 1909 cartoon published on the "Children's Page" went even further. The cartoonist depicted two "*negritos*" (an often disparaging term for black people), Kama and Raka, fighting with each other over "jealousy for Takaraka," presumably a historic Ethiopian kingdom (See Figure 1.1). What appears to be Theodore Roosevelt emerges from behind some trees to stop the fight "with solid arguments." Roosevelt's reasoning apparently convinced Kama and Raka to stop, and all three eventually realized that "laughter is the same for la raza negra and la raza blanca."⁷³ Thus, the cartoon offered a supposedly humorous depiction of black and white people with the lesson that laughter crosses cultural and racial divides. Nevertheless, the cartoon itself provides visual and linguistic evidence that people

⁷¹ Luis G. Iza, "Tregua a la política: Perfiles," *La Patria de México*, January 10, 1892, 1-2.

⁷² "El origen de los negros," *La Patria de México*, November 23, 1909, 6.

⁷³ "Página para los Niños," *El Diario: Periódico Nacional Independiente*, October 17, 1909, 7.

in Africa were inherently violent, lacked the ability to reason for themselves, and lived in backward societies.



Los negritos Kama y Raka
Luchaban con odio insano,
En el desierto africano,
Por celos de Takaraka.

Un turista Inglés los vió,
Y ante tan malos intentos,
Con sólidos argumentos
La paz á entrambos volvió.

Kama y Raka ante el temor
De tan terribles razones,
Trocaron sus desazones
En muestras de buen humor.

Y muy pronto en risa franca
Se divirtieron los tres,
Que en la risa lo mismo es
La raza negra y la blanca.

Figure 1.1: "Children's Page"

The above cases illustrate that people associated blackness as an identity common outside of Mexico. Newspaper editors and intellectuals also promoted the idea that Mexico was unique in comparison to the United States. Journalists and lay historians advanced Mexican exceptionalism in terms of race while their colleagues published stories like the examples above.

One story from the *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Chiapas* discussed the region's history with slavery. The author traced slavery back to the original conquistadors and the arrival of Diego de Mazariegos. He tied abolition to independence and argued that during this time the "manumitted slaves... came to be placed in the same condition as the indios who worked on the remaining communal farms." This led to a number of "successive connections until la raza negra disappeared."⁷⁴ José Rovirosa described the racial makeup of the state of Tabasco for the official newspaper in 1890. He listed what in his assumption were all of the races that comprised the state's population. He acknowledged that Tabasco once had a significant Afro-Mexican population, but he downplayed their current importance offering that "la raza negra" had only "a few individuals of this race integrated into the state."⁷⁵ Rovirosa's estimates suggest that in coastal Tabasco, an area of African and Afro-Latin American migration well into the eighteenth century, Afro-Mexicans likely helped form part of the regional mestizo identity.⁷⁶

Such recognitions undermined arguments locating blackness outside Mexico. They also played into a discourse that Mexican law forbade racial discrimination, and many journalists compared Mexico favorably in terms of race with the United States. In one example, the editors of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* reprinted an account from an unnamed official who boasted that the placement of an African American unit on the Texas border in 1865 provided "the opportunity" to show them that in Mexico "la raza negra is not a victim."⁷⁷ Predictably, lynchings became easy fodder for journalists looking to contrast race relations between the U.S. and Mexico, and

⁷⁴ "Los jornaleros de Chiapas," *Periódico Oficial del Estado de Chiapas*, April 23, 1887, 2.

⁷⁵ José N. Rovirosa, "Reseña geográfica y estadística del Estado de Tabasco," *Periódico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco*, December 24, 1890, 1.

⁷⁶ Porfirian era census figures are relatively difficult to obtain for Tabasco. For more on the persistent wave of forced and voluntary migration patterns into the Yucatán see, Restall, *The Black Middle*, 28-32.

⁷⁷ "Documentos para la historia: Legación mexicana en los Estados Unidos de América, 18 junio 1865," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, March 18, 1888, 2.

these racially charged murders made the news often. One particularly harsh condemnation insisted “one of the worst stains on American civilization is the bloody war that the United States wages on the negros.” The author asked how can “*el pueblo blanco*” (the white community) say that the U.S. “is a model of democracy, and in which human rights is respected above everything else” when “lynchings are the exclusive property of *el pueblo blanco* where the republic lives.” The author supposed that the news of lynchings and racial violence reaching Mexico represented only a mere fraction of the crimes committed against African Americans and ended questioning people in the U.S. “why... the hatred for the negro?”⁷⁸

Segregation and Jim Crow laws highlighted another crucial difference in how Mexicans and people from the U.S. demarcated racial boundaries. One incident captured the attention of Mexico City residents in 1895 when a local patron dismissed a group of African American tourists from a cantina. The owner of the cantina that was popular among tourists from the United States kicked members of the “well-dressed” group out of his establishment. Il Madesimo noted that several “*americanos blancos* (white Americans) opposed” the presence of African Americans and told the owner to “expel the negros.” This “public affront” infuriated the author who questioned national sovereignty and asked readers “are we in Mexico or the United States?” Madesimo complained that “they should know when they arrive in another country” cultural and legal differences granted African American tourists protection. He insisted that “the children of Senegambia, the Congo, and any other part of the world are well received” in Mexico provided that they recognize they “are subject to the obedience of the laws.”⁷⁹ The incident allowed

⁷⁸ “Por los negros,” *La Patria de México*, October 30, 1906, 1.

⁷⁹ Il Madesimo, “Al correr de la pluma: A la tierra que fueres, haz lo que vieres,” *La Patria de México*, June 26, 1895, 1-2.

Madesimo to emphasize Mexico's progressive stance on race and criticize the racist attitudes of U.S. tourists.

Examples taken from mid-to-late nineteenth century newspapers provide a window into the ways in which people constructed blackness at the national level. Newspaper editors selected and published articles targeting the largest possible audience. The growth in publications suggest that discussions of blackness were popular topics.⁸⁰ Journalists less frequently wrote about black criminality. They engaged in a debate that incorporated racist assumptions about the ability of Afro-Mexicans to labor in particular conditions. Such thought placed African descendent communities, both real and imagined, literally on the margins, socially and geographically, of Mexican society. Ethnographers and journalists, in other cases, placed blackness outside the country and provided disturbing images and descriptions of African descendent people. Still other accounts contrasted Mexico's tolerant laws regarding race with the Jim Crow South. Overall, these stories offer a sampling into the myriad ways that journalists discussed blackness at the national level in the penny press.

Part 4: The Discourse of Blackness among Porfirian and Revolutionary Intellectuals

During the Porfiriato, scholars attempted to give popular depictions of race a refined "scientific" patina. They incorporated the popular discourse of blackness into their studies while also building on the scholarly histories of Mexico. They generally discounted the roles that Afro-

⁸⁰ For more on the relationship between capitalism and newspapers see, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 37-46. Anderson focuses primarily on nationalism, but his point that people influenced the subject matter of newspapers and created new national identities is helpful in this regard.

Mexicans played following independence and stressed Euro-Indigenous mestizaje. This had a profound impact on the post-revolutionary racial discourse that championed indigenismo and defined Mexico as a mestizo nation in the twentieth century. Only by mid-century, with the rise of Pan-Africanism and ethnohistory, post-revolutionary politicians and intellectuals attempted to identify Mexico as part of the African Diaspora. These studies grew slowly over the course of the following decades before finally reaching national importance in 2015 when politicians added Afro-Mexican as a racial category to the national census for the first time.⁸¹

During his lengthy career, cartographer Antonio García Cubas straddled two generations of “scientific scholarship in Mexico.” Members of the *Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística* (Mexican Geographic and Statistic Society) inducted García Cubas “as an honorary member in 1856” at the unprecedented age of twenty-four due to his importance as a cartographer. A year later in 1857 García Cubas published the *Carta general*, or general map of Mexico “to wide acclaim.” The society published a modified version of this map in his first widely consumed publication *Atlas geográfico, estadístico e histórico de la República Mexicana*. Ramond Craib concludes that this national atlas was the first of its kind and “an exemplary representation of a new nationalist sensibility.”⁸² Magali Carrera argues in her recent book, *Traveling From New Spain to Mexico*, that “Antonio García Cubas (1832-1912)... provided Mexico with critical mapped images of itself.” While his maps fixed the new national boundaries

⁸¹ The National Institute of Statistics and Geography found that this group comprised 1.2% of the population. The survey was based on a range of identities the people themselves chose as their identity to construct the census category. Resultados Definitivos de la Encuesta Intercensal 2015, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, December 8, 2015, 4.

⁸² Raymond B. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 27-29.

after the U.S. invasion, Carrera argues that García Cubas “did not so much locate land, people, or places in the lines of longitude and latitude as sketch the face of the nation.”⁸³

In 1885, García Cubas published *Atlas pintoresco e histórico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*. This picturesque atlas depicted a number of themes including political history, Porfirian transportation networks, topographical features, primary export commodities, and archaeological sites. The series of 15 cartographic plates each had accompanying cartouches and statistical data to support the respective themes. García Cubas elected to begin with a map of the modern Mexican political divisions surrounded by portrait busts of every president since independence. Readers could essentially begin with nationhood and advance through all of the major political figures until they arrived in modern Mexico with President Díaz. His second plate, the *Carta etnográfica*, (Ethnographic Map) seemingly portrayed the racial and cultural diversity of the entire country (see Figure 1.2). García Cubas included la raza blanca, Mixtecs and Zapotecs, Chinantecs and Zoques, Yucatecos and Chontales, to name but a few. However, he conspicuously excluded Afro-Mexicans from the map. He provided one clue with a cartouche of the *Jarocho*s of Veracruz. Jarocho often referred to a person with African ancestry from the state of Veracruz, but after mid-century, the term morphed into a broader regional identity rather than one’s physical characteristics.⁸⁴ García Cubas failed to explain if his image depicted African descendent people, and in the accompanying text, he left Afro-Mexicans out altogether. Carrera

⁸³ Magali M. Carrera, *Traveling From New Spain to Mexico: Mapping Practices of Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), xiv, 1.

⁸⁴ While there are numerous references to Afro-Mexicans and “jarocho” music very few historians have traced the racial component when describing people. Theodore Vincent defines the term as meaning an Afro-Mexican *Veracruzano*, or person from the state of Veracruz, during the colonial era. It seems that the term took on a broader meaning following independence incorporating Afro-Mexicans into the coastal Veracruz regional identity. See, Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero*, 15; For more on the importance of jarocho identity in Santa Anna’s armies see, Will Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007). For more on son jarocho and Afro-Mexican music see, Anita Gonzalez, *Afro-Mexico: Dancing Between Myth and Reality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

argues that this racial and ethnic map was fundamental to identifying and exerting control over Mexico's "others."⁸⁵ The map's exclusion of Afro-Mexicans illustrates the opposite. Mexico did not exercise control over a population that for nearly a century intellectuals located along the coast. For García Cubas, Afro-Mexicans disappeared from Mexico's racial and cultural landscape rather than becoming an integral component of the nation.



Figure 1.2: “Carta Etnográfica” García Cubas includes “*jarocho*s de Veracruz” in this map, but his accompanying text failed to mention people of African descent in his otherwise extensive ethnography. Image courtesy Library of Congress, General Map Collection, García Cubas, Antonio. *Atlas pintoresco é histórico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*. México, Debray Sucesores, 1885. Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008621671/>.

⁸⁵ Carrera, *Travelling from New Spain to Mexico*, 211.

García Cubas' *Carta etnográfica* depicted only the European and indigenous populations in Mexico. He ignored the Afro-Mexican population and claimed erroneously that this ethnographic map represented the entirety of Mexico's many nations. In his highly influential analysis of spatial history, Paul Carter insists that such an act of visual representation and naming represent "the *cultural* place where history begins." In the atlas, García Cubas defined Mexican territory and included spatial and temporal beginning points from which national history grew. He included all of the products, architecture, and important historical events to illustrate the territory comprising Mexico as "a space with a history." In this space, García Cubas then mapped the country's various races and ethnicities that inhabited the "geo-body" of the nation.⁸⁶ His ethnic and racial selections mapped onto modern Mexico essentially represented "a fabric woven of self-reinforcing illusions."⁸⁷ Once mapped, the country's ethnic and racial images became powerful nationalistic symbols that gained in importance throughout the Porfiriato. In fact, García Cubas' racial and cultural vision better represented the post-revolutionary government's official discourse of mestizaje more than it did popular attitudes and realities during the late nineteenth century.

One of the era's leading intellectuals, Vicente Riva Palacio, wrote the first history of Mexico from the pre-Colombian era to the Porfiriato. He published the five volume, *México a través de los siglos*, over the course of a five-year period beginning in 1884, and he recruited four additional historians to complete the ambitious project. Enrique Florescano observes that in the numerous works of fiction, theater, journalism, and history that made up Riva Palacio's

⁸⁶ Italics in original. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xv. Thongchai Winichakul coined the term "geo-body" as the visual images that depicted modern Thailand. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of the Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 165, x.

⁸⁷ Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, xxiv.

decades-long career he incorporated “the full range of society.” Virtually all of his writings included “Indians, urban lepers, creoles, blacks, mulattos, and mestizos,” but Florescano notes that “mestizos were the physical and moral prototype of the Mexican.” He describes that “*México a través de los siglos* became the historiographic canon of its epoch” giving “coherence, animation, and prestige to the diffused past,” and he insists that “its effect” among scholars “was... profound and immediate” giving rise to subsequent volumes that merely summarized his work.⁸⁸ By the 1880s, Riva Palacio was an accomplished writer and published numerous works of historical fiction featuring Afro-Mexican protagonists. This likely reflected his own African ancestry as Vicente Guerrero’s grandson. He discarded the dismissive tone of prior historians and insisted that African slaves “comprehended” their social and political status.⁸⁹

Riva Palacio expanded this theme in *México a través de los siglos* with an analysis of the establishment of San Lorenzo de los Negros, Veracruz, a one-time *cimarrón* (runaway slave) community. He described that Yanga, a runaway slave and the maroon community’s leader, frustrated Spanish efforts to capture and re-enslave residents. Yanga ultimately triumphed militarily over Spanish attempts to subdue the village, and Riva Palacio argued that he eventually forced colonial officials to negotiate for peace. They legally recognized the inhabitants’ freedom and granted the town pueblo status in 1609.⁹⁰ However, Riva Palacio built on Mora’s conclusions and focused on Afro-Mexican contributions that were part of the distant past. Riva

⁸⁸ Enrique Florescano, *National Narratives in Mexico: A History*, translated by Nancy Hancock (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 304-06.

⁸⁹ Vicente Riva Palacio, Manuel Payno, Juan A. Mateos, and Rafael Martinez de la Torre, *El libro rojo, 1520-1867*, Tomo I (México: A. Pola, 1905), 354.

⁹⁰ Vicente Riva Palacio, Alfredo Chavero, Julio Zárate, Enrique de Olavarría y Ferrari, José María Vigil, and Manuel Dublán, *México a través de los siglos: Historia general y completa del desenvolvimiento social, político, religioso, militar, artístico, científico y literario de México desde la antigüedad más remota hasta la época actual*, Tomo II (México: Ballescá, 1887), 549-551.

Palacio increasingly emphasized Euro-indigenous mestizaje as he edited the contributions of subsequent volumes.⁹¹ His and García Cubas' treatment of Afro-Mexicans during the Porfiriato ignored contrary evidence from around the country as well as popular accounts of Mexico's ties to Africa available in contemporary newspapers. Essentially, these two important scholars unsuccessfully attempted to render "Blacks invisible."⁹²

Justo Sierra and Francisco Bulnes, the Porfiriato's two other most recognizable historians and intellectuals, effectively marginalized Afro-Mexicans as well. Sierra's *Evolución política del pueblo mexicano* built on Riva Palacio's approach, whereby the Mexican nation began in the pre-Colombian past and marched forward into the nineteenth century.⁹³ Sierra also wrote about Afro-Mexicans in his works of fiction, but he did not analyze them critically in his interpretations of Mexican history.⁹⁴ The oft outspoken Bulnes criticized Afro-Mexican President Guerrero by comparing his political career with Iturbide's. Bulnes a provocative politician, intellectual, and historian argued that the widely unpopular Iturbide had simply made a mistake by overreaching his power and dismissing congress in 1822. In contrast, Guerrero's contestation of the 1828 election, a decisive electoral victory, was something Bulnes characterized as "criminal."⁹⁵ Overall, Porfirian historians wrote more about Afro-Mexicans as relics of Mexico's past than they did as members of the modern nation.

⁹¹ Florescano, *National Narratives in Mexico*, 304.

⁹² Jiménez Ramos, "Black Mexico," 93.

⁹³ Justo Sierra, *Evolución política del pueblo mexicano* ([Caracas]: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1985). For more on the importance of this work see, Florescano, *National Narratives in Mexico*, 306-09.

⁹⁴ See, Justo Sierra, *Cuentos románticos* (México: Librería de Bouret, 1896).

⁹⁵ Francisco Bulnes, *La guerra de independencia: Hidalgo - Iturbide* (México: Librería de Bouret, 1904). For more of Bulnes discussing Afro-Mexicans see, "Las tres razas humanas," in *Positivismo y porfirismo*, edited by Abelardo Villegas (México: SEP, 1972). Bulnes also had controversial opinions considering Mexico's indigenous population. His study of Benito Juárez's presidency caused a major controversy during a crucial moment of the Porfiriato. See, Bulnes, *El verdadero Juárez y la verdad sobre la intervención y el imperio*, Rev. ed. (México: Ediciones Ateneo, 1989); John Radley Milstead, "Party of the Century: Juárez, Díaz, and the End of the 'Unifying Liberal Myth' in 1906 Oaxaca" (master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2012).

The social and political upheaval of the 1910 Mexican Revolution extended to perceptions of race as well. Politician and intellectual José Vasconcelos solidified the concept of mestizaje as a process commingling Europeans only with indigenous people. He shared his predecessors' positivist views of racial categories, but he offered a new spin. He essentially renamed mestizos the "cosmic race" and argued that they represented the authentic racial group of Mexico. He believed that the cosmic race would propel "the inferior races" (Mexico's indigenous population) into modernity.⁹⁶ Theodore Cohen argues that Vasconcelos "oscillated between giving primacy to biological descent and cultural heritage," and as a result he only "ambivalently integrated blackness into Mexican mestizaje."⁹⁷ Cohen correctly emphasizes that Vasconcelos left virtually no space for Afro-Mexicans in post-revolutionary Mexico as part of the cosmic race. Post-revolutionary politicians adhered to his concept of mestizaje and celebrated the country's European and indigenous pasts.⁹⁸

While Vasconcelos updated Porfirian racist attitudes for the post-revolutionary state, politicians with large Afro-Mexican populations began to understand the people they governed. Guerrero Governor Gabriel Guevara reported in his annual message to congress that the Afro-Mexican population living in the state's portion of the Costa Chica lived without services. He observed that the economic isolation "one finds in this region is lamentable." Of all the inhabitants, he estimated that "50% of the groups have the anthropological characteristics of la raza negra." He asserted that in order to change "their old customs and conduct" the state needed to construct highways so that the benefits of modernity would overcome their lack of "schools,

⁹⁶ José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana* (Madrid: Agencia Mundial de Librerías, 1925), 31.

⁹⁷ Cohen, "In Black and Brown," 62.

⁹⁸ Hernández Cuevas, *African Mexicans*, 1-30. For more on how this process of erasure extended back into the nineteenth century and culminated with Vasconcelos' theory see, Ramos, "Black Mexico," 84-85.

political parties, and newspapers.”⁹⁹ After studying with Melville Herskovits at Northwestern University, anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán contributed to the more liberating aspects of post-revolutionary indigenismo by including Afro-Mexicans in national history.¹⁰⁰ His 1946 *La población negra de México* was the first study to take issue with prior assumptions of race. He at once analyzed the history of Afro-Mexicans and wrote a national ethnography of the population. His ethnohistory demonstrated that not only did Afro-Mexicans play a vital role in the past but they also continued to be an integral part of Mexico. Aguirre Beltrán observed that the positivist perspective of the early nationalist, liberal, and revolutionary historians either marginalized or wrote Afro-Mexicans out of national history. He claimed instead that his study “represented a violent contradiction” of these increasingly unsustainable perspectives.¹⁰¹ In addition, he joined a growing number of scholars who connected the Afro-Mexican slave experience to the wider study of the African diaspora.¹⁰² These collective works helped shed light on the population that Porfirian scholars and post-revolutionary officials attempted to silence.

⁹⁹ Gabriel R. Guevara, “Informe rendido por el C. General Gabriel R. Guevara,” *Periódico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero*, September 12, 1934, 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ Herskovits famously looked for “Africanisms” in the African descendant communities he studied in the Americas. For one example see, Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Scholars have examined indigenismo in post-revolutionary Mexico. In particular, Alexander Dawson argued that this policy “reinforced the idea that the Indian was an emotional primitive, while the European was the source of all modern life.” See, Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), xviii.

¹⁰¹ Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México*, 9. For more on the relationship between pre and post-revolutionary ideas about race see, Ben Vinson III, “Fading From Memory: Historiographical Reflections on the Afro-Mexican Presence,” *Review of Black Political Economy* 33, no. 1 (2005), 67. For examples of contemporary studies of Afro-Mexicans see, Carlos Basauri, *Breves notas etnográficas sobre la población negra del Distrito de Jamiltepec, Oaxaca* (México: Consejo Editorial del Primer Congreso Demográfico, 1943).

¹⁰² Aguirre Beltrán continued to write throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century. See also, Aguirre Beltrán, *Cuijla*; Aguirre Beltrán, “The Integration of the Negro into the National Society of Mexico.”

Conclusion

In September 1921, President Álvaro Obregón led a massive celebration commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of Iturbide's entrance into Mexico City. This marked the second time in eleven years that people gathered to commemorate a centennial independence ceremony, and in this case, Obregón's post-revolutionary government decided what to remember as part of the ceremony. Eleven years beforehand in 1910, Díaz's government highlighted their version of Mexican history in a series of parades, exhibits, and events. This time officials planned a month-long festival that "presented contemporary indigenous culture as integral to national identity." Planners nevertheless left Afro-Mexicans out of the post-revolutionary state's national narrative even though Rafael García, "popularly known as 'El Negro,'" managed a baseball team during the festivities.¹⁰³ The ceremony reflected the influence of more than a century of racial discourse that elided Afro-Mexicans into a project of mestizaje or virtually ignored them as a group altogether. Nevertheless, the celebration did extend official recognition to the many other ethnicities García Cubas included in his map.

The previous examples trace a number of discourses and performances that demonstrate how elites constructed blackness at the national level. Post-independence politicians used slavery as a powerful metaphor for citizenship and nationhood. Planners selected images that associated the colonial era with imperial slavery, and they incorporated manumission ceremonies into the earliest state celebrations of independence. This helped undermine slavery as an institution in Mexico. After abolition, this morphed into a discursive strategy symbolizing Mexico's moral

¹⁰³ Michael J. Gonzales, "Imagining Mexico in 1921: Visions of the Revolutionary State and Society in the Centennial Celebration in Mexico City," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2009), 248, 261.

superiority over the United States in terms of race. Newspaper editors published numerous appeals imploring ordinary Mexicans to take up arms and defend the country against invasion or face enslavement. Nevertheless, this flattened popular interpretations of Afro-Mexicans into an identity associated only with slavery and servitude.

Journalists presented Afro-Mexican communities as distant and dangerous while emphasizing criminality and violence. Leading historians, politicians, and intellectuals followed suit and associated blackness with non-heroic soldiering in their histories of Mexico. These works influenced both the popular penny press and Porfirian era intellectuals. Journalists in the second half of the century emphasized criminality, located blackness at the country's borders or outside Mexico, published racist descriptions of African descendent people, championed Afro-Mexican labor potential, or boasted of Mexican racial exceptionalism. García Cubas' *Carta etnográfica* defined racial and ethnic categories in Mexico without acknowledging the country's extensive African roots. Riva Palacio historicized the connection to Africa in colonial era histories and novels, but he highlighted mestizaje from independence forward without discussing the role that African descendent people played in this process.

Late Porfirian and post-revolutionary scholars built on these assumptions. Vasconcelos argued that the so-called cosmic race was the culmination of mestizaje between European and indigenous people. His book, *La raza cósmica*, defined Mexico as a mestizo nation until ethnohistorians studying the African Diaspora challenged this narrative. These examples illustrate how people constructed blackness at the national level for more than a century. However, Afro-Mexican communities persisted with or without government recognition. In fact, the national discourse of blackness presents only one side of a multi-faceted experience that incorporated geography, linguistic ability, and culture as well as socio-economic and political

ties. This begs the question as to how people constructed race at the local level. To answer this, one must analyze this process among local actors over the same period to determine how ordinary people constructed race in their everyday lives.

CHAPTER 2: Race and Culture in Jamiltepec: Geography, Language, and Capitalism

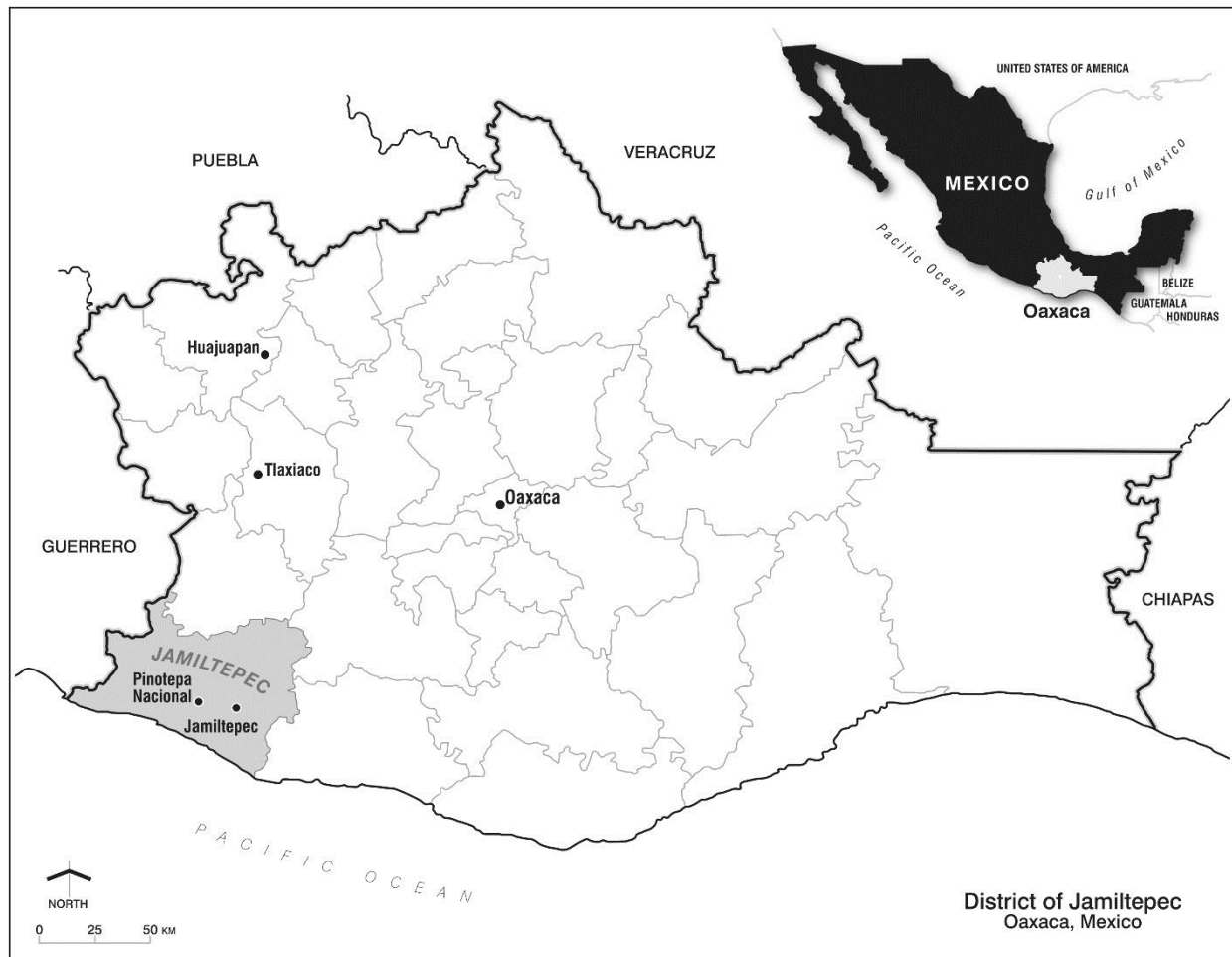


Figure 2.1: Map of Jamiltepec Lester Jones, Jones Maps & Diagrams, 2016.

Much to his surprise, Captain Elias C. Staples discovered the Jamiltepec region when he ran his ship, the *Amphitrite*, aground there on April 23, 1852. The captain led the crew and passengers in the unfamiliar countryside for days before eventually finding help miles away from the coast in Tututepec.¹ It took them several weeks to reach the nearest port of Acapulco where

¹ “Náufragos,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 22 May 1852, 3.

they completed the journey to San Francisco, California.² The foreigners learned for themselves how geography historically contributed to the region's isolation while navigating the unknown terrain and searching desperately for help after the shipwreck. Situated along the desolate Pacific coast in southern Oaxaca, Jamiltepec has a number of lagoons and rivers, but strong currents and a steep shoreline prevented construction of a harbor (see Figure 2.1). To the north, the beach and narrow coastal plain merge quickly with the hilly terrain before transforming into formidable mountains. In the nineteenth century, there were limited transportation routes that connected the region with other parts of the Mixteca, Oaxaca City, and Puebla. Two ports flanked the region to the east and west in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and Acapulco (see Figure 2.2), but travelling to either location meant traversing the rugged coastline and often took several days. Essentially, several overland routes climbed the mountains and connected regional farmers, merchants, and ranchers with markets to the north.

² “*Amphitrite*: Passengers arriving at the Port of San Francisco,” Ship Passengers – Sea Captains: The Maritime Heritage Project, San Francisco, 1846-1899, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://www.maritimeheritage.org/passengers/amphitrite.html>; “From Mexico,” *North American and United States Gazette*, June 16, 1852, 1; Benito Juárez to Comandante General de las Armas de Oaxaca, May 6, 1852, Archivo General del Poder Ejecutivo del Estado de Oaxaca (Hereafter cited as AGPEO), Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 35; “Náufragos,” 3.

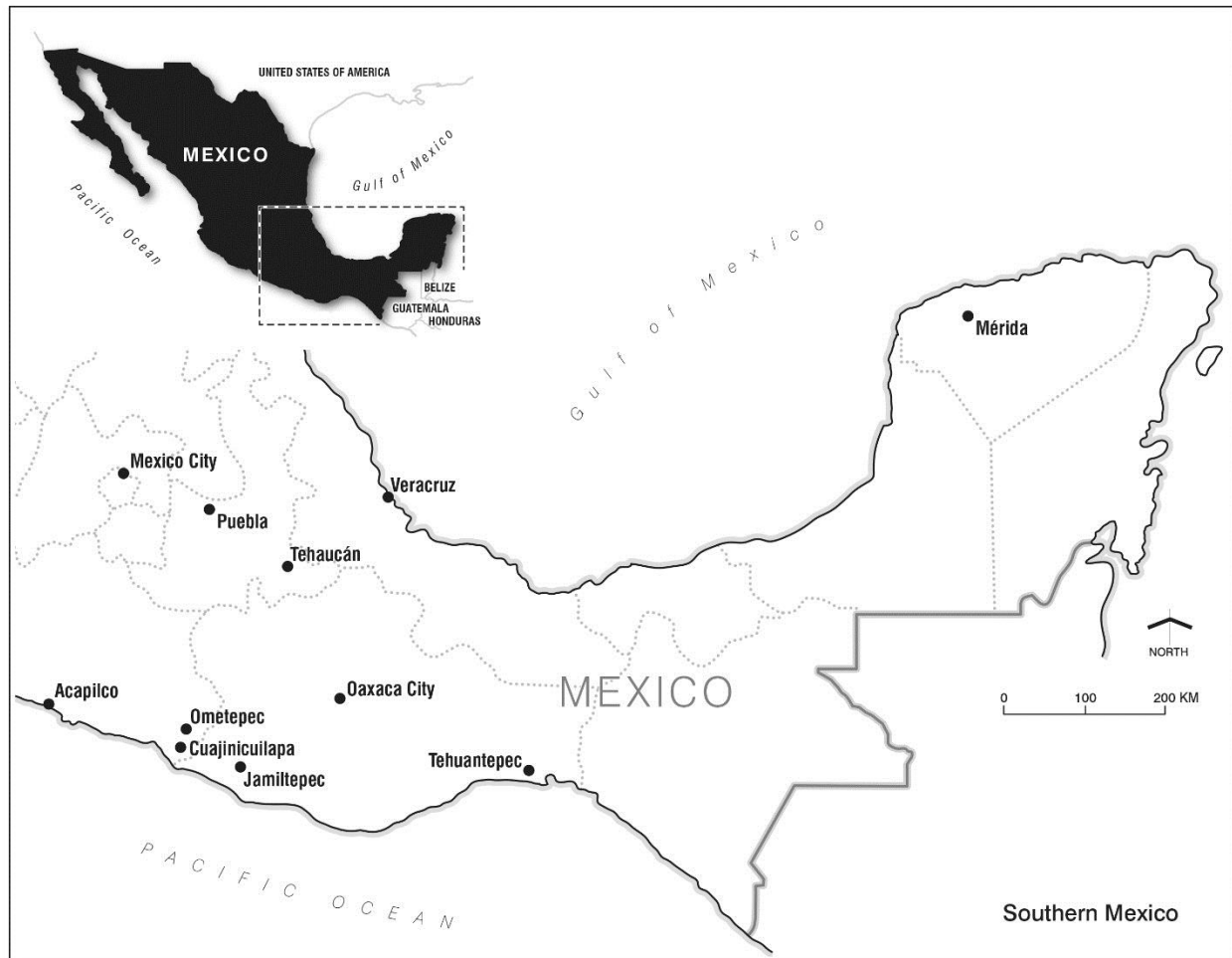


Figure 2.2: Map of Southern Mexico Lester Jones, Jones Maps & Diagrams, 2019.

This chapter provides a brief introduction to regional history prior to independence in 1821, and it will set the scene by providing an overview of the governmental institutions, the people who lived in the region, and the local economy. In addition, Chapter 2 will illustrate how geography, choice of language, and culture provided a means for locals to demarcate race after the end of the caste system. Dating back to before the arrival of Spanish colonizers, indigenous residents traded with regions far to the north. This trade extended to the central valleys of Mexico with coastal communities providing *cochineal* (a natural dye), cocoa, and cotton to the Mexica Empire in Tenochtitlán during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Trade grew steadily during the colonial era (1521-1821) as Europeans arrived and forced enslaved Africans

to make the arduous journey overland from the Port of Veracruz. Spanish merchants exploited their labor to expand cotton production, produce sugar, and introduce livestock ranching. Jesuit missionaries soon followed and used slave laborers in their far-reaching pasturing system, or *hacienda volante*, that made the best use of resources by remaining on the move with a route that stretched more than 300 miles to the north before ending at slaughterhouses in Tehuacán, Puebla. Young goats began this journey in several Jamiltepec communities before reaching their final destination where butchers supplied southern New Spain with fresh meat and hides.

Thus on the eve of independence, Jamiltepec's residents had a long history of overcoming formidable geographic barriers. During the colonial era, residents also proudly proclaimed their tradition of soldiering that ultimately became a valuable skill during the independence war. The region's Afro-Mexican soldiers during the war had divided loyalties with many supporting independence but a seemingly equal number fighting for the crown. At times, this led to conflicts with Mixtecs, the dominant indigenous group. These disputes often revolved around cultural, linguistic, political, and socio-economic differences, and after independence, these issues shifted dramatically as the region changed from a proto-capitalist export economy into full-scale commodity production. However, the above example of the *Amphitrite* shipwreck also illustrates that geographic barriers meant isolation persisted.

These were some of the key factors in demarcating ethnic and racial difference in the region. Jamiltepec's isolation helped create a cultural, racial, and ethnic milieu that meant people often maintained colonial era caste distinctions in their everyday lives. This extended to district politics and the regional economy. Officials formally ended the caste system following independence, and regional elites, for the most part, stopped describing Afro-Mexicans according to their physical characteristics. Terms like "*negro*," "*mulato*," and "*pardo*" rarely

appear in post-independence political documents, land dispute cases, and civil proceedings. Instead, local politicians substituted euphemistic language tied to linguistic ability, geographic location, and cultural difference to identify people of African descent. These same officials continued to use colonial era designations to describe – and often disparage – indigenous residents. Overall, the thematic outlines in this chapter will provide a means by which to interpret how political and socio-economic shifts in the nineteenth century influenced the construction of race on the coast.

Part 1: Jamiltepec Prior to Independence

Mixtecs established communities in the region beginning in the early eleventh century. Lord 8-Deer founded the pueblo Tututepec when he led an expedition there from Tilantongo located in the Mixteca Alta (see Figure 2.3). He and his successors as *yya toniñe* (lord rulers) incorporated small groups of Chatinos already living in the region into their coastal empire and commanded a large territory. Although three different codices have contradictory accounts of the arrival on the coast, they all suggest Mixtecs established Tututepec as capital in 1083 C.E.³ 8-Deer eventually returned to Tilantongo and united the coastal empire with the rest of the Mixteca. Ronald Spores and Andrew Balkansky argue that the sheer size and importance of Tututepec made it “a major demographic hub” with an approximate size of “twenty square

³ Arthur A. Joyce, et al., “Lord 8 Deer ‘Jaguar Claw’ and the Land of the Sky: The Archaeology and History of Tututepec,” *Latin American Antiquity* 15, no. 3 (September 2004), 282; Alexander F. Christensen, “Colonization and Microevolution in Formative Oaxaca, Mexico,” *World Archaeology* 30, no. 2, Population and Demography (October 1998), 263-266; Ronald Spores, “Tututepec: A Post-Classic Period Mixtec Conquest State,” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1993), 169-172.

kilometers” and an “estimated fifteen thousand inhabitants.”⁴ Inter-pueblo disputes were common during this time with coastal Mixtecs fighting in other areas of southern Mesoamerica.

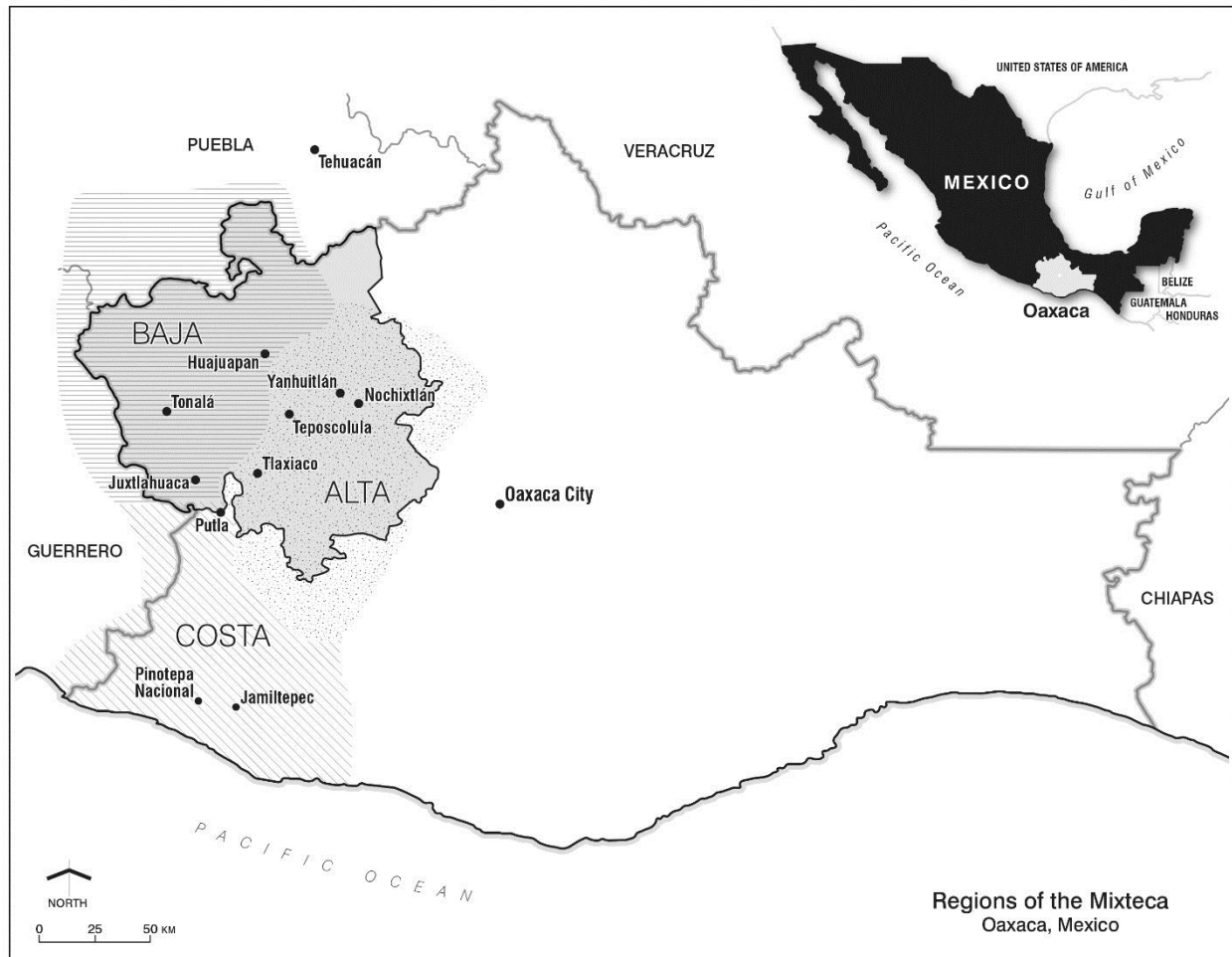


Figure 2.3: Regions of the Mixteca Lester Jones, Jones Maps & Diagrams, 2019.

Mixtec rulers consolidated power over a multi-ethnic empire. In particular, the Tututepec state comprised several Amuzgo inhabitants who migrated from the modern state of Guerrero in the west and settled near the Mixtec pueblo Zacatepec. Chatinos remained to the east of

⁴ Ronald Spores and Andrew K. Balkansky, *The Mixtecs of Oaxaca: Ancient Times to the Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 106.

Tututepec and served as a buffer separating Mixtecs from their Zapotec counterparts living approximately 200 miles away in Tehuantepec. Finally, a few Nahuas settled in small numbers to the east near the modern towns of Pochutla and Puerto Ángel.⁵ Triquis formed communities to the north of the region in modern San Juan Copala, San Miguel Copala, and Itunyoso.⁶ Demographically speaking, Mixtecs dominated in Jamiltepec with Amuzgos forming important communities, and the two groups comprised the backbone of the pre-colonial social order. They maintained independent communities after the arrival of Mexica imperial soldiers in the late fifteenth century. These warriors never conquered Tututepec, and they agreed to allow town nobles to “direct their own affairs” in exchange for regular tribute payments.⁷

Hernan Cortés dispatched Pedro Alvarado to Oaxaca in 1522, less than a year after toppling the Mexica Empire. Spanish imperialists subdued pockets of resistance in the south, and they worked to establish control over Oaxaca. Alvarado and his Nahua allies passed through “the coastal Mixtec area of Tututepec” due to the region’s supposed abundance of “gold and other natural resources,” and they dealt with resistance harshly. Kevin Terraciano argues that “by the 1530s, Spanish rule in the Mixteca had been firmly established and never seriously challenged during the colonial period.”⁸ Spaniards nonetheless preferred the cooler highland climates of Antequera (Oaxaca City), Puebla, and Mexico City and never settled in the coastal region in large numbers. Those who did set up haciendas on the Pacific coast and brought enslaved

⁵ Spores, “Tututepec,” 169.

⁶ Pedro Lewin Fischer and Fausto Sandoval Cruz, *Triquis* (México DF: Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas), 8.

⁷ Spores and Balkansky, *The Mixtecs of Oaxaca*, 97.

⁸ Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 2-3. William B. Taylor seemingly confirms Terraciano’s conclusions. Taylor argues that “eighteenth century rebellions were not random or limitless” throughout the Mixteca Alta, but he posits that the Spanish “controlled” them because “there were few examples of general destruction and pillaging.” William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 115.

Africans along with them. This began almost immediately after the Spanish conquest in the mid-sixteenth century. In modern Guerrero, hacendado San Nicolás de Tolentino y Maldonado transported approximately 100 enslaved Africans to his hacienda in Cuajinicuilapa.⁹ In the modern state of Oaxaca, a Spaniard with the title Mariscal de Castilla brought “100 negro couples... in conjunction with 200 cows and horses to establish an *estancia de ganado mayor* [cattle and horse ranch] he named *Los Cortijos*” or the country ranch.¹⁰ Colonial officials in the eighteenth century recognized the growth of the original settlement with the formal title Hacienda “Los Cortijos” where they recorded a large number of “mulatos” lived.¹¹

On the eve of the war for independence, the Jamiltepec’s Afro-Mexican population doubled the colony’s overall average and approached twenty percent, but Mixtecs dominated regional demographics and formed the remaining portion of Jamiltepec’s population.¹² Yet, Afro-Mexicans in the region comprised the bulk of the southern independence army even though many supported realistas. Such realities hint at the complex social, economic, and political relationships underpinning the coastal community. Ben Vinson argues that even though “many blacks in the region were attracted to the message of liberty and sovereignty,” economic relationships and personal ties often overrode support for nationhood. Vinson concludes that Afro-Mexican cotton producers and Spanish merchants constructed a moral economy that set important limits on exploitative financing practices, and in return, a number of producers

⁹ Javier Laviña, “Somos indios y somos negros, somos mexicanos: La población afromestiza de la Costa de Guerrero,” *Historia y Fuente Oral*, no. 11 (1994), 99.

¹⁰ Adolfo Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola y agraria de la Costa Oaxaqueña* (México: Universidad Autónoma Chapingo, 1996), 78.

¹¹ Inquisidor Fiscal contra Domingo Vala O Alvarado, 1714, Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter cited as AGN), Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición, Volumen 758, Expediente 27.

¹² The Afro-Mexican population was approximately 20% in Jamiltepec but only 10% in New Spain. See, Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 1; Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola*, 74-80. Amuzgos never represented more than 5% of the region’s population.

remained loyal to fulfill their personal obligations to these merchants. This relationship meant that farmers understood they were “heavily dependent upon the international [cotton] market for their livelihoods.”¹³ At the same time, many Afro-Mexicans in the region embraced independence following codification of the 1812 Cádiz Constitution that denied them citizenship.

The Oaxaca and Guerrero coast provided one of the few constant areas where the insurgency remained active throughout the war.¹⁴ Bustamante argued that “the first shout of insurrection heard in the province of Oaxaca was the one don Antonio Valdés gave in the pueblos of Jamiltepec, Pinotepa del Rey [Nacional], and others of the coast.” These traditionally Mixtec pueblos immediately faced a royalist army that Captain don José Antonio Caldelas formed in Tututepec. He raised an army of primarily Mixtecs from the surrounding area, but he prized “a division of negros from the coast” as his army’s most potent weapon.¹⁵ Bustamante observed that such confrontations among local residents who lived and worked nearby had the potential to turn deadly. He argued that in 1814 realistas who attempted to drive Vicente Guerrero from the region committed a number of atrocities. Bustamante claimed that this group, comprised of men “from the populous estancias of Cuajinicuilapa and Cortijos,” attempted to reestablish Spanish control. Soldiers from these two largely Afro-Mexican pueblos overwhelmed insurgents and persecuted “defenseless innocent families... without distinction of sex nor age.”¹⁶

¹³ Ben Vinson, III, “Articulating Space: The Free-Colored Military Establishment in Colonial Mexico from the Conquest to Independence,” *Callaloo* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2004), 164.

¹⁴ The Costa Grande, in particular, was a hotbed of the insurgency. Brian Hamnett argues that elites and Afro-Mexicans allied with Morelos early to protect economic interests and local control. See, Brian R. Hamnett, *Roots of Insurgency: Mexican Regions, 1750-1824* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 144-49. Eric Van Young argues that economic factors fueled resistance on the coast after 1814. He stresses that “Jamiltepec’s cotton production... was in a state of total decay, [and] many of its Black inhabitants drawn off into the wars.” Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 84.

¹⁵ Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo I, 319.

¹⁶ Bustamante claimed that they murdered more than 70 people in this particular incident. See, Bustamante, *Cuadro histórico*, Tomo III, 247.

Alamán also emphasized inter-ethnic violence. In describing Valdés' call for independence, Alamán argued that "indios from Jamiltepec, Pinotepa, and other adjacent" pueblos were the first to join the independence movement. He claimed that "negros from the coast... declared against indios and began... their services... for the Spanish government."¹⁷ At times, Afro-Mexican soldiers from the region faced each other as enemies on the battlefield. Valerio Trujano's unit, comprised of "many negros from the coast," defeated realistas protecting important trading routes near Oaxaca City in 1812. This prompted Caldelas' army of "negros from the coast" to march to Yanhuítlán and face Trujano.¹⁸ However, Trujano gained the upper hand and took possession of Huajuapán de León on April 5, 1812. Huajuapán was crucial to both sides and widely viewed as the most important city in the Mixteca due to its location that connected Oaxaca to Mexico City. Realistas surrounded Trujano and laid siege to the city for 111 days. Trujano and Caldelas led competing factions made up of "negros from the coast" against one another before insurgents finally broke the siege on July 23, 1812 when Morelos relieved Trujano's exhausted army.¹⁹

The region thus underwent a vast social and political transformation in the fight for independence after three centuries of relative stability. At the same time, colonial era structures dominated city landscapes. Locals converted administrative buildings into district and municipal offices clustered around mid-sized stone cathedrals in the larger cities Jamiltepec, Huazolotitlán,

¹⁷ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo II, 420.

¹⁸ Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo III, 241-42.

¹⁹ Trujano deserves his own study. He did everything from set up fake canons to creating makeshift artillery forged from the bells of one Huajuapán church. Smith, *Roots of Conservatism*, 75-6; Herminio Chávez Guerrero, *Valerio Trujano: El insurgente olvidado héroe de los ciento once días* (Mexico City: Editorial Trillas, 1961); Carleton Beals, "Valerio Trujano: Black Joy," *The Crisis*, May 1931, 153-154, 174; Oscar Botello Mier, "Hechos y figuras: Las mil estrategias de Valerio Trujano," *Tu'un Savi: Palabra de la lluvia...: Historia y cultura de la nación mixteca* 3, no. 1 (July-September 2004).

and Pinotepa Nacional. In these towns, wealthy residents lived nearby in stone and adobe houses that quickly gave way to modest wood and mud brick homes with thatched roofs for workers and farmers living outside the *zócalo* (city center). Between 3,000 and 4,000 people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds lived in each of these cities respectively, and the population of these towns swelled dramatically on market day every week when locals from nearby pueblos gathered for the *tianguis* (market).

In contrast, the majority of the region's residents lived on small farms and ranches. Rural pueblos could have as few as 100 residents and up to more than 1,000 in Cortijos and Pinotepa de Don Luis. Outside Cortijos Afro-Mexicans lived in less formal communities and answered to judges, *alcaldes*, and tax collectors living in larger cities or pueblos that Mixtecs often controlled. Afro-Mexicans living in such informal communities occupied the only level ground in the region. Among palm tree forests, locals spent their time as fishermen, small-scale ranchers, subsistence farmers, and cotton producers. In fact, the flat coastal plain was the only location in the region capable of supporting large-scale cotton production. *Costeños* lived on diets of fish, meat, corn, chiles, beans, and tropical fruits that grew in abundance in the hot, humid climate. Residents selected leaders to represent them in important matters, but formal political structures in these communities only become apparent after mid-century. Mixtec and Amuzgo pueblos further to the north shared many of the same characteristics, but the hills, soil, and climate prevented farmers from producing large quantities of cotton. In these sierra communities, residents lived in wooden structures with thatched roofs and clustered municipal buildings around small churches. They engaged in similar subsistence agricultural practices as their coastal neighbors, rented land to *hacendados* for pasturing goats, and collected cochineal for the international market through the first half of the nineteenth century.

By 1821, the region had a number of racial and ethnic divisions that likely confused outsiders. For instance, the word “Mixtec” itself is a misleading term because many locals identified more with their individual pueblo than they did a broader racial or ethnic identity.²⁰ Mixtec men and women for instance dressed differently from town to town, celebrated distinct religious holidays, and spoke widely varying forms of the same language. Such variation among Mixtecs began with Tututepec’s political fragmentation in the pre-conquest era. During this time, residents from one pueblo engaged in violence against Mixtecs in neighboring communities to control land and resources, and they often sustained these disputes in the nineteenth century. In addition, people from other ethnic groups including Amuzgo, Triqui, Chatino, and Nahuatl further complicated the elite category “indígena.” They too spoke different languages that changed from pueblo to pueblo. In addition, locals in each community wore unique clothing that signaled town, religious, and linguistic identities to their neighbors on market days and during religious fiestas. Mestizos and Afro-Mexicans added to the region’s diversity. They also lived in separate geographic locations even though they shared common economic interests with one another and spoke Spanish.

Beginning with Lord 8-Deer’s entry into the region, residents along the coast remained connected to distant markets. The few Spanish colonists who settled in Jamiltepec brought large numbers of enslaved Africans along with them. They joined Mixtecs and Amuzgos during the colonial era to form diverse communities that have persisted for five centuries. In terms of politics, colonial authorities fused the new government offices onto existing indigenous

²⁰ See, José Santiago López Bautista, Bernardina Santiago Rojas, Juan Julián Caballero, Gabriel Caballero Morales, and Ubaldo López García, eds., *Tu’un Savi Identidad. Memoria del Diplomado: “Uso, lectura, escritura y gramática de la lengua* (Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca: Ve’e Tu’un Savi, 2012), 11-15.

hierarchies, but they relocated colonial hubs away from Tututepec and other Mixtec principal cities. Entrepreneurs also tapped into the pre-colonial economy by converting cochineal into an international commodity. Other investors introduced livestock, sugar production, and cotton cultivation to the region as well, but the independence war transformed Jamiltepec from isolated colonial outpost to a hotbed of insurrectionary activity. Race and ethnicity seemingly played no role determining which side locals supported even though contemporary historians emphasized Afro-indigenous violence in their national histories. In reality, residents fought on both sides during the war regardless of race or ethnicity. The war nonetheless had long-term effects on regional culture, the market economy, and local politics. In fact, authorities at the national level looked to localities like Jamiltepec after the war to serve as the political and economic backbone of the new republic.

Part 2: 19th Century Political and Economic Structures

The Jamiltepec population grew steadily over the nineteenth century even as state authorities reduced the size and political jurisdiction of the district. Peter Gerhard concludes that in 1777 approximately 28,384 people resided in the *Xicayán Intendencia*. This Spanish colonial administrative district corresponded roughly to the Jamiltepec jurisdiction after independence. Of these individuals, Mixtecs and a small number of Amuzgos comprised the majority (20,834) with Afro-Mexicans making up much of the remainder of the population (6,434).²¹ These numbers

²¹ Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 381-382.

match the final accurate census taken during the colonial era over a decade later in 1790.²² By 1825, the population swelled to approximately 40,000 and less than a decade later authorities reported 43,040 people lived in the district. Pinotepa Nacional represented the largest pueblo in the region in 1832 with over 3,700 residents.²³ Several decades later in 1879, even though the district lost Juquila and several other important pueblos, the population grew substantially. Local authorities reported that 36,184 people resided in the now territorially smaller district of which 21,019 spoke Mixtec, 2,139 spoke Amuzgo, and 401 spoke Nahuatl. Afro-Mexicans listed in the census as “negra” represented 18% of the population with 6,621 residents.²⁴ The district population grew slowly but steadily in the final decades of the nineteenth century with Porfirian authorities reporting in 1903 that 48,981 citizens lived in the region.²⁵

Many political institutions from the pre-conquest and colonial eras endured after independence. In particular, Mixtec communities remained fragmented in individual political units after 8-Deer’s empire fell apart following his death. Nobles ruled in individual pueblos, or *ñuu* (pueblos), with the support of other noble families, merchants, and laborers in their respective communities.²⁶ Marriages between noble males and females often brought different

²² Hugo Roberto Castro Aranda, *México en 1790: El censo condenado* (México DF: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1988), 90.

²³ “Estadística del Departamento de Xamiltepeque en el que se incluye el Partido de su nombre y el de Juquila,” 1825, Colección Manuel Martínez Gracida (Hereafter cited as MMG), MGO 15, Tomo Departamento de Jamiltepec; *Censo Clasificado del Estado de Oajaca: Departamento de Jamiltepec* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1832).

²⁴ “Gobernación: Cuadro estadístico que manifiesta la población que tenía el Estado,” in Francisco Meijueiro, *Memoria Constitucional de la administración pública del Estado libre y soberano de Oaxaca, presentada por el Poder Ejecutivo al Legislativo del mismo, el 17 de septiembre de 1879* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1879).

²⁵ Emilio Pimentel, “Cuadro estadístico que manifiesta el censo de habitantes que tenía en el Estado,” in *Mensaje leído por el C. Lic. Emilio Pimentel Gobernador constitucional del Estado ante la XXII Legislatura del mismo y contestación del Presidente del Congreso C. Lic. Francisco Carranza al abrir aquella su primer periodo de sesiones ordinarias, el 16 de septiembre de 1903* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1903).

²⁶ Maarten Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, *Encounter with the Plumed Serpent: Drama and Power in the Heart of Mesoamerica* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2007), 281-282; Bruce E. Byland and

pueblos together, and Terraciano convincingly argues that this structure led to a system where male and female leaders shared power equally.²⁷ This changed during the colonial era as Spanish authorities established the *cabildo* (town council) and appointed only male nobles. Females still served in their roles as *cacicas* (hereditary noblewoman), but colonial officials worked more often through cabildo governments.²⁸ Officials appointed one *gobernador* (governor) to each town who assisted the two *alcaldes* (magistrates) and four *regidores* (councilmen). By the late colonial era, *caciques* (hereditary nobleman) and *cacicas* held primarily land and resources rather than formal political power.²⁹ This structure persisted well into the nineteenth century in indigenous pueblos throughout the state of Oaxaca. In fact, pueblo cabildos formed the foundation for the early republic. Officials designated pueblos with more than 3,000 inhabitants *ayuntamientos* (cities) and smaller communities with 500 residents *repúblicas* (republics).³⁰

There was a great deal of continuity in terms of institutions from the pre-conquest and colonial eras. After all, in Mixtec pueblos Spanish authorities simply fused cabildo institutions onto the basic *ñuu* structure as they did the *altepetl* (local ethnic state) in other areas.³¹ In addition, authorities during the Early Republic divided state boundaries and administrative districts in much the same manner colonial administrators had in the last century of the Spanish Empire. After independence, they defined these boundaries and recognized a *cabecera* (principal town) that housed district-level officials. They appointed a *gobernador del distrito* to function in

John M.D. Pohl, *In the Realm of 8 Deer: The Archaeology of Mixtec Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 31-33.

²⁷ Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 165-179.

²⁸ Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 183-184.

²⁹ Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 43-44.

³⁰ J. Édgar Mendoza García, *Municipios, cofradías y tierras comunales: Los pueblos Chocholtecos de Oaxaca en el siglo XIX* (Oaxaca: UABJO, 2011), 74-75.

³¹ Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 105.

much the same manner the *gobernador* did in an individual pueblo. In 1836, Santa Anna abolished the 1824 Constitution that provided pueblos with a great deal of autonomy and created the *juez de paz* (justice of the peace) as an elected official who served a one-year term. Officials also allowed for the appointment of a *subprefect* (subprefecture) that recognized important smaller pueblos in a given administrative district and granted them judicial authority to work in conjunction with the district government.³² The 1857 Constitution marks the final major transformation of local governance prior to the 1910 Revolution. Liberal politicians created the office of the *presidente municipal* (municipal president) as a popularly elected official at the head of the pueblo or municipal government. At the district level, they also created the *jefe político* (district boss) to replace the *gobernador del distrito*, but over time, state officials granted increased power to this office after appointing political allies to these positions.³³ In addition, church obligations and *cofradías* (confraternities) remained vital to the cultural and religious life in each pueblo. Parishioners continued to select *mayordomos* (religious administrators) to lead the pueblo through patron saint's days and other religious festivals.³⁴ At the same time, locals engaged in various economic activities throughout the nineteenth century perhaps in more important ways than they did with religious and political institutions.

³² Mendoza García, *Municipios, cofradías y tierras comunales*, 84-91.

³³ Mendoza García, *Municipios, cofradías y tierras comunales*, 111-141.

³⁴ For more on the importance of religious festivals see, Paul K. Eiss, *In the Name of El Pueblo: Place, Community, and the Politics of History in Yucatán* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 217-243.

Cochineal

Mixtec and Amuzgo residents produced cochineal dating back to the pre-colonial era. They harvested the insects that fed on cactus leaves in the same manner as modern producers in the central valleys of Oaxaca. Cultivators today place the tiny insects on cactus paddles to fatten up on the plant over a period of approximately two months then kill them and dry the bugs to use as a natural dye (See Figure 2.4). When ground into a paste, they produce bright reds, purples, and oranges depending on levels of acidity one adds to the mixture (See Figure 2.5). Coastal residents exported cochineal as far away as Tenochtitlán in the form of tribute to the Mexica Empire. Mesoamericans used cochineal as both a dye for textiles and pigment for pre-conquest codices.³⁵ After the collapse of the Mexica, Cortés penned a letter to the crown in 1523 advocating that investors begin exporting cochineal to Europe. He noted that they could exploit indigenous production and use the small insect as an effective and profitable dye. Cortés' suggestion went largely unrealized throughout much of the sixteenth century. Spanish investors pursued other economic interests, and Mixtecs in Jamiltepec continued to produce cochineal to sell in local markets. Consumers used the dyes to color wool clothing and blankets with distinctive patterns that distinguished them from their neighbors. In the late sixteenth century, Viceroy Martín Enriquez and Luis de Velasco published a guide for cultivating and harvesting

³⁵ For more on the use of cochineal during the pre-colonial era see, Elena Phipps, "Cochineal Red: The Art History of a Color," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series 67, no. 3, Cochineal Red (Winter 2010), pp. 4-48; Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola y agraria de la costa oaxaqueña*, 60-5.

the insect.³⁶ Production, nevertheless, failed to meet expectations until Felipe II ordered the creation of a large-scale system in 1620.³⁷



Figure 2.4: Photograph of cochineal on a cactus leaf La Grana Cochinilla, San Bartolo Coyotepec, Oaxaca. Photo courtesy of Amanda Milstead 2015.



Figure 2.5: Photographs of natural dyes The photo on the left depicts three possible tints depending on acidity levels. The photo on the right illustrates dyed wool ready for weaving. Photos taken at The Bug in the Rug in Teotitlán del Valle, Oaxaca. Photos courtesy of Amanda Milstead 2013.

³⁶ Josef Antonio de Alzate, *Memoria en que se trata del insecto grana o cochinilla, de su naturaleza y serie de su vida, como también el método para propagarla y reducirla al estado en que forma uno de los ramos mas útiles del Comercio* (Madrid: Imprenta de Sancha, 1795), 93-94.

³⁷ Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola*, 136.

Few statistics survive to indicate profitability during the seventeenth century. It is clear, however, that production rose during this period until Oaxaca blossomed into “the chief source of scarlet dye” on the international market.³⁸ The region comprising the modern state of Oaxaca averaged 5.6 million *libras* at 0.5 kilogram per libra between 1701 and 1710. This generated an annual average revenue of approximately \$10.9 million Pesos. Production reached its peak between 1771 and 1780 when Oaxaca producers supplied more than 10.4 million libras for export to Mexico City, Puebla, and Spain. In terms of profitability, these years provided a financial windfall for investors with an average annual income of approximately \$25.6 million Pesos.³⁹ These estimates corroborate Adolfo Rodríguez Canto’s findings that the mid-to-late eighteenth century represented the most profitable era. He argues that “between 1796 and 1810 cochineal was the principal export product of New Spain” representing more than 10% of the value of all “annual exports.” The evidence from Jamiltepec makes clear that cochineal was “the principal commercial indigenous crop of the region.”⁴⁰

Jeremy Baskes argues that Spanish merchants underwrote colonial era cochineal production by extending credit to local communities in the *repartimiento* system. Historians have generally interpreted the repartimiento as a monopoly that required indigenous residents “to accept certain amounts of raw cotton, tools, mules, oxen, wax, and fine cloth and repay [a colonial official] in coarse cotton *mantas* [coarse cloth]” used for clothing. The government agent would set prices for each product as well as “the price he accepted [in return for] their

³⁸ Brian R. Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750-1821* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 2.

³⁹ Manuel Martínez Gracida to Manuel González, June 7, 1900, MMG.

⁴⁰ Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola*, 136, 137-38.

mantas.”⁴¹ Baskes convincingly argues that historians wrongly characterize the system as exploitative and miss benefits officials extended to producers. These benefits stemmed from the individual officials who served a dual function. They fixed prices on consumer goods, but they also collected loans to finance cochineal producers. These officials had personal relationships with residents and helped deliver loan payments to creditors in Mexico City. Baskes posits that this worked particularly well with cochineal production since the operations were small and usually comprised “individuals... [who] produced the dyestuff in backyard cactus groves.”⁴² He insists that creditors found these local officials invaluable “because they could use their political power to collect debts” from local producers.⁴³ Baskes concludes this infused much needed cash in indigenous pueblos throughout Oaxaca, and as an added benefit, cochineal revenues allowed producers to purchase consumer goods and more easily meet tax obligations.⁴⁴

Baskes’ data matches Rodríguez Canto’s and my own research on prices and productivity of cochineal for eighteenth century Oaxaca. Production and revenue grew steadily over the first half of the eighteenth century. Table 2.1 illustrates that producers maintained an average output of over six million *libras* (pounds), and merchants enjoyed healthy returns that gained steadily during this period. The stability of production and rise in revenue most likely reflect international market factors due to high demand in Europe. For investors, this represented a relatively profitable business venture. Individual producers relied on the infusion of cash in regions like

⁴¹ Peter F. Guardino, *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 45. For more on the repartimiento see, John K. Chance, *Conquest of the Sierra* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); Brading, *Miners and Merchants*.

⁴² Jeremy Baskes, “Colonial Institutions and Cross-Cultural Trade: Repartimiento Credit and Indigenous Production of Cochineal in Eighteenth-Century Oaxaca, Mexico,” *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 1 (March 2005), 193.

⁴³ Jeremy Baskes, *Indians, Merchants, and Markets: A Reinterpretation of the Repartimiento and Spanish-Indian Economic Relations in Colonial Oaxaca, 1750-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 4.

⁴⁴ Baskes, “Colonial Institutions and Cross-Cultural Trade,” 190-94.

Jamiltepec's indigenous communities.⁴⁵ The commodity reached maximum profitability in the second half of the eighteenth century. Table 2.2 shows that the trend from the first half of the century continued through 1760. Production remained stable while profits grew steadily following the same pattern. This changed beginning in 1761 when profits outpaced production. Revenue spiked to an annual average over these two decades of \$23.5 million Pesos. War with England as well as the French and Haitian revolutions most likely slowed sales in the final two decades.⁴⁶ Taken together, it seems that Baskes' conclusions explains the mid-century boom. As repartimiento investments rose so did production and revenue.

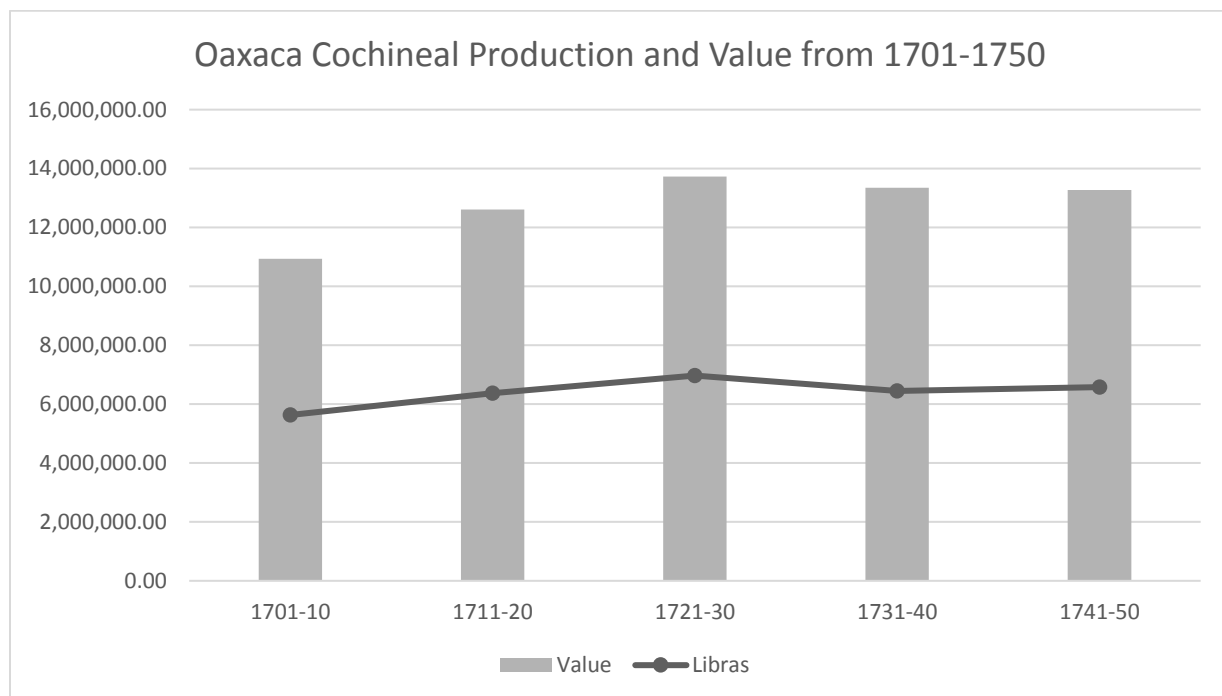


Table 2.1: Cochineal production from 1701-1750 MMG, June 7, 1900.

⁴⁵ While the cash infusion provided an important source of income, Brian Hamnett illustrates that this was an exploitative relationship. He claims that officials would “secure the cochineal dye from the Indians at the price of 16 reales per pound... they would sell it at 30 and 32 reales.” Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico*, 13.

⁴⁶ Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico*, 56-7.

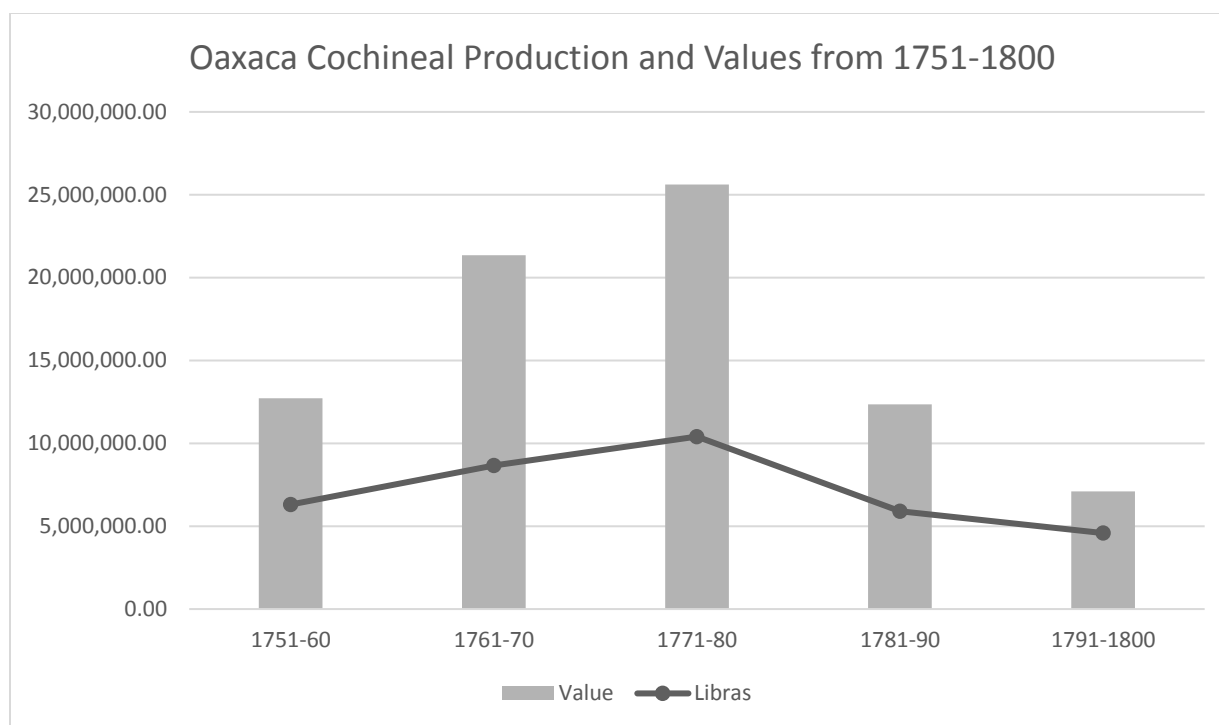


Table 2.2. Cochineal production from 1751-1800 MMG, June 7, 1900.

The boom did not carry over to the nineteenth century. Table 2.3 demonstrates that profits soared in the first decade and remained high throughout the independence war, but they steadily declined to less than an annual five-million-Peso average between 1841 and 1850. Remarkably, production rose steadily with a small dip during the independence war. It seems that, even though demand remained high, competition from other regions of the Americas played a role in the drop.⁴⁷ Table 2.4 displays the decline of cochineal in the second half of the nineteenth century. Production and profits fell steadily until the trade collapsed altogether in 1900. Jamiltepec Gobernador de Distrito Nicolás Tejada asked Oaxaca’s governor for help recovering lost cochineal revenue in his 1852 *Informe* (annual report). He recognized that prior to independence cochineal formed the backbone of the regional economy “because all of the pueblos... cultivated it in every part” of the district. In Tejada’s estimation, officials in the future

⁴⁷ Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico*, 144.

would be better off planning the economy “as if it did not exist.”⁴⁸ Certainly, after mid-century the once reliable source of revenue dried up. This was due in large part to the shift in market conditions outlined above and the emergence of chemical dyes in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ The economic collapse left many Mixtec communities struggling to meet tax obligations and coincided with the loss of another important stream of revenue.

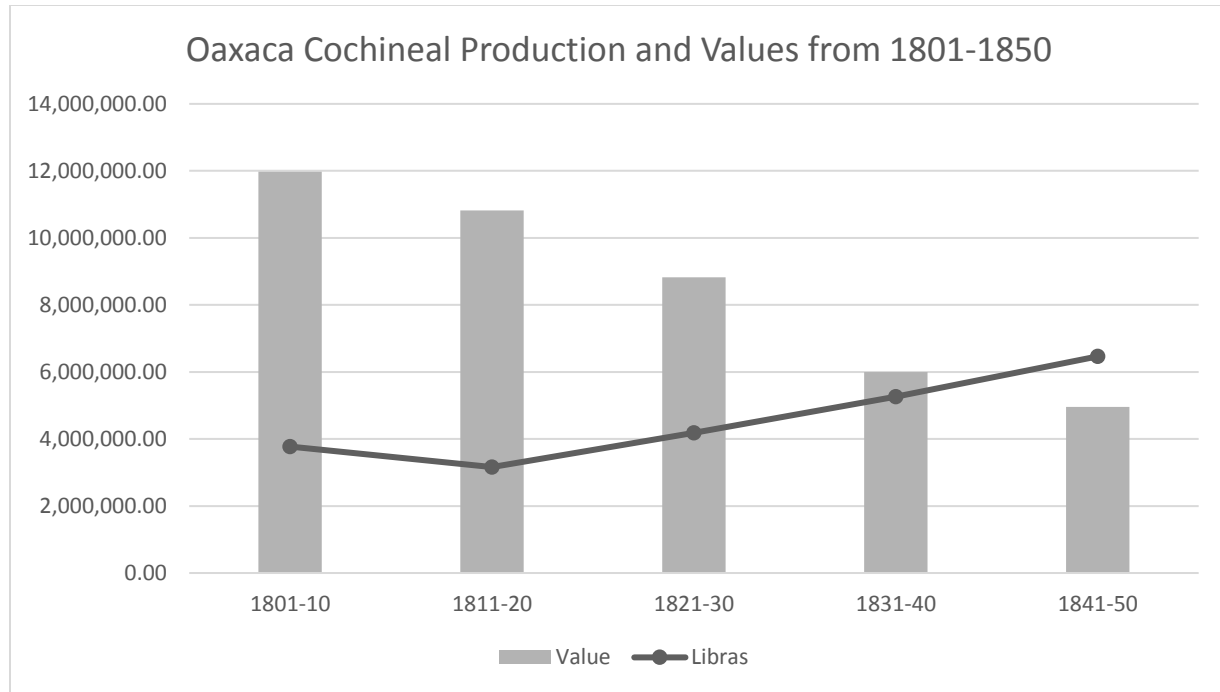


Table 2.3. Cochineal production from 1801-1850 MMG, June 7, 1900.

⁴⁸ Nicolás Tejada a Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca – Informe, April 6, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 61.

⁴⁹ Juan Bautista Carriedo, *Estudios históricos y estadísticos del estado oaxaqueño*, Tomo II (Oaxaca: Imprenta del autor, 1849), 96-103.

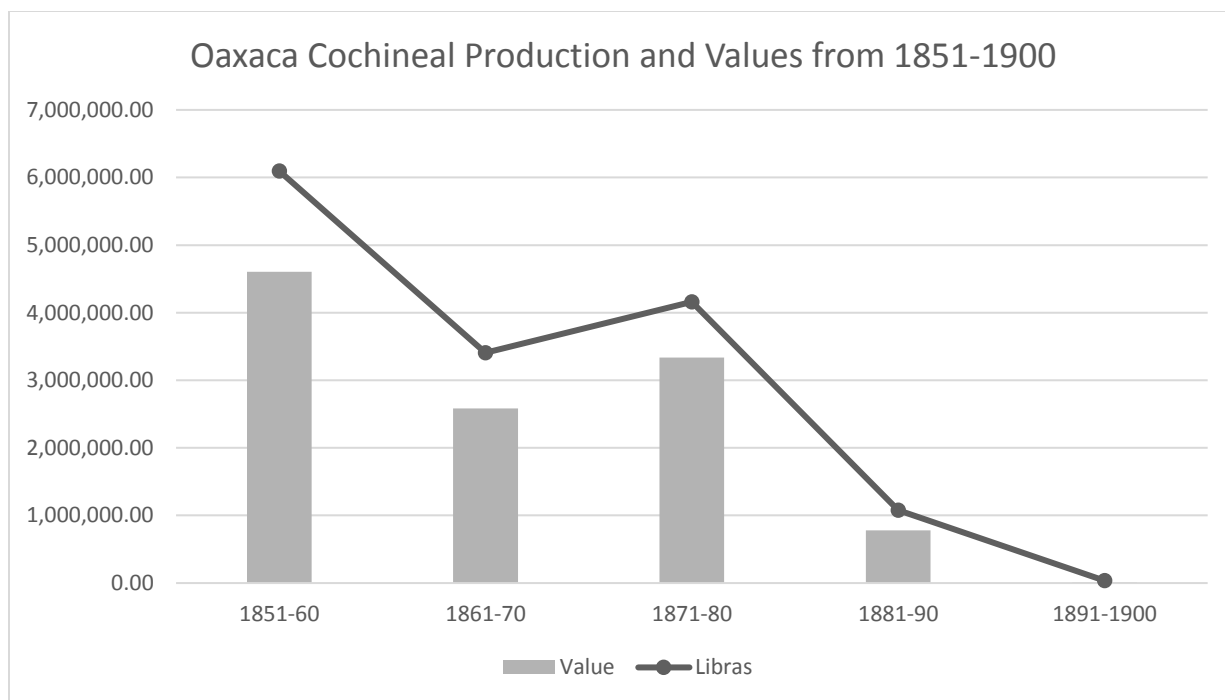


Table 2.4. Cochineal production from 1851-1900 MMG, June 7, 1900.

Haciendas Volantes

Spanish hacendados relied on enslaved Africans to labor on cattle, horse, and goat ranches during the colonial era. Rodríguez Canto argues that the move to ranching “contributed to a succession of... transformations” in agricultural production and social relationships in the coastal region.⁵⁰ Haciendas like the Mariscal de Castilla’s Los Cortijos came about as primarily ranching ventures that prospered by exploiting natural resources with several hundred enslaved laborers. The region’s indigenous residents, who lacked the background in animal husbandry, avoided large-scale ranching throughout much of the colonial era. Spanish hacendados

⁵⁰ Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola*, 154; 157-58.

accumulated more land during the sharp population decline of the sixteenth century and amassed vast haciendas to pasture cattle, horses, and pigs for local and regional consumption.

Descendants of the Mariscal de Castilla sold their hacienda to don Mateo de Mauleón who acquired land at an alarming rate. By 1630, his combined holdings incorporated the haciendas Cortijos and Buenavista, and his property extended along the coastal plain in both directions comprising much of the Costa Chica in the modern states of Oaxaca and Guerrero.⁵¹

This type of ranching persisted throughout the colonial era and continues on a smaller scale today. One can hardly underestimate the value of cattle and horses to the regional economy. Nevertheless, goat ranching also thrived in the area during the colonial era and grew dramatically during the nineteenth century. Danièle Dehouve argues that Spanish colonists introduced a system of goat ranching that began on the coast and made use of limited water and food in the Mixteca by remaining on the move until reaching slaughterhouses in Huajuapán, Oaxaca and Tehuacán, Puebla (See Figure 2.6).⁵² She estimates that investors created this system of haciendas volantes “at the end of the sixteenth century.”⁵³ They developed even further during the seventeenth century when Jesuits took over the sprawling haciendas and rented lands from

⁵¹ Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola*, 113-15; 120.

⁵² Haciendas volantes transformed the landscape as large herds of goats literally ate their way from the coast to the slaughterhouses in Tehuacán. Residents of the Mixtec community Tilantongo complained in a short video in 2014, “Sembrando Futuro,” that “free range pasture lands” with goats in particular as the primary reason for deforestation in their region. “Sembrando Futuro,” 14:16. Posted October 6, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJSsvXGUAic>. Canto Rodríguez argues that livestock ranching had far-reaching effects for indigenous pueblos on the coast. He observes that many pueblos disappeared, livestock transmitted diseases, and animals trampled subsistence crops. Canto Rodríguez, *Historia agrícola de la costa y agraria de la costa oaxaqueña*, 75. In his groundbreaking study, Alfred Crosby argues that the expansion of ranching as colonists increased New Spain’s territory coincided with a massive surge in livestock so much so that they “reached the magnitude of a stampede.” Alfred W. Crosby, *The Colombian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), 82. For more on the methodology of environmental history in Mexico see, Christopher R. Boyer, ed., *A Land Between Waters: Environmental Histories of Modern Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012).

⁵³ Danièle Dehouve, “Introducción,” in *La vida volante: Pastoreo trashumante en la Sierra Madre del Sur*, ed. Danièle Dehouve, Roberto Cervantes Delgado, and Ulrik Hvilshøj (México, DF: Jorale Editores, 2004), 9.

local leaders in individual pueblos to pasture livestock for short periods of time in the modern states of Oaxaca and Guerrero. The system stretched more than three hundred miles, and members of the religious order controlled these networks since they, along with the Dominicans, represented “the largest corporate landowners in the Mixteca.”⁵⁴

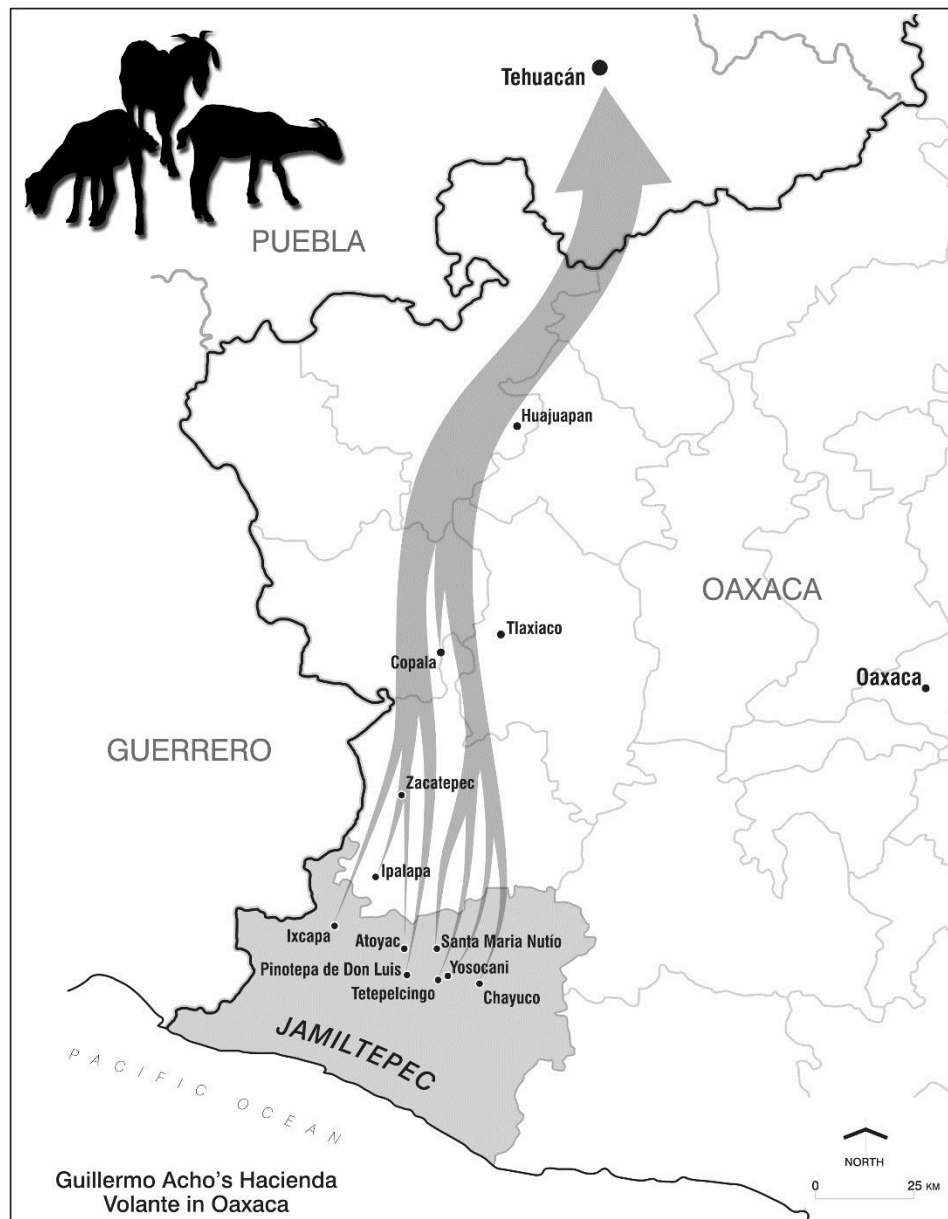


Figure 2.6: Guillermo Acho's Hacienda Volante in Oaxaca Lester Jones, Jones Maps & Diagrams, 2016.

⁵⁴ Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 285.

The expulsion of Jesuits from New Spain in 1767 makes studying these systems particularly frustrating. From this point forward, few documents survived detailing how they became private enterprises. The evidence indicates that investors assumed control of former Jesuit haciendas volantes and converted them into highly profitable operations in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ On the eve of expulsion, Benjamin Smith estimates that “the Jesuit flocks... totaled over sixty-one thousand sheep and sixty-seven thousand goats.”⁵⁶ Smith also argues that the haciendas volantes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provided much needed cash to landowners and laborers in the Mixteca Baja. The data from Jamiltepec merely reveals the income that pueblos gained from renting communal land, but there is very little evidence detailing how individuals participated in the ambulatory economy. After independence, two elites emerged as the primary hacendados originating in Jamiltepec. Huajuapán-based Antonio de León continued the process of renting tracts from local pueblos to complement his extensive holdings throughout the Mixteca. Jamiltepec-based Manuel María Fagoaga rented numerous properties to pasture goats from local villages. This went hand-in-hand with his political career as he dominated regional politics from behind the scenes until the 1850s.

In most cases, these two men rented coastal pueblo land rather than purchasing it. A tax report from 1844 detailed how it worked. De León paid fifty pesos to pasture his livestock to the residents of Pinotepa de Don Luis for a small portion of the year. Fagoaga reported a similar strategy and paid residents of San Pedro Jicayán during the same period one hundred pesos to

⁵⁵ Dehouve, “Las haciendas volantes de la Sierra de Tlapa: Origen e historia,” in *La vida volante*, 84.

⁵⁶ Smith, *Roots of Conservatism*, 51. See also, Andrew Mouat, “Los chiveros de la Mixteca Baja,” unpubl. MA thesis, UNAM, 1980; Rodolfo Pastor, *Campesinos y reformas: La Mixteca, 1700-1856* (México DF: Colegio de México, 1987), pp. 230-36; Ursula Ewald, *Estudios sobre la hacienda colonial en México: Las propiedades rurales del Colegio Espíritu Santo de Puebla* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976); María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, *Economía y vida de los españoles en la Mixteca Alta, 1519-1720* (México DF: INAH, 1990).

pasture his livestock on pueblo land. Lastly, an unknown person paid an unreported number of individual residents in Ixcapa \$101 Pesos for the same purpose.⁵⁷ Renting land could produce conflict when hacendados failed to meet their financial obligations. Residents of Tututepec reported that the “small livestock ranch owners” shorted the municipality the contracted amount, and they complained that this meant the pueblo would not be able to meet annual tax obligations.⁵⁸ Records from 1852 provide a more detailed account of how pueblos substituted rents to overcome financial burdens after the decline of cochineal revenue with income from haciendas volantes. In this year, residents of Yosocani reported that de León paid them \$50 Pesos “for the pasture of these lands that his small livestock enjoy [as part] of his hacienda volante.”⁵⁹ De León paid officials in Pinotepa de Don Luis \$60 Pesos “in the month of January for Cabecera land” to pasture goats.⁶⁰ Ixcapa reported that don Laureano Alemán paid \$50 Pesos, José Toribio paid \$30 Pesos, and an unnamed person paid \$21 Pesos for a total \$101 Pesos for three separate haciendas volantes. In turn, the town spent \$93 Pesos to pay taxes, maintain a school, and complete public works projects.⁶¹

1852 likely represents a watershed year for indigenous pueblos. The unusually thorough tax records illustrate that primarily Mixtec pueblos like Pinotepa de Don Luis, Ixcapa, Yosocani, Jicayán, Tepetlapan, and Atoyac exceeded or met tax obligations with rents from haciendas

⁵⁷ “Estado que manifiesta los pueblos que tienen bienes comunales, los que permiten arrendamientos de terrenos por productos de plaza y de fincas urbanas,” September 6, 1844, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 24.

⁵⁸ Plácido Garcés to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 10, 1845, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 85.

⁵⁹ Pascual López – Informe de Hacienda del fondo común de la municipalidad de Santa María Yosocani, November 30, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 66.

⁶⁰ Juan Mejía – Informe del común de Pinotepa de Don Luis, December 1, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 66.

⁶¹ Matías García – Informe sobre los productos de bienes propios por arrendamiento de los terrenos de Ixcapa, November 25, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 67.

volantes. Afro-Mexican pueblos, conversely, reported no income in return for renting land to ranchers. This reflects the different economy in the two communities corresponding with geographic location. Afro-Mexicans inhabited the land with rich soils appropriate for cotton cultivation located along the flat, narrow coastal plain. Mixtec pueblos were situated in the drier hilly and mountainous terrain more suitable for goat ranching, subsistence agriculture, and cochineal production. These pueblos, located to the north, also had easier access to markets further up in the Mixteca. This had important consequences after 1855 and the Liberal transformation. As we will see in subsequent chapters, the Reform had important effects on regional economics and politics. Hacendados used the 1856 *Ley Lerdo* (land reform law) to file *tierras baldías* (unused land) claims in state and federal courts. Once adjudicated, the person who filed the claim had legal title to communal land and no longer had to pay rents. This cut Mixtec communities off from important funds historically used to meet tax obligations and pay for public works projects. The mid-century legal shakeup allowed one hacendado, Guillermo Acho, to accumulate vast tracts of communal land in the 1870s. In fact, he accumulated so much wealth during this time that one observer labelled Acho “the goat king.”⁶²

Cotton

Cotton cultivation predated the arrival of the Spanish, but colonial merchants turned the crop into a commodity. The product generated small but steady profits, and coastal producers supplied *obrajes* (textile mills) in Puebla. These small manufacturers produced textiles for the

⁶² M.H. Pastor, *Impresiones y recuerdos de mis viajes á México* (San Sebastián: La Voz de Guipúzcoa, 1900), 212.

internal market supplying New Spain with an abundance of cheap material, and manufacturers apparently preferred cotton from the Jamiltepec region due to its perceived quality.⁶³

Immediately after independence, cotton production seemed to be the first industry to recover economically. Officials confirmed the presence of foreign cotton speculators in 1829 after several issued claims that their foreign status exempted them from paying local taxes. Politicians appealed to the governor's office for a decision noting that the unknown investors represented an important part of the local economy. State tax assessors confirmed that these foreigners did have to pay taxes on district products.⁶⁴ Less than a decade later, officials stressed the importance of cotton by offering a short description of the district's three cotton gins in the annual Informe. They communicated that two "citizens of Britain," Juan Sater and Elliott Turnbull, operated cotton gins in Tututepec and Pinotepa Nacional. Nicolás Tejada owned the only other one located in Huazolotitlán. The author of the annual report emphasized the importance of cotton without providing specific monetary figures to support his assertions. Nevertheless, the Informe stressed that cotton supplied factories outside the district, generated substantial revenue, and required hefty investments in labor and machinery.⁶⁵

Statistics following independence offer few insights into cotton's profitability through mid-century. Nevertheless, it is clear that the market fluctuated wildly due to a number of internal and external factors. International competition from the short-lived Republic of Texas and the United States stifled growth in the cotton sector (1836-1845). One official complained in his 1840 annual report that "the introduction of foreign fabric" hurt local producers who

⁶³ Rodríguez Canto, *Historia agrícola*, 134.

⁶⁴ Manuel Loaeza to Secretario del Gobernador, March 3, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 1.

⁶⁵ Tomás Gallangos to Gobernador del Estado, November 27, 1838, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 53.

struggled to meet demand. In addition, he noted that it made no difference to manufacturers where they purchased raw cotton due to the low price of foreign materials.⁶⁶ Later that year a district magistrate reported a major loss to the governor due to the “introduction of foreign” textiles.⁶⁷ Apparently, slave labor in Texas and the U.S. provided foreign producers with a distinct advantage over the free labor system on the coast. In 1842, officials again appealed to the governor for help regulating the influx of cheap cotton that they argued “would be the complete ruin of this coast.” They stated that cotton production provided a livelihood for “countless families that feed themselves and subsist from the product.”⁶⁸ The appeal played to popular notions of familial honor. Foreign competitors undermined the ability of Afro-Mexican male heads of household to provide for and protect their dependents. Thus, by including how the trade deficit affected families, the official highlighted the economic, cultural, and social toll foreign cotton inflicted on otherwise honorable providers.⁶⁹ Building on this theme, the author warned that district authorities could not collect sufficient taxes from cotton to pay military pensions to

⁶⁶ Manuel José S. Urrutia to Gobernador del Departamento de Jamiltepec, February 4, 1840, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 3.

⁶⁷ José María Moreda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 17, 1840, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 3.

⁶⁸ José María Moreda to Gobernador de Oaxaca and el Presidente de la República, July 12, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 5.

⁶⁹ Scholars have long studied masculine and feminine honor in Latin America. In particular, this study builds on several broad themes. First, Pablo Piccato argues that honor among the urban poor in Mexico City was tied both to external expectations and an internal sense of self-worth. In this case, a government official is likely employing the same discursive strategy individual producers approached him with, and thus reflects both an elite and popular sense of masculine honor as head of household, even among Afro-Mexican farmers. Piccato, *City of Suspects*, 94. This strategy also fits what Heather Fowler-Salamini describes among female laborers in Veracruz “who sought respect as good providers.” Thus, honor fulfills an economic category in terms of meeting familial obligations. Heather Fowler-Salamini, “Gender, Work, Trade Unionism, and Working-Class Women’s Culture in Post-Revolutionary Veracruz,” in *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico*, ed. Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 173. Finally, Peter Beattie argues that racial status often determined honor in nineteenth century Brazil. Claims of honor certainly undermined the social hierarchy as elites at the local and state levels disparaged Afro-Mexicans as having no honor due to drinking, vices, and propensity to violence. Peter M. Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 8-9.

those who sacrificed while defending the nation. This was perhaps an even more effective strategy since it openly questioned elite honorability for potentially failing to fulfill the patriotic social contract between veterans and the state. The official argued that the economic crisis represented much “more than the subsistence of [male residents] and their families.”⁷⁰

The U.S. invasion in 1846 predictably slowed production. Residents in Huazolotitlán, Pinotepa Nacional, and surrounding pueblos petitioned the governor in 1848 for a suspension of taxes. They used forceful language in this case that stressed honor, service, and sacrifice. In their appeal, they also made a classic federalist argument by referring to themselves as “citizens” that “sustain institutions, obey the authorities, conserve the order and public tranquility of these pueblos.” The letter included more than three pages of signatures, and people reminded state officials that they had been “obligated to give aid to the state government in the present circumstances with their persons, livelihoods, and interests... from the beginning of the invasion.” They believed that their “sacrifices... inspire[d] patriotism” as a model of service. This kind of language before mid-century was common. Citing military service and self-sacrifice was an effective tactic when appealing to high government officials in Oaxaca and Mexico City. In this case, residents once again tied sacrifice and honor to familial economics. They insisted that “the loss of cotton fields” during the war halted business to a “standstill” and left farmers unable to provide for their families.⁷¹ Three years later in 1851, cotton prices had yet to recover even after soldiers returned home in 1848 and resumed production.⁷² A year later, prominent

⁷⁰ Moreda to Gobernador and el Presidente, July 12, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 5.

⁷¹ Ursulino Parada (Alcalde 1º), Antonio Carcel (Alcalde 2º), Ángel María Rodríguez (Regidor 1º), Bruno Cabrera (Regidor 2º), Tomás Rodríguez (Regidor 3º), et al. to Gobernador del Estado, February 15, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Alcaldes, Legajo 18, Expediente 15.

⁷² Ursulino Parada: Aconticimientos Notables, April 30, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimeintos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 37.

cotton merchant Nicolás Tejada asked the Department of *Fomento* (development) for help controlling imports. He charged that, even after substantial sacrifices during the U.S. invasion, the government failed to protect cotton producers from market fluctuations. Tejada once again stressed masculine honor and stated that the economic downturn threatened “the principle of [residents’] moral lives.”⁷³ Cotton thus formed an important symbolic and economic component of everyday culture.

Residents struggled during the 1850s due to a number of natural disasters, crop failures, disease, and locust invasions. The evidence indicates that the early 1860s marked a turn for the better. After the War of the Reform (1859-61), residents once again appealed for a tax break. This time they argued that they had no objection to paying their taxes, but they insisted that the rate on cotton was too high due to subsistence crop failures. Essentially, the cotton crop bankrolled district and state tax requirements, but if producers experienced a problem growing tropical fruits for local consumption then residents could not offset the financial losses and meet tax obligations.⁷⁴ The French invasion in 1862 once again set production back, but by the end of the decade, cotton showed signs of improvement. This coincided with a new wave of foreign investors who helped revolutionize the business and generate massive profits. In subsequent chapters, their businesses and local influence will be more fully explored. However, these entrepreneurs produced a steady income for the region beginning in the early 1870s. They supplied large manufacturers in Oaxaca’s central valleys with raw cotton to textile mills.

⁷³ Nicolás Tejada – Informe sobre el Departamento de Jamiltepec, April 26, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 77.

⁷⁴ Nicolás Baños to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, May 10, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 18.

Farmers, merchants, and small manufacturers produced a number of other products for local and regional consumption in the nineteenth century. Oaxaqueños prized machetes produced in Afro-Mexican pueblos. In addition, entrepreneurs invested in coffee, soap, and sugar production while others harvested salt from the numerous lagoons. Farmers grew corn, chiles, beans, and tropical fruits to sell at the local tianguis. However, none of these products had the same impact on the regional economy. As we will see, export products created important socio-economic ties that reinforced racial and ethnic divisions. In general, Mixtec residents lost economic and political resources over the course of the nineteenth century. The collapse of the cochineal market combined with land-hungry hacendados who used the Ley Lerdo to expropriate communal lands and avoid paying rents. Afro-Mexicans had long lived in dependent communities within a network of indigenous pueblos. The late century surge in cotton production gave them a means to bargain for pueblo autonomy. These economic relationships, combined with cultural, linguistic, and geographic factors detailed below, illustrate how socio-economic ties influenced how jamiltepecanos constructed race in their everyday lives.

Part 3: Constructing Race in Nineteenth Century Jamiltepec

Legal categories of race underwent a dramatic transformation after independence. Afro-Mexican leaders like Vicente Guerrero insisted on an end to the caste system that codified Spanish racial categories. This meant that elites after independence frequently substituted euphemistic language to describe Afro-Mexicans rather than using colonial era caste designations. Post-independence leaders in Jamiltepec employed terminology emphasizing geographic location to differentiate groups of people from one another. This lexicon held

important clues about the decisions residents made in their daily lives, and their personal choices of where to live, who to marry, and what language to speak illustrate that racial categories more often reflected cultural categories rather than one's physical characteristics.⁷⁵ Linguistic ability separated Mixtec and Amuzgo residents from each other as well as virtually everyone else. Cultural and religious differences offered another means by which people asserted separate identities. Finally, much like elites described at the national level, regional geography and the location of individual pueblos spatially separated a black, Spanish-speaking coast from an indigenous, Mixtec-speaking interior. These linguistic, cultural, and geographic factors preserved racial and ethnic distinctions throughout the nineteenth century.

Journalists, historians, and politicians at the national level disregarded caste categories but continued to disparage Afro-Mexicans in the nineteenth century. However, these examples only reveal points of view prevalent among elites in Mexico City. Such accounts do not reflect local realities. Nevertheless, people of African descent seem to be absent from documents preserved in local and state archives. This makes Afro-Mexicans' everyday experiences quite difficult for historians to analyze in the nineteenth century. Spotty marriage and birth records from the late colonial era through the 1850s obscure the past even further. Despite these methodological difficulties, Afro-Mexicans certainly formed an integral part of regional politics, economics, and culture. The lack of records suggest that elites embraced the end of legal racial categories. Correspondence between officials, civil and criminal court cases, and business

⁷⁵ Francie Chassen-López illustrates this phenomenon. She argues that, at the beginning of the 1910 Revolution, Jamiltepec racial identities had more to do with "cultural (language, dress, and customs) preferences... than phenotype." Chassen-López, "Maderismo or Mixtec Empire?," 105. James Scott posits that space, linguistic ability, and choice of where to live provided a means for people to transform ethnic and racial identities. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 248-51.

contracts are devoid of racial language to describe Afro-Mexicans. One can begin to discern important clues, however, by analyzing the ways in which these leaders described other groups of people. The evidence indicates that elites continued to use caste era descriptors to identify Mixtecs and Amuzgos with terms like *indígena*, *indio*, or *sin razón* (without reason). Occasionally, indigenous residents themselves would use this language when petitioning courts to protect pueblo land, asking for a tax break, or appealing for a political change. Officials frequently included what pueblo the person or persons were from and less often included *de la sierra* (of the mountains) insinuating indigenous heritage.

Post-independence language shifted dramatically concerning Afro-Mexicans. This likely stemmed from their political leaders in addition to the numerous soldiers who insisted on an end to caste categories after the war for independence.⁷⁶ These demands fit within a broader Atlantic world experience whereby African descendent people across the French Caribbean, Colombia, and Cuba embraced republican ideas of citizenship and called for an end to the caste system.⁷⁷ In Jamiltepec, Afro-Mexican residents during the nineteenth century rarely, if ever, self-identified by emphasizing their physical or racial characteristics in the public sphere. Officials followed suit and frequently avoided using caste era terminology. They substituted geographic language to differentiate black pueblos while avoiding outdated racial distinctions. For example, politicians generally built on the national discourse of blackness and referred to Afro-Mexicans as *costeños* or, less often as *casta de razón* (caste with reason). They would add *bajos de la costa* (lowlands of the coast) to emphasize geography and imply difference. More importantly, such language

⁷⁶ Lucas Alamán implied as much with his insistence that the 1812 Cádiz Constitution expressly denied citizenship to all African descendent castes. Alamán, *Historia de Méjico*, Tomo III, 119; Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero*, 44-5; Vincent, "The Blacks Who Freed Mexico," 259.

⁷⁷ Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 3-5; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 3-5; Helg, *Liberty and Equality*, 147-50; Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion*, 33.

reveals that people continued to demarcate race much like they did during the colonial era. District officials and state authorities maintained the use of colonial labels to describe Mixtec, Amuzgo, blanco, and mestizo residents in official correspondence, court cases, land contracts, and publications. Thus, the key to understanding these euphemisms, in many cases, is to look for what is missing.

Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán observes that for large parts of the year Afro-Mexicans in Cuajinicuilapa, Guerrero leave their homes to labor in distant cornfields. He concludes that this is a different agricultural practice from local Mixtec and Amuzgo residents, and he observes that “for December and January the *campesino* [farmer] abandons the home... with his wife and children” where they plant corn located “two, three, or four hours” by foot from their pueblo.⁷⁸ The family stays in temporary structures until May or June once they harvest the corn crop before returning to their permanent homes to resume cotton production. Aguirre Beltrán’s observations from the 1950s seem to describe what a district official wrote in 1835. José María Parada complained about the ambulatory population in Cortijos located approximately ten miles from Cuajinicuilapa. He stated that local officials in the predominately Afro-Mexican pueblo failed to collect the correct amount of taxes due to their apparent “ignorance” of the tax code. For Parada, the real problem was that residents in this pueblo left for lengthy periods and thus avoided meeting tax obligations. He contrasted this with a different tax problem officials faced in three Mixtec pueblos. Parada asked for help resolving an issue in Cacahuatpec, Mechoacán, and Comaltepec. They apparently avoided paying the correct amount of taxes since assessors could not accurately project incomes from haciendas volantes. In contrast, Parada did not condemn

⁷⁸ Aguirre Beltrán, *Cuijla*, 112.

them for confusing tax collectors. It seems therefore that the ambulatory nature of people rather than productive livestock marked the Cortijos residents as dishonorable.⁷⁹

Some officials emphasized criminality and a culture of violence in Afro-Mexican communities. José Régules wrote to the governor of Oaxaca to complain that Afro-Mexican men carried machetes with them at all times. Without identifying race or singling out a particular pueblo, Régules charged that people living in coastal communities had “the bad custom... of carrying their machetes” with them even when not working.⁸⁰ Mixtec men generally carried their machetes with them as well, but it seems that officials frequently worried more about Afro-Mexican violence. One letter from 1853 published in *El Universal* warned that arming indigenous communities in Jamiltepec would ignite longstanding racial tensions. The author insisted that this action misunderstood local realities and threatened to spark a “caste war” with angry Mixtec and Afro-Mexican men targeting mestizo officials.⁸¹ In another case, Jefe Político José María Ramírez confirmed in a letter to the governor that district authorities had taken the unprecedented step of outlawing the carrying of machetes outside of agricultural fields in 1861. Nevertheless, Ramírez lamented that officials in individual pueblos would most likely ignore the edict for fear of reprisals. In his estimation, this was especially the case among “the residents (*vecinos*) of los bajos” where he assured the governor people “will continue using them.”⁸² Afro-Mexican military service and assumptions of widespread coastal banditry seemingly connected

⁷⁹ José María Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 17, 1835, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 3, Expediente 10.

⁸⁰ José M. Régules to Gobernador del Estado, December 5, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 2.

⁸¹ “Oajaca,” *El Universal: Periódico Independiente*, March 30, 1853, 3.

⁸² José María Ramírez to Gobernador del Estado, July 2, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 29.

race with violence among elites, but these examples also indicate that Afro-Mexican men felt the need to carry machetes while away from their agricultural fields for security.

Entertainment during popular festivals could also highlight racial difference. José Antonio Reguera appealed for help to resolve a dispute between what he termed “the two castes” over “the origin of musicians” performing for the public in one of the few racially mixed pueblos outside of Pinotepa Nacional or Jamiltepec.⁸³ Unfortunately, he failed to identify if the two groups played different genres of music. The documents do reveal that it was the musicians themselves and their individual ethnic identities that represented the main point of contention.⁸⁴ People from both sides appealed to preserve separate spaces for musicians of each “caste.” Afro-Mexican musicians won the dispute and reserved space in the church for the prestigious festivals of Corpus Christi, Novena de Dolores, and the Fiesta de la Soledad. Mixtec musicians could perform during these holidays, but they had to clear specific locations with organizers and religious confraternities. Reguera hoped that this deal would deter further violence, and he assured the governor that district authorities would enforce the arrangement.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, religion and religious festivals generally represented an area of cooperation. The records indicate that people throughout the district shared religious traditions, holidays, and priests. One example from 1857 highlights that festival planners collected dues from residents in precisely the same manner from Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs when financing annual religious celebrations. Residents of Lo de Soto, a predominately Afro-Mexican pueblo,

⁸³ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 28, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 49.

⁸⁴ Music has long been a point of pride among Afro-Jamiltepecanos. See, Vaughn, “Los negros, los indígenas y la diáspora,” 85-93.

⁸⁵ Reguera to Gobernador, January 28, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 49.

raised \$184 Pesos for the annual San Juan Rosario fiesta with only \$14 Pesos paid in cash. They raised the remaining funds by selling crops, prepared foods, chickens, and eggs while also valuing the work cooking food, distributing alcohol, and volunteer work performed during the festival in the same manner as a monetary donation.⁸⁶ The majority Mixtec community Mesones financed their two annual festivals in a similar manner. They raised only \$3 Pesos in cash to pay for their two annual festivals with the remaining \$103 Pesos coming from trading crops and community service during the celebration.⁸⁷

Religious practices could represent areas of conflict and reveal deep divisions. Indigenous residents from Amuzgos, Cacahuatpec, and Zacatepec complained in 1858 that their priest had betrayed them. They claimed that he spent a great deal of time in Cortijos rather than engaging in his religious duties in their communities. In addition, he had allied with a militant faction of Afro-Mexicans in Lo de Soto and returned in support of General Don Manuel María del Toro. Residents protested that such political affiliations denied them from meeting important religious obligations. The priest also demanded the outrageous sum of \$15 Pesos for festivals and \$18 Pesos for a marriage. Apparently, Amuzgos and Mixtecs could cooperate in these three communities, but the priest's alliance with Afro-Mexicans to the south prompted arbitration.⁸⁸

Linguistic ability also served to demarcate race throughout the nineteenth century. In 1879, Afro-Mexicans comprised more than half of the district's Spanish speakers while Mixtecs,

⁸⁶ Agustín Castañeda – Estado que manifiesta lo que esta Estancia ha acostumbrado darle anualmente a su párroco para las fiestas que celebra, April 28, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 40.

⁸⁷ Agustín Castañeda – Estado que manifiesta lo que este pueblo ha acostumbrado darle anualmente a su párroco para las fiestas que celebra, April 28, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 40.

⁸⁸ Antonio Puga y todo el pueblo to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, April 30, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 5.

at 60 percent of the population, generally preferred to speak *mixteco*.⁸⁹ This frequently posed problems for district officials and underscored the region's ethnic fissures. Military leaders often encountered language barriers when sending young officers unfamiliar with the area to find new recruits. The records are full of correspondence from frustrated soldiers leaving Mixtec villages with few, if any, enlistments. People in these pueblos would often use their identity to thwart recruiters. Men often successfully claimed that they could not serve because they were unable to speak Spanish. One particular case in 1842 follows a similar pattern with what the author described as Mixtecs claiming "I am indigenous without reason or the Spanish language."⁹⁰ However, a fellow recruiter beamed that he exceeded his quota in the primarily Afro-Mexican pueblo Cortijos. His new recruits suggested that they had numerous family and friends in Cuajinicuilapa. However, state and district officials scolded the officer since they could not accept soldiers from another state.⁹¹ The officer's experience indicates that language played a vital role in who could serve in a regular army battalion.

This example also suggests that Mixtecs sometimes refused service in integrated units. To counter such actions leaders resorted to impressment and entrapment in Mixtec communities, but they seem to have avoided such practices in Afro-Mexican pueblos.⁹² In 1838, Mixtecs in

⁸⁹ The numbers on language coincide in this survey almost precisely to the population figures. See, "Gobernación: Cuadro estadístico que manifiesta la población que tenía el Estado," in Meijueiro, *Memoria Constitucional*. *Tu'un savi* represents the term mixteco in one Mixteca Baja variant. Mixteco is the term Mexica colonizers referred to Mixtec people and their language. For more on the pre-Columbian and colonial eras see, Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between*; Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*; Spores, *The Mixtec Kings and Their People*; Spores, *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times*.

⁹⁰ "Soy indígena y no tengo razón o idioma castellano." José María Monda to Despacho del Distrito, January 25, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 7.

⁹¹ Plácido Garcés to Despacho del Distrito, April 5, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 7.

⁹² To date, I have not found examples of impressment in Afro-Mexican pueblos during the nineteenth century. Both Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans seem to share similar desertion patterns, but impressment was apparently something officials used solely in Mixtec communities.

Tututepec objected to predatory recruitment. They argued that officers invaded their homes during the night and impressed boys as young as twelve and thirteen while they slept. This caused a number of social and political disputes in the community. First, residents complained that, by entering private spaces, soldiers dishonored families and exposed female family members to real or putative sexual violation.⁹³ Second, people in the community chastised men who declined service as dishonorable. This was because refusal to serve typically resulted in labor on press-gangs in public works projects while in close proximity to neighbors and families. Third, those who served in the battalion often faced harsh treatment from officers and fellow soldiers due to language and cultural barriers. The people in Tututepec insisted that everyone mistreated Mixtec soldiers, and in this particular case, officers denied men food and water. As a result, 28 recruits abandoned service, but district officials defended the officers and charged those who absconded with desertion. Mistreatment and a perceived lack of respect left many indigenous people with few options. Service in integrated units highlighted ethnic differences, but a failure to serve could also endanger one's honor.⁹⁴ This apparently persisted over time as one local politician on the eve of the U.S. invasion in 1846 endorsed impressment in Mixtec communities. He asserted that this was necessary due to their unwillingness to serve alongside Afro-Mexican soldiers, who comprised the bulk of the battalion. He also argued that integration could explain the large number of desertions plaguing the unit. Therefore, he justified the use of force as a means to overcome cultural and language barriers to defend national sovereignty.⁹⁵

⁹³ For more on public and private spaces and familial honor see, Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood*, 8-9.

⁹⁴ Tomás Gallangos to General Francisco Bendejo y Gobernador de Jamiltepec, May 1, 1838, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 4

⁹⁵ Lic. Afobia to Despacho del Distrito, December 16, 1845, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 19.

In 1855, José Mariano Abrego announced that officials complied with a new law mandating the use of indigenous translators in all legal matters. He noted that often language represented a major point of conflict since indigenous people throughout the district did not speak Spanish. He stated in a letter to the governor that the district would henceforth explain laws “in Castellano and in the language of las indígenas... the respective obligations with absolute independence of the attributions of the *jueces de paz* [Justices of the Peace].” He identified several pueblos (Huazolotitlán, Pinotepa Nacional, Pinotepa de Don Luis, Atoyac, Amuzgos, Tlacamama, and Cacahuatpec) that were Mixtec or Amuzgo that required additional resources. Abrego complained that people in these pueblos ignored their respective jueces de paz for quite some time and expressed “disgust” with officials due to a lack of communication.⁹⁶

Francisco Baños Peña outlined a major problem in Pinotepa Nacional where they had a racially “mixed” population. This city had quickly grown into the most important commercial center in the district following independence, and in this regard, it attracted Afro-Mexicans, Mixtecs, and Amuzgos seeking employment opportunities. Baños Peña noted few problems among those he labelled “de razón,” but he claimed that “indígenas” posed a threat due to the formidable language barrier. This coupled with a general sense of anger toward Spanish speakers, or those he labelled “de razón.” He explained that this was because “the indígenas were the settlers of these locations, and they believe that they have been dispossessed of their authority by the advances and intrigues of de razón” people.⁹⁷ In the end, he advocated having two independent jueces de paz to meet the requirement referenced in the prior example. This would

⁹⁶ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 2, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 34.

⁹⁷ Francisco Baños Peña to Prefecto del Distrito de Jamiltepec, January 20, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 1.

help alleviate some of the inter-ethnic problems and allow authorities to begin teaching Spanish to everyone. Language barriers in this example masked other issues of deep resentment between Mixtecs and members of other Spanish-speaking groups.

Politicians condemned lawlessness throughout the nineteenth century. They would often present coastal communities as significant threats due to criminality and banditry. One example from 1862 involved two bandits named Melo and Coronado. Officials claimed that they had received widespread support in the bajos before they invaded the city of Jamiltepec. Upon seizing control of the town, the bandits insisted on a set of economic demands and settled political scores. Their short-lived two-man government took control of the district seat before authorities captured and executed them both a few hours later. Afterward, politicians circulated warnings about the extent of their support – in one estimate as much as 25% of the district – that emanated from the bajos. They wrongly charged that *costeños* had long supported banditry in the district, but officials ignored their political motivations after the War of the Reform and failed to account for why Afro-Mexicans in this pueblo united with outsiders.⁹⁸

One case in 1857 highlighted that the state exempted “*costeños* from the bajos” from paying taxes levied to build local schools over the objections of district officials.⁹⁹ A committee of politicians from Pinotepa Nacional, Huazolotitlán, and Jamiltepec claimed that every other resident in the district paid their monthly obligation – half a peso – while *costeños* contributed nothing. The authors charged that *costeños* diverted the money to fund their further isolation. In their estimation, the failure of Afro-Mexicans to subsidize the state and local governments led to

⁹⁸ 26 Noviembre 1862: José Antonio Pérez, Juan Gay, Manuel María Ramírez, y Francisco Baños Peña – Pronunciamiento con el Jefe Político, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 14, AGPEO; “Oaxaca,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, December 4, 1862, 4.

⁹⁹ 10 Febrero 1857: Pedro Gasga, Francisco Merino, y José Sánchez, et al. a Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 32, AGPEO.

the degradation of the entire community. This was due to a lack of primary and secondary schools and a profound absence of interest among many residents – costeños and indígenas alike – in education. A separate incident in 1872 involved the seizure of guns from entrepreneurs in Pinotepa Nacional. They complained to the jefe político that the new militia commander had illegally seized their rifles used to protect business interests. They charged that the commander had unwittingly associated middle-class residents of Pinotepa Nacional with violent costeños from the bajos. They observed that officers had wrongly exempted the most dangerous people along the coast due to their military service. Meanwhile honorable entrepreneurs could not protect their businesses against “bandits and thieves.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, politicians and entrepreneurs employed language that associated Afro-Mexicans with violence and specific locations. They employed such indirect language to build on and modify the national discourse of blackness by drawing from spatial divisions and cultural constructs unique to the district.

During the Porfiriato, pronunciations of the region’s blackness and the link with geography became even more direct. Manuel Martínez Gracida’s *Cuadros Sinópticos* is perhaps the best-known example. Martínez Gracida offered an ethnographic, geographic, and historic examination of every rancho, hacienda, pueblo, villa, and municipio in the state. In particular, he identified five pueblos along the coast with large populations of Afro-Mexicans. When describing the people of one town he noted that “they are of the African race... of an indolent character with little affection for work and given to vices, principally the drinking of liquor.” He also noted that residents paid their taxes on time, and they “always have their long and sharp

¹⁰⁰ 6 Febrero 1872: M.C. Santaella, Juan Bautista Valle, José Pérez, Juan Gay, Francisco Villar, B. Miranda, Nicolás Tejada, Manuel María Ramírez, Cosme del Valle, José Pío V. González, Juan A. Zapata, Pedro Aguirre, José R. Carmona, José Rafael Pérez, Pedro Rivero, Franquilino Castañeda, José Cruz Álvarez a Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 38, AGPEO.

machetes” with them.¹⁰¹ State officials could now map blackness and all the accompanying assumptions such identities entailed in individual pueblos. In 1892, the jefe político corroborated Martínez Gracida’s conclusions. He observed that Mixtecs lived in closed communities in the sierra whereas Afro-Mexicans occupied the entire coastline, and in his estimation, there were very few connections linking the two. The landscape itself demarcated ethnicity. With euphemistic language, elites codified a lexicon of race and space based on the choices of local actors. Porfirian intellectuals in Oaxaca City built on this interplay of subaltern personal choice, the geography of race, and the national discourse of blackness to map Afro-Mexican communities into the state’s geography (See Figure 2.7).¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Martínez Gracida, 227, 236-38, 240-41.

¹⁰² “Parte expositiva Distrito de Jamiltepec,” in *Memorias Administrativas*. Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1892. For more on the relationship of mapping with identity and nationalism see, Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*.

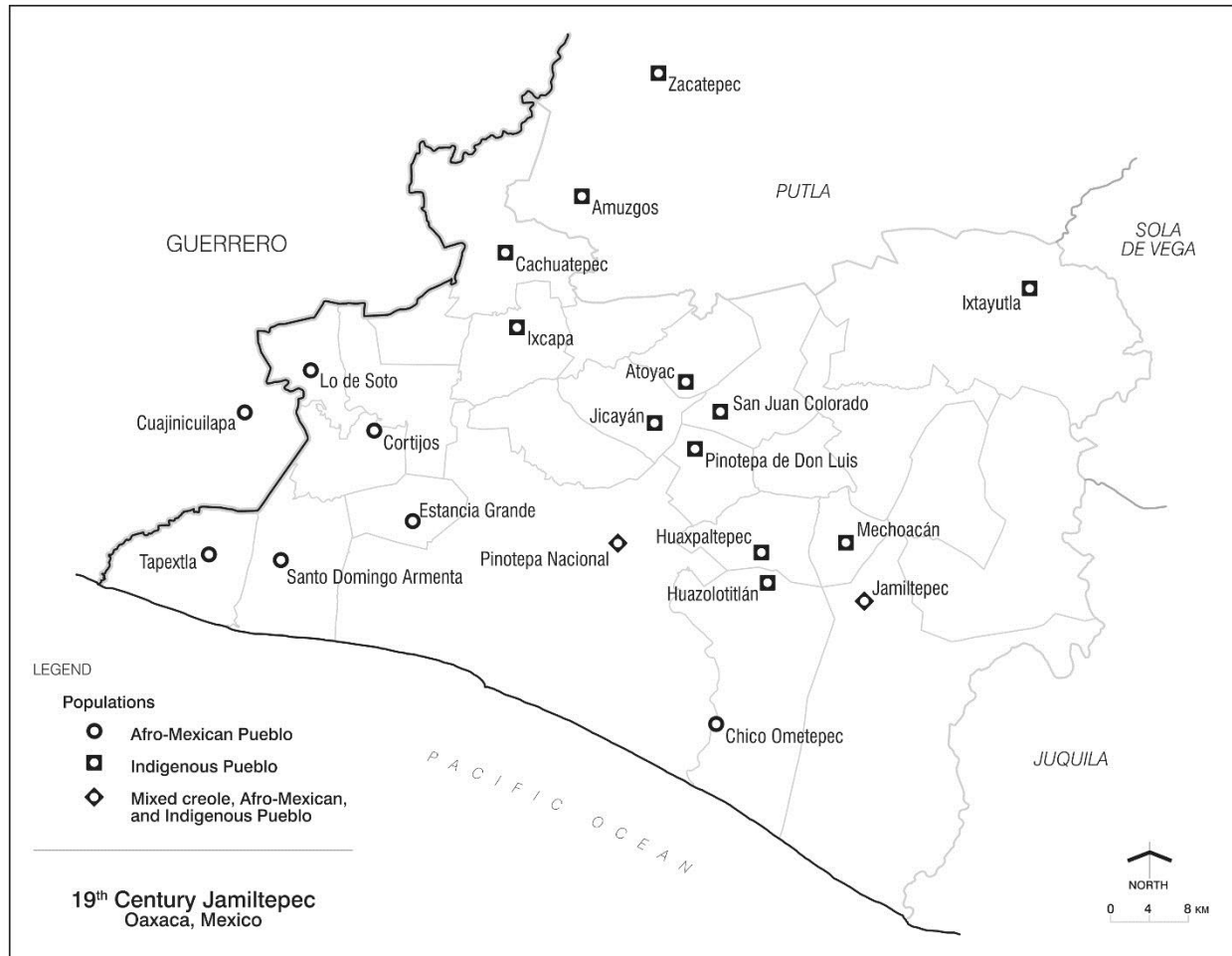


Figure 2.7: Ethnic and Racial Map of Jamiltepec Lester Jones, *Jones Maps & Diagrams*, 2016. Some of the larger pueblos illustrating how geography played a keyrole in defining race on the coast.

Martínez Gracida contradicted Antonio García Cubas with his assessment of Oaxaca's Afro-Mexican communities. He also provided a language for historians to unmask the hidden meanings of race in an otherwise seemingly post-racial period. The above examples illustrate that physical characteristics were not the leading factor when differentiating race and ethnicity. In this case, cultural practices highlight both cooperation and conflict. Language and linguistic ability illustrate another way that costeños asserted their racial identity. Regional geography separated indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities and provided a geographic space where cultural, linguistic, and economic differences flourished. Taken together, these examples provide

a framework for a closer analysis in subsequent chapters of how political, economic, and social developments affected these social constructs during the nineteenth century.

Conclusion: An End to Isolation

At daybreak in the city of Jamiltepec on June 17, 1894, “twenty-one canon bursts, fireworks, and cheers” marked the arrival of the telegraph. At “eight in the morning... a column of children adorned with tri-colored flags” marched past the church in an impressive parade. At nine, Jefe Político Cristóbal Palacios and all of the district’s most important government officials initiated a large gathering in the center of the city where “they were raising a scientific trophy... dedicated to the memory of Samuel Morse.” Palacios, “with eloquent phrases in the correct and gallant style, described the history of the sublime invention.” The arrival of a telegraph line to the region inspired “the people to express their enthusiasm with repeated applauses.” Residents assembled in the street later in the afternoon to dance as musicians played patriotic songs. During the night, planners illuminated public buildings, prominent homes, and the church. “At exactly nine the philharmonic bands from Pinotepa Nacional, Pinotepa de Don Luis, and Jamiltepec pleased the attendees with excellent symphonies.” Elite families capped off the day with a large fiesta in the zócalo that lasted until three that morning.¹⁰³

The arrival of the telegraph in 1894 seemingly broke the region’s long isolation. Apparently, the festival only commemorated the arrival of the line rather than the first correspondence. Residents had to wait more than a month for the first transmission. With less

¹⁰³ “Una mejora en Jamiltepec,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, June 26, 1894.

fanfare, Plutarco Gasga initiated the service from an office in Pinotepa Nacional. He transmitted a short message to the governor in Oaxaca City at 11:15 a.m. on August 5 thanking him for the establishment of the telegraph office.¹⁰⁴ No one could possibly understand at the time that the telegraph did not precede the railroad as many hoped. It did provide an important means of communication, however, when warfare once again erupted in the district during the 1910 Revolution. In terms of transportation, the district remained almost as isolated as it had been in 1852 when Staples' ship came to rest near the mouth of the Chacahua Lagoon. By the close of the Porfiriato, in fact, the district was almost as connected, and disconnected, as it had been throughout the colonial era and the nineteenth century. Residents traded products and goods with other parts of the Mixteca, Oaxaca City, Puebla, and Mexico City, but these examples conceal the fact that much had changed.

Dating back to the arrival of Lord 8-Deer, the region became an isolated but important trading center connected to the heart of the Mixteca. Mixtecs and Amuzgos traded cochineal, cocoa, and cotton throughout Mesoamerica and eventually Tenochtitlán. Spanish colonists in the early sixteenth century transformed the region when they introduced European livestock. Mixtecs continued to dominate regional demographics after the large decline in indigenous population in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Afro-Mexicans settled along the coast while a small number of Spanish merchants, laborers, and hacendados implemented imperial projects. The newly arrived Afro-Mexicans challenged Mixtec dominance, but for the most part, cooperation was more common with few incidents of inter-ethnic and racial violence. The war

¹⁰⁴ Plutarco Gasga to Gobernador del Estado, August 5, 1894, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 34, Expediente 50.

for independence revealed these tensions and foreshadowed a century of struggle to control land, access to natural resources, and commerce in the nineteenth century.

Investors transformed the regional economy as well from the lucrative cochineal trade to one that produced two highly profitable commodities. Entrepreneurs grew their landholdings with friendly mid-century liberal land laws to pasture goats in massive systems of haciendas volantes. In so doing, they denied important income to predominately Mixtec pueblos that historically rented lands to hacendados in the first half of the century. For Mixtecs, this combined with a loss of income when the cochineal trade declined and collapsed altogether in the 1850s. This one-two punch upset the historic balance of power that long favored Mixtecs. At the same time, Afro-Mexicans leveraged cotton production to gain autonomy with the help of powerful entrepreneurs hoping to protect profits. In terms of race, a number of factors were often more important than physical characteristics. Linguistic ability, culture, and geography helped demarcate racial and ethnic boundaries throughout this period, and in this sense, the patterns outlined in this chapter will help us analyze how race worked at the local level.

CHAPTER 3: Politics, Race, and War after Independence (1821-1846)

Atoyac Alcalde Melchor Reymundo reported to district officials in 1829 that his small pueblo of Mixtec farmers found the ideal citizen to meet the regular army's recruitment mandate. He wrote that twenty-year-old Lorenzo Mejía would soon report for duty. Reymundo communicated that Mejía, an unmarried laborer and "native of this pueblo," had a deceased mother and an "unknown" father. Interestingly, the alcalde included several clues as to why he believed Mejía would make a model recruit to serve as a third-class soldier. Reymundo stated that Mejía's marital status, absence of living parents, and lack of children gave him no legal exemptions and therefore made him less "able to evade armed service." Reymundo commented that as "a loner," or social outcast, Mejía was a good fit for the army because he did not "have someone he is in charge of."¹ His unmarried status and lack of personal contacts made Mejía at once an outsider in his own community and a perfect recruit as a soldier because he had no familial ties meaning he presumably would not desert.²

In July 1829, Pinotepa del Estado (Nacional) Alcalde José Aguirre sent a letter to military officials identifying two residents for impressment into the regular army. Aguirre cited that the first man, Manuel de Ábila, was fit for duty because of his status as an "orphan," and added that Ábila "is married, but does not see nor hear from his wife." Aguirre reassured federal authorities that Ábila would make a good example for others because his marital and employment status

¹ Melchor Reymundo, Nota calificativa del Ciudadano Recluta destinado al Ejército Permanente, July 26, 1829. AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 7. For more on the status of "loners" as a deviant form of masculinity see, Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 48-52.

² For more on how people viewed regular army conscripts and National Guard volunteers in Mexico see, Peter Guardino, *The Dead March: A History of the Mexican-American War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 163-166.

would illustrate what would happen to similar failed patriarchs in this community. Aguirre then turned to the second candidate, Manuel López, noting that he was a “descendent of an indigenous [parent] that speaks Castellano very well” and added that he lived “without a single obligation.” These reassurances accompanied a second report explaining why two deserters left their National Guard posts. Mariano Solís deserted “the 3rd Company of the National Guard,” and Pedro José fled from the “5th Infantry Regiment” to reunite with family.³ Aguirre’s odd juxtaposition implied that loners would make better soldiers because they did not have dependents that required the protection of a male head of household. Their low social status meant unattached men likely would not abscond from service in the same manner as others who authorities claimed had deserted to resume their roles as *padres de familia*.

Authorities throughout Jamiltepec looked for outcasts to press into military service in the 1820s and 1830s. The three men above had few ties binding them to their communities, and officials preferred them for precisely this reason. Many of these young men were orphans, and in almost every case, authorities listed the men as “idle.” Identifying them in this manner also suggests officials may have carefully selected this language to justify recruitment in the first place. Unemployed loners lacked honor after all as a “*padre de familia*” or “*hombre de bien*,” and local officials proclaimed in numerous examples that this was what made the recruits ideal for soldiering. Peter Beattie describes a similar phenomenon in Brazil after independence. He notes that an officers’ commission provided a means of social mobility, but local officials pressed unattached men into the lower ranks as a kind of “penal dumping ground.”⁴ Municipal

³ José Aguirre, José Anselmo Baños, Ramón Bargas y Juan José Esteves, *Calificación de las relativas que van de reemplazo al cupo de ejército*, July 28, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 7.

⁴ Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood*, 25.

authorities in Mexico during this time met military recruitment obligations through a quota system. Peter Guardino argues that officials in post-independence Mexico met such requirements on occasion with criminals, but he concludes that more often “authorities focused... on men deemed detrimental to local society.” Politicians continued using this colonial era practice after independence “to rid society of people who did not follow the norms.”⁵

These mid-1820s impressment cases illustrate the ways in which authorities modified colonial era social and political practices after independence. Chapter 3 explores this process in addition to the political mobilizations, economic developments, and cultural transformations in Jamiltepec from 1821 to the U.S. invasion. In particular, three popular mobilizations reveal how race and ethnicity intersected with politics. Afro-Mexican and Mixtec residents divided sharply in 1829 as President Guerrero fled to the coast in what historians have labelled the War of the South. In many ways, this represented a continuation of the violence from the independence war as Afro-Mexicans united with supporters from the modern state of Guerrero to the west and radical federalists in the Triqui region to the north. Some Mixtecs opposed the alliance and fought with his opponents, but for the most part, Mixtecs remained neutral as Guerrero’s coalition failed to restore him to the presidency. Race and ethnicity play less of a role in the era’s two other popular mobilizations in 1834 and 1846.

District leaders also attempted to resurrect the cochineal trade, agricultural production, and livestock ranching after independence in 1821. Afro-Mexican farmers sought to meet the substantial increase in demand for cotton after speculators transported modern gins and mechanized agricultural equipment to the region. These investments signaled expected growth in

⁵ Peter Guardino, “Gender, Soldiering, and Citizenship,” 32.

this economic sector to well beyond colonial era levels and helps explain some of the political decisions Afro-Mexicans made after independence. While many Jamiltepec residents avoided engaging in national politics, Afro-Mexicans overwhelmingly supported Guerrero. They had close ties to the former general because many residents served in his army during the independence war. Guerrero also ended slavery during his short term in office putting coastal cotton producers on equal footing with competitors in Texas who before 1829 relied on slave labor. Farmers and speculators had similar interests in this regard. Ending slavery in Texas would benefit cotton production in Jamiltepec. Mixtecs did not have similar financial concerns or as many personal ties to Guerrero, and they seemed to have interpreted the alliance, comprised of surrounding racial and ethnic groups with recent histories of violence during the independence war, as a threat. These political divisions during the War of the South therefore illustrate how economics, history, and politics intersected with race after independence.

Political violence increased in the 1830s. Authorities disparaged Afro-Mexicans in Jamiltepec as bandits after Guerrero's defeat, but a perceived challenge to the cultural authority of the Catholic Church provided an opportunity for residents to form a broad coalition in 1834. Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs joined district elites and condemned what they argued was a Liberal attack on ecclesiastic authority. They united in support of the conservative Plan de Cuernavaca that propelled Santa Anna to the presidency. The alliance quickly dissolved as Santa Anna attacked individual pueblo authority and the federalist system. Centralizing power in Mexico City also set up a crisis in Texas where immigrants from the U.S. proclaimed their independence from Mexico in 1836 in order to protect slavery. Afro-Mexican farmers consequently had compelling cultural and economic reasons for continuing to support Santa Anna. Speculators in Texas and in the United States, who relied on slavery, flooded Mexican markets with

inexpensive cotton cloth in the late 1830s and early 1840s. This strengthened the alliance between Afro-Mexican farmers and investors as they successfully appealed to protect the national textile industry. Farmers on the coast thus worked to protect their economic interests even if that support undermined federalism and local autonomy. In 1846, Afro-Mexicans formed an integral component of the cross-racial coalition to protect national sovereignty and their rights as citizens. Race and ethnicity played a less central role than the evidence suggests in these political mobilizations. Locals instead had complex personal, political, and economic motives for participating in post-independence politics.

Part 1: Partisanship and Popular Mobilizations (1821-1831)

Elites in Oaxaca City created the state's first political parties during the 1822 city council election. Leaders named "themselves *aceites* or oils and their opponents *vinagres* or vinegars" to illustrate historic racial and class differences between them and the city's multi-racial popular classes. The former colonial capital had long been a melting pot of sorts for Oaxaca's sixteen indigenous groups as well as free and enslaved Afro-Mexicans.⁶ They championed federalism and local control whereas *aceites* insisted on a strong central government. This translated to the local level where leaders across the state often adapted party affiliations to suit their political ambitions. In Huajuapán Antonio de León formed an alliance with the *vinagres* in Oaxaca City, but Benjamin Smith persuasively argues that this affiliation reflected de León's political ambition more than his dedication to federalism.⁷ In the absence of a charismatic leader like de

⁶ Guardino, *The Time of Liberty*, 179-80.

⁷ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 128.

León Jamiltepec residents had fewer direct ties to either party. Manuel María Fagoaga, a prominent regional landowner, maintained influence over district politics even though he resided in Oaxaca City where he acted as “one of the most important aceites.”⁸ In spite of this connection, the lack of references to parties in official correspondence suggests that local leaders hid their affiliations and attempted to keep Oaxaca City’s numerous partisan disputes from reaching Jamiltepec. Elites nonetheless developed significant divisions by the late 1820s.

Partisan disputes defined politics at the national level as well after independence. Agustín de Iturbide (1822-1823) served for a short period as Mexico’s first emperor, but Victoria (1824-1829) helped stabilize the young republic when he assumed the presidency. The stability did not last beyond his term beginning with General Guerrero’s electoral defeat to Manuel Gómez Pedraza. Both men were federalists, but Gómez Pedraza opposed Guerrero due to his supposed unacceptable radicalism. Nevertheless, Guerrero had a large majority of popular support throughout Mexico that the politicians who controlled Mexico’s post-independence electoral system ignored when they selected Gómez Pedraza as president. In response, Guerrero revolted and charged that elites conspired against his popular coalition. In fact, Santa Anna joined Guerrero’s alliance sending him to the presidency and Gómez Pedraza into exile.⁹ Guerrero wasted no time and used the inaugural address on April 1, 1829 to announce his plan for a more inclusive government. This angered opponents, but the president fueled even more opposition by supporting universal male suffrage and abolishing slavery on September 16, 1829.¹⁰

⁸ Guardino, *The Time of Liberty*, 190.

⁹ Santa Anna worked with local political opponents of Fagoaga in Oaxaca to undermine his term as governor before meeting with Guerrero in Tehuacán in January 1829. Jorge Fernando Iturrigarria, *Historia de Oaxaca 1821-1854: De la consumación de la Independencia a la iniciación de la Reforma* (México, D.F.: Ediciones E.R.B., 1935), 110; 139-42.

¹⁰ Vincent, “The Contributions of Mexico’s First Black Indian President,” 152-153.

In Jamiltepec, Francisco Rodríguez responded to news of Guerrero's ascension to the presidency days after his inauguration. Rodríguez wrote to his superiors in Oaxaca City that "he made all of the pueblos in this district understand" that the "Benemérito [distinguished man] de la Patria don Vicente Guerrero" was now president of the Republic.¹¹ Another official remarked that residents from all the pueblos had voted to support the general "with sweet satisfaction."¹² Unlike in the state capital and Mexico City, district authorities seemed to experience the transition to Guerrero's presidency with little popular opposition. Their lack of party affiliation allowed them to adapt to the new political environment, and it helped that residents widely supported Guerrero. This support reflects their experiences with his army during the independence war, the form of federalism he promoted, and his abolition of slavery decree.¹³ By the end of the summer, a few desertions among Mixtecs corresponded with what Rodríguez characterized as an unwillingness to send replacement recruits among "unhappy indígenas," but he declared that otherwise the district was relatively peaceful.¹⁴

Vinagres used Guerrero's victory to enforce an outdated law calling for the expulsion of Spaniards. Federal politicians enacted legislation expelling Spaniards immediately after independence, but the discovery of a plot to reconquer Mexico in 1827 motivated officials to

¹¹ Francisco Rodríguez a Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 21, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 12.

¹² Manuel Loaeza a Secretario de Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 13, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 12.

¹³ James Sanders notes that in Mexico "subalterns knew of, were interested in, and sought to take part in the life of the new nation-states." This extended to abolition among Afro-Mexicans who quickly incorporated "the rhetoric of the Atlantic Age of Revolution." Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World*, 56. Sanders also links popular mobilizations among Afro-Colombians in the nineteenth century with support for abolition and equal citizenship rights. He notes that even though subaltern actors rarely emphasized this connection using specific language this support transformed into action at ballot boxes and on battlefields. See, Sanders, *Contentious Republicans*, 59-66.

¹⁴ Francisco Rodríguez a Secretario de Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 4, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 12.

enforce the decree for the first time.¹⁵ By 1829, this filtered down to the state and district levels. Jamiltepec Gobernador de Distrito Manuel Loaeza satisfied vinagres by identifying three Spaniards (Valentín Fernández, Antonio Haro, and Jacinto Pérez) as no longer having the necessary legal “protection” to remain in the district and advocated enforcing the Expulsion Decree.¹⁶ A few weeks later Loaeza’s successor, Francisco Rodríguez, wrote an appeal to halt the dismissal. He articulated the aceite position and claimed that the action would be unlawful since the men were unaware of the federal requirement.¹⁷ Vinagres in control at the state level worked toward expulsion, but Rodríguez defended the men as honorable residents who made valuable contributions to the regional economy. He only managed to generate sympathy for Haro by pointing out the man’s advanced age and weak physical condition. Authorities complied with Rodríguez’s request and issued the exception citing Haro’s “physical impediment.”¹⁸ Rodríguez found few allies in the vinagre-run government in Oaxaca City, but contrasting the two approaches illustrates how local politicians engaged in party politics.

As the above example demonstrates, elites at the local level participated in partisan debates, but searching for the occasional elite political disagreement ignores how the popular classes interacted with the state after independence. Military recruitment tactics and desertion cases provide a window into this interaction and illustrate how ordinary soldiers voiced their displeasure with the military’s quota system, impressment policies, and harsh conditions. One

¹⁵ Will Fowler, *Mexico in the Age of Proposals, 1821-1853* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 50-51.

¹⁶ Manuel Loaeza a Secretario del Gobernador, April 14, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 14.

¹⁷ Francisco Rodríguez a Secretario del Gobernador, April 21, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 14.

¹⁸ Bocanegra, El Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Relaciones, April 29, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 14. Antonio López de Santa Anna was apparently quite active during 1829 expelling Spaniards as well. Will Fowler argues that between 1824 and 1828 Santa Anna only applied expulsion laws to Spanish rivals and did not apply the laws to close associates. However, Fowler notes in “1829 [Santa Anna] became particularly active in applying the laws.” Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 118.

case from August 1829 suggests that desertions increased dramatically at the end of the decade. An inter-ethnic and cross-racial group of thirty-one oaxaqueños deserted their posts and fled “to the mountain range” in the northern area of Jamiltepec.¹⁹ Officials rarely provide insight into why men in such instances decided to flee service. Perhaps their popular identification as men without honor combined with the army’s harsh living conditions inspired the men to desert in unison. Authorities emphasized that the deserters stayed together in the mountains and did not attempt to reunite with their families. Such behavior suggests many of them fit official preferences for unattached men described in the opening of this chapter.

Officials used colonial caste system designates in their description of the deserters to stress cross-racial cooperation. Authorities identified indigenous soldiers as “indígena” and listed others as “de razón.” They followed these descriptions with a reference to skin color and physical characteristics. In one example, they declared that Miguel Domínguez was a man of reason, “de razón,” with “dark skin color..., curly hair..., [and a] flat nose.”²⁰ In this instance, they applied caste system physical designations without including a racial category beyond “indígena” or “de razón.” Authorities wrote that other men were “de razón,” to indicate they spoke Spanish, with varying degrees of “dark” or “pink” skin tones. Officials identified most of the deserters as indígenas, but officers implied that many of the men had Afro-Mexican heritage. They stressed the men’s racial identities to emphasize that these soldiers discarded traditional boundaries and cooperated with one another in the mass desertion. By August, authorities captured all the deserters, and military officials oversaw a march of the offenders to Oaxaca City

¹⁹ Francisco Rodríguez a Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 5, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 11.

²⁰ Bernardo de Ortega a Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 5, 1829, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 11.

for more regular army service.²¹ This case coincides with an increase in desertions preserved in the archival record at the end of the decade and suggests that enlisted soldiers frequently resisted fulfilling individual pueblo recruitment quotas as the political fortunes of generals at the national level quickly changed.

The War of the South (1829-1831)

It seems Guerrero's opponents on both sides felt he overstepped his authority when it came to abolition. In the fall of 1829, Conservative leader Alamán convinced Vice President Anastasio Bustamante to assume control over the presidency, and Guerrero's formidable Conservative and Liberal opponents backed the takeover. The former general had no choice but to leave office and seek refuge with supporters along the Pacific coast.²² Guerrero and his allies found willing partners among Afro-Mexicans in Jamiltepec. Juan Bruno, an independence era ally of Guerrero's from Putla, led a faction of what authorities described as "bandits" into the Afro-Mexican pueblo Cortijos where "he managed to seduce some people" to take up arms. Government forces caught the group in Cortijos where Bruno "had enticed them to revolt." Authorities claimed that with help of residents from nearby Mixtec pueblos the military drove Bruno and his supporters out of the region.²³ This report seems unlikely because a different account from officer Joaquín Ramírez y Sesma detailed that Bruno's force engaged his unit before they could reach Cortijos. He estimated that Bruno had fifty soldiers under his command

²¹ Mariano de Quintas y Aguilar a Vice Gobernador, August 11, 1829, AGPEO, Desertores, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Legajo 12, Expediente 11.

²² Iturribarría, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo I, 163-65; Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 125-27.

²³ "México 9 de agosto de 1830," *El Gladiador*, August 9, 1830, 2; Iturribarría, *Historia de Oaxaca, 1821-1854*, 166-67.

that attacked from all sides forcing Ramírez to withdraw. Bruno and his Afro-Mexican allies from Cuajinicuilapa and Cortijos fought government forces to a standstill.²⁴

Jamiltepec official José Régules sent a panicked communication asking the governor of Oaxaca for help in January 1831. He reported that another revolutionary, Manuel Medina, entered the pueblo of Amuzgos and threatened the town's residents. Régules charged that "the bandit Medina, after he had committed some robberies and carried prisoners with him," took off "in the direction of Putla."²⁵ He noted that a small militia unit from Huazolotitlán marched in the direction of Amuzgos, but they could not arrive in time to confront Medina. This was bad news for district officials. Medina formed another component of the uprising in support of Guerrero, and like Bruno, Medina began his movement in Putla. The two men joined Hilario "*Hilarión*" Alonso who led a revolt in the nearby Triqui community Copala. As supporters of Guerrero in the War of the South, all three men had a similar hatred for the remaining Spanish residents. This demonstrated that ethnic and racial resentments extended beyond indigenous communities. Benjamin Smith notes that Alonso's first act of rebellion in 1829 was "to decapitate Spanish landowner Tomás Esperón." For his part, one of Medina's first acts "was to execute the '*gachupín*' [pejorative term for Spaniard] military commander José P. Quintana."²⁶

Medina's expeditions into Mixtec and Amuzgo pueblos continued through the spring. In March, Régules renewed his appeal to state authorities for help due to more invasions from "the rebel Medina." He related that the residents of Zacatepec, who he added do not speak Spanish, reported Medina's men committed several crimes. He also noted that authorities stationed in the

²⁴ "Gobierno General," *El Sol*, October 6, 1830, 1.

²⁵ José Régules a Secretario de Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 16, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 4.

²⁶ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 110.

nearby Afro-Mexican pueblo Cortijos failed to respond and help their Mixtec neighbors.²⁷ Régules pledged additional troops and a permanent army presence in the region after a report described a third Medina incursion in Zacatepec and Amuzgos.²⁸ Bruno's perhaps more menacing presence continued as well throughout the summer of 1831. Régules noted that he received word "the gang of Juan Bruno" had marched to Tlapa (located in the modern state of Guerrero) with "all the individuals of Cortijos accompany[ing] him." Régules reported that peace returned to the region with their departure because numerous residents "abandoned their labors for the cause of war."²⁹ Commander Nicolás Condelle related that Bruno raised more than one hundred men to oppose the federal government during his time recruiting soldiers in coastal communities. He advised government forces to use caution.³⁰

The primarily indigenous coalition from outside the region of Mixtecs and Triquis from Putla and Copala to the north transformed into a largely Afro-Mexican alliance in Jamiltepec. Mixtec and Amuzgo residents from inside the district avoided joining the alliance. Bruno marshalled prolonged resistance on both sides of the border in Afro-Mexican pueblos surrounding Cuajinicuilapa and Cortijos. This continued through the summer even after Bustamante supporters captured Guerrero in Acapulco in January 1831 and transported him to Oaxaca City. They held him in the nearby town Cuilapan where officials tried and executed him on February 14, 1831 (See Figure 3.1).³¹ Interestingly, indigenous residents in Jamiltepec either

²⁷ José Régules a Vice Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 22, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 2.

²⁸ José Régules a Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 12, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 4.

²⁹ José Régules a Secretario de Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 5, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 15.

³⁰ "Sección auxiliar del Sur," *El Sol*, April 17, 1831, 3.

³¹ For more on Guerrero's trial and execution see, Vincent, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero*, 202-08; Iturrubarría, *Historia de Oaxaca, 1821-1854*, 157-81.

remained neutral or, in some cases, fought against Guerrero and his supporters. Perhaps this was because of their position between two groups of people with whom they had fought on several occasions during the independence war. Memories of inter-ethnic conflicts surely alarmed many people in these communities, and the combination of the Putla-based alliance with Afro-Mexicans to their south likely squeezed Mixtecs in Jamiltepec who found themselves in the middle of two recent enemies.



Figure 3.1: Photographs of Vicente Guerrero's Memorial The photo on the right is where Guerrero spent his final days. The statue erected in the twentieth century faces the cell. Photo courtesy Amanda Milstead, 2014.

District authorities attempted to avoid chaos by working to establish order in Cortijos. In early 1831 they named the pueblo an official Subprefecture of the district and assigned a *Juez de Paz* (Justice of the Peace) to reside permanently in the town. This likely stemmed from Bruno's

and Medina's success recruiting the pueblo's residents.³² Régules had other reasons as well to maintain order after locals in Cortijos applied for a tax extension because the violence had greatly reduced their "fortunes."³³ Régules planned a visit to the pueblo so that he could personally collect taxes, meet with individual residents, and compile an accurate census.³⁴ The effects of the War of the South consumed the bulk of Régules' time throughout the late summer and early fall. He compiled a lengthy report in October, and in it he stated that the district had several serious problems. To begin, officials failed to collect necessary taxes in the areas where Bruno's army had been active. To make matters worse, he noted that these pueblos also had severe food shortages since so many farmers had abandoned their crops. Régules asked the state for possible options to delay tax obligations since he believed that a payment would not be possible.³⁵ He took an additional step and formed a new government in Cortijos to ensure accurate tax collection.³⁶ The failure to meet tax obligations and the Bruno revolt likely factored into a December 1831 order to ban machetes away from agricultural work in coastal communities.³⁷ Régules' experience with Bruno and his Afro-Mexican supporters clearly influenced the official to enact the new law. After all, he represented one of the authorities that many Afro-Mexicans violently rejected.

³² José Régules a Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 11, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 2.

³³ José Régules a Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 31, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 6.

³⁴ José Régules a Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 21, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 7.

³⁵ José Régules a Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 28, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 7.

³⁶ José Régules a Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 25, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 49.

³⁷ José M. Régules to Gobernador del Estado, December 5, 1831, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 2.

The War of the South helped transform contentious partisan politics into popular mobilizations and armed confrontations. At first glance it seems that Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs divided along racial lines during the crisis. However, a closer analysis reveals that race and ethnicity was only one factor in these divisions. The Mixtec decision to remain neutral or confront Guerrero allies may actually reflect a popular interpretation of events through independence era history associating Triquis and Afro-Mexicans with violence. In fact, Guerrero supporters contributed to such an understanding when they marched to Amuzgo and Mixtec pueblos to settle scores rather than recruit partners. Afro-Mexicans, mestizos, and Triquis seemingly had no issue forming this coalition and apparently welcomed the cross-racial alliance. Mixtecs, conversely, may have understandably focused on the hostility toward their pueblos and remained isolated as a means of self-defense. Analyzing these popular mobilizations illustrates the danger that scholars face when interpreting Afro-indigenous interactions along the peaceful/violence paradigm. Local documents indicate that race and ethnicity played less of a role during the War of the South. In this case, Triquis supported federalism, and Afro-Mexicans joined radical federalists to defend citizenship, autonomy, and abolition. Mixtecs had many of the same objectives and acted accordingly to protect their communities. This suggests that economic and cultural factors could push these opponents together on a different occasion.

Part 2: *“To Defend our Religion”* (1832-1836)

During the War of the South, many Afro-Mexicans in the region mobilized in support of Guerrero. The revolt also foreshadowed greater political instability at the local and national levels. Partisan politics during this time divided much of Mexican society, and locals in

Jamiltepec understood that these divisions had important repercussions regarding who controlled district and municipal governments. In other words, authorities affiliated with a given party could appoint corrupt local officials. This was precisely the case following the War of the South. Residents objected that officials in Jamiltepec had overstepped their authority. Locals may have had to tolerate such behavior in the past, but the effectiveness of mobilizations during the independence war and the War of the South meant that elites had to govern differently than their predecessors did in the colonial era. As a result, many officials realized after independence that harnessing popular sentiment could help them realize their personal political goals. Defense of the Catholic Church against an unpopular Liberal government in Mexico City provided an ideal opportunity for leaders to command a powerful cross-racial coalition even though the politicians they supported at the national level threatened to undermine the federalist system.

In the early 1830s, residents protested on several occasions that officials abused their authority. In one example from 1832 Antonio Calvo alleged that the *Juez de Primera Instancia* (lower court judge) in Juquila failed to investigate corruption charges Calvo filed against 1st Alcalde Manuel Escamilla. Calvo testified that Escamilla with “his black vengeance” had arrested and detained Calvo in 1830 for months without filing formal charges. He declared that Escamilla frequently bound Calvo in shackles during his imprisonment, but Escamilla countered that he arrested Calvo because the man stole three pistols and a saber. Calvo denied the theft and offered proof that, in addition to owning the weapons, he had proper licenses. He believed that upon hearing the complaint the Juez did not investigate to avoid angering Escamilla. Calvo explained that he only escaped with the unlikely help of Comandante Rafael Pimentel and moved to the city of Jamiltepec where he agreed to serve in the National Guard. Calvo then indicated that all authorities in the district abused their authority. He claimed upon entering a “peaceful

pueblo” his unit witnessed numerous costeños “living in stagnating” conditions without access to basic necessities. He blamed men like Escamilla and declared that they “only come... to this miserable country” as a matter of political expediency or to collect taxes. He declared that Mixtecs lived in similar conditions and attributed “the sad state... the costeños and indígenas are in” to officials who “do not serve justice.”³⁸

Calvo’s lengthy case file contains correspondence and testimony dating back to 1830. This suggests that by 1832 state and district officials finally took Calvo’s charges seriously, and it implies that Calvo was a man of higher social standing. For his part, Escamilla responded to the charges in 1832 with a letter stating he arrested the man after witnessing him throw knives at an image of *Señora del Rosario* (Our Lady of the Rosary). Escamilla maintained that Calvo also had a saber and stated the decision to arrest came after Calvo failed to produce a license.³⁹ However, this contradicted Escamilla’s prior statement from 1830. At that time, he put forth a female resident from Juquila who testified that Calvo stole the pistols and saber from her.⁴⁰ Thus, Escamilla provided two different, and conflicting, testimonies as to why he arrested Calvo. The Juez de Primera Instancia Joaquín Lucía Núñez in Juquila provided authorities with compelling testimony that he had given Escamilla proof Calvo had the proper authorization to possess the weapons back in 1830. Unfortunately, the record ends abruptly without evidence of how, or if,

³⁸ Antonio Calvo a Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 1, 1832, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 5.

³⁹ Manuel Escamilla, Joaquín Núñez y Francisco Antonio Rodríguez a Gobernador de Jamiltepec, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 5.

⁴⁰ Francisco Antonio Rodríguez, J. Núñez y Luis Gonzaga Núñez a Gobernador de Jamiltepec, February 7, 1830, AGPEO, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 5.

officials resolved the case.⁴¹ Calvo more than likely struck a deal with authorities after they accepted Lucía Núñez's evidence and weighed Escamilla's contradictory testimony.

In another example from 1832 Leonardo Copto, a "resident of Juquila," charged that military officials wrongly pressed him into the army after he stopped near town to let his mule drink water. He explained that he encountered a military patrol that accused him of stealing the animal. Officers imprisoned Copto in the same location where Escamilla held Calvo. Copto provided proof that he owned the mule and informed them he intended to sell it to a local woman for \$40 Pesos. An unnamed lieutenant interrogating Copto apparently did not believe the story. The official held Copto and refused to provide food and water. Copto alleged that the lieutenant also wrongfully accused the man of desertion. He offered evidence to counter the charge demonstrating that he served honorably in the army, but his captor rejected the testimony. Copto's wife arrived at the jail soon thereafter to bring food and corroborate his story. An officer informed the woman that her husband would depart soon as an impressed soldier bound for service in California. She obtained help from a local man, don Manuel Mejía, who corroborated Copto's claims. Mejía stated that as an "hombre de bien" Copto was an honorable man with a family. Mejía had enough social standing to convince authorities of Copto's honor, and they decided to free the veteran.⁴² These two cases provide a rare window into how ordinary citizens used appeals to protect themselves and their families from abuses of authority. Many Afro-Mexican and indigenous residents nevertheless had a more difficult time finding the same kind

⁴¹ Joaquín Lucía Núñez – Certifico, February 29, 1832, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, AGPEO, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 5.

⁴² Leonardo Copto a Gobernador de Jamiltepec José María Regules, May 7, 1832, AGPEO, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 6.

of support that Calvo and Copto managed. In many cases, patrons like Mejía proclaimed masculine honor and familial economics to protect otherwise vulnerable citizens.

Officials at the national level often exceeded their authority as well during what one can only describe as a politically chaotic period. Opponents forced Bustamante out of the presidency in September 1832, and Melchor Múzquiz took over as leader of “a caretaker government” before he “in turn gave way to Manuel Gómez Pedraza.” Supporters tapped him to “fill out his ‘constitutional’ term, which supposedly had been interrupted when his 1828 opponent, Vicente Guerrero, usurped power.”⁴³ Santa Anna assumed the presidency in 1833, but he quickly turned the office over to his vice president, Valentín Gómez Farías, a Liberal reformer. He alienated supporters by seeking counsel from Liberal José María Luis Mora who urged Gómez Farías to limit the power and influence of the church.⁴⁴ Will Fowler argues that due to their plan “to impose a wide range of reforms that limited the power of both the army and the clergy” opponents “did not take long to react.”⁴⁵ They announced the Plan de Cuernavaca in 1834 demanding that Santa Anna return as president. The plan had immediate support at the local level due to Gómez Farías’ overreach, but followers of Santa Anna in Jamiltepec advocated for a change in administration rather than an end to the federalist system. This resembles what Michael Ducey concludes happened in the Huasteca where officials voiced “support only for the plan ... not changing the form of government.”⁴⁶ In contrast, Benjamin Smith finds that support

⁴³ Charles A. Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821-1853* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 110.

⁴⁴ Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora*, 125.

⁴⁵ Fowler, *Mexico in the Age of Proposals*, 22.

⁴⁶ Ducey, *A Nation of Villages*, 114.

for the church in the Mixteca Baja coincided with a preference among regional officials for a strong central government.⁴⁷

Local Priest José Cleto Bendejo was the first, and perhaps most outspoken, cleric to face charges of promoting revolution against Gómez Farías in early 1834. He publicly condemned the government's anti-church policies, and his harsh rhetoric prompted General Estevan Moctezuma to fine the priest an outrageous sum of \$2,000 Pesos. Moctezuma claimed he witnessed the priest engage "in the revolution [we] last had in this territory."⁴⁸ Cleto Bendejo successfully challenged the hefty fine, but officials debated whether or not he should forfeit his role in the church. He became more confrontational in March when the Alcalde of Juquila testified that Cleto Bendejo publicly expressed his disdain for the local government. The alcalde related that in a private conversation during a social function Cleto Bendejo "insult[ed] me... saying to me that I was a drunk scoundrel." Cleto Bendejo then berated politicians don José María Espinosa and don Juan José Valencia "for carrying out the policies of our government." He warned them that executing the Liberal policies were "the practice and hidden spirit that has driven them from principle with their [anti-clerical] allies."⁴⁹ Jamiltepec administrator Julián González transcribed the testimony and supplemented it with a district-level recommendation that authorities strip Cleto Bendejo of his duties and expel him from the region.

Barbara Tenenbaum argues that Gómez Farías' policy toward the church had more to do with economic reform rather than an ideological opposition. In her estimation, Liberal officials saw divesting the church of "all nonessential property" as an easy means to fill the otherwise

⁴⁷ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 134.

⁴⁸ Julián González a Secretario del Despacho del Estado de Oaxaca, January 14, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Asuntos Eclesiásticos, Legajo 27, Expediente 22.

⁴⁹ Julián González a Secretario del Despacho de Oaxaca, April 19, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Asuntos Eclesiásticos, Legajo 27, Expediente 22.

empty treasury.⁵⁰ While it seems unlikely that this was solely an economic attack, Liberals certainly sensed an opportunity to assume control over the institution's formidable land and assets. Their policy also helps explain Cleto Bendejo's actions. A few days before the Alcalde of Juquila reported the confrontation above, the *Cofradía de Guadalupe* (religious confraternity of Guadalupe) paid their taxes with 70 head of cattle. Officials worried that cofradía members from Cleto Bendejo's parish made the payment with stolen livestock. He confirmed their suspicions and warned that other parishioners would compensate authorities in the same manner if officials did not accept the payment.⁵¹ The priest's involvement suggests that members of his parish offered the cattle to meet new tax obligations Liberals levied against their cofradía, and residents in other communities expressed similar anger for the tax. Reports reached authorities in the city of Jamiltepec that Marcos Copala y Cruz, a Spanish citizen, led an insurrection in Cuajinicuilapa against the Liberal government. Officials worried that the unrest might spill across the border into Cortijos as it had during the War of the South.⁵² The involvement of a pro-church Spaniard and a radical priest in Afro-Mexican and Mixtec communities indicates that virtually all residents found protecting the church and its resources particularly appealing.

Threats of rebellion forced authorities to enter into uneasy partnerships with former adversaries. Julián González notified state officials in February that Manuel Medina had returned to the region. González acknowledged Medina's formal rank of Captain in the regular army and related "Medina... among other criminals... brought the *Regidor* [Regent] from Amuzgos

⁵⁰ Barbara A. Tenenbaum, "The Making of a Fait Accompli: Mexico and the Provincias Internas, 1776-1846," in *The Origins of Mexican National Politics, 1808-1847*, ed. Jaime E. Rodríguez O. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1997), 94.

⁵¹ Mariano Méndez a Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 25, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 8.

⁵² Julián González a Gobernador del Estado, April 8, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 19.

Ignacio Peleaz.” González believed that Medina and Peleaz worked out of Amuzgos “to forge... a conspiracy” against his government.⁵³ Desperate leaders indicated that they had few options but to ally with Medina, a Liberal, to maintain order. A few days later, González applied the honorific title of “don” to Medina and complied with a “supreme order” that “put in [Medina’s] hands... a party that has destined itself for command headquarters.”⁵⁴ Such actions illustrate that officials understood the depth of popular sentiment mounting against them, and they feared that Medina’s ultimate intention was to overthrow their regime and establish what Benjamin Smith labels a radical federalist government. Radical federalists commanded factions in Copala and Putla championing the “liberating ethos of popular suffrage, village rule, and political autonomy” that seemingly threatened politicians like González.⁵⁵ Dating back to the War of the South many Afro-Mexicans found this popular ideology particularly appealing.

González warned state officials about the danger of allowing Medina safe passage through the district. He penned a short letter to the governor recognizing the threat that the pro-church factions posed, but he also noted that having Medina traverse the district with armed men was an equally dangerous strategy.⁵⁶ In particular, González objected that the local commander gave Medina “a crate of ammunition.” He warned that arming Medina in Cuajinicuilapa, where he led a serious revolt less than two years beforehand, could pose significant problems for the regional government. Nevertheless, González stated that he would obey the order “for the [good]

⁵³ Julián González a Secretario del Despacho de Oaxaca, February 11, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 9.

⁵⁴ Julián González a Secretario del Despacho de Oaxaca, February 17, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 9.

⁵⁵ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 110.

⁵⁶ Julián González a Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 25, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 2.

of the Republic.”⁵⁷ Medina apparently achieved the results officials sought when they allied with his private militia. He captured revolutionary leaders don Manuel Castilla and don Albino de la Peña.⁵⁸ González did not include a description of what these men did. The Copala y Cruz case from above, and Medina’s location in Cuajinicuilapa, suggest that they led pro-church factions in Afro-Mexican communities. It seems that officials acted wisely by entering into this alliance since Medina presumably garnered popular support in the same pueblos.

Supporters formally announced the Plan de Cuernavaca on May 25, 1834 by calling for a restoration of the church and the return of Santa Anna.⁵⁹ It took less than a month for the movement to spread to the region. The first signs of unrest came in mid-June when a district administrator notified military officials in Juquila that José Miguel Peña in Tututepec had announced his support for the plan. The official urged that they too should join the revolt “to defend our religion.”⁶⁰ Julián González indicated that there had been popular support for the plan since May 31. In a letter to the governor, González reported that he had received word of a pronunciamiento in Juquila whereby supporters caused “disorder” and shouted “in favor of Canalizo and centralism.”⁶¹ He claimed that a similar gathering took place in Tututepec, but authorities in both cases quickly restored order. Ramón Narvaez in Huazolotitlán communicated

⁵⁷ Julián González a Secretario del Despacho de Oaxaca, March 10, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 9.

⁵⁸ Julián González a Comandante Militar de Jamiltepec y Comandante General de Oaxaca, AGPEO, March 18, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 9.

⁵⁹ Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 154. Elites, in particular, cited restoration of the religious *fuero* (legal exemption) when they announced the plan. For more on the attacks on fueros under Gómez Farías see, Hale, *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora*, 131-36.

⁶⁰ Baucilio Dias a Lieutenant Coronel don Andrés la Flor, June 17, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 6.

⁶¹ Julián González a Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 17, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 9. As we will see, adherents to the Plan at the national level supported a strong centralized government, and José Valentín Raimundo Canalizo Bocadillo was most likely the reference. He was a strong advocate of centralism and close Santa Anna ally. See, Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 234-37; Iturriarría, *Historia de Oaxaca, 1821-1854*, 195-96.

to district authorities that he “notified [residents] to support the pronunciamiento.”⁶² Another official from Huazolotitlán stated a day later that virtually all residents “in the bajos... support the pronunciamiento.”⁶³ Mariano Méndez offered the first coherent statement on the spread of the revolt in early July. He notified Antonio de León that citizens throughout the district adhered to “the Plan de Cuernavaca.”⁶⁴ Santiago Narvaez in Huazolotitlán added that officials representing the pueblo and “the bajos” supported the “Plan de Cuernavaca” with a unanimous vote and made it a retroactive law dating back to the beginning of July.⁶⁵ Thus, Afro-Mexicans in the region’s bajos entered into an alliance to defend the church with their neighbors in the majority Mixtec pueblo Huazolotitlán.

Throughout the district officials expressed widespread support for Santa Anna. In one case, authorities in Tututepec and Juquila attempted to maintain their allegiance to Gómez Farías. One alcalde bluntly stated that if he recognized the plan then “indios... will not respect other signed orders.”⁶⁶ De León himself ordered the removal of this man and effectively ended any small pockets of resistance by the end of July.⁶⁷ Afro-Mexicans, mestizos, and Mixtecs acted together to end Gómez Farías’ presidency because they believed his attacks on the church were an unacceptable abuse of authority. This cross-racial and multi-ethnic coalition followed less than a decade after residents sharply divided over whether or not to support Guerrero. The

⁶² Ramón Narváez a Coronel Julián González, June 27, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Milicia Nacional, Legajo 28, Expediente 2.

⁶³ Santiago Narváez a Coronel Julián González, June 28, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Milicia Nacional, Legajo 28, Expediente 2.

⁶⁴ Mariano Méndez a Gobernador y Comandante General Antonio de León, July 8, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 9.

⁶⁵ Santiago Narváez a Coronel Julián González, July 17, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Milicia Nacional, Legajo 28, Expediente 2.

⁶⁶ Julián González a General de Brigada Antonio de León, July 29, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 9.

⁶⁷ Julián González a Antonio de León, July 29, 1834, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 9; Iturribarría, *Historia de Oaxaca, 1821-1854*, 205-08.

evidence thus indicates that locals considered factors other than race or ethnicity when forming political coalitions. In this case, defending the possessions and cultural authority of the church proved to be an incredibly powerful means to connect with citizens at the local level. In addition, adherents to the plan did so in classic federalist terms by demanding control over *cofradía* lands, religious culture, and local elections.

Part 3: Protecting the *Padres* of the Cotton Economy

Post-independence political mobilizations indicate that Jamiltepec residents should not have supported the decision to end the federalist system. Nevertheless, Santa Anna and his advisors presumably had compelling reasons to strip local and state governments of power due to fears that political movements in the Yucatán, Campeche, and Texas would fragment the country. Above all, they grew increasingly alarmed with events in Texas. English-speaking immigrants by 1834 outnumbered *tejanos* (Texans), and they advocated for slavery despite its 1829 abolition. Alfredo Ávila and John Tutino offer compelling evidence that “independence [in 1821] and the collapse of the silver economy ended markets for Texas livestock and other economic ties with regions south.” They conclude that Texans developed stronger relations with the north and “became the vortex where struggles to shape a Mexico facing economic collapse met rising Comanche power, and the expanding United States.”⁶⁸ Along the eastern Texas

⁶⁸ Alfredo Ávila and John Tutino, “Becoming Mexico: The Conflictive Search for a North American Nation,” in *New Countries: Capitalism, Revolutions, and Nations in the Americas, 1750-1870*, edited by John Tutino (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 263-264.

border, slavery and the cotton economy influenced rapid expansion.⁶⁹ Therefore, Santa Anna's move to give the government in Mexico City unprecedented power arose from his goal to maintain a unified nation. The move to centralism thus set up a confrontation with leaders in Texas who responded by declaring their independence in March 1836. Santa Anna's military defeat and capture at San Jacinto in the same year granted Texas independence, even though Mexican leaders argued the treaty did not meet international standards.⁷⁰ The establishment of the new Texas republic had important consequences for Jamiltepec. First, the expansion of slavery and the growth of cotton production in Texas and the U.S. South threatened to destroy Oaxaca's free labor textile industry. Second, Santa Anna passed the 1836 Constitution effectively ending the federalist system and local autonomy. Third, the move to centralism inspired widespread military desertions and rebellions.

At the local level, officials expressed disgust with their inability to collect taxes accurately. Newly appointed administrators in the wake of the Plan de Cuernavaca described a lack of cooperation in compiling an accurate census. José María Parada's complaint, detailed in the prior chapter, allows us to see how Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs in the western and central areas of the region impeded such measures. Parada charged that the ambulatory Afro-Mexican population in Cortijos provided evidence that officials in the newly created Subprefecture were complicit with tax dodging or, at the very least, "ignorant" and incompetent. He noted that administrators failed to account for revenue in Cacahuatpec, Mechoacán, and Comaltepec that *alcaldes* received in return for access to communal pastures in these Mixtec pueblos. Parada

⁶⁹ Countless historians of the US have outlined this expansion. For an excellent analysis of the role of slavery and the expansion into the Mississippi River valley see, Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁷⁰ Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 178-180.

stressed that even in larger towns like Pinotepa Nacional and Jamiltepec citizens could easily avoid meeting tax obligations by claiming that they were only in the cities to buy and sell at the weekly tianguis. They could then fraudulently claim they had already paid taxes while at the market after returning to their respective pueblos.⁷¹ Parada's frustration reveals that the move to a highly centralized system further weakened the local government's ability to govern effectively and collect revenue. In smaller pueblos, locals appeared unphased with the change as they returned to their private lives after the Plan de Cuernavaca and observed religious holidays like the Virgin of Juquila festival in early December.⁷²

Authorities nonetheless reported widespread support for national unity after the military defeat in Texas. Parada wrote a letter to the governor in late 1836 stating that officials were in the process of collecting numerous voluntary donations from residents for "the maintenance of the National War against the traitor colonists of Tejas."⁷³ He did not include the amount, but the fact that he continued to use such strong language months after the defeat suggests that citizens supported further military action to defeat rebellious Texans. Nativism expanded as well after the war. District authorities complied with a state-level inquiry in 1838 demanding reports on "*cartas de seguridad*" (letters of assurance) and "passports" of all foreigners throughout the region, but they still prioritized expelling Spaniards.⁷⁴ Such continuity between policies illustrate that often Centralists simply refashioned Liberal nativist policies into Conservative ones as a

⁷¹ José María Parada a Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 17, 1835, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 10.

⁷² Santos de Vera a Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 1, 1835, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 11.

⁷³ José María Parada a Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 29, 1836, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 11.

⁷⁴ Tomás Gallangos a Señor del Despacho de Jamiltepec, February 27, 1838, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 26.

means to bolster support for the federal government in the pueblos. Their actions coincided with efforts to overcome growing instability among Liberals advocating a return to federalism. At the national level Ávila and Tutino note that Mexico's "political life seemed a disaster" due to "fears of persistent instability and escalating violence."⁷⁵

Farmers and investors maintained their support of the centralist government in response to competitors who used slave labor to destabilize the cotton and textile trade. Sven Beckert provides a persuasive analysis of this economic transformation and explains how British manufacturers came to dominate the global industry in *The Empire of Cotton*. He concludes that by 1830 British manufacturing "productivity had increased 370 times" since 1800 due to mechanization and slave labor in the U.S. South and the Republic of Texas. Essentially, Beckert declares that "slavery... was as essential to the new empire of cotton as proper climate and good soil."⁷⁶ Jamiltepec producers who hoped to meet projected increases in demand at Puebla textile factories discovered in the late 1830s that inexpensive English imports threatened to shutter the mills and undermine the free labor system in coastal Oaxaca. By 1840, the British "empire of cotton" threatened even the smallest producers. One local man official notified district authorities of "the loss of various [small-scale] spinning manufacturers" due to "the foreign introduction of [cotton cloth]."⁷⁷ A year later local authorities outlawed foreign textiles and urged state politicians to enact a similar law for all of Oaxaca.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ávila and Tutino, "Becoming Mexico," 266.

⁷⁶ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 67; 91.

⁷⁷ José María Moreda a Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 17, 1840, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 3.

⁷⁸ José María Moreda a Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 9, 1841, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 4.

Beckert notes that British investors and speculators like Jamiltepec's Elliott Turnbull helped modernize production in Mexico, but by 1840 even foreign entrepreneurs like Turnbull could not make the national industry competitive with Britain's.⁷⁹ Individual producers united with investors and advocated for a tariff to protect farmers and manufacturers. To make the case, they asserted that foreign imports threatened the masculine honor and economic sovereignty of farmers to advocate for the tax. This began in 1842 when José María Moreda penned a warning directly to Santa Anna stating that the influx of foreign textiles could "be the complete ruin of this coast," and he cautioned that these products threatened "countless families that feed themselves and subsist from the product."⁸⁰ The well-connected Manuel María Fagoaga agreed in a letter he published in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*. He appealed to Mexico City authorities in terms of protecting national sovereignty shaming them with examples of large crops wasted due to foreign slaveholders who had undercut local producers.⁸¹ Hence national sovereignty connected Conservative elites with Afro-Mexican farmers who argued the unfair competition challenged their roles as *padres de familia*. This strategy sought to preserve national autonomy and regional economics by likening the competition to an attack on honorable Mexican men and their dependent families. The strategy worked. Beckert notes that, "by 1843, the prohibition of cotton textile imports was written into the Mexican constitution."⁸²

In spite of this, it took a great deal of time for individual producers to benefit from the tariffs. In 1845, cotton speculator Domingo Ignacio González complained that people living in the bajos of Pinotepa Nacional were "obstinate" and uncooperative when he attempted to

⁷⁹ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 153.

⁸⁰ José María Moreda to Gobernador de Oaxaca and el Presidente de la República, July 12, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 5.

⁸¹ "Junta de Fomento e Industria de Oajaca," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, July 26, 1842, 2.

⁸² Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 160.

purchase cotton from them. He related that they had long agreed to sell him the unprocessed product, but this changed dramatically during the 1845 growing season when they refused to fulfill their annual obligation. He asserted that “there is no known cause for that conduct I observe[d].” González stated that residents there no longer participated in the annual religious celebrations either, and they reported to him that they lived in a constant state of “poverty.”⁸³ Afro-Mexican producers in this community had to wait for textile manufacturers to recover before they could profit from farming. Even González himself acknowledged that he never purchased the prior year’s crop from the community because an illness kept him from the village. It seems, however, that he would have most likely sent an agent to this pueblo to purchase the product if prices were high. The industry’s slow recovery undermined regional stability even after leaders granted manufacturers significant advantages over competitors, but farmers remained loyal to centralist authorities who had enacted the tariff and enforced abolition.

Authorities in the 1840s engaged in a number of alternative development projects to supplement lost revenue from cotton, livestock, and cochineal. One leader suggested that tobacco cultivation would serve this purpose. He observed that cattle ranching “does not have the demand that [it did] in other times,” cotton suffered from foreign competition, and the low price of cochineal led to a drastic economic downturn. Tobacco, alternatively, retained its value and required limited space so farmers could grow it alongside subsistence crops.⁸⁴ Another official responded to a national initiative requiring administrators to document “colonizable lands.” He provided few details to government speculators in what almost reads like a request from Liberals

⁸³ Domingo Ignacio González a Secretario Lic. Don José Isidoro Romero, April 14, 1845, AGPEO, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 34.

⁸⁴ Manuel José S. Urrutia a Gobernador del Departamento de Jamiltepec, February 4, 1840, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Industria y Comercio, Legajo 19, Expediente 3.

in the 1850s. He stated that “everyone recognizes the property of *cacicazgos* [territory of a cacique] in particular pueblos.” Of the other territory, the official held that “the largest part of those... [are] only cattle ranches... without *terrenos baldíos* [vacant land]... for colonizing.”⁸⁵ The reference to cacique land and the opacity of the response demonstrates that, in terms of their local governments, officials remained committed to established land tenure practices and the federalist system that preserved local autonomy. On the one hand, they refrained from privatizing communal land and developing cash crops in indigenous pueblos, but on the other hand, they remained open to suggestions for ways to substitute products and develop the economy prior to the U.S. invasion in 1846.

Part 4: Masculinity, Soldiering, and Desertion on the Eve of Invasion

Authorities at the national level responded to the economic downturn, diplomatic crisis in Texas, and regional unrest by increasing recruitment efforts. They pressured local officials to find replacements at seemingly any cost. In Jamiltepec, one administrator alerted General Francisco Bendejo in 1838 that pueblo authorities in Tututepec agreed to send twenty-eight recruits to meet the demand for more army soldiers.⁸⁶ Bendejo sent his own letter to Gallangos on the same day warning that the local officials in Tututepec had overreached their authority when they pressed twenty-eight men into the army. He reported that authorities invaded private homes after dark and forced adolescent boys as young as 13 or 14 into service. Such action

⁸⁵ José María Monda a Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 8, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 36.

⁸⁶ Tomás Gallangos a General Francisco Bendejo y Gobernador, May 1, 1838, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 4.

during a time of peace marked the recruits and their families as dishonorable. Making these families vulnerable to public authority and potential abuse also disrupted the moral economy of military service. Invading private homes where honorable men presumably protected vulnerable family members represented a dramatic break with the past as well as something Bendejo himself condemned. The concept of the home as the primary site of masculine honor in Jamiltepec corresponds to Peter Beattie's findings in Brazil where people "associate[d] the house with honor, order, marriage, family, and private power." In contrast, the street represented "disgrace, chaos, illegitimacy, danger, vagrancy, and vulnerability."⁸⁷ In addition, authorities had long signaled that only men deemed dishonorable were eligible to meet quota requirements. Bendejo added that officials jailed older men unwilling to leave their families and forced them to labor on press gangs. Several of the men officials did force into service died after authorities denied them food and water.⁸⁸ Gallangos conceded a week later that all of the twenty-eight recruits either deserted or were no longer fit to serve.⁸⁹

The need for recruits only increased in the 1840s. Santa Anna had ceded power to Anastasio Bustamante who served as president, with the exception of one brief period, between 1837 and 1841. A number of regional revolts in Tabasco and the Yucatán threatened national fragmentation, and France briefly invaded the port of Veracruz in 1838 in an action known as the Pastry War. Santa Anna once again put together a coalition and announced the Plan de Perote on

⁸⁷ Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood*, 8. The public private division even had deep cultural meanings in Porfirian Mexico. Pablo Piccato details this breakdown of public and private spaces in Mexico City during the early twentieth century. Piccato, *City of Suspects*, 111-16.

⁸⁸ Francisco Bendego (General de Brigada) a Gobernador de Jamiltepec, May 1, 1838, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 4.

⁸⁹ Tomás Gallangos a Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 8, 1838, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 4.

September 9, 1841 to restore order domestically and internationally.⁹⁰ In Oaxaca, the Plan de Perote signaled an affirmation of centralism and eventually brought Antonio de León to serve as governor between 1842 and 1845. Benjamin Smith concludes that in the Mixteca Baja “communities were to offer their support and orchestrated confirmations of Santa Anna’s power in elaborate council ceremonies and church services.”⁹¹ Officials in the north with connections in the Mixteca Alta and Baja declared their support for the plan in October. Authorities in several pueblos around Amuzgos proclaimed support for de León and his pronunciamiento.⁹² Indigenous support in a small area gave way to widespread support for Santa Anna in November. Beginning with Afro-Mexican pueblos surrounding Cortijos, local authorities declared that their constituents joined “the Gobernador de [Jamiltepec] and Prefecto” in support of the plan.⁹³ Residents from the cotton-producing Afro-Mexican pueblos Tapextla and Santo Domingo offered the strongest statement of support for de León and Santa Anna. They declared that “the elder males,” normally exempt due to age, “of this pueblo [Tapextla] and Santo Domingo” supported the act to empower Santa Anna and de León.⁹⁴

As demands increased, officials attempted to find soldiers to fulfill larger recruitment quotas with candidates from indigenous pueblos. This led to the pattern discussed in the prior chapter where generally Mixtec and Amuzgo citizens claimed repeatedly that they could not serve due to their inability to speak Spanish. In one instance, army deserters in 1842 justified

⁹⁰ Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 207-08. Defending against the French invasion cost Santa Anna his leg. For more see, Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 186-93.

⁹¹ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 137.

⁹² Agustín Peleaz, Bartolo Nuñez, Vicente Martínez y Manuel José Borgar – Pronunciamiento, October 4, 1841, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 24. Please note there are several examples from this expediente supporting the pronunciamiento.

⁹³ Juan de Mata y García Juez de Paz de Estancia Grande a Gobernador del Departamento de Jamiltepec, November 6, 1841, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 21.

⁹⁴ Miguel Paulino Juez 1º de Paz – Pronunciamiento, November 8, 1841, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 21.

their departures by claiming no knowledge of Spanish.⁹⁵ The volunteers who did speak Spanish from Cortijos and other Afro-Mexican pueblos continued to fill the ranks. Soldiers could also create chaos by abandoning their posts and returning home to their families. Deserters in early 1842 threatened pueblo officials in the “bajos” outside Huazolotitlán. Authorities moved to restore order among the deserters and other “*paisanos*” (civilians).⁹⁶ This transformed into a broader movement across several communities. One group of deserters threatened authorities in Tututepec.⁹⁷ In Pinotepa Nacional officials accused a deserter of murdering Bernardino Baños, an unspecified town official, during peace negotiations.⁹⁸ Authorities in Cortijos reported that deserters allied with residents in the pueblo and began settling scores. Six soldiers attacked a local man, Sebastián Soriano, in his home and murdered him.⁹⁹ The situation in Cortijos was so bad that authorities requested help from the state.¹⁰⁰

A year later officials struggled to contain another uprising of deserters in the “bajos of Chico Ometepec.” Juan Manuel Toscano and José Gregorio deserted the battalion and went to the “bajos” where authorities alleged they committed a number of crimes. The Juez de Paz in Huazolotitlán charged that Toscano and Gregorio destroyed cotton crops that a Huazolotitlán resident owned in Chico Ometepec.¹⁰¹ Such an attack illustrates some of the underlying ethnic

⁹⁵ José María Monda a Secretario del Despacho de Jamiltepec, February 1, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 7.

⁹⁶ José Francisco de Monda a Secretario de Jamiltepec, February 15, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 16.

⁹⁷ José Francisco de Monda a Secretario de Jamiltepec, March 8, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 16.

⁹⁸ José Francisco de Monda a Secretario de Jamiltepec, March 15, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 16.

⁹⁹ Damian Serrano a Prefecto de Jamiltepec, March 23, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 16.

¹⁰⁰ José Francisco de Monda a Secretario de Jamiltepec, March 29, 1842, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Desertores, Legajo 12, Expediente 16.

¹⁰¹ Rafael Pimentel a Gobernador y Comandante General de Oaxaca, February 14, 1843, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 18.

and socio-economic disputes between residents in predominantly Afro-Mexican and majority Mixtec pueblos like Chico Ometepe and Huazolotitlán respectively. Authorities apparently grew fearful and sent General Rafael Pimentel into “the bajos of Chico Ometepe” where his expedition met resistance. He reported that costeños refused to help locate the deserters and proclaimed that “they oppose justice.”¹⁰² The opposition Pimentel found in the bajos surely made an impression. He worked out a deal with the soldiers and offered amnesty rather than continue his futile attempt to catch deserters in such a hostile environment.¹⁰³ His foray thus failed to put down the rebellion, but through negotiation Pimentel successfully reenlisted all of the men who deserted the unit.¹⁰⁴

Men deserted the army for many reasons, but a common complaint was that the government failed to pay them in a timely fashion. Spotty payroll information and a lack of correspondence prevents clarity in 1842 and 1843, but missed payments likely caused several mass desertions in both years. Authorities offered a clue to the prior years in 1844 when they sent word there was a significant revolt in Juquila. The local alcalde there stated that soldiers had rebelled after authorities stopped paying salaries. State and federal politicians shifted the onus of payroll to regional officials who struggled to meet their obligations by taxing tobacco.¹⁰⁵ Their decision to tax tobacco also demonstrated a lack of knowledge about the legal code. Officials in the district treasury office, the *Tesorería General del Departamento*, refused to approve the

¹⁰² Rafael Pimentel a Gobernador y Comandante General de Oaxaca, February 21, 1843, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 18.

¹⁰³ Rafael Pimentel a Gobernador y Comandante General de Oaxaca, April 18, 1843, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 19.

¹⁰⁴ Rafael Pimentel a Gobernador y Comandante General de Oaxaca, May 2, 1843, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 19.

¹⁰⁵ Rafael Pimentel a Gobernador y Comandante General de Oaxaca, July 1, 1844, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 23.

payroll because tobacco taxation fell solely to the federal government. Officers described the situation as a potential disaster and appealed for the treasurer to reconsider his decision.¹⁰⁶ With this evidence in mind from 1844, it seems plausible that authorities also failed to pay soldiers in the two prior years. This may have caused the desertions, but in both instances the actions of the deserters suggests deeper longstanding issues. The violent episodes in Pinotepa Nacional and Cortijos in 1842 demonstrate that, at the very least, angry ex-soldiers became aggressive and settled scores in their communities. The 1843 incident indicates that, on a broader scale, authorities had to offer amnesty to deserters in Afro-Mexican communities along the coast.

The desertions certainly affected a number of Mixtec, Amuzgo, and Afro-Mexican communities. One official in 1845 reported that Afro-Mexican soldiers deserted once again. After praising military commanders and local police for maintaining order, he stated that Afro-Mexicans were prone to desertions “because [there] is so much hatred from those of color” toward their superiors. He described that this compelled Afro-Mexicans “to abandon their homes and cultivated lands” in favor of regions higher up in the Sierra or across the Guerrero border away from district and military authorities.¹⁰⁷ The same official advocated expanding recruitment into indigenous pueblos and focusing more directly on that population. Yet in 1845 he noted this had limitations as well. He wrote that several unspecified diseases had spread throughout the region’s indigenous communities after they had refused to cooperate with inoculation efforts. He also described that Afro-Mexicans served in smaller numbers than they had in the past. The official concluded that they engaged in “the cultivation of cotton” because “they are able to be

¹⁰⁶ Rafael Pimentel a Gobernador y Comandante General de Oaxaca, June 17, 1844, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 23.

¹⁰⁷ Lic. Afobia a Secretario del Despacho de Jamiltepec, December 16, 1845, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 19.

useful in this end.” He emphasized that “those of color” along the coast “are exclusively dedicated to this product.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, Afro-Mexican men found farming a better option to provide for their families than soldiering for low wages or without pay altogether.

The Jamiltepec army battalion served outside the district on at least one occasion before the U.S. invasion. This happened when support for Santa Anna’s government collapsed in late 1844. Former allies, generals, and politicians lined up against him and demanded he vacate the presidency. He resisted, took an army of supporters to Puebla, and laid siege to the city from January 1 to 10 to confront opponents stationed in the city (See Figure 3.2).¹⁰⁹ General Rafael Pimentel led the Jamiltepec battalion in an effective defense. One report published in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* proclaimed that Pimentel acted in an “honorable and civil” manner that made the unit worthy of recognition.¹¹⁰ Another report detailed that the Jamiltepec battalion joined other units from Puebla and Oaxaca in distinguishing themselves “with outstanding acts.”¹¹¹ The defense was too much for Santa Anna’s forces. Leaders credited defenders with defeating his army and driving him from the city. He retreated to Veracruz where he faced an angry coalition in his home state before he reentered politics during the next year’s crisis.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Lic. Afobia a Secretario del Despacho de Jamiltepec, December 23, 1845, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 8.

¹⁰⁹ Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 240.

¹¹⁰ Joaquín Morlet, “Comunicaciones relativa a la defensa de Puebla,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, February 8, 1845, 1-2.

¹¹¹ José J. Reyes, “Línea de San Agustín,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, February 18, 1845, 2.

¹¹² Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 240-43.

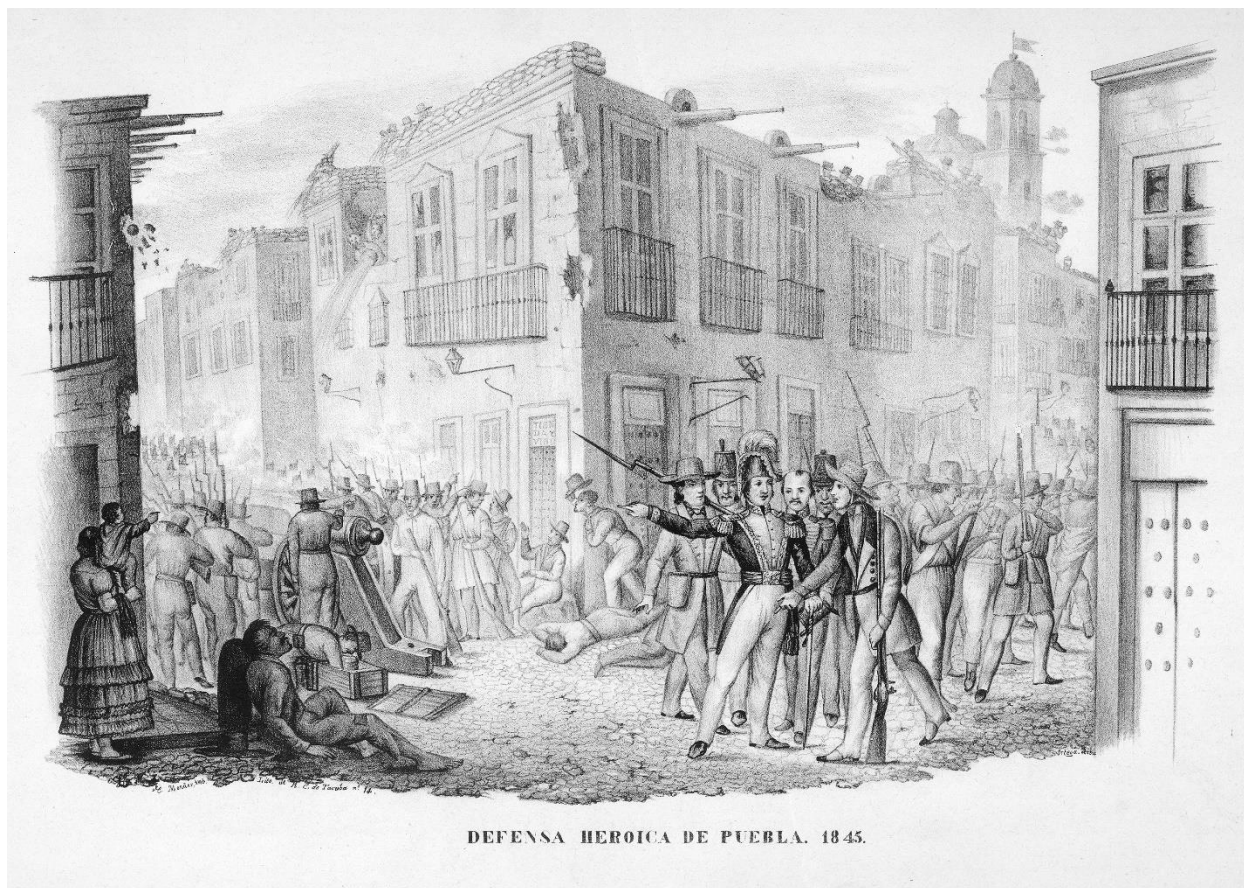


Figure 3.2: H. Mendes and José Severo Rocha, *Defensa heroica de Puebla*, 1845
 Courtesy, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, Arlington, Texas.

Unrest in the district grew worse in 1845. Officials reported in December that General don Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga pronounced against the state and federal government in Juquila.¹¹³ The few details contained in this pronunciamiento seemingly relate to Antonio de León's proclamation in Huajuapán. On January 9, de León and his supporters met in the Mixteca Baja city to condemn the interim government for attacking the church. De León insisted that the "provisional government will not be an oppressive dictatorship."¹¹⁴ Mariano Paredes led the Plan

¹¹³ Lic. Afobia a Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 29, 1845, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 85.

¹¹⁴ Antonio de León, "El comandante general del departamento de Oaxaca, a sus habitantes," *El Indicador: Diario político, literario, mercantil y económico*, January 19, 1846, 1 (hereafter cited as *El Indicador*).

de San Luis Potosí they referenced, but it never materialized into a broader political movement.¹¹⁵ In May 1846 Afro-Mexican communities on both sides of the Guerrero/Oaxaca border once again were the epicenter of a rebellion. De León requested that regional authorities in Jamiltepec march their troops to Cuajinicuilapa to put down what he called a serious uprising. He suggested that they could defeat the rebellion by coordinating between the Jamiltepec regular army unit in Cuajinicuilapa and another pro-government force that was moving into Tlapa, Guerrero.¹¹⁶ Authorities in Jamiltepec reported that their units could not respond to the threat. They claimed that the battalion was spread too thin to take action.¹¹⁷

The famous caudillo and Guerrero ally from the independence war, Juan Álvarez, led the uprising detailed in the above reports. Officials penned a letter to the governor in May describing a massive pronunciamiento in Cuajinicuilapa and Putla. They identified Álvarez as the leader in Guerrero with Atilano Romero and Marcelino Loaeza leading a force of more than 1,200 soldiers in Putla. Officials suggested moving a unit in between the two border regions to keep the revolutionary forces from uniting.¹¹⁸ José Loaeza, a wealthy rancher, offered a scathing rebuke of military and civil officials in an early June letter. He charged that they had caused numerous desertions and unrest due to government corruption. He claimed that high-ranking army officers “tolerated and engaged in conversations with deserters,” and he asserted that this lack of discipline threatened to undermine regional safety.¹¹⁹ In one final attempt to overcome popular

¹¹⁵ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 139.

¹¹⁶ Antonio de León, “Comandancia general de Oajaca,” *El Indicador*, May 19, 1846, 1.

¹¹⁷ Francisco Santa María, Lic. Afobia y José María González Mesa, “Comandancia general de Oajaca,” *El Indicador*, May 19, 1846, 1.

¹¹⁸ Lic. Afobia a Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 5, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 6.

¹¹⁹ José M. de Loaeza a Sr. Gobernador del Estado, June 9, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Letras, Legajo 18, Expediente 78.

unrest on the eve of war with the United States, district officials confirmed that they would enforce a ban on a popular dance that reportedly originated in Xoxocotlán near Oaxaca City. Authorities claimed that the dance mocked the Spanish conquest of Mexico by revising the course of events to poke fun at the invaders. Regional authorities seemed annoyed to have to enforce the ban that downplayed Spanish influence in Mexico because they faced a serious problem with Afro-Mexicans that increasingly supported Álvarez.

“I Have Not Come Here to Mistreat Your Priest”

One incident helps illustrate how locals constructed masculine honor and racial boundaries in their private lives. In early 1846, Pedro Baños from Jicayán entered Cristóval Rueda de León’s property in Jamiltepec and demanded that Rueda de León extend credit for a pistol, two horses, and some other goods. He claimed that Baños took flight with the property before agreeing to the terms of credit. The merchant filed all the necessary paperwork and pursued Baños into the sierra to recover the lost property. The angry man found an acquaintance and Baños’ three sisters who all confirmed that he had fled with the pistol and horses. The man then traversed a large portion of the district visiting Pinotepa de Don Luis, Tetepelcingo, Tlacamama, and San Juan Colorado. He encountered a number of witnesses claiming to know Baños and uncovered a promising lead. One informant advised Rueda de León to go to Jicayán and search for Baños in the nearby pueblo Atoyac. The Jamiltepec merchant checked into a *posada* (inn) upon arrival in Jicayán, and he immediately began beating on neighboring doors yelling “where is Pedro Baños?” Father José Romualdo Calderón approached Rueda de León and inquired about his behavior, but the man refused to answer the priest’s questions.

Rueda de León stormed out of the posada into a large gathering of what he later described as “indios and indias from the pueblo armed with machetes, sticks, and stones.” The crowd closed in and began shouting that Rueda de León “has insulted the priest” and that those guilty of such an action “are going to die.” The now frightened man pled that this “is false, I have not come here to mistreat your priest.” Instead, he proclaimed that he was merely there to bring Baños to justice, and he sought to reassure the angry mob by telling them “I am Christian.” This failed to calm the crowd as they encircled the stranger, but at the last minute, the priest shielded Rueda de León from harm. Father Romualdo Calderón told the mob that the two men were friends and asked everyone to leave them alone. Members of the crowd listened to the priest and allowed Rueda de León to return to Jamiltepec where he pursued the case against Baños. Rueda de León charged that Baños was simply an “indio” whose actions threatened his stature as an honorable merchant.¹²⁰ The Gobernador of Jamiltepec took note of the offense and issued a warrant calling for Baños’ arrest citing that he “had escaped and robbed two horses” and a pistol.¹²¹ For his part, Baños had Father Romualdo Calderón write a letter on his behalf. The priest used the honorific don to introduce Baños and assured officials that he “is and always has been very honorable” adding that he was an “hombre de bien.” The priest also denied any wrongdoing on Baños’ part. Unfortunately, the case file ends abruptly without a resolution suggesting that the two men likely reached an agreement.¹²²

¹²⁰ Lic. Juan N. Ezeta a Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 28, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 9.

¹²¹ Juan Nepumoceno Ezeta a ciudadanos jueces de paz y jefes de policia de los pueblo del margen: Tetepelcingo, Pinotepa Don Luis, San Juan Colorado y Atoyac, March 28, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 9.

¹²² “El Cura de Atoyac,” José Romualdo Calderón a Atoyac, San Juan Colorado, Pinotepa de Don Luis, Tetepelcingo, March 24, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 9.

This case is suggestive of the ways in which oaxaqueños constructed masculinity and race in their private lives. To begin, the importance of race in this case is unmistakable. Rueda de León provides no clues about his own racial identity, but when one accounts for his statements about those he encountered, it seems logical to conclude that he was not indígena. He used the strong term *indio* to describe Baños and the angry crowd. The incident also illustrates that potentially well-connected and powerful merchants in cities like Pinotepa Nacional and Jamiltepec often had few reliable contacts in Mixtec pueblos. Men like Rueda de León potentially faced danger in these locations when they were not welcome and unaccompanied. For their part, it seems that Jicayán's residents did not appreciate Rueda de León's outburst in the posada and his initial hostility toward their priest. In fact, they seemed most offended at the perceived attack on religion. This indicates a deep religious conservatism in Mixtec pueblos similar to what Benjamin Smith describes in the Mixteca Baja. Finally, the concept of honor held particularly strong meaning for virtually everyone involved. Rueda de León claimed the theft was more of an affront to his honor than a financial hardship. District authorities must have found Rueda de León's definition of honor particularly compelling because they issued an arrest warrant after hearing only his testimony, but the priest contested this definition and emphasized that Baños was an *hombre de bien*. Residents in Jicayán used these ideas and seemed outraged that Rueda de León dishonored their priest. It seems that by insulting the priest he dishonored both their pueblo and their religion.

The Rueda de León case provides an important window into how locals constructed masculine honor outside of economics and soldiering. In fact, these cultural attitudes informed many daily decisions and intersected with politics, race, and economics. The case also illustrates that male residents devoted a great deal of energy into proclaiming and protecting their roles as

honorable members of their respective communities. Politically speaking, Afro-Mexicans continued to support the centralist government after authorities acted to protect their roles as *padres de familia* in the cotton economy. Recruitment practices, unbearable conditions, and withholding compensation in contrast emasculated regular soldiers while at the same time publicly marking them as dishonorable. By the early 1840s, these actions eroded popular support for local, state, and national authorities who increasingly broke with long-established methods to increase the size and scope of the military. Masculinity and honor therefore played into everyday political and economic decisions, and these concepts proved invaluable as politicians in the United States challenged Mexico's national honor and threatened war as they annexed Texas to become the 28th state in late 1845.

Conclusion

After the U.S. and Mexico declared war on one another in the summer of 1846, local elites proclaimed their patriotism. They announced that prominent citizens formed the *Junta Patriótica* (Patriotic Committee) “with the laudable goal to procure resources to sustain the Republican Army... in front of the invaders from the United States.”¹²³ Gobernador de Jamiltepec Manuel María Mejía related that regional officials would donate their salaries to support the war effort to “help in defense of the Patria.”¹²⁴ Acts of patriotism like Mejía's illustrate that elites tapped into the widespread patriotic sentiment that extended all the way to

¹²³ José María Loaeza a Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 13, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Socorros Para la Guerra, Legajo 28, Expediente 11.

¹²⁴ Manuel María Mejía a Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 17, 1846, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 21.

this remote region. Residents who could not serve militarily witnessed the local battalion depart on their way to Veracruz to protect the vital port from a potential U.S. invasion. In fact, the unit arrived approximately a week after Mejía's donation. The editors of *El Indicador* projected confidence and offered reassurance to their readers in the port city that the battalion joined units from Xalapa and Puebla to form "a line quite numerous."¹²⁵

Thus, in the first two decades after independence military service changed from a dumping ground for outcasts in the regular army to an institution comprised of honorable volunteers in the National Guard. Politics in the post-independence period in Jamiltepec changed rapidly as well from contentious partisanship to violent confrontations that began with the pro-Guerrero coalition. Mixtecs remained neutral or, in a few cases, opposed the alliance. These partnerships indicate that race divided regional politics. Guerrero's choice to abolish slavery seems to strengthen this association. However, such conclusions do not fully account for other important factors. Afro-Mexicans certainly supported abolition. This likely reflected their own racial identities and historic ties to slavery, but there were also significant economic factors. They could not compete with planters in other regions who produced cotton with slave labor. Mixtecs and Amuzgos did not have similar ties to slavery and the slave economy, and their actions during the conflict suggests that they placed more importance on racial and ethnic difference. Nevertheless, this probably had more to do with the actions of Guerrero's supporters from Putla who targeted Mixtec and Amuzgo pueblos.

These choices also provide a window into post-independence state formation. Elite politicians quickly discovered during the independence war and the War of the South that they

¹²⁵ "November 21, 1846," *El Indicador*, November 21, 1846, 4.

could no longer ignore the popular classes. Politicians like Santa Anna attempted to harness these mobilizations and tied their political aspirations to popular politics by employing a variety of tactics to foster support. For example, Santa Anna channeled anger toward the Liberal regime attempting to limit the power and influence of the Catholic Church to his bid for the presidency. Interestingly, Jamiltepec residents joined this coalition in large numbers even though Santa Anna opposed the federalist system that many locals historically supported. The defense of a cultural icon therefore provided Santa Anna with a perfect opportunity to advance his personal and political agenda. Jamiltepecanos divided after he abolished the federalist system and centralized power in Mexico City. Mixtecs, in particular, returned to their communities and demanded pueblo autonomy. Fearing Afro-Mexicans and mestizos could make the same decision, local elites with ties to the cotton economy and Santa Anna's Conservative government advocated enacting a tariff on foreign textiles. Centralists followed this advice and authorized the tax to protect Afro-Mexican padres of cotton in addition to speculators, investors, and manufacturers.

The move to centralize power in Mexico City destabilized the country politically. Small acts like tariffs that ensured Afro-Mexican support could not offset mounting popular opposition. Dating back to before the sixteenth century Mexico's indigenous population controlled many of their own affairs at the pueblo level. The centralist government attacked this principle, and Mixtecs and Amuzgos quickly withdrew their support. They had enthusiastically unified with Santa Anna to protect the church, but they always insisted on pueblo autonomy. Meanwhile military officials and local authorities abused their power by using harsh recruitment techniques and withholding compensation to soldiers. As a result, many deserted in large numbers in the early 1840s while opponents like Juan Álvarez built formidable alliances that threatened the regional and national regimes. Defending national sovereignty from the United States

temporarily overrode these political disagreements. Residents unified once again to defend Mexico's national honor from yankee invaders and Texas traitors.

CHAPTER 4: Popular Consent and the Post-War State (1846-1855)

In 1848, Jamiltepec city *alcaldes* Ángel María Rodríguez and Cristóbal del Valle illustrated the economic toll the U.S. invasion had on the region in their proposal to address several ongoing problems. They intended to correct “the bad state of primary education” and repair “deteriorated” municipal buildings that had grown virtually uninhabitable due to a lack of funds. The three-part plan would have granted the city greater oversight of the market and provided a new revenue stream. First, they suggested that to curtail rustling authorities should appoint a new administrative agent who would verify that the livestock slaughtered and sold in the market “are not stolen.” The *alcaldes* planned to designate that the “salaried” administrator would maintain “a meticulous registry of cows and pigs that [butchers] kill, the name of the sellers and buyers, and the iron or mark that the animals have.” Second, authorities sought to end “putrefaction” in the city from decaying animal parts and confine butchers to “a single location.” Doing so would have also avoided the “*arroyos* [rivers] of blood..., intestines, heads and legs, and excrement” crisscrossing streets. In addition, they recommended restricting the practice of impaling meats on sharp metal objects that regularly stabbed unsuspecting passersby and caused numerous injuries. Finally, a tax of “two reales per head” of livestock would have paid the agent’s salary, funded education, and financed structural repairs to city buildings.¹

Local officials after the war developed schemes like the example above to regulate new aspects of commerce promoting education and public health in addition to increasing revenue.

¹ Cristóbal del Valle and Ángel María Rodríguez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 23, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 48. For more on regulating market spaces in Mexico City to control public health see, Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *¡Que Vivan Los Tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 59-60.

Chapter 4 will analyze their actions and examine how residents recovered from the invasion, demanded pueblo autonomy, and mobilized politically in the decade following the U.S. invasion. Similar to other regions of Mexico, the recovery was a long and difficult process. Soldiers in the regular army battalion served outside the region for most of the conflict where they earned national recognition for defending Veracruz.² Most residents nonetheless experienced the war from home, but they found creative ways to contribute to the national effort. In one case, villagers collected \$33.40 Pesos and sent the funds to Mexico City along with a note stipulating that authorities use the money “to help the Supreme Government of the Nation sustain the war.”³ Officials in the region devoted their time and energy, conversely, to tax collection. In so doing, they ignored that this placed incredible financial hardships on their constituents and overburdened the communities they represented. Residents resented that they had to shoulder the tax increase while making significant personal sacrifices. Thus, even though they fought no battles in Jamiltepec, the war required that the local population contribute soldiers and money to defend Mexico. Locals therefore flooded authorities with appeals in gendered language stressing that they could not pay taxes while male heads of households served as soldiers in an army that habitually neglected to compensate them and their families.⁴

The wartime lapse in the moral economy fostered serious political divisions after the invasion. Similar to the 1830s and early 1840s, politicians attempted to foster popular support to

² “Historia de la compañía active de Jamiltepec,” 1848-49, Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional (Hereafter cited as SEDENA), Expediente 481.3, Folio 58.

³ Ramón Echeverría, “Informe sobre contribuciones,” May 3, 1847, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribuciones, Legajo 7, Expediente 43. Peter Guardino argues that nationalism and loyalty to the nation-state during the war helped sustain the effort because as he concludes Mexican citizens, “contrary to the view of some historians,” were “able to comprehend the war as a conflict between two nations.” Guardino, *The Dead March*, 280.

⁴ The use of gendered language to stress male economic contributions to local economies and families was a common practice to avoid service. Irregular payments to soldiers compounded their unwillingness to serve. Guardino, *The Dead March*, 52-54.

build broad alliances, but the ballooning wartime spending deficit required officials to levy tax payments from individuals historically exempt. This undermined the authority of post-war governments and stifled attempts to build a broad political consensus. These disputes over taxes, soldiering, and citizenship provide an entryway to analyze state formation. Locals who refused to cooperate with authorities, pay taxes, and recognize appointed officials diminished the effectiveness of local, state, and federal governments. Residents complained that authorities abandoned the concept of citizenship by placing unrealistic and onerous requirements on patriotic citizens. In addition, jamiltepecanos attacked the centralist system itself. They advocated for a return to federalism and, in some cases, took the outrageous steps of expelling authorities from their pueblos and forming new governments. Consequently, the federalist mobilization that Álvarez led before the war survived and emerged even stronger afterward.

The post-war political and economic instability complicated racial divisions as well. Elites hardened their attitudes toward Mixtec and Amuzgo citizens and derided them as ignorant because too many “indígenas” supposedly could not speak Spanish. Authorities also disparaged Afro-Mexicans as tax cheats who presumably preferred to live in isolation to avoid fulfilling their economic obligations. These prejudices, in many ways, mirrored elite attitudes at the national level who increasingly advocated for a strong central leader capable of forcing ordinary citizens to obey an unpopular government. Religious leaders seized on this opportunity and reprised their colonial era leadership roles in individual communities. In Jamiltepec, this angered local officials who charged that priests encouraged parishioners to revolt and withhold taxes. Authorities had a point. Priests increasingly influenced local elections after the war. In the meantime, a new generation of politicians with substantial economic connections assumed

control over district offices. These new leaders oversaw a rapid expansion of ranching and haciendas volantes, and they worked to restore cotton production to pre-independence levels.

The economic expansion nevertheless failed to produce stability. Political factions increased during the early 1850s at both the local and national levels convincing elites to request that Santa Anna once again return as president in 1853. He understood that political allies wanted authoritarian leadership so he fashioned his final term in office into a dictatorship. His administrators enacted legislation to limit pueblo autonomy and silence political adversaries. However, these decisions ignored the popular appeal of restoring the federalist system and gave Álvarez the perfect opportunity to form an alliance demanding an end to the dictatorship. Santa Anna's limited support in Jamiltepec quickly dissolved as residents formed a cross-racial coalition backing the Plan de Ayutla. The Liberal triumph that followed in 1855 capped off a tumultuous decade of war, unrest, and instability. Race and ethnicity played even less of a role in these political mobilizations than it had in the prior two decades. Mixtec, Amuzgo, and Afro-Mexican citizens united as federalists insisting on pueblo autonomy, control of natural resources, and authority over local elections. The political failure of the Mexican state during this time illustrates that post-war politicians greatly miscalculated their constituents. Residents in Jamiltepec embraced citizenship and made significant sacrifices during this period for a nation whose leaders disregarded the power of their consent.

Part 1: Service, Taxes, and Citizenship in Post-War Jamiltepec

Service in defense of the country was a powerful means of asserting masculine honor during the war, but this varied greatly depending on which branch of the military one served in

and how that person became a soldier. Peter Guardino argues that volunteers in the newly formed National Guard units “saw themselves as exemplifying the citizen-soldier ideal.”⁵ This stood in stark contrast to regular army units comprised of dishonorable outcasts dragooned into service. Officials at the local level continued to meet recruitment requirements for the regular army during the war by selecting men – or sometimes boys – without families, unmarried men, criminals, men who did not support their families, or men accused of adultery.⁶ This came at a low cost for local authorities as the army assumed the expense of “rehabilitating” these men, and they also fulfilled recruitment quotas necessary for national defense. Volunteering for service in the National Guard in contrast provided men with an opportunity to serve in a separate unit that usually never left the region. This served two vital functions. First, the men in these units often had close ties in the areas they served and could therefore be more effective at maintaining peace during times of crisis. Second, volunteers won exemption from forced recruitment and avoided the stigma of impressment into the army or navy. This also allowed them to retain their more important roles as *padres de familia* because they could return to their families on a regular basis and, in most cases, farm. Service in the right military unit therefore provided men with an effective means of asserting masculine honor and protecting oneself from impersonal outside authority. Impressment into a regular army unit in comparison marked one as dishonorable.

After the war, officials broke with these popular assumptions and assessed how residents contributed to national defense. In many cases, authorities questioned the rights of individuals who proclaimed themselves honorable Mexican citizens. The issue revolved around taxes and

⁵ Guardino, “Gender, Soldiering, and Citizenship in the Mexican-American War,” 41.

⁶ This usually had more to do with protecting the labor pool than one’s honor, but as we have seen the term *padre de familia* is an inherently economic term. Residents generally saw unmarried men, orphans, and convicts as men who did not contribute to the local economy. As Guardino concludes it usually took an extreme case or a serial adulterer for authorities to press a man into service for committing adultery. Guardino, *The Dead March*, 54-64.

dated back to during the war when authorities alleged that some locals simply refused to make essential contributions to fund the military. For example, the Gobernador de Distrito submitted a lengthy report in 1849 charging that the residents of Huazolotitlán had not paid their taxes for more than two years, and beginning in 1847, they had refused to recognize district and state governments as legitimate.⁷ Another incident from 1847 involved battalion reinforcements camped in the city of Jamiltepec. The former Gobernador del Distrito Juan Ezeta testified to state officials that “12 costeños” revolted against their superiors and district authorities. The soldiers took control over a portion of the city and destroyed several houses including Ezeta’s own home, but authorities quickly restored order. Ezeta claimed that the 12 Afro-Mexican soldiers revolted because they were unwilling to pay their taxes while serving in the army.⁸ National Guard Colonel Nicolás Tejada reported that his unit failed to collect taxes accurately during the war because many of the residents he encountered simply refused to cooperate with collectors.⁹ These incidents indicate a widespread resentment against paying the taxes that local, state, and federal authorities exacted to fund the war.

The dispute pre-dated the invasion and began when the centralist government revised the tax code in 1838, but authorities at that time exempted many peasants because they did not meet the minimum annual income threshold of \$500 Pesos. This changed in 1841 when authorities decided that the tax, or *capitación*, would apply to all citizens regardless of income or status. As Peter Guardino notes this change represented “a national personal income tax... which peasants

⁷ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 19, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, *Capitación*, Legajo 29, Expediente 7.

⁸ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca, March 8, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, *Pueblos*, Legajo 7, Expediente 45.

⁹ Juan Nepomuceno Ezeta to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 6, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, *Milicia Nacional*, Legajo 28, Expediente 26.

along with all others... were to pay 1.5 pesos per year.”¹⁰ Michael Ducey argues that the U.S. invasion provided many people in the Huasteca “with an opportunity to revolt” against the new law.¹¹ He concludes that the extension of the *capitación* sparked outrage among residents already angry with corrupt politicians. In Jamiltepec, similar disputes took place after the invasion during the post-war economic crisis. Ursulino Parada, the First Alcalde of Pinotepa Nacional, informed state assessors that the “laborers and farmers” in his city could not pay their taxes “due to the standstill of commerce, the loss of cotton fields..., the low price of agricultural products..., the reduction of inhabitants, and other causes... that reduced the proletarian class to misery.” In light of these circumstances, he requested “the suspension of the *capitación*.” Parada included three additional pages with the signatures of townspeople and emphasized that the “extraction of men in armed service” imposed a great deal of suffering on the patriotic families and communities they left behind.¹²

Parada sent the appeal during a time of regional crisis with numerous similar cases in surrounding pueblos. A week later he attended an emergency meeting for the district’s pueblo authorities in the city of Jamiltepec. Officials there accused don Manuel Mejía of “sedition” and destruction of property. They communicated that Tejada’s National Guard failed to catch Mejía because he had many sympathizers in the region and requested that state authorities send a unit from another area of the state to restore order.¹³ One official blamed Governor Benito Juárez’s

¹⁰ Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico’s National State*, 152. See also, Karen Deborah Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens: Local Liberalism in Early National Oaxaca and Yucatán* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 81-82; Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 111-12; Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 221-23.

¹¹ Ducey, *A Nation of Villages*, 160.

¹² Ursulino Parada, et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 15, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 52.

¹³ Ursulino Parada y Francisco Labastida, “Sesión extraordinario de Cabildo de Jamiltepec,” February 23, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 23.

lack of communication with residents for the unrest. He charged that Juárez's failure to lead encouraged people to follow "the bad example some individuals have given from the pueblo of Huazolotitlán."¹⁴ Administrators there countered that their combined military sacrifices, abject poverty, and overwhelming tax burden left many honorable residents with few choices. They complained to district authorities in January that the government misled recruits by promising that service in the army would exempt soldiers and their families from capitación obligations. This echoed accounts from National Guard recruits who claimed officers deceived them about capitación requirements while serving. Officials reported that townspeople in Huazolotitlán experienced "much anguish" and must have some relief.¹⁵ They reiterated that the situation in the pueblo overwhelmed local authorities in an additional appeal two months later to district officials who continued to require residents to pay the capitación regardless of their circumstances.¹⁶

Authorities reported that the situation grew increasingly dangerous at the end of the hot, dry season. José Antonio Reguera asked state officials to lift Huazolotitlán's tax burden in May. He reported that the "*jornaleros*" (laborers) were essentially starving and unable to feed their own families and therefore could not pay the capitación.¹⁷ On the same day, Reguera reported to state officials that "the miserable people of Cacahuatepec" burned public property in response to tax collection efforts.¹⁸ A few weeks later, Tejada testified to district authorities that he

¹⁴ Juan Moaz to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 14, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 24. For more on Juárez as governor of Oaxaca see, Ralph Roeder, *Juárez and His Mexico*, Volume 1 (New York: Viking Press, 1947), 73-85.

¹⁵ Ramón Luvano to Gobernador del Departamento D. Juan N. Ezeta, January 30, 1848, AGPEO, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 45.

¹⁶ Victoriano de Arribas y Ramón Sirvane – Acto, March 19, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 8.

¹⁷ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 8, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente, 27.

¹⁸ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 8, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 24.

witnessed Juan Nepumoceno Ezeta encourage people in Huazolotitlán to refuse paying taxes and revolt. Tejada supplemented the account with an additional letter from Anacleto Robles. He claimed to have witnessed Ezeta inciting rebellion in Tlaxiaco and suggested he was attempting to instigate a large uprising throughout the Mixteca.¹⁹ The alarming news apparently captured the attention of state officials. In August, Reguera complied with an order restricting commerce and travel out of the region. He countered that this would further harm the local economy, but he agreed to enforce the directive and arrest anyone attempting to enter or leave the district without permission.²⁰ Thus, officials worked to suppress unrest stemming from tax bills few locals could pay due to the region's dire economic circumstances.

Tax collection disputes seemingly multiplied throughout the summer. Priest Francisco Parra y Salamanca unsuccessfully petitioned Reguera in mid-September to forgive that year's *capitación* for residents in his parish in addition to several other debts town officials incurred to pay for the war.²¹ Reguera learned in late September that an army officer incorrectly promised tax relief for recruits and their families who agreed to serve during the war while enlisting volunteers in Lo de Soto, Maguey, and Cortijos. Reguera informed local authorities that this was not possible and ordered a new census in the three pueblos because the *capitación* requirement did not accurately reflect the current population.²² In early October, authorities reported that Álvarez had again revolted across the border in Guerrero.²³ Officials seemed surprisingly

¹⁹ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 20, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 52.

²⁰ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 15, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 7.

²¹ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 12, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 32.

²² José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 19, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 30.

²³ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 5, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 7.

oblivious to his appeal as they ignored the serious economic hardships taxes and military service caused for individual families. Diego Laguna and José Lorenzo López represented several Mixtec communities in an appeal for relief and claimed that Ezeta had duped them into not paying taxes. They argued that this allowed residents to fall behind in capitación payments, and they communicated that Ezeta pocketed what little taxes they could pay without forwarding their funds to the state government. They also requested a new census.²⁴ Reguera coolly responded that residents knew they had not met the capitación and demanded payment.²⁵ Juan López from Chico Ometepepec claimed that officials based the capitación obligation for his pueblo on an inaccurate census. He alleged that one group of officials underreported the capitación requirement to the state while another group overestimated the town's population. López argued that his pueblo therefore had to pay more than their actual obligation.²⁶

These examples illustrate that citizens made substantial personal and economic sacrifices to defend Mexico from the U.S. invasion. Authorities, however, disregarded the contributions that otherwise honorable men and women made during the war and often withheld compensation to soldiers and their families.²⁷ Pueblo authorities quickly learned that petitions requesting tax relief simply did not work even if they emphasized service, sacrifice, and hardship. In this regard, the war separated politicians from the populace. This stood in sharp contrast to the cultural and nationalistic appeals from the 1830s and early 1840s connecting men like Santa Anna to ordinary Mexican citizens. In fact, administrators at the district, state, and regional

²⁴ Diego Laguna and José Lorenzo López to Gobernador del Estado, November 17, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 52.

²⁵ José Reguera to Gobernador del Estado, November 21, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 52.

²⁶ Juan López to Gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca, November 30, 1848, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 46.

²⁷ For more on the failure to pay soldiers during the war see, Guardino, *The Dead March*, 68-69.

levels ignored the moral economy of military service and dishonored numerous volunteer soldiers and their families. Thus, in the aftermath of the war, Mexican politicians squandered the patriotism and unity locals proclaimed at the beginning of the invasion. As a result, residents expressed outrage at the requirements authorities imposed on the public that they themselves failed to meet. Officials humiliated honorable families and questioned their citizenship rights because they could not pay a tax during a national economic crisis. Jamiltepecanos responded by returning to their respective communities and proclaiming local control over land and resources.

Part 2: Honorable Citizens and “*a Shortage of Justice*” (1849-1852)

Gobernador del Distrito Antonio Iglesias penned an alarming monthly *Informe* (report) to state officials in January 1849. He reported that the new year began with a literal bang as an errant firework struck the first alcalde’s house in Jamiltepec and caused a large fire during the celebration. This accident seemingly foreshadowed that authorities would face substantial obstacles in 1849 as they attempted to restore order in their communities. In fact, Iglesias included that a small group of revolutionaries hid in the hills outside Huazolotitlán and menaced local officials. To their south in Chico Ometepec, he claimed that residents had raised a formidable anti-government force with more than 100 guns and countless machetes. He noted that it took more than 200 soldiers and 60 reinforcements from Tututepec to put down the “rebellion.”²⁸ Officials in Huazolotitlán confirmed Iglesias’ report. They acknowledged that as far back as 1847 the group had refused to recognize district authorities or pay taxes. Officials

²⁸ Antonio Iglesias to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 23, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 11.

offered to help restore order and cooperate with district administrators in exchange for tax relief. Pueblo leaders also reported that Afro-Mexicans in the surrounding bajos continued to attack tax collectors who entered the coastal plain to collect the capitación.²⁹ Another official reported that the situation in Huazolotitlán and surrounding areas persisted well into April.³⁰ The issue of taxes transformed into a question of political legitimacy after the war.

Reguera requested help from military officials in November after a disturbing incident in San Juan Colorado. He relayed that the *Juez de Primera Instancia* (lower court judge) had reported two armed men entered the pueblo on September 28, 1849 and held the town hostage for two days. Reguera failed to mention what motivated the two men, and he complained to state officials that district authorities could not mount an adequate response due to “the bad state of the police.” He believed that the “lack of police” translated into “a shortage of... justice.”³¹ Reguera responded to a state mandate to restore order on the same day requiring him to form two additional National Guard battalions. He referenced the importance of controlling potentially deadly situations like the armed takeover in San Juan Colorado but expressed doubts that he could find enough recruits to meet the government’s demand after authorities withheld pay to soldiers during the war. Reguera concluded that due to “their bad fortunes... much damage would result” for potential recruits and families if they “abandon[ed] their agricultural work.”³²

²⁹ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 19, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Capitación, Legajo 29, Expediente 7.

³⁰ José Miguel Baños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 27, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 25.

³¹ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador del Estado, November 12, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 48.

³² José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 12, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 48. This was a common practice throughout the country when faced with filling military rolls with local residents. Authorities were generally unwilling to send productive men to serve in militia units, National Guard service, or regular army detachments because it would often hurt the local economy. See, Guardino, *The Dead March*, 53-59.

Officials therefore had few resources to address criminal acts in isolated areas, but much to his surprise, Reguera did manage to comply with a portion of the state mandate and filled one National Guard battalion before December.³³

Racial and ethnic tensions increased after the war as well. Antonio Iglesias described that in late January 1849 he “had to go to Pinotepa [Nacional] as a result in part of the First Alcalde’s letter describing the differences and dissension that have been provoked between the two classes of indígenas and razón.” Iglesias openly longed for a return to the colonial era caste system, or as he called it “the days of separation.”³⁴ A second report helps illustrate problems that migration from Afro-Mexican and Mixtec pueblos brought to municipalities like Pinotepa Nacional. Reguera reported that musicians from the “indígena and razón castes” refused to play together during the town’s religious holidays. It took the local priest’s involvement and several concerned neighbors to calm the performers (See Chapter 2).³⁵ Local authorities worked with religious leaders to broker a deal whereby each group maintained separate bands that were to play during prescribed religious ceremonies at assigned locations.³⁶ Authorities assured state officials in Oaxaca City that this “unique agreement to reconcile differences between indígenas and de razón” was the best possible compromise in a town with such a diverse population.³⁷

Locals in the region had a wide range of different racial and ethnic identities. This meant that racial tensions extended beyond Afro-indigenous disputes. One case highlights deep

³³ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 17, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 53.

³⁴ Antonio Iglesias to Gobernador del Departamento, January 23, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Alcaldes, Legajo 18, Expediente 53.

³⁵ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 28, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 49.

³⁶ José Antonio Reguera, Francisco Rivero, et al., “Hecho entra bandas de castas,” February 12, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 49.

³⁷ José Antonio Reguera to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 12, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 49.

divisions between blancos and indígenas in the Mixtec pueblo Cacahuatepec. Antonio Hernández identified himself in February 1849 as the second alcalde of the pueblo in an appeal to the governor of Oaxaca. He claimed to represent “the Corporation of elders and all of the indígena class that composed the majority of the pueblo” and filed a formal complaint against Priest Francisco Parra. Hernández accused Parra of forcing both people identified as “de razón” as well as the majority “indígenas” to pay an unusually large fee for his services. Hernández held that this was a clear violation of the constitution and a practice locally outlawed since 1818. He claimed that residents in the pueblo suffered a great deal during the past few years and could not afford to meet the capitación in addition to paying comparably expensive church obligations that the priest and the “de razón” class unfairly demanded “indígenas” pay.³⁸ Parra countered with a lengthy defense of the practice. First, he insisted that Hernández had never held the title of second alcalde and claimed instead that he was “a regidor of exception” without authority beyond collecting the capitación from “indígenas.” Parra noted that the “de razón” class comprised the local government and held legal authority under the constitution. He also clarified that “all the indígena class and the elders” Hernández claimed to represent “were no [more] than eight individuals,” an inordinately small group for a Mixtec pueblo.³⁹

Parra then attacked Hernández’s honor. After accusing the man of claiming an erroneous title, Parra contended that Hernández and the indigenous elders no longer attended church but preferred to engage in “sinister masses.” Parra alleged that one of the elders “lives in public and scandalous cohabitation with two of his wife’s granddaughters.” Another man supposedly did

³⁸ Antonio Hernández to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 9, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 51.

³⁹ Francisco Parra Salamanca to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 27, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 51.

not have decent furniture because according to Parra he had “burned them in a furious fire... the Monday of the Grito de Dolores.” Parra held that another of the elders was “habitually drunk with shame and indecency.” The priest juxtaposed this group of seemingly dishonorable men with the first *alcalde* of the “de razón” class who he insisted legally and honorably led the pueblo government. Parra asserted that Hernández could not legally be the second *alcalde*. The priest then moved to the complaint, and after a lengthy defense, he stated that officials in Cacahuatepec enacted a statute that required everyone who accessed pueblo land or resources to contribute one *real* to pay for religious festivals. He stated that this worked well some time back with a priest in a particularly unruly indigenous parish in Ometepec, Guerrero. He asked state authorities to intervene on his behalf and cited that the “de razón class favors him” and would like to see the state government “castigate” Hernández.⁴⁰

This example highlights several key issues residents in indigenous pueblos faced after independence. First, every person involved in the case acknowledged that Cacahuatepec was an indigenous (*indígena*) pueblo. Parra’s insistence that the first *alcalde* was “de razón” and therefore legitimate illustrates how officials often imposed Spanish-speaking representatives with few, if any, ties to majority indigenous pueblos. Hernández’s proclamation that he was the second *alcalde* who represented the majority indigenous population illustrates a changing political environment limiting the Mixtec inhabitants’ long-established autonomy. His council of elders attempted to push aside appointed officials and sought arbitration from the state to regain control over their pueblo. In so doing, they revealed that a potentially large portion, perhaps an overwhelming majority, of the pueblo supported these actions while at the same time recognizing

⁴⁰ Parra to Gobernador, February 27, 1849, AGPEO.

the role state authorities played as arbiters against corrupt local officials. Second, disputes over masculine honor played an important role in both appeals. Hernández presented himself as honorable with a government position and a legitimate representative of his pueblo. Parra seems to have understood the power of such rhetoric and devoted much of his letter to delegitimizing Hernández's and the council of elders' claims by attacking their status and moral turpitude. According to Parra, Hernández was a liar, another man lived incestuously with his granddaughters, another man destroyed property, and another man was a drunk. All of these charges also played into common stereotypes about Mexico's indigenous population during the mid-nineteenth century. Finally, this case suggests widespread discontent lurking beneath the surface of everyday life in a small indigenous pueblo. The example is full of racial resentment. A large Mixtec population seemingly questioned the legitimacy of imposed pueblo authorities in addition to the district politicians who presumably appointed the outsiders to these positions because they spoke Spanish. This example also demonstrates the financial burden the *capitación* placed on ordinary citizens in the Costa Mixteca as well as acceptable fees for church sacraments and services.

Cacahuatepec, however, was not indicative of the relationship many of the pueblos in the region had with their priests. Reports began to surface in early 1849 that heretics were among the population in Huazolotitlán who had revolted against local authorities and refused to pay taxes.⁴¹ Many people in contrast seemed to seek out religious leaders to help make sense of a dire situation. Authorities acknowledged in August 1849 that a large portion of the district had "separated" from the formal government and elected their own *alcaldes*. In addition, they

⁴¹ José Antonio Reguera to José María Viuda, March 26, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 42.

reported to state officials that they experienced a major shortage of corn and worked to eradicate a serious cholera outbreak.⁴² The following year Nicolás Tejada related that a priest incited rebellion in Huazolotitlán and the nearby bajos to the south. He warned that the priest's message was particularly troublesome due to "the majority indígena population" that had been confrontational with authorities since 1847. The priest had apparently formed an alliance with the pueblo's second alcalde and advocated a full rejection of authority. Tejada worried that this message would make the already difficult task of collecting taxes altogether impossible.⁴³ In an *Informe* (report) later that year Tejada concluded that damage from a large hurricane, the war, widespread hunger due to a shortage of corn, and a major cholera outbreak "has woken up the religious spirit."⁴⁴ The situation became worse over the course of the next year, and Ursulino Parada asked state officials to waive tax debts altogether for Huazolotitlán due to "habitual diseases" and starvation.⁴⁵

Tejada and Parada believed that many of the post-war political problems stemmed from the economic downturn. As newly elected district officials they inaugurated several projects to improve communication outside the region and revitalize the economy. In the summer of 1849 they led an effort to improve the road leading to the port of Huatulco in the east. Each man donated large sums of money with the hopes of transporting coastal cotton and other products

⁴² José Miguel Baños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 21, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 11.

⁴³ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 12, 1850, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 80.

⁴⁴ [Nicolás Tejada], "Informe del Departamento," November 8, 1850, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 55.

⁴⁵ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 22, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Capitación, Legajo 29, Expediente 9.

more easily to the port rather than sending them over tall mountains.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the men faced substantial obstacles to restore the economy to pre-war levels. In 1851, Tejada reported that, in addition to losing a substantial number of crops necessary for local consumption, farmers lost the entire cotton harvest.⁴⁷ Parada attempted to estimate the value of the loss a few months later and concluded that, even though that year was devastating, cotton had “not experienced new growth” in several years. He attributed the recession to the considerable sacrifice “costeños” made to sustaining the war effort and noted that the shortfall “in large part [was due to] the loss of labor.” He described that this represented a major cost for merchants and investors, but he concluded that “costeños have pinned their hopes” and future financial well-being on cotton. He believed that any loss from a natural disaster, labor shortage, or economic downturn could have a devastating effect for Afro-Mexican producers in the region.⁴⁸

Tejada and Parada both increased their investments in virtually every aspect of cotton production after the war. The two men had substantial ties to affluent families in the region, and Tejada surpassed Fagoaga as the leading merchant in Jamiltepec in the 1850s. One critic later described Tejada as the “political father” of one of the state of Oaxaca’s most important Porfirian era entrepreneurs.⁴⁹ In a rare, candid letter Tejada stated that his Huazolotitlán cotton gin brought in \$75 Pesos and \$2 Reales of profit for every bail processed, but he revealed that “each sum

⁴⁶ Nicolás Tejada, “Lista que manifiesta las cantidades con que se hace suscrito por donativo voluntario para la apertura del Camino del Huatulco,” June 26, 1849, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Contribución, Legajo 3, Expediente 28.

⁴⁷ Nicolás Tejada, “Informe sobre el distrito en 1850,” February 3, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 54.

⁴⁸ Ursulino Parada, “Acontecimientos Notables,” April 30, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 37.

⁴⁹ Isaac Narváez de Tlaxiaco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 22, 1910, AGPEO, Secretario de Gobierno, Conflictos, Legajo 63, Expediente 31.

exceeded the expressed value” to individual producers.⁵⁰ Tejada and Parada seem to correspond with what historian Sven Beckert describes as happening at the national level. He argues that “industrialist businessmen... could make their [cotton] interests central to state policies” and were “essential for [Mexico’s] move toward industrial capitalism.”⁵¹ Almost a decade after successfully lobbying for protective tariffs, Tejada led another effort in 1852 to curtail harmful taxes and regulations. He argued that non-perishables like cotton, cochineal, and livestock were the key to the region’s economic success, but he highlighted the difficulties of each industry. Cochineal demand had never recovered after independence and livestock was too difficult to tax accurately without more regulations on slaughterhouses and ranchers. He believed that cotton represented the best hope for financial success as the national textile industry slowly recovered.⁵² Tejada reiterated the consequences of international competition weeks later when he described that “misery has invaded the district” due to “the fall in prices of cotton.” He argued that officials should “find themselves highly interested in the protection and growth” of the cotton industry because their regulatory action would restore work, family, and respectability of small farmers and workers.⁵³

Tejada had numerous personal reasons to stress the importance of cotton to state officials. He had recently invested to expand the cotton trade, and he reported that two of his gins in Huazolotitlán generated substantial profits during the recession. A filing with a local judge

⁵⁰ Tejada did not provide a specific quantity here other than to give the value of an unspecified amount of processed cotton. In comparison, this value seems high for a bail at this time. Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 10, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 59.

⁵¹ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 160.

⁵² Nicolás Tejada, “Informe,” April 6, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 61.

⁵³ Nicolás Tejada, “Informe sobre el Departamento de Jamiltepec,” April 26, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 77.

revealed that he lived in “a house located in Huazolotitlán with a cotton gin... behind the church on the front of the plaza.”⁵⁴ Antonio Iglesias confirmed this testimony, and added that Tejada “a native of Madrid,” was now a “Mexican citizen” who followed all of the guidelines in reporting the worth of his business.⁵⁵ He played a pivotal role in transforming the product into a valuable commodity. This meant that Tejada often had close personal connections to Afro-Mexican communities. In one example from his post as a National Guard Colonel Tejada praised “the behavior of *costeños*... due to their integrity, their love of order, their acceptance of the law, and their respect of the supreme government and all legitimately constituted authorities.”⁵⁶ He carefully used phrases to stress masculine honor after indirectly identifying race. Integrity and lawfulness translated into honor. Furthermore these qualities could have prevented authorities from pressing them into a regular army unit. Volunteering as a soldier after the war in the National Guard thus provided Afro-Mexican men, *costeños* in Tejada’s words, with a means to demonstrate their honorable masculinity and roles as citizens.

In the 1850s, however, elites like Tejada increasingly equated blackness and indigeneity with a lack of honor. In one letter Tejada requested to split Cortijos and Cuajinicuilapa into two parishes (see Chapter 2) due to what he described as widespread ignorance. He complained that the priest had to divide his time between the two predominately Afro-Mexican pueblos leaving residents in Cortijos without religious leadership for long periods of time. He asserted that Afro-Mexicans in Cortijos made matters worse because they migrated to different locations as the

⁵⁴ Nicolás Tejada to the Juez de Primera Instancia, January 11, 1852, Archivo General de Notarías del Estado de Oaxaca (hereafter cited as ANO), Juzgado de Distrito, Jamiltepec, 1851-52, 1117.

⁵⁵ Antonio Iglesias, Manuel López Noriega, et al., January 11, 1852, ANO, Juzgado de Distrito, Jamiltepec, 1851-52, 1117.

⁵⁶ Nicolás Tejada, “El Gobernador Interino del Departamento a los Guardia Nacional que marchan a la Capital,” July 17, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Guardia Nacional, Legajo 28, Expediente 28.

seasons changed. Tejada charged that the men who engaged in such mobility abandoned their duties as *padres de familia* by never baptizing their children nor attending mass.⁵⁷ Thus their agricultural patterns that made the best use of the growing seasons were evidence of their lack of religion and, by extension, honor. Tejada's assumptions about race and ethnicity were not limited to Afro-Mexicans. The First Alcalde of Cortijos asked Tejada for help enforcing a quarantine in his town from nearby Mixtec pueblos to his north due to a cholera outbreak. Tejada asked state officials for help and added that the "ignorant" indigenous population would spread the disease throughout the region because of their unwillingness to treat the illness and inability to communicate with authorities.⁵⁸ Tejada offered only "ignorance" and linguistic ability as evidence to blame Mixtecs for the health crisis. Such connections between race and honor grew increasingly explicit among elites like Tejada after the war.

Soldiering in the proper unit could help to make one honorable, but for many elites one's race meant that large groups lacked honor collectively. In addition, soldiers who gained honor for their service during the war could also lose it if their actions violated social mores. One example from 1851 illustrates how an ex-soldier might unsuccessfully reference his service during the war. Antonio Budar appealed to authorities and eventually the governor of Oaxaca for leniency in his sentence after being convicted of having an affair with a married woman. He had climbed his way up to sergeant in the regular army during the war and served with distinction in the Jamiltepec Battalion. His rank as a non-commissioned officer most likely would have separated him in terms of public opinion from the conscripts he led into battle, but an unspecified

⁵⁷ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 4, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 78.

⁵⁸ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 23, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 25.

man's accusations of adultery with a married woman damaged his reputation. He emphasized his rank and clean record during the war, but the local judge who heard his case was apparently unmoved and labelled him a "criminal" guilty of "an illicit relationship." The record of his appeals ended abruptly suggesting that state authorities likely did not overturn the local judge's decision. His presumably honorable actions and bravery during the war were not enough to restore his damaged reputation and highlights competing conceptions of respectability.⁵⁹

Through their annual rental payments ranchers provided a vital economic means of support to Mixtec *padres de familia*. This income often offset tax obligations and communal expenditures, and post-war tax collection efforts extended to these payments as officials sought to document revenue from *haciendas volantes* (See Chapter 2). One rare contract provides some insight into what appears to be a typical arrangement. José Miguel Ángel of Huajuapán reported to district authorities in 1851 that he and the *Alcalde* of Tetepelcingo reached a nine-year agreement to rent commonly held *pueblo* land. They submitted a certified contract that carefully spelled out the terms representatives of the *pueblo* and Ángel had agreed to along with a description of the land he could use. The contract detailed that he would rent virtually all of the commonly held *pueblo* pastures. This was therefore a large investment for villagers who agreed not to use the land for their own ranches and farms during this time. Ángel's *hacienda volante* comprised territory beginning immediately adjacent to the *pueblo* and extended to the farthest border that several communities shared. While the agreement did not limit the number of goats Ángel could pasture on *pueblo* lands, it did list that Ángel agreed to pay the town \$40 Pesos annually for nine years. Authorities also agreed that Ángel was "free to consent the land" to

⁵⁹ Antonio Budar to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 23, 1851, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 28.

other hacendados if they had “more goats from bordering” pueblos.⁶⁰ The contract went into effect in February after town elders in this Mixtec pueblo expressed no objections to the public announcement authorities posted in late January. The statement notified residents that their elected officials agreed “to lease the land for the raising of goats” to Ángel in exchange for \$40 Pesos annually for a nine-year term.⁶¹

Ángel had apparently adhered to the agreement nearly two years later when pueblo authorities reported he paid them \$40 Pesos in 1852 for his “hacienda volante.”⁶² Nevertheless, it is difficult to gauge how satisfied each party was with the agreement. Local officials seemed to welcome any means of revenue to fulfill tax obligations and public works projects in otherwise cash deficient areas, but when one compares contracts on the coast with those further north, it seems that hacendados received more favorable treatment in Jamiltepec than they did elsewhere. Officials in San Andrés Chicahuaxtla, a pueblo located between Putla and Tlaxiaco, valued their “commonly held pueblo lands” they listed as “mountainous and serving as pastures” at \$500 Pesos. They recognized the pasture as a small part of land the “Cacique of Copala” owned, but they reported no rental income from a hacienda volante.⁶³ Authorities in Itunyoso, conversely, reported that land rented annually was worth more than \$800 Pesos.⁶⁴ In other cases rental contracts to the north mirrored those in Jamiltepec. Three pueblos near Tlaxiaco reported their rental income from haciendas volantes were comparable to the values outlined above in

⁶⁰ José Miguel Ángel, Alcalde de Tetepelcingo Lázaro Nicolás y Regidor Primero Matías Hernández, February 7, 1851, ANO, Juzgado de Distrito, Jamiltepec, 1851-52, 1117.

⁶¹ Pablo Aparicio, “Aviso Público,” January 26, 1851, ANO, Juzgado de Distrito, Jamiltepec, 1851-52, 1117.

⁶² Anastasio Quiroz – “Informe del comun de Tetepelcingo,” November 30, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 66.

⁶³ Ambrosio Añorve, “Inventario General de San Andrés Chicahuaxtla,” February 22, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Tlaxiaco, Legajo 2.

⁶⁴ Juan Anastasio, “Inventario General de San Martín Itunyoso,” February 9, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Tlaxiaco, Legajo 2.

Jamiltepec.⁶⁵ Authorities along the routes of the haciendas volantes attempted to collect income from these operations by entering into reasonable contracts to offset tax obligations. In the early 1850s, only officials in San Pedro Jicayán failed to renegotiate their \$150 Peso annual contract.⁶⁶

Haciendas volantes certainly generated substantial revenue for pueblos and hacendados. Other types of ranching also drew a great deal of attention from authorities after the war. The notary archive for the years 1851 and 1852 alone contain numerous contracts for cattle and horse ranching, but these same records have only one contract for a hacienda volante. Among these examples Ursulino Parada paid a relatively large annual sum, \$30 Pesos, to rent communal land outside of Huaxpaltepec.⁶⁷ José Germán Gasga's \$10 Pesos to rent pastureland in Pinotepa Nacional is more representative of a common agreement.⁶⁸ These two examples help illustrate an otherwise lengthy set of small contracts that rarely reached the level of Parada's agreement to graze cattle and horses, but as the opening vignette demonstrates, rustling was a problem authorities attempted to eradicate. Tejada notified state authorities in 1852 that he had "animals of every kind that their owners do not recognize" occupying rented pueblo lands. He speculated that in most cases "they were robbed" and sold in the unregulated marketplace. He proposed that authorities document every rancher's brand and sell unregistered livestock publicly to generate

⁶⁵ 35 pesos in Yacuane. José Mariano Avendaño, "Inventario General de San Bartolo Yucuane," February 8, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Tlaxiaco, Legajo 2. 30 pesos in Tataltepec. Isidro de Paz, "Inventario General de Santa María Tataltepec," January 28, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Tlaxiaco, Legajo 2. 51 pesos in Atoyaquillo. Gregorio Merlín Díaz, "Inventario General de Santa María Asunción Atoyaquillo," February 16, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Tlaxiaco, Legajo 2.

⁶⁶ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 10, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 48.

⁶⁷ Mariano de los Santos, "Aviso Público," August 20, 1851, ANO, Juzgado de Distrito, Jamiltepec, 1851-52, 1117.

⁶⁸ Manuel Cosme Mejía, "Aviso Público," June 5, 1851, ANO, Juzgado de Distrito, Jamiltepec, 1851-52, 1117.

tax revenue.⁶⁹ Ranchers throughout the region supported Tejada's plan and worked with officials to register their animals.⁷⁰

Ranching, military service, and cotton production illustrates how familial economics and notions of citizenship intersected with politics during the post-war years. Authorities placed onerous financial demands on ordinary citizens by collecting the *capitación* during the post-war economic crisis. The dispute eventually transcended economics and evolved into a political dispute over citizenship. Locals objected that they could not pay a government that had itself denied compensation to soldiers defending Mexico from the U.S. invasion. This provided an opening for new leaders at the district level like Parada and Tejada who worked to stabilize the economy and protect their investments. They believed that such measures would protect countless *padres de familia* and help maintain order while also maximizing their own profits in cotton and livestock. The links between politics, identity, and economics illustrates how successful politicians appealed broadly to citizens after independence. These leaders adeptly understood that stabilizing the economy could help them to achieve their own political and personal agendas. This contrasts sharply with the national level. Elites in Mexico City ignored popular initiatives and supported a move to authoritarian leadership.

⁶⁹ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 9, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 55.

⁷⁰ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 23, 1852, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comercio e Industria, Legajo 19, Expediente 9.

Part 3: Santa Anna as Dictator

Santa Anna returned to Veracruz from exile in Colombia on April 1, 1853. Conservative politicians worked with him to overthrow Mariano Arista's moderate government later that same year. They cited the Caste War in the Yucatán (1847-52), political unrest in Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Morelos, and violence in northern states as evidence that Santa Anna should lead the country as a dictator.⁷¹ When he assumed the presidency later that year, Santa Anna's government worked "to ensure that all opposition was silenced" in a manner that "exceeded anything carried out by any of his previous administrations."⁷² In addition, Santa Anna sought to limit autonomy in indigenous pueblos, particularly in states like Oaxaca.⁷³ He directed officials at the state and district levels to replace local administrators in individual pueblo governments with Spanish-speakers from outside the communities they represented. His decision angered Mixtec and Amuzgo citizens who united after the invasion in support of a return to federalism. Thus, disputes at the national level once again filtered down to the region. Santa Anna began his presidency with numerous supporters in Jamiltepec, but his unpopular policies, the weak economic recovery, and onerous tax code made for a fragile coalition.

Tejada expressed elite frustrations toward the indigenous population in a demeaning letter he sent to the governor in early 1853. He described an isolated, ignorant, and fragmented region that served as a major obstacle to progress. He charged that the majority "indígena"

⁷¹ For more on the Caste War see, Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Terry Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever: Mayas, Hispanics, and Caste War Violence in Yucatán, 1800-1880* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Rajeshwari Dutt, *Maya Caciques in Early National Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), 61-102.

⁷² Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 297.

⁷³ Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens*, 148-150.

population could not “read or write” and “ignore our language.” To make matters worse, he insisted that the government functionaries and translators in Mixtec pueblos were no help to authorities because “they are from the same class” as those they represented. He linked citizenship to linguistic ability and suggested that the majority Mixtec-speaking population he represented were not full citizens because they did not speak Spanish. He differentiated Afro-Mexicans on the coast without documenting ethnicity or race, but he offered subtle clues why he believed they were different as well. He omitted the term “indígena” and only referred to the hot coastal location. This aligns with other letters from Tejada where he identified indigenous people as “indígena” and separated Afro-Mexicans from others by describing geography and climate. He noted that the extreme heat along the coast prevented more people from living there who were not “costeños,” and he claimed that the coast was full of economic potential because there was plenty of land “to work and raise livestock.”⁷⁴ Tejada blamed “costeños” for the lack of progress but asserted they were the only people capable of withstanding the harsh climate. Whether disparaging Mixtecs or Afro-Mexicans, Tejada joined many other elites at this time who expressed that they governed an unruly, ignorant population.

Two years later one pueblo official in Cortijos provided a scathing assessment of the locals living in this primarily Afro-Mexican community. In his report to district authorities the Comisario Municipal de Cortijos José Manuel Serrano avoided the use of race or ethnicity in his description of what he portrayed as an otherwise lawless community. He argued that he could not produce a proper census because the 1,170 people he estimated lived there remained obscured “by distance” from his office. He confirmed that 40 families remained in the pueblo permanently

⁷⁴ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 3, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 56.

because they were either unwilling or too sick to move with the growing season. Yet, he asserted that they lived in the pueblo throughout the year because “they have no motive that would force them to live in the country.” He charged that these 40 families “gave welcome in their houses to men from all classes: murderers, criminals, and principally deserters.” According to Serrano virtually everyone who lived in Cortijos for all or part of the year were responsible for the “many wrongs against our system of government.”⁷⁵ He claimed that these “wrongs” from the pueblo’s residents included their refusal to pay taxes, frequent military desertions, and annual migrations. Authorities worked with religious leaders to address these issues and announced later in the year that church officials finally agreed to separate Cuajinicuilapa and Cortijos into two parishes. The priest who had served these two communities noted that the rainy season prevented him from crossing the river dividing Guerrero and Oaxaca, and authorities agreed that the move would finally reconcile the religious and political boundaries by placing Cortijos in a parish with other Afro-Mexican pueblos in the Jamiltepec jurisdiction.⁷⁶

The first references in the region to a broader political movement came early in 1853. A captain in Ometepec, Guerrero wrote a letter to Tejada urging him to support the Plan de Jalisco. Tejada forwarded the letter to the Oaxaca governor and offered reassurances that district officials would not support the pronunciamiento.⁷⁷ Tejada also included a separate message warning of potential violence spreading into the region from Guerrero. He expressed support for the current government in Oaxaca City and stated that local authorities would march “night and day” to

⁷⁵ José Mariano Abrego, “Exposición del Comisario de Cortijos” to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, March 15, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Estadística, Legajo 24, Expediente 13.

⁷⁶ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, June 8, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 38.

⁷⁷ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 20, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 69.

protect all pueblos in his district.⁷⁸ A week later officials called for a special election to name delegates to the “*Congreso Extraordinario*” (Special Congress) for a special election cycle. Tejada described that authorities “published and circulated” the order, but officials in the sierra encountered “very violent [opposition] in these respective pueblos.”⁷⁹ The revolt that began with Conservative José María Blancarte’s pronunciamiento against moderate Jalisco Governor Jesús López Portillo in 1852 had grown exponentially and included a demand for the removal of President Mariano Arista by early 1853. Will Fowler correctly concludes that Santa Anna’s supporters successfully attached Arista’s removal to the pronunciamiento because he failed “to bring any respite to postwar Mexico.”⁸⁰

The violence Tejada referenced illustrates the serious underlying political disputes in the region. In Mixtec communities it appears people were largely unhappy with Arista, but they never supported Santa Anna’s return to the presidency. Tejada relayed another message in early March that a second attempt for a special election provoked violence in several pueblos.⁸¹ On the same day, Tejada forwarded a report that the revolt had spilled across the border from Guerrero as Santa Anna’s supporters urged residents to join the pronunciamiento. Tejada’s letter also contained what must have been stunning news for officials eager to avoid a change in government. Nicolás Tejada’s brother, Carlos, was one of the military leaders supporting the pronunciamiento. Nicolás, nevertheless, seemed to play both sides. He indicated that he would not betray his brother while remaining loyal to the embattled state and federal governments. At

⁷⁸ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 20, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 69.

⁷⁹ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 28, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 69.

⁸⁰ Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 293.

⁸¹ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 8, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 70.

the same time, Nicolás urged state officials to remain open to a potential change in leadership at the national level and avoid acting irrationally to put down the pronunciamiento.⁸² In early April Nicolás recognized Santa Anna as president and criticized the outgoing state government formed in 1852. He charged that state officials accumulated a great deal of personal wealth during and after war while regions like Jamiltepec suffered. In particular, he claimed that a French investor mistreated local cotton merchants and producers. He declared that competing with foreign investors from France “would be impossible” and it would subject the region to “the most degrading form of slavery.”⁸³

Tejada’s critique of the governor built on a familiar theme in nineteenth century Mexico. The juxtaposition of slavery with freedom held important meaning after independence and during the U.S. invasion. Yet, Tejada only invoked slavery to disparage an economic competitor who presumably hurt his personal business. He did not reference the numerous Afro-Mexican cotton producers in the region who were the descendants of slaves. Instead, Tejada defined freedom in economic terms stressing that foreign investors like the person he attacked could harm the *padres de familia* who depended on cotton to provide for their families. In a separate incident one priest’s complaint over how *alcaldes* required residents to labor without wages in Cortijos further lent credibility to Tejada’s original point. The unnamed priest complained to Tejada that officials in his pueblo violated an 1850 law banning *alcaldes* from using free labor to complete public projects. Tejada required the priest to compile a list of specific instances of how authorities violated this law, and he underscored to state authorities that the prior administration

⁸² Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 8, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 70.

⁸³ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 5, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 70.

allowed this to happen.⁸⁴ Thus Tejada seemed to justify the change in government to protect the economic freedom of citizens from slavery.

Government officials had formally recognized the demands of Juan Álvarez and numerous local activists when they formed the State of Guerrero in May 1849. Authorities in Puebla, the State of Mexico, and Michoacán agreed to cede large portions of their territory after a lengthy process that lasted more than a decade.⁸⁵ The formation of a new state also severed various political ties with what became Guerrero and split the Costa Chica into two regions. The Oaxaca and Guerrero sides comprised the area, and unsurprisingly the political shift sparked a number of disputes over grazing pastures for livestock. The first reports came in April 1853 when a local official on the Oaxaca side of the border in Lo de Soto accused Guerrero ranchers of trampling crops on pueblo land. An official from Guerrero countered that “the residents of Huistepec, [Guerrero] have obtained the right to those lands” and his government therefore had jurisdiction over this part of Lo de Soto.⁸⁶ A separate Lo de Soto official on the Oaxaca side informed district and state authorities a few days later that Guerrero representatives declared the land belonged to a historic cacique in Huistepec. He argued that the Guerrero claim to Oaxaca territory was therefore illegal because recent laws “have extinguished the cacicazgos.” In his estimation, the land that historically belonged to Huistepec had changed hands years ago allowing the residents of Lo de Soto to claim authority over the territory.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Nicolás Tejada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 23, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Alcaldes, Legajo 18, Expediente 56.

⁸⁵ Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State*, 171-76.

⁸⁶ “Circular mandó desde Alcalde 1ª to El Alcalde de Ranchería de Lo de Soto y Gobernador del Jamiltepec,” April 29, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 27.

⁸⁷ Manuel Salvador Saligon to Gobernador del Departamento de Jamiltepec, May 4, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 27.

The dispute festered for quite some time since the formation of the new state. One official from Lo de Soto, a pueblo with a large Afro-Mexican population, insisted that the “indígenas” from Huistepec caused the problem but “*vecinos*” (residents) in Lo de Soto frequently responded with violence. He detailed that each side “reciprocates animosities that exist between those residents of [Huistepec] and the *vecinos* from [Lo de Soto].”⁸⁸ At the district level, authorities worked with their counterparts in Guerrero with little success to resolve the dispute. One official argued that the ranchers in Lo de Soto “take great care that their livestock do not cross” the boundary. He placed all blame on the Guerrero side of the border and linked the problems back to informal landholding practices in Huistepec connected to their old cacique. He reported that local authorities “inform me the land on which they have their cattle belongs to the *cacicazgo* of Señor Añorve, and he has them rented.”⁸⁹ Nevertheless, local officials on the Guerrero side of the border charged that the problem extended into Mixtec pueblos as well. The Prefect of Ometepec penned a letter in the summer of 1853 citing that “the *indios* of those pueblos [in Cacahuatepec] have taken” a large number of “cattle and animals” from Añorve causing great damage.⁹⁰ The official complained to Jamiltepec authorities that a number of reports suggested that rustlers from Cacahuatepec and Lo de Soto sold the stolen livestock in unregulated Jamiltepec markets. In addition, he insisted that numerous deserters from his district freely lived among the residents of both pueblos and aided with rustling.

⁸⁸ José Miguel Baños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 7, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 27.

⁸⁹ Manuel Salvador Saligon to Gobernador del Departamento de Jamiltepec, May 7, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 27.

⁹⁰ José Miguel Baños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, July 4, 1853, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 20.

The cross-border dispute surprised authorities who believed residents would be pleased with the effort to establish a new state with the name of Guerrero, the national hero. Targeting foreigners, however, was predictably popular among constituents. In early 1854, district authorities complied with a new state law restricting foreign travel.⁹¹ Federal officials warned in February that “suspicious foreigners” evaded legal “admission into the Republic” and illegally travelled in various regions of the country.⁹² By April, state officials forwarded a long series of messages that discussed an ongoing rebellion on the Guerrero side of the border. Álvarez led the insurrection against Santa Anna’s government, and local officials feared that he would unite with a group of unnamed foreigners who supported his cause. In particular, Parada seemed most concerned about a French filibuster expedition that supposedly left San Francisco, California on its way to the Guerrero coast. He suspected that this expedition would land in Acapulco to join Álvarez before making their way to Cuajinicuilapa.⁹³ Foreign interlopers seemed to frighten Santa Anna’s administration more than internal threats, and his representatives issued orders to restrict travel. In Jamiltepec, officials took such warnings seriously due to their close proximity to the port and Álvarez’s primary area of support, but the local economy depended on outside connections with slaughterhouses and textile mills. Parada warned that travel restrictions would cause serious damage to the economy because they would prevent “movement to-and-from Puebla.” He correctly assumed that restricting trade in this manner would have a devastating effect on cotton producers and ranchers.⁹⁴ Santa Anna’s officials threw these economic

⁹¹ Francisco María Armengol to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 10, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 30.

⁹² Francisco María Armengol to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, February 7, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 93.

⁹³ “Comunicaciones Importantes,” *El Universal: Periódico Independiente*, 3 Abril 1854, 2-3.

⁹⁴ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 10, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 30.

considerations aside and restricted commerce further emboldening the political opponents plotting to overthrow his government.

Part 4: Santa Anna's Finale and a Popular "*Lack of Patriotism*"

Colonel Florencio Villarreal pronounced the Plan de Ayutla on March 1, 1854. Santa Anna's state and federal authorities attempted to avoid violence from spreading across the border from Guerrero and stationed a large force in Jamiltepec.⁹⁵ This prevented outright pronouncements of support for the rebellion making it unclear how many locals initially supported the revolt. Parada informed state authorities in March that communication had grown difficult because "rebels from Guerrero" moved into the Mixteca to the north and cut the entire region off from the capital.⁹⁶ Just a few weeks later in April 1854, he confusingly wrote that all district employees complied with a state mandate to support Álvarez and the Plan de Ayutla.⁹⁷ On the same day, he informed state authorities that Priest Bernardino Carvajal embarked on "a violent separation" from the district by forming a new government.⁹⁸ By the end of April Álvarez supporters claimed to have occupied all district-level offices, but these misleading declarations concealed that many Santa Anna loyalists clung to their positions until the middle of 1855.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Iturrigarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo I, 432.

⁹⁶ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, March 21, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 93.

⁹⁷ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, April 18, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 93.

⁹⁸ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 18, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 37.

⁹⁹ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, April 24, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 17.

Despite the confusion, local authorities faced additional obstacles to governing throughout much of the year. On May 5, 1854, a large earthquake struck the Pacific coast at approximately 9:00 a.m. The tremor caused serious damage across the Mixteca with reports of destruction far away in Huajuapán, Tlaxiaco, Juxtlahuaca, Miahuatlán, and Ejutla. Parada communicated in early May that the earthquake caused major damage and a series of aftershocks destroyed virtually every public building that survived the initial quake.¹⁰⁰ A large locust invasion followed in late May and destroyed crops throughout the region.¹⁰¹ This included the locust incident discussed in Chapter 2 when one official in Huazolotitlán argued that Afro-Mexicans raised an army of locusts to attack Mixtec crops for economic reasons.¹⁰² A separate representative believed in comparison that Afro-Mexicans from the “bajos” conspired with a priest to use the pests against their Mixtec enemies.¹⁰³ The Minister of *Fomento* (Development) estimated that the locust invasion was the worst since 1804 and worried that a major famine would plague residents throughout the Mixteca from Oaxaca to Puebla.¹⁰⁴ Parada blamed the restrictions on travel and commerce for widespread starvation.¹⁰⁵ He claimed that Santa Anna limited travel at precisely the wrong time causing many people to suffer unnecessarily. Nevertheless, blaming Santa Anna for the poor economic conditions ignored that the pests seemed to stay around longer than in times past with officials reporting that the infestation persisted in late October. They observed that many residents responded by turning to religion as

¹⁰⁰ Ursulino Parada, “El terremoto del día 5,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 24 Mayo 1854, 3.

¹⁰¹ Iturrubarría argues that the earthquake and locust disasters cemented popular support for the Plan de Ayutla. Iturrubarría, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo I, 433-34.

¹⁰² Pedro Chávez to Prefecto del Distrito Ursulino Parada, June 28, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 74.

¹⁰³ Juan Teodoro Galeste to Prefecto del Distrito Ursulino Parada, July 2, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 7, Expediente 72.

¹⁰⁴ Ignacio de Goytia, “Ministerio de Fomento: Sección Segundo,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 24 Julio 1854, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 15, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 30.

a means to end the crisis. One official encouraged the religious revival and asserted that a renewed devotion represented the best option to wipe out the plague.¹⁰⁶

Natural disasters also exposed racial divides and elite prejudice. Parada informed the governor of Oaxaca in early September 1854 that he had encountered a number of problems collecting information on commonly held land in Chico Ometepec. He wrote that the earthquake and locusts served to isolate the predominantly Afro-Mexican pueblo, but he added “that there are populations [in Chico Ometepec] that have been completely alone” without access to resources long before the earthquake.¹⁰⁷ Residents from the nearby bajos outside Huazolotitlán unsuccessfully sent a request for tax relief to district authorities after the natural disasters. José Mariano Abrego urged state authorities to deny the request because in his words the residents in the bajos “live like moors.” He asserted that they “call themselves *de razón*,” but he added that “like *indígenas*, they are... insubordinate and immoral.” Abrego claimed that they were using the earthquake to their advantage because under “the pretext of poverty... they want to live in their pueblo... where no one can observe their conduct.” He declared that men in this community lacked honor and “cause all of society the gravest danger.” He cited as an example that townspeople refused to repair the damaged church after the earthquake because “no one acted to raise it” in the first place even though their priest did everything in his power “to encourage them.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, the earthquake provided men like Abrego with an opportunity to blame Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs for the natural disasters without expressing any sense of compassion for the suffering they endured.

¹⁰⁶ José Mariano Abrego, “La langosta,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 29 Octubre 1854, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, September 4, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 49.

¹⁰⁸ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 19, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Capitación, Legajo 29, Expediente 12.

Santa Anna encouraged local officials to devote resources and time to celebrating independence rather than recovery efforts after the natural disasters.¹⁰⁹ Members of his cabinet sent state and local officials specific directions on how to decorate their pueblos and what to emphasize during the ceremonies as an absurd attempt to lend credibility to Santa Anna's presidency and tie him to independence. Officials in Oaxaca City claimed that adherence to the basic program would ensure a "very laudable" ceremony with "honorable and patriotic sentiments."¹¹⁰ It seems that at least a portion of the population did not celebrate the occasion. One local official complained that some people failed to illuminate their houses according to the plan while others did not celebrate at all. He attributed this to "a lack of patriotism" that had invaded the region.¹¹¹ After the celebration he circulated a letter to pueblo authorities in Jamiltepec encouraging them to tie Santa Anna in with religion. The official urged fellow administrators to remind their constituents that "divine providence" alone placed Santa Anna in the presidency.¹¹² His allies attempted on yet another occasion to make cultural connections with ordinary citizens to maintain a base of popular support.

The response to the national disasters coincided with several significant political developments and land dispute cases. One lengthy dispute from a rental contract and land sale in Chico Ometepec demonstrates the growing importance of cotton to the regional economy. In late November 1854 residents of Chico Ometepec filed an appeal to district officials. Don Miguel

¹⁰⁹ Will Fowler argues that Santa Anna used patriotic rituals and state ceremonies to foster popular support for his dictatorship. Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 301.

¹¹⁰ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 22, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 30.

¹¹¹ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, October 10, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 29.

¹¹² José Mariano Abrego to Señores Comisarios, January 1, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 34.

Gerónimo Narvaez and don José Miguel Baños agreed to help pueblo officials Francisco Ramírez and Ciriaco García to stop a rental contract to José María Loeaza. Loeaza was a prominent rancher who finalized a deal with an unnamed representative to graze 85 heads of cattle and 30 horses on pueblo land. He also planned to build a large corral and hire two cowboys, but pueblo officials objected to the introduction of cattle on commonly held land where they farmed cotton. They asserted that the cattle would wander outside Loeaza's proposed boundary and destroy valuable crops.¹¹³ District authorities sided with the residents of Chico Ometepec, and this seemed to embolden them to oppose another rental contract in early 1855. Don Miguel Gerónimo Narváez represented "partners in La Boquilla," a popular name for Chico Ometepec. They charged that district authorities certified a land sale contract without consulting pueblo officials. They claimed once again that this would damage crops and asked state officials to nullify the contract. Unfortunately, the file ends abruptly at this point without indicating the outcome.¹¹⁴ Legal challenges like the two above gave residents a powerful means of protecting pueblo autonomy and access to natural resources. They successfully tied the destruction of crops to the local economy and masculine honor. They argued that if authorities upheld the contracts then the economy could potentially collapse and dishonor the town's *padres de familia* whose misfortunes would prevent them from fulfilling their patriarchal duties of protecting and providing for dependents.

A separate case from Tetepec illustrates how officials could certify rental and sale contracts over the objections of local authorities who failed to obtain legal representation.

¹¹³ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 23, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 49.

¹¹⁴ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 2, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 50.

Residents appealed to halt the sale of communal land in 1855 by alleging three men illegally entered into a contract with Cacique Pascual Nicolás. Local representatives argued that the sale for \$632 Pesos to these three partners left residents without a means to farm. District authorities forwarded the case to the governor's office, but it appears the appeal ended there with no indication if townspeople succeeded in protecting their resources. Their lack of formal representation and inability to petition for help protecting a valued commodity suggests that state officials did not overturn the sale.¹¹⁵ In late November 1855 residents of the Afro-Mexican community Chico Ometepepec objected to a sale of communal land, but on this occasion Narváez did not help with the appeal. Local officials proclaimed that as residents of the "bajos of Huazolotitlán" they had worked the land "for time immemorial," but the new owner wanted to increase the customary rental price for land to an amount that residents could not pay. Two investors from Pinotepa Nacional purchased the property and raised rents after the state enacted a new law regarding the sale of unused lands. Residents agreed that the sale was legal, but they argued that the new owners failed to account for the recent natural disasters when negotiating the purchase price for the communal property. Pueblo authorities reported that the unused land had lain fallow since the locust invasion the prior year and unsuccessfully appealed to have state authorities halt the sale by demanding a higher price.¹¹⁶ Without a powerful ally the legal system provided no remedy to protect the land or lower the rent for local farmers.

These disputes over pueblo land illustrate a diverging moral economy in Mixtec and Afro-Mexican communities. Beginning in the 1850s, Afro-Mexican farmers at times obtained

¹¹⁵ Pascual Nicolás to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, January 27, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 31.

¹¹⁶ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, November 27, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 85.

outside legal counsel from individuals with extensive political connections. These individuals worked on behalf of residents in appeals to protect pueblo land and resources, and together they asked authorities to intervene on behalf of the *padres de familia* who sustained the highly lucrative cotton industry. Mixtec farmers in comparison had no commodity with which they could attract similar support and therefore had limited success protecting pueblo resources. In addition, Santa Anna's administrators enforced laws to limit the political authority of indigenous communities. They modified an old edict that Santa Anna decreed during his early centralist phase appointing Spanish-speaking outsiders to serve as a community's *juez de paz*. During the 1830s, Santa Anna believed that appointing loyalists to these positions would help regulate the historic independence of indigenous pueblos. In rural Oaxaca authorities located in Subprefectures like Huazolotitlán, Pinotepa Nacional, and Cortijos named *jueces de paz* to serve in surrounding pueblos. These officials had a broad mandate with powers ranging from tax collection to settling minor disputes. Karen Caplan argues that from its implementation in 1836 residents often "subverted the intentions of centralist law" by challenging the authority of imposed *jueces de paz*.¹¹⁷ Santa Anna's decision in 1853 to strengthen the law was a final attempt to increase his government's control over indigenous pueblos.¹¹⁸

Local representatives voiced concern over the change in 1854 and appealed for a return to the old system. They argued that the policy locked Mixtecs out of pueblo governments by changing "*jueces de paz de indios... and [jueces de paz] de razón*" to a single official. This prevented communication of legal matters in Mixtec, and as a result, officials warned that they

¹¹⁷ Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens*, 95.

¹¹⁸ Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens*, 165-70.

could no longer sustain “customs of good order and restraint.”¹¹⁹ The Prefect of Jamiltepec José Mariano Abrego appealed for help from state authorities in early January 1855. He related that in “the indigenous part of all the mixed pueblos like Huazolotitlán, Pinotepa Nacional, Pinotepa de Don Luis, Atoyac, Amuzgos, Tlacamama, and Cacahuatpec” there was an overwhelming “disgust for the exclusion” non-Spanish-speaking citizens felt. Abrego reported that district officials imposed the jueces, and this angered townspeople so much that authorities “have not been able to extract” the capitación. He argued that the primary concern stemmed from the traditional division of two jueces de paz who could serve both indigenous and mestizo residents. Abrego urged the governor to change the practice and issue a “measure or resolution of not replacing any functionaries under the denomination of the 2nd Juez de Paz.” He added that observing this separation where indigenous residents had access to local authorities in their own language was an institution dating back “to much earlier times.”¹²⁰ By 1853, residents had adapted to the new office by seeking to control who occupied the position, but they lost the secondary juez that served non-Spanish speakers. In the event where a juez only spoke Spanish, pueblo authorities historically worked with the district to have a second juez de paz to serve Mixtec and Amuzgo residents in their respective communities.

Loyal Santa Anna state and district officials apparently did not stop at appointing jueces de paz in small pueblos. Comisario José Anastasio Merino from Pinotepa de Don Luis asked authorities to return the selection of pueblo officials to residents. He insisted that “since time immemorial the pueblo has been accustomed to have two purely indígena alcaldes.” Merino

¹¹⁹ José María Villamano, Francisco Vasconcelos, et al. to Prefecto de Jamiltepec, December 31, 1854, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 86.

¹²⁰ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 2, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 34.

described how the first *alcalde* historically handled all court cases, and the second collected taxes, regulated the economy, and oversaw political matters. He argued that the second *alcalde* also regulated cultural and religious ceremonies. This official made sure “the *indígena* class” complied with laws and customs “without altering their Christian and religious” traditions. He complained that authorities at the district level had changed this time-honored tradition by appointing officials from outside the *pueblo* who only spoke Spanish. Merino claimed, however, that even the rare appointee who could speak Mixteco was ineffective because they were more “occupied in their work and do not attend our most important public meetings.” He revealed that, at these functions, residents took part in “indispensable ceremonies and requirements to meet conditions in the obligation to be a legitimate *indígena* citizen.” Merino anticipated that authorities from outside Pinotepa de Don Luis would simply impose a stranger who barely spoke Mixteco, but he declared that even if “they know how to speak our language... they ignore the most interesting phrases” with the most meaning. He argued that “*indígenas* have” everything they need in their *pueblos* and could maintain order by selecting their own officials “to govern... in their native language.”¹²¹

Francisco Baños Peña, the *Comisario Municipal* of Pinotepa Nacional, had a similar assessment. The primary difference in his case is that Baños Peña identified himself as “*de razón*,” but he described a similar sentiment of anger among people he identified as “*indígena*” in the much larger ethnically and racially “mixed” city. He recognized that the recent change in the law prevented 2nd *jueces de paz* from serving as independent justices for “*indígenas*” as they had “since very remote times” dating back to the colonial era. Baños Peña proposed restoring the 2nd

¹²¹ José Anastasio Merino to Gobernador de Jamiltepec and Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 10, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 3.

juez de paz to serve the indígena population, but he argued that the 1st juez de paz should handle all judicial matters. The 2nd juez de paz instead would serve the indigenous population primarily by collecting taxes, working with priests to ensure the fulfillment of religious customs, and naming *mayordomos* (festival religious leader).¹²² In his estimation this would help eliminate some of the anger and resistance to the removal of the 2nd jueces de paz he and other officials encountered across the region. He added that continuing the current practice would perpetuate a cycle of “odiousness and resistance from the [indigenous] class.”¹²³ At the district level José Mariano Abrego agreed with Baños Peña’s assessment. Abrego argued that “indígenas” interpreted the alteration of the government structure as an attempt to end pueblo autonomy.¹²⁴ As late as August 1855 officials still debated the issue. Ursulino Parada pronounced that residents who did not learn Spanish deserved outside representation because their ignorance of the language was evidence of their failure as Mexican citizens.¹²⁵ Thus, what began as an attempt to control indigenous communities in the 1830s transformed into a broader national project mandating that officials conduct all government business in Spanish.

In addition to dealing with the fallout from this unpopular policy, officials attempted to prevent Álvarez’s rebellion from spreading to the region. At the district level, they coordinated with forces loyal to Santa Anna in Guerrero and marched more than 200 soldiers to Acapulco. Jamiltepec National Guard leaders also sent a large force to Ometepepec to help retain the city for

¹²² For more on the role of mayordomos in annual religious ceremonies see, John Monaghan, “Fiesta Finance in Mesoamerica and the Origins of a Gift Exchange System,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2, no. 3 (1996), 502-503.

¹²³ Francisco Baños Peña to Prefecto de Jamiltepec, January 20, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 1.

¹²⁴ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, January 23, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Paz, Legajo 18, Expediente 90.

¹²⁵ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 24, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 32.

Santa Anna.¹²⁶ It seems that Álvarez nevertheless now had a great deal of support throughout much of the Mixteca and the state of Guerrero. One Álvarez ally from further to the north in the Mixteca caused a great deal of problems for authorities as he led a large faction of supporters through the district on his way to Cuajinicuilapa.¹²⁷ In mid-March, a large number of residents in Cortijos openly expressed their support for Álvarez's Plan de Ayutla and rebelled against authorities.¹²⁸ In contrast, one Ometepec official relocated to the city of Jamiltepec due to the ongoing violence in Guerrero. He cited widespread loyalty to Santa Anna among officials in Jamiltepec as his primary motivation for moving there.¹²⁹ José Mariano Abrego issued a counter pronunciamiento in support of Santa Anna on the president's birthday to proclaim local support for his administration and planned a grand celebration.¹³⁰ Local authorities sponsored a full day of parades, music, and dancing that began with a cannon shot in the morning and ended late in the night.¹³¹ However, the good will the celebration intended to foster never materialized. More than two months after celebrating Santa Anna's birthday Parada reiterated for a final time that his government supported Álvarez.¹³² Jamiltepec thus belatedly joined the plan that had already driven Santa Anna out of the presidency and brought a new generation of Liberals to power.¹³³

¹²⁶ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, January 2, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 21.

¹²⁷ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, January 16, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 21.

¹²⁸ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, March 15, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 19.

¹²⁹ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador and Comandante General de Oaxaca, April 7, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 21.

¹³⁰ José Mariano Abrego, "Pronunciamiento en apoyo de Santa Anna," June 14, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Milicia Nacional, Legajo 28, Expediente 8.

¹³¹ José Mariano Abrego to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 14, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 32.

¹³² Ursulino Parada, et al., "Pronunciamiento de Plan de Ayutla," August 27, 1855, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Milicia Nacional, Legajo 28, Expediente 8.

¹³³ For more on the national development of the plan see, Fowler, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, 311-16.

Evidence from post-war Jamiltepec provides a window into nineteenth century state formation. Santa Anna and his authoritarian supporters seemed to disdain local residents. They worked to limit pueblo autonomy in indigenous communities at precisely the moment when locals in Jamiltepec demanded that authorities restore the federalist system. His political decisions therefore carried far more weight than his feeble attempts to foster popular support through lavish rituals, references to the church, or military bonuses. Jamiltepecanos no longer supported the man who ended the federalist system, and references to tariffs or abolition did not generate loyalty among a new generation of Afro-Mexicans. They worked with men like Parada and Tejada – who likely sympathized with Santa Anna’s authoritarian leanings – to protect their communities. Thus, in order to be successful after the war, politicians at the national level had to return Mexico to the federalist system built on the concept of pueblo autonomy.

Conclusion

Oaxaqueños in the capital witnessed a bloody confrontation at the close of 1855. Priests Carlos Parra, José Gabriel Castellanos, and José García joined with Captain Bonifacio Blanco from the Jamiltepec army battalion in a pronunciamiento against the interim Liberal government. Editors of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* related that Blanco, who they described as being “of Spanish origin” and “ill repute,” led elements of his regular army unit against National Guard forces stationed in the center of the city. Nightfall interrupted the battle on December 11, but Blanco resumed his assault the following morning. National Guard troops eventually ceded the city to Blanco and the priests leaving Oaxaca’s normally dusty streets muddied with “blood and scattered with bodies.” The victorious reactionaries nonetheless could not remain after the

victory because numerous citizens surrounded the force in the confined city space and repeatedly attacked from all sides. The editors boasted to their Mexico City readers that as reactionaries shouted “religion and *fueros*” (legal privileges) oaxaqueños retorted “federation and liberty.” Editors asserted that the pronunciamiento represented a “black page in the glorious history of Oajaca in the time of liberty.”¹³⁴ The clash between the National Guard and the priest-supported regular army soldiers signaled that oaxaqueños remained sharply divided.

The pronunciamiento also marked the end of the Age of Santa Anna in Oaxaca. In many ways, the battle seems remote in time and place from the unity jamiltepecanos exhibited during the U.S. invasion. Residents after all came together during the crisis to defend Mexico from the United States. Politicians seemed disconnected from the populace afterward as they pressed ordinary citizens for taxes to pay the rapidly inflating national debt. These efforts dishonored otherwise patriotic padres de familia and their dependent families. Locals connected onerous tax obligations to the injustice of making padres de familia incapable of providing for and protecting their dependents. Thus jamiltepecanos sought to make these disputes about how officials impugned family honor and communal morality, but authorities failed to see this connection. They also misread the population and dismissed popular appeals to restore the federalist system. Instead, elites went in the opposite direction and brought in Santa Anna as a veritable dictator with unlimited power over a highly centralized government. These decisions doomed his short-lived presidency because he lacked the popular support he had cultivated in 1834 and maintained for more than two decades. Analyzing this failure reveals how he rose to the presidency on so many occasions. Santa Anna pinned his success to the popular mobilizations and large coalitions

¹³⁴ “El motín de Oajaca,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, December 19, 1855, 3.

that helped him defeat political rivals. By 1855, he could no longer appeal to ordinary citizens in the same manner, and a new generation of leaders built a formidable alliance that swept him out of the presidency for a final time.

In terms of race, economic investors helped transform relations during the post-war period. Men like Tejada and Parada permanently shifted the local economy away from cochineal, the primary colonial era export, to cotton and livestock production. This shift required them to work with Afro-Mexican farmers in the district's bajos who produced the commodity. Farmers ably enlisted legal counsel from men with extensive political and economic connections to protect pueblo land and resources. In return, producers agreed to supply speculators with cheap cotton. Leaders at the local level, who had a personal interest in protecting the cotton economy, listened to these appeals intently because they feared that ruling against Afro-Mexican communities might limit production and potential profits. In so doing, they preserved the moral economy in these communities to *protect* the capitalist transition. The opposite began to occur in indigenous pueblos as investors pursued new economic opportunities on pueblo land. In addition, Mixtecs and Amuzgos had fewer primary products with which to bargain, and they began to lose the ability to petition state authorities effectively. Officials also appeared less willing to intervene and take pueblo appeals seriously due to their own conflicts of interest. Essentially, Mixtecs often sought control over the same resources that elites coveted in order to expand the economy. Prior to the Liberal transformation in late 1855 Mixtecs had already begun to lose control over land and resources. Santa Anna's unrelated policies to limit indigenous political autonomy accelerated this process. The capitalist transformation therefore had important long-term consequences in terms of race and ethnicity as Liberals sought to remake Mexico.

As we will see in the next chapter Juan Álvarez's Plan de Ayutla had a great deal of support initially in Jamiltepec. A cross-racial coalition formed to remove Santa Anna around the popular political consensus of returning to a federalist system. In this regard, Liberals tapped into what had grown into a widely favored popular initiative. In fact, evidence from nineteenth century Jamiltepec indicates that residents often mobilized politically to protect their own pueblo's political, cultural, and economic autonomy even when participating in movements whose leaders sought to centralize power. In the mid-1850s, many people opposed the Liberal reforms as the above example suggests. Priests who had become more politically active after the war confronted the new government and appealed to ordinary jamiltepecanos to protect their churches, military, and resources. This was more of a cultural and political movement therefore and had limited economic and racial connections as citizens once again formed partisan alliances as they had done since the independence war.

CHAPTER 5: Reformers, Reactionaries, and Traitors (1855-1867)

Less than two months after passage of the Ley Lerdo on June 25, 1856 several priests objected to what “this government has done” to “cofradía ranches.” They complained that government officials had sold cofradía land under “a false law” and the new owners were “mistreating the livestock.” The priests demanded that authorities “abstain from carrying out such sales” because the transfers of property would harm parishioners and their animals. The priests vowed to hold leaders “personally responsible” for damages, but local representatives countered they had never approved the sale.¹ Instead, a priest in Huazolotitlán had members of his parish engage in what officials described as “clandestine sales and extractions of livestock.” One district administrator reported that townspeople “had seen ranchers and the priest from Huazolotitlán with a team of livestock that belonged to the cofradía of... Huaxpaltepec.”² The official alleged that the Huazolotitlán cleric encouraged parishioners to claim the property by citing the Liberal land reform law.

The priests who urged authorities to halt the sale had many reasons to worry because local authorities soon thereafter began targeting church assets. In fact, they challenged a report from the governor’s office stating that Jamiltepec leaders had “not sold” cofradía land or complied with the new law. They responded that “the cofradía ranches from the Parish of Amuzgos... are already in adjudication.”³ In fact, officials moved quickly after hearing of the

¹ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 12, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 39.

² Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 23, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 39.

³ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 4, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 39.

governor's criticism. A few days later in mid-November Priest Francisco Vasconcelos gave an unsuccessful impassioned plea directly to district magistrates to stop the sale of *cofradía* grazing land in his parish.⁴ The next day Priest Bernardino Carvajal went directly to district officers and protested the seizure and sale of *cofradía* land in Pinotepa de Don Luis to an investor. He argued that Manuel María Fagoaga rented the land, presumably for his *hacienda volante*, and had to approve before a "valid sale" could take place. Authorities went ahead and privatized the land without the powerful, aging Conservative's authorization.⁵

As these examples illustrate, the new regime that came to power in 1855 enacted laws to transform Mexico's land tenure system, reform the legal code, define citizenship, and modernize the economy. Privatizing church land and assets represented one aspect of this multi-faceted program that they believed would speed up the economic recovery and end colonial era privileges. Chapter 5 will evaluate this political, cultural, and economic revolution and examine how *jamiltepecanos* responded to these changes at the popular level. As the above example suggests, the intentions of the new law isolated the church and, in many cases, worked against the poor farmers who had joined religious brotherhoods to gain access to and protect communal lands. Predictably, land disputes in JAMILTEPEC grew exponentially after passage of the *Ley Lerdo*, and locals responded by flooding authorities with appeals to cease transfers. Church officials led the way filing lawsuits, objecting publicly, and excommunicating administrators. Residents joined the process and developed schemes to purchase *cofradía* land, but when all

⁴ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 17, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de JAMILTEPEC, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 39.

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these measures failed, they revolted against authorities. Essentially, the Liberal reform program, intended to modernize Mexico, initiated another wave of political violence.

Partisan disputes rapidly devolved into civil war. The Liberal program divided residents who mobilized to support or challenge land reform, limitations on ecclesiastic authority, and military restructuring. In short, many locals who allied with Conservatives interpreted Liberal initiatives as an attack on their communities and culture. In this regard, race and ethnicity played a small factor in popular mobilizations as reactionaries effectively established cross-racial coalitions in Afro-Mexican and Mixtec communities. The alliances frightened leaders who struggled to maintain order, and the cross-racial partisan mobilizations increased after the War of the Reform (1858-1861). The French invasion and short-lived Second Empire (1864-1867) ended the Conservative movement at the popular level as ordinary citizens united to defend the nation. Most importantly, their efforts produced a different outcome from 1846. President Benito Juárez's Liberal forces drove the French army and navy out of Mexico along with Napoleon III's imperial puppet Emperor Maximilian von Habsburg. Liberals effectively targeted Conservatives as traitors afterward because they invited Napoleon III to intervene in Mexico and fought alongside French forces in Maximilian's treacherous army. Essentially, ordinary citizens unified to defend Mexico from the invasion as well as the Conservatives who betrayed the nation.

Liberals crushed the opposition and established a political consensus after the French Intervention (1862-1867). Tracing how they managed to defeat political rivals from the early Liberal reforms in the mid-1850s through the victory over French forces in 1867 provides yet another opportunity to analyze how locals in Jamiltepec engaged with the state. Liberals channeled the widespread discontent with Santa Anna's centralized government into a popular coalition demanding reform, but this centered on restoring the federalist system. Leaders

overreached by attacking the church, communal landholding, and the military. This created a space for reactionaries to attract followers and amass formidable Afro-indigenous coalitions. In many ways, the violence mirrored the independence war with mobilizations dividing residents in individual communities regardless of race or ethnicity. In virtually every case, locals on both sides mobilized to protect their own communities, institutions, and culture from outsiders. The decision many Conservative elites made to invite Napoleon III to colonize Mexico destroyed these divisions and provided Liberals with a mandate to form a massive coalition. The power of popular consent at the local level thus continued to play a crucial role in national political developments throughout the Liberal Reform (1855-1867).

Part 1: The “*Malicious and Subversive*” Opposition to Land Reform



Figure 5.1: Photograph of Benito Juárez Memorial This is a view of the most prominent statue of Juárez in Oaxaca City today. Authorities erected the monument in 1906 to overlook the capital and point foreign “usurpers” out of Mexico. See Milstead, “Party of the Century.” Photo courtesy of Amanda Milstead 2010.

Benito Juárez towers over the mid-century Liberal Reform Era more than any other single figure. In fact, his insistence on an end to colonial era privileges and commitment to reforming Mexico's legal system makes Juárez arguably the country's most influential political leader. However, the man who insisted on citizenship rights for all and refused to surrender to foreign invaders came from a humble Zapotec pueblo located in the mountains near Oaxaca City. Juárez could not speak Spanish when he migrated to the capital from Guelatao at the age of twelve. Upon arrival, he befriended a well-connected benefactor who taught Juárez the Spanish language and helped him obtain an education. As a young man, Juárez rejected an opportunity to attend seminary and enrolled in the Institute of Arts and Sciences in Oaxaca City to study law. He quickly transferred a promising career as an attorney into politics where he served as Oaxaca's governor during the U.S. invasion and again in the early 1850s before Santa Anna deemed Juárez a threat and exiled him in 1853.⁶ He joined Ignacio Comonfort and Miguel Lerdo de Tejada in the Plan de Ayutla that swept Santa Anna out of the presidency a short time later. Together, the three men dominated Liberal politics in the mid-1850s, but Juárez gained national prominence for writing the Ley Juárez. The law guaranteed all Mexicans, regardless of race, class, or status, equal rights as citizens by abolishing church and military fueros. As we will see, the law had many opponents, but Juárez's reputation as a leader ultimately led him to the presidency where he served from 1861 until his untimely death on July 18, 1872.

In late 1855, Juárez returned home to serve as Oaxaca's governor amidst a chaotic scene. His stance toward the church and military angered political opponents even though he was a fellow oaxaqueño.⁷ Regional leaders across the state reported a wide range of reactions to the

⁶ For more on Juárez's background and early career see, Roeder, *Juarez and His Mexico*, 3-160.

⁷ Iturribarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 34-36.

news, and in Tehuantepec the rival Zapotec region openly revolted. Residents of Jamiltepec conversely met reports of Juárez's arrival in Oaxaca City with widespread celebrations. The majority Mixtec coastal region seemingly welcomed the returning Zapotec governor with open arms regardless of his ethnicity or political affiliation. In the city of Jamiltepec, locals crowded into the streets to cheer the news and prominent leaders gave impromptu speeches in the zócalo. Orators struggled mightily to address residents over continuous loud cheers, but unlike the prescribed ceremonies of Santa Anna's presidency, celebrants demonstrated to leaders that this was a popular celebration. Officials gave up and joined the party. That night townspeople lit up windows to private residences, and representatives illuminated government buildings. The crowd that gathered for the celebration joined together in a spontaneous parade that jammed down the "principal streets and terminated at the Municipal house." Revelers sang, cheered, and danced in the zócalo until well after midnight. Townspeople gathered again the next day and continued to celebrate. One party reportedly lasted until 3:00 a.m. the following morning.⁸

The festivities, however, ended quickly as officials attempted to address serious ongoing problems. At the local level, leaders seemed most concerned with failed tax collection efforts due to the juez de paz issue that continued to fester under the new administration. Their focus on taxes reflects the dire lingering economic situation after the U.S. invasion as well as a shift away from renting commonly held pueblo land to haciendas volantes. As we have seen, rents from these systems are very difficult to uncover, but official reports about cochineal confirms that many pueblos increasingly ran large deficits as the trade collapsed. Margarita Menegus Bornemann argues that by the arrival of the Liberal regime in late 1855 pueblos surrounding

⁸ Agustín Castañeda to Benito Juárez, February 26, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 18.

Huajuapán de León reported substantial deficits and had to sell ejido lands to cover operating expenses.⁹ Liberals further upset regional stability when they assumed control over federal and state governments. They inexplicably maintained the practice of appointing jueces de paz, and Juárez's government further isolated oaxaqueños by passing a version of the Ley Lerdo at the state level on July 3, 1856. Jorge Fernando Iturrigarria concludes that "all the population" met the law with "consequent alarm."¹⁰ While this appears to have also been the case in Jamiltepec residents developed strategies to disguise communal landholding.¹¹

One response to the Ley Lerdo in Huazolotitlán offers a perspective on how residents devised ingenious strategies to protect *cofradía* land. Priest Ignacio Fernández submitted a contract to "purchase" *cofradía* land in August 1856. The agreement stipulated that the "de razón residents... and the indígenas" pooled their resources to buy the property under Fernández's guidance, who ensured them that the contract met the new law's conditions.¹² Perhaps the priest was a bit too forthcoming by offering that his parishioners were purchasing their own "*cofradía*" land even if the sale was something he interpreted as legal.¹³ Agustín Castañeda relayed that another buyer had already begun the process of legally acquiring church property by invoking the Ley Lerdo, and he derided Fernández as a "fanatic" who threatened excommunication to members unwilling to go along with the scheme. Instead, Castañeda pointed out that this was an

⁹ Margarita Menegus Bornemann, *La Mixteca Baja: Entre la Revolución y la Reforma: Cacicazgo, territorialidad y gobierno siglos XVIII-XIX* (Oaxaca: UABJO, 2009), 157-168.

¹⁰ Iturrigarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 54.

¹¹ Antonio Escobar Ohmstede and Matthew Butler, "Introduction: Transitions and Closures in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Mexican Agrarian History," in *Mexico in Transition: New Perspectives on Mexican Agrarian History, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Antonio Escobar Ohmstede and Matthew Butler (México, DF: CIESAS, 2013), 42.

¹² Ignacio Fernández to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, August 21, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 36.

¹³ Benjamin Smith found that in the 1860s such strategies had grown much more sophisticated with Mixtec residents in Huajuapán forming "agricultural societies" to preserve landholding practices. Smith, *Roots of Conservatism*, 170-172.

obvious attempt to protect *cofradía* land as the priest himself had indicated in the contract.

Castañeda cautioned state administrators that priests like Fernández could simply transfer ownership of church land in this manner and undermine the spirit of the law. Finally, the official anticipated violence from those who signed the document and ordered 25 additional soldiers to reinforce the National Guard unit stationed in Huazolotitlán.

Oddly, Castañeda failed to consider why members of the *cofradía* wanted to protect their commonly held land, but regardless of his ignorance they had obvious reasons to circumvent the new law to protect their own economic well-being. Castañeda nevertheless correctly anticipated that the incident would flare tempers among members. Less than two weeks after trying to settle the dispute he reported that “the malicious and subversive” residents attacked troops stationed on *cofradía* land. He requested that authorities from the state send no less than 40 additional reinforcements.¹⁴ In addition, Huazolotitlán residents had apparently refused to pay their tax obligation, and one town official asked Castañeda for troops to help him coerce locals into paying the *capitación*.¹⁵ As the land protection strategy grew increasingly untenable it appears that Hernández and members of “*cofradía* ranches in his parish” rustled livestock and attempted to sell the animals outside the community. Officials reported that Fernández and his followers took livestock they considered rightfully theirs in retaliation to what they regarded as an unjust invasion of their land.¹⁶ Their actions from the opening example of this chapter therefore seem

¹⁴ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 1, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 22.

¹⁵ Euastaquio Torres to Agustín Castañeda, August 31, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 36.

¹⁶ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 23, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 36.

less confusing. Fernández and his parishioners targeted land and livestock they legally possessed before investors used the Ley Lerdo to appropriate communal resources.

In the end, Fernández's strategy failed. District authorities dismissed the Huazolotitlán residents' request and privatized two parcels of their land in November 1856.¹⁷ Land dispute cases like this example also illustrate how leaders discussed race. Incredibly, the new leadership demonstrated a great deal of continuity with the prior regime in terms of their own biases. Men like Castañeda had no problem disparaging the populations they represented and continued many policies from Santa Anna's dictatorship. For example, district officials maintained the practice of limiting indigenous autonomy, and the language officials used demonstrates a remarkably constant elite bias in terms of race. In a separate case from Huazolotitlán Castañeda mocked "indígenas" for refusing to pay the capitación and ignoring their obligations as citizens. He claimed that the "de razón" residents regularly paid their taxes and funded several public works projects including construction of a primary school.¹⁸ This conclusion ignored his own prior decision to reject a compromise plan all residents would likely have supported to fund the school.¹⁹ Almost three months later in March 1857 Castañeda complained that the issue remained unresolved. He placed the blame squarely on "indígenas" who he asserted would rather work their fields than have a government school "civilize" their children.²⁰

¹⁷ José Ignacio Labastida, et al. "Certificamos," November 11, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 36.

¹⁸ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 27, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 58.

¹⁹ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 3, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 58.

²⁰ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 24, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Legajo 18, Expediente 58.

Land disputes intensified due to widespread confusion and uneven enforcement of the Ley Lerdo. One alcalde from Pinotepa de Don Luis complained that rather than simply limiting the influence and wealth of the Catholic Church the Ley Lerdo had ended communal landholding altogether. He reported that several “traffickers” from outside the region came to his pueblo and simply cited the law in addition to a confusing set of decrees to occupy their pueblo’s land extralegally. In one example, Juan Eugenio de Tautuario de las Nieves “introduced... loaded mules” into the pueblo as he attempted to move permanently onto communal land. In another case three men from Pinotepa Nacional “cited a law from August 20” to force villagers off their land. The outsiders sought to use the pueblo’s ideal location as a major transportation point for goats moving north on haciendas volantes, and they even attempted to collect taxes from residents who they argued were legally responsible due to the passage of livestock through their pueblo. Authorities agreed with the outsiders and demanded payment.²¹ In another example, residents of a predominantly Afro-Mexican *ranchería* (small town) near the Pacific coast asked authorities for help stopping an adjudication. They complained that the juez de paz assigned to their pueblo illegally profited from a land sale and appealed to state authorities. Interestingly, Castañeda, who fought Huazolotitlán’s strategy to purchase land, suggested that *cofradía* members should pool their resources to buy the land legally.²²

The confusion over land laws in the early days of the Liberal Reform in Jamiltepec merged with other issues. In Huazolotitlán residents there explicitly tied tax obligations to the new law. In 1856 they followed the advice of Priest Hernández who encouraged parishioners

²¹ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 2, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 57.

²² Miguel Gerónimo Narvaez and José Miguel Baños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 7, 1856, AGPEO, Gobernación, Adjudicaciones, Legajo 14, Expediente 7.

“not to pay taxes” due to “the conduct of this government.”²³ In another instance residents in Huaxpaltepec refused to pay their tax bill of \$67 Pesos due to an illegal land invasion. Juan Narváez contracted with another rancher, Pablo Martín, to pasture livestock on communal land for his hacienda volante. The original agreement called for \$67 Pesos each year to pass the livestock through town.²⁴ Pueblo officials charged, however, that neither of the men had fulfilled the contract because they invoked the Ley Lerdo to purchase the land they agreed to rent.²⁵ Residents petitioned state authorities for help and asked to delay tax payments until they could resolve the matter, but officials refused a postponement and directed them to “pay... the bill.”²⁶

As Menegus Bornemann argues in the Mixteca Baja, simply raising cash during the transition to the new government proved difficult for many communities. A local priest in Lo de Soto reported to district authorities in early 1857 that the pueblo raised \$318 Pesos for the annual patron saint festival. This represents a substantial sum for a pueblo this size, but a closer examination reveals that residents could not raise this amount in cash. The priest reported that of the \$318 Pesos only 28 came in the form of a cash donation. Parishioners participated in other ways by donating chiles, eggs, corn, beans, bread, chocolate, and other products in addition to volunteering as laborers during the festivities. The \$290 Peso balance therefore came from estimates of donated products and voluntary services rather than cash.²⁷ This was a common

²³ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 2, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 57.

²⁴ Pablo Martín et al., “Cuenta de los productos para trasladar Ganado de los nopaleras de C. Juan Narváez,” March 6, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 32.

²⁵ Bernabe López to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, March 6, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 32.

²⁶ Bernabe López and Mariano Solís to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 10, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 32.

²⁷ Agustín Castañeda, “Estado que manifiesta lo que esta estancia ha acostumbrado darle anualmente para las fiestas que celebra en Lo de Soto,” April 28, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 40.

practice because cash-strapped townspeople could rarely pay directly for religious festivals. In one example, Castañeda asked state officials to require residents from “the pueblos near the ocean” to send one Real to pay for his town’s patron saint festival.²⁸ Castañeda’s request illustrates the extent of the cash shortage. Townspeople simply did not have the means to pay taxes or donate to an important religious festival. Yet, Castañeda also indicated that the ongoing recession and disputes over the Ley Lerdo contributed to a great deal of popular unrest. He petitioned National Guard leaders to send a large force of soldiers to suppress a potential uprising during the annual Virgin of Juquila celebration.²⁹ While there were no reports of violence from that festival Castañeda asked military officials to station additional troops in Pinotepa de Don Luis a few months later “to guard the public tranquility given that their pure indígena population” would surely revolt during the town’s annual patron saint fiesta.³⁰

During this economic downturn, residents interpreted Liberal reforms to landholding as an attack on their individual churches and communities. The perplexing decision to continue the unpopular practice of appointing local officials in small pueblos contributed to this sentiment. Many citizens saw these decisions as another assault on pueblo autonomy even though they had mobilized in large numbers to drive Santa Anna out of the presidency. In addition, new leaders often shared the racial biases of their predecessors. They disparaged Afro-Mexicans and indígenas as obstacles to modernization for failing to pay taxes and voicing understandable objections to land adjudications. Such pronouncements eroded the unity locals exhibited during

²⁸ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 16, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 40.

²⁹ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 6, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 22.

³⁰ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 13, 1856, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 23.

the popular celebration in support of Juárez's arrival. Reactionaries attracted followers by arguing that Liberals targeted communal institutions and sought to inhibit cultural traditions. Numerous Afro-Mexican and Mixtec residents rallied to this cause and united to defend their pueblos and culture. Other jamiltepecanos remained loyal to Liberals and embraced codifying protections for citizens in a new constitution. Jamiltepecanos therefore mobilized politically in support of Liberals and Conservatives on yet another occasion at the end of the turbulent decade.

Part 2: Political Violence and Civil War (1857-1861)

Confusion over landholding gave way to widespread criticism of Liberal initiatives and provided an opportunity to settle historic disputes. In one case, residents from Estanzuela and El Zapote petitioned authorities to establish separate pueblos in early 1857. An argument over how to protect communal land from adjudication reignited a centuries-old disagreement, and representatives from both communities unsuccessfully requested separate governments.³¹ In other instances, parishioners revolted against the new regime to preserve the cultural authority of the church after clerics attacked Juárez for abolishing military and ecclesiastic fueros. Juárez's critics believed that such actions limited the church's authority and dishonored officers who sacrificed in defense of the nation. Conservative opponents therefore effectively enticed supporters in the same manner they did during the 1834 Plan de Cuernavaca. They encouraged residents to revolt against the new administration to save the church from the Liberal

³¹ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 13, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 52.

onslaught.³² Reactionary leaders joined military officials who increasingly believed the church and military were “tied together” due to the attack on fueros. Liberals solidified this connection by dismissing the regular army permanently in favor of the National Guard.³³

In Oaxaca, opponents led several unrelated movements to depose the Liberal regime after codification of the Ley Juárez at the national level. In fact, Charles Berry argues that it was due to this fear of losing support in Oaxaca that convinced President Ignacio Comonfort to send Juárez “to Oaxaca as governor” in the first place.³⁴ Comonfort’s decision worked despite the disputes over taxes and the land reform program. Juárez maintained popular support during his time as governor from virtually every area of the state other than the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. In that region officials declared their separation from the state shortly after Juárez assumed the office of governor.³⁵ Despite this obvious setback, he exuded confidence in the Liberal coalition and returned to Mexico City in 1857 after overseeing the state’s ratification of the 1857 Constitution. However, the new governor lacked Juárez’s popular appeal and support for the Liberal regime rapidly faded.³⁶ Reactionaries in contrast built formidable coalitions that demanded restoration of church authority and *cofradía* land.

One Santa Anna loyalist and former officer, José María Salado, raised an army of over 500 followers in Jamiltepec to confront the Liberal regime. They initiated the revolt by attacking a ranch the Liberal Priest Bernardino Carvajal owned, and then they turned their attention to

³² Moisés González Navarro, “La ley Juárez,” *Historia Mexicana* 55, no. 3 (January-March 2006), 960-961.

³³ Brian Hamnett argues that this connection dated back to the 1834 Plan de Cuernavaca that brought Santa Anna to the presidency. Brian Hamnett, “Mexican Conservatives, Clericals, and Soldiers: The ‘Traitor’ Tomás Mejía through Reform and Empire,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20, no. 2 (April 2001), 190.

³⁴ Charles R. Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca, 1856-76: A Microhistory of the Liberal Revolution* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 30.

³⁵ For more on the uprising in Tehuantepec see, Iturribarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 45-46; 68-74.

³⁶ Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 38-41.

several pueblos that Salado identified as having ties to Liberal politicians.³⁷ The editors of *El Monitor Republicano* reported that Salado murdered a rival general during Santa Anna's dictatorship, but he escaped from prison after committing the crime. The editors related that when Salado encountered a Liberal in Jamiltepec he "cut off his head." In another instance, Salado used the side of his machete to assault several "young men." He took one of them prisoner and inexplicably beat him to death.³⁸ Interestingly, Salado presented himself as "the hero of religion in Jamiltepec" leading chants among his followers of "religion and fueros." Salado led his force to the extremely religious Mixtec pueblo Juquila where Priest Blas Florentino Velasco praised Salado's reactionaries. Upon arrival, Velasco "rallied" the soldiers and passed out "stamps of the Virgin of Juquila, scapulars, and rosaries." Before departing the priest blessed a battle flag the men had decorated with a "red cross and a saint's image."³⁹

After leaving Juquila, Salado settled in Ixcapa for the summer. Local officials recounted later that the "the rebellious leaders... gave orders" requiring residents to "to support the revolutionaries" with cash and food. The National Guard converged on Salado's encampment late in the afternoon on August 13. María Velasco led a young Porfirio Díaz and approximately 400 soldiers to the pueblo where they spotted Salado's sentries, but the reactionaries attacked before Velasco could act. Salado apparently sensed an opportunity to gain an advantage, but reinforcements from Cuajinicuilapa rallied in defense and counterattacked the reactionary forces. The rag-tag army quickly retreated over Salado's orders to remain in the pueblo. Velasco reported afterward that as Salado stood "in front of the largest line he received a bullet to the

³⁷ For more on Carvajal see Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 41-42.

³⁸ "Crónica de Oaxaca," *El Monitor Republicano*, September 6, 1857, 3.

³⁹ "Crónica de Oaxaca," *El Monitor Republicano*, September 6, 1857, 3.

heart.”⁴⁰ Authorities also reported that they made a grisly discovery of twenty-two bodies “in the forests” near Ixcapa.⁴¹ Some of the dead appeared to have been residents of the pueblo who Salado murdered as he meted out harsh punishments to anyone who he believed remained loyal to the Liberal regime.⁴² Velasco’s force inflicted a great deal of damage to Salado’s army “the majority of whom drowned” in a river while trying desperately to escape.⁴³ The remnants of Salado’s force fled to the north and slowly made their way to Teposcolula where authorities relayed that the small unit “invaded” the Mixtec city later that December.⁴⁴

Velasco assured state authorities afterward that “Salado died” in the battle. This ended the immediate threat to Liberals at the local level, but it must have alarmed them that he managed to put such a large cross-racial coalition together in the first place. Salado built this alliance on protecting the cultural authority of the Catholic Church in much the same manner that Santa Anna’s allies did during the Plan de Cuernavaca. Mixtec residents in Juquila received his force with a great deal of enthusiasm. Newspaper accounts suggest that he gained followers while there at the blessing of the local priest who encouraged the revolt. This contrasts starkly with his time in Ixcapa where townspeople reported Salado targeted Mixtecs there as potential enemies who supported the Liberal regime. In addition, María Velasco identified a portion of Salado’s troops as Afro-Mexican. He seemed particularly frightened of a “valiant and strong negro” who killed a Liberal officer, but he praised his Afro-Mexican soldiers for a daring

⁴⁰ “La acción de Ixcapa,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, September 8, 1857, 2.

⁴¹ M. Velasco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 23, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 23.

⁴² “Crónica de Oaxaca,” *El Monitor Republicano*, September 6, 1857, 3.

⁴³ Iturribarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 107. This is a direct quote from Velasco’s account sent to the governor several weeks after the encounter in Ixcapa.

⁴⁴ F. Loaeza to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 22, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 23.

counterattack on Salado's forces.⁴⁵ The political and religious climate therefore pulled indigenous and Afro-Mexican citizens in different directions that likely reflected their personal beliefs, cultural attitudes, and individual loyalties rather than racial and ethnic identities.

Religion and religious duties nevertheless could intersect race. One case outlined in Chapter 2 stands out in this regard. The Mixtec and Amuzgo residents of Cacahuatepec, Amuzgos, and Zacatepec shared their priest, Nicolás Aracona, between the three communities. They asked state authorities in early 1858 to issue an order requiring Aracona to remain in their pueblos after he reportedly left for long periods of time. In addition, residents claimed that, when he was present, he charged exorbitant fees for festivals and marriages. They objected that \$15 Pesos for religious services during a patron saint festival and \$18 Pesos for weddings was well outside their ability to pay in addition to being exponentially more than these services cost in the past. They also reported that Aracona spent the bulk of his time in the predominantly Afro-Mexican pueblo Cortijos and the mixed pueblo Lo de Soto where he and Manuel María del Toro raised a large army.⁴⁶ Townspeople from the three pueblos attempted to paint the priest as radical to alarm authorities about potential acts of sedition. In reality, María del Toro worked with local officials to confront reactionaries.⁴⁷ Residents from Cacahuatepec attacked his Liberal battalion as they passed through their pueblo a few months later with no mention of Aracona.⁴⁸ Thus, the Amuzgo and Mixtec residents in Cacahuatepec, Amuzgos, and Zacatepec seemed to prefer

⁴⁵ "La acción de Ixcapa," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, September 8, 1857, 2-3.

⁴⁶ Antonio Puga et al. to Gobernador de Jamiltepec, April 30, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 5.

⁴⁷ Manuel López y Orozco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 18, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 39.

⁴⁸ Manuel López y Orozco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 31, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comandancia Militar, Legajo 1, Expediente 39.

Conservative priests and preserving the historic role of the Catholic Church whereas the predominantly Afro-Mexican residents of Cortijos and Lo de Soto embraced the Liberal cause.

Locals in other instances voiced their anger at corrupt politicians who invoked the Ley Lerdo to defraud the public. In one example, Ursulino Parada and Venancio Mera seemingly had everything in order for a legal adjudication in 1857 when they filed paperwork to purchase Chico Ometepec's communal land.⁴⁹ Residents protested that Parada, who had well-known ties to cotton production, unfairly targeted their property to assume ownership over valuable farmland for his personal business. They argued that this action represented an abuse of authority because as Gobernador de Distrito he could not enrich himself at the expense of his constituents. He hid this connection in an 1858 appeal by concealing his own involvement in the adjudication.⁵⁰ Townspeople nonetheless pointed out Parada's role to state magistrates, and they alleged that he approved the original adjudication in his own home while presiding over a clandestine meeting between district officials.⁵¹ The 1st Alcalde of Jamiltepec Bruno Ríos echoed these sentiments in a separate case and expressed that an allegedly illegal adjudication left residents starving, "without clothing, and full of misery." Ríos identified himself as a "humble and poor laborer" who witnessed their suffering firsthand. He blamed local representatives for profiting from the adjudication and asked state officials to help the honorable townspeople who made significant sacrifices to Mexico by overturning the sale.⁵²

⁴⁹ Agustín Castañeda to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 14, 1857, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 52.

⁵⁰ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 15, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 53.

⁵¹ Manuel María Garcés to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 5, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 53.

⁵² Bruno Ríos to Gobernador de Jamiltepec and Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 29, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 39.

Jamiltepecanos adapted new strategies to protect resources as land adjudication cases increased. For example, residents in Jicaltepec notified authorities they had formed a corporation with the town's adult men serving as the shareholders. They then identified a large area of pueblo land and asked the state to conduct a survey so they could adjudicate the "*tierras baldías*" (unused land).⁵³ This is a similar strategy to what Benjamin Smith claims Mixtec residents employed near Huajuapán. Smith concludes that locals there "circumvented [the law]... by allowing individual peasants to buy the lands as shareholders in *sociedades agrícolas*, or agricultural societies."⁵⁴ This was precisely what several residents in Pinotepa Nacional did a few years later to protect their communal lands. They cited the Ley Lerdo and asked officials to adjudicate communal lands in favor of a corporation they had not yet named. To bolster their case, residents reported that members had sacrificed as soldiers to defend the nation.⁵⁵ In other instances, townspeople resorted to violence to protect land and resources. District officials complained that ranchers in Lo de Soto had to guard communal property from cross-border invasions that originated in Guerrero. Lo de Soto residents also attacked farmers in Cacahuatpec to protect what they regarded as their precious land and resources.⁵⁶ These examples from before the War of the Reform suggest prolonged warfare in the region, but this never materialized. Citizens experienced the civil war from afar with few battles taking place in Jamiltepec.

⁵³ Agustín Sello et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 29, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 29.

⁵⁴ Emphasis in original. Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 151.

⁵⁵ J. Pio V. Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 10, 1863, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 57.

⁵⁶ Ursulino Parada to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 14, 1858, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 59.

The War and the Reactionaries who “Seduced Peaceful Residents”

In late September 1859 Justo Ziga reported that residents held a three-day commemoration of independence on September 15, 16, and 17. He confirmed that they “had everything [they needed] to celebrate” the grito and relayed that revelers enjoyed the music, dancing, and orations about service and sacrifice during the young nation’s numerous wars. He asserted that celebrating independence in Jamiltepec, in the “magnificent pueblos that belong to the district,” surpassed most areas of the country.⁵⁷ Distracted by these ceremonies, Ziga failed to recognize that a large reactionary army threatened to topple the Liberal administration in Oaxaca City. In fact, the Conservative army under the leadership of General José María Cobos moved from the Puebla-Oaxaca border to the south in October 1859. Within a month, Cobos’ army had defeated virtually all of the state’s Liberal defenders before eventually taking the capital and installing new leadership on November 6.⁵⁸

The coast remained divided much like other areas of the state during the war. Authorities reported that as early as August a group of reactionaries tied to Cobos’ force on the Puebla border had ventured into the region. “53 men arrived in the pueblo Mesones and stayed there three days” as they were “pursuing [General Ignacio] Mejía’s Mixtec” force. Other than looking for recruits and foraging in the northern area authorities indicated that the reactionaries did not attack civilians. Instead, they pursued Mejía’s force to the north and took Putla before rejoining Cobos’ main army to mount the offensive against the Liberal government in Oaxaca City later

⁵⁷ Justo Ziga to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 20, 1859, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 13, Expediente 39.

⁵⁸ Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 67-68; Iturríbarría, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 198-205.

that October.⁵⁹ Officially, the region remained loyal to the shadow Liberal government located in the Sierra Juárez for the remainder of 1859 and throughout much of 1860. The closest the Conservative Army reached to the Jamiltepec region was their attack and occupation of Ejutla on March 23, 1860, but they quickly evacuated on March 26.⁶⁰ The few archival records that survived suggest that the region remained peaceful for much of 1859 and 1860. In fact, authorities only reported one incident and requested “50 well-armed men” to guard a stockpile of ammunition and supplies in the city of Jamiltepec.⁶¹

The surviving evidence suggesting that the region remained peaceful seems highly unlikely given the intense disputes over land before the war. At the very least, residents split their loyalties between Liberals and Conservatives, but Cobos’ occupation of Oaxaca City made communications during the war nearly impossible. This likely explains the lack of official correspondence. After Liberals regained control of the capital in 1861 the pre-war partisan divisions returned to the archival record as well as the region. José Ramírez informed district authorities in June 1861 that the “Bandit Coronado” led a revolt with a large following in “the bajos of Chico Ometepec and the pueblo Huazolotitlán.” Ramírez identified other “revolutionaries” and reported that two officers stationed in Amuzgos left for the coast to put down the rebellion.⁶² Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans living near Huazolotitlán united against Liberal authorities under Cornelio Puga’s command. He performed well as Coronado’s leader on the coast by drawing on experience while serving after “under... José María Salado.” Authorities

⁵⁹ Justo Ziga to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 23, 1859, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 25.

⁶⁰ Iturribarría, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 230-231.

⁶¹ Justo Ziga to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 27, 1860, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 26.

⁶² José Ramírez to Secretario del Despacho de Jamiltepec, June 6, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 29.

asserted that Puga “seduced peaceful residents” to revolt using religion in the same manner as Salado. His followers imprisoned former district official Juan Ezeta, and they worked with an unnamed alcalde who provided reactionaries with “many head of livestock” residents stole from a nearby ranch. Nervous representatives urged state authorities to send reinforcements due to “the damaging and harmful effects” of Puga’s insurrection.⁶³

In retrospect it seems unsurprising that Huazolotitlán’s residents led the popular opposition to the Liberal regime after their persistent defense of *cofradía* land. Authorities reported that a coordinated armed invasion of Pinotepa Nacional and Huaspaltepec originated in Huazolotitlán in late September. National Guard officers quickly captured who they believed were the three leaders in Pinotepa Nacional and defeated the other attacks.⁶⁴ Officials brought charges against the men in October indicating that, although they were traitors, they were not connected to Puga.⁶⁵ National Guard commanders placed a small force “in the bajos of Chico Ometepec, Poza Verde, and La Boquilla” outside Huazolotitlán where residents continued to protest against the Liberal government by refusing to pay taxes. Administrators accused two men “with the last names of Ávila and Cortés” of inciting rebellion and instructing locals to withhold tax payments.⁶⁶ They alluded capture and relocated to Huazolotitlán where authorities reported additional acts of defiance the following day when attempting to collect the *capitación*. They blamed the two men for “seditious acts” and accused them of spreading rebellion.⁶⁷ Ávila’s and

⁶³ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, July 16, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 27.

⁶⁴ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 24, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 27.

⁶⁵ Ignacio Fernández to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 7, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 44.

⁶⁶ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 7, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, *Capitación*, Legajo 29, Expediente 19.

⁶⁷ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 8, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 27.

Cortés' minor revolt coincided with rumors of a Spanish invasion at the end of 1861 requiring authorities to relocate the National Guard to Oaxaca City.⁶⁸

Tax collection remained a serious problem throughout the region during the war. Most of the surviving examples of official correspondence in the archival record detail problems authorities faced collecting the capitación. It seems that withholding tax obligations was the most powerful option peasants had outside of rebellion to express their displeasure with authorities and what they argued were unfair laws that limited their access to resources. These minor acts of defiance, or as James Scott might say the “weapons of the weak,” gave otherwise powerless peasant farmers a relatively safe means to protest against the Liberal transformation.⁶⁹

Occasionally officials did abuse their power. This was the case in 1861 when Ursulino Parada asked state authorities to forgive the city of Jamiltepec's tax burden because his predecessor, Justo Ziga, doubled the capitación during the war and fled with the balance. An unnamed notary public made a hasty receipt and kept careful records in 1860 so that residents would not have to pay after Ziga's tenure. Parada forwarded the notary's detailed records and successfully petitioned to have the city's tax burden adjusted.⁷⁰

The district looked as though it would thrive economically by the end of the war even though authorities documented numerous difficulties collecting the capitación. José María Ramírez sent an optimistic report valuing the season's cotton crop for 1861 at \$11,520 Pesos. He noted that the primary buyers of processed cotton in Puebla and Mexico City paid higher than normal prices for coastal cotton. The U.S. Civil War apparently provided an opportunity for local

⁶⁸ Cesario de León to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 31, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 29.

⁶⁹ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 31-32.

⁷⁰ Ursulino Parada to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, September 24, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 29.

farmers and speculators to meet the resurrected industry's booming demand.⁷¹ Parada and Nicolás Tejada seemed poised to capitalize on the boom. They owned all of the cotton gins with Tejada having two in Huazolotitlán and Pinotepa Nacional while Parada had one in Jamiltepec.⁷² Haciendas volantes also promised substantial wealth after the war. On the eve of hostilities, authorities auctioned the property of a man they identified as Señor Múgica "to pay his bills." Múgica had an estimated net worth of over \$230,000 Pesos related to his hacienda volante that stretched from the Oaxaca coast to Tehuacán, Puebla. The auctioneer advertised that Múgica owned substantial properties along the route in Tlapazingo (\$3,140 Pesos), Tatote (\$1,600 Pesos), and Copala (\$8,296.71 Pesos) among others. Advertisers proclaimed that the lands comprised "a considerable area and are valued at much more" than what they listed in the announcement. Assessors related that "the hacienda volante contains 70,000 heads, more or less, of goats of which 12,000 were separated for the slaughter." They estimated each goat destined for the slaughter at 20 Reales per head, and they valued the others at 8 Reales each. Múgica's hacienda volante had considerable holdings worth a massive amount of money, but the evidence indicates that his system was much smaller than others discussed in prior chapters.⁷³

The mid-century partisan mobilizations thus stifled the economy by turning otherwise substantial economic gains into modest growth at the end of the decade. Liberals seeking to spark a recovery by privatizing *cofradía* land helped erode the coalition that carried them to power in 1855. Clerics, army officers, and Conservatives recruited followers in Jamiltepec by

⁷¹ José María Ramírez, "Noticia de los productos agrícolas e industriales de Jamiltepec," August 31, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Estadística, Legajo 24, Expediente 15.

⁷² José María Ramírez, "Noticia de las máquinas y fábricas que hay en el distrito," August 27, 1861, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Estadística, Legajo 24, Expediente 15.

⁷³ José María Tello, "Almoneda al Mejor Postor," *La Sociedad: Periódico, Político y Literario*, September 9, 1859, 4.

appealing to individuals in Afro-Mexican and Mixtec communities in terms of defending pueblo autonomy, protecting the Catholic Church, and preserving landholding practices. In contrast, Liberals maintained support by guaranteeing citizenship rights, promoting economic growth, and ending *fueros*. Jamiltepecanos carefully weighed these cultural, political, and economic issues to make informed decisions that best suited them and their families. From this perspective, scholars can uncover how these personal decisions influenced mid-nineteenth century politics at the state and national levels. Liberals used a broad mandate to transform Mexico, but the reform program overreached their popular support. Reactionaries turned grassroots movements into a formal Conservative opposition that unsuccessfully fought for two years to overthrow the Liberal regime. After the defeat, Liberals regained control over politics, but disputes over land and culture persisted beyond the War of the Reform. As a result, Conservatives searched for alternatives to restore colonial era privileges and institutions.

Part 3: Invasion and Insurrection

James Sanders argues in *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World* that Latin Americans during the nineteenth century championed the most inclusive form of republicanism anywhere in the world. He contends that after the war Mexican intellectuals “looked forward to a new dawn of peace and prosperity” but “saw the war as necessary to impel liberal modernity forward.”⁷⁴ In comparison, the tripartite occupation of Veracruz between British, Spanish, and French forces to seize Mexico’s primary source of customs revenue exemplified European backwardness and

⁷⁴ Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World*, 96.

barbarism. Charles Berry observes that in Oaxaca Governor Ramón Cajiga “made a show of putting the state on a war footing” upon hearing news of the occupation.⁷⁵ French leaders apparently saw an opportunity to gain a colony when they accepted Mexican Conservative invitations to install a monarchy and invaded the country. Sanders notes that they rationalized the invasion was necessary in order “to civilize the locals,” but in reality most Mexicans believed the opposite. They saw “no reason” for Napoleon III and his army to invade “a sovereign nation.”

As the French army moved further inland from the Port of Veracruz, people in the district responded by sending their contributions to repel the invasion. Authorities in Amuzgos, Atoyac, and San Juan Colorado sent small contributions from virtually every citizen in their respective pueblos to finance the “foreign war.”⁷⁶ First Alcalde of Jamiltepec José Francisco Baños notified the jefe político that townspeople donated 28 heads of cattle to fund national defense. He asked that district officials make note of this rather large gift and forgive their tax debt if the war destroyed the local economy.⁷⁷ The jefe político took this further and cut his own salary as “an example” of how representatives might contribute to national defense.⁷⁸ These seemingly small acts demonstrate how popular ideas of citizenship became increasingly entwined with the Liberal cause after the War of the Reform. After all, these primarily indigenous pueblos had numerous ties to both sides before the war, but they could no longer support Conservatives after they betrayed the nation. Ordinary citizens thus rallied to defend Mexico and Juárez, the legal president, from French invaders.

⁷⁵ Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 80.

⁷⁶ F.M. Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 18, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Socorros para la Guerra, Legajo 28, Expediente 18.

⁷⁷ José Francisco Baños to Pioquinto Pérez, October 28, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Socorros para la Guerra, Legajo 28, Expediente 18.

⁷⁸ Manuel López Orozco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 11, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Socorros para la Guerra, Legajo 28, Expediente 20.

Jamiltepecanos made significant sacrifices with these donations considering that many had yet to recover from the economic recession. For example, residents of Tapextla asked authorities for tax relief in the summer of 1862 even though they reported a boom in cotton production. They claimed that speculators made all the money and failed to compensate farmers fairly. As a result, they could not pay their taxes for agricultural products and subsistence crops.⁷⁹ Three days later, residents blamed their inability to pay taxes on a late season hurricane that destroyed crops.⁸⁰ Townspeople attempted to bolster their case by quoting the jefe político who declared that villagers “have distinguished themselves” by working honorably “to acquire the principal seeds to feed themselves.” Thus, honorable padres de familia found it “difficult if not impossible to cover the applicable tax.”⁸¹ Residents worked with officials, who had vested interests in cotton, to present themselves to state authorities as honorable men who pay all the necessary taxes under normal circumstances. One district administrator added that he supported the appeal. He emphasized family economics and suggested that state officials forgave tax debts to padres de familia in Villa Alta, Teotitlán del Camino, and Huajuapán for similar reasons.⁸²

Unfortunately, the Tapextla tax appeal records end without indicating how authorities handled the petition. The case nevertheless illustrates how cotton increasingly brought Afro-Mexican farmers and elites closer together. Several high-ranking administrators supported the Tapextla petition not long after countless officials devoted nearly two decades to enforcing

⁷⁹ Nicolás Baños to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, May 10, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 20.

⁸⁰ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 13, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Capitación, Legajo 29, Expediente 20.

⁸¹ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 13, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 18.

⁸² Luis Mejía to Tesorería General de Oaxaca, May 23, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 18.

compulsory tax collection without granting exceptions. Supporting a request for an exemption allowed officials to assume a paternalistic role with Afro-Mexican farmers while protecting personal interests and the regional economy. Producers presumably provided speculators with an inexpensive product in return for representation. For their part, Afro-Mexican cotton farmers understood the wealth their principal commodity generated, and they began using cotton after the Liberal Reform to leverage representation in tax appeals, land dispute cases, and legal proceedings. Producers also understood the importance of appearance in these cases, and they stressed masculine honor without referencing racial or ethnic identity. At times, Afro-Mexican citizens tied honor to military service and sacrifice, but at other times, they stressed their roles as *padres de familia* and responsible heads of households. The men in cases like the example above were presumably all married and had children that they could no longer provide for if authorities enforced an onerous tax obligation after a natural disaster.

To protect the regional economy district officials grew much more willing to intervene on behalf of cotton farmers after the mid-1850s. One example from 1862 contains the two most important export products: livestock and cotton. Officials requested state assistance to develop a plan that would prevent ranchers from trampling cotton crops on the coast. Representatives reported that the expanding network of haciendas volantes now reached the northern coastal plain and ranchers had no choice but to run hundreds of goats over cotton farms in order to transport livestock north to slaughterhouses. Predictably, the animals destroyed crops and caused numerous disputes, but officials worried more that the practice caused a dramatic loss of cotton production.⁸³ Ranchers generated substantial revenue by renting communal land, but

⁸³ J. M. Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 5, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 38.

administrators now had to account for the booming cotton economy that relied on coastal farmers and their crops.⁸⁴ In fact, even during the early stages of the French invasion authorities reported cotton revenue had exceeded all expectations.⁸⁵ Therefore, officials had to intercede in ways they never did in the past to protect the valuable commodity.

This shift toward commodity production made entrepreneurs like Nicolás Tejada and Ursulino Parada incredibly wealthy. In the early 1860s, Tejada's machines processed more than half of all the high and mid-grade cotton bound for textile mills in Puebla and Mexico City.⁸⁶ Due to his close connection with the Fagoaga family Tejada controlled a profitable hacienda volante, but he increasingly focused on cotton as his primary investment. After backing away from public service, he worked closely with former colleagues in district offices to ensure his businesses received favorable treatment because he occasionally angered residents. For example, a group of farmers in Pinotepa Nacional sued Tejada after he redirected a river away from their fields to supply water to his own enterprise. They claimed that at the very least Tejada should reimburse them \$300 Pesos for lost revenue and allow the river to flow on its normal course as it had "since time immemorial."⁸⁷ The record ends abruptly without indicating how the state arbitrated an outcome, but similar disputes involving Tejada suggest that authorities favored protecting his growing business interests rather than safeguarding a pueblo's access to resources.

⁸⁴ "Noticia de los pueblos de este Distrito que tienen fondos comunales," May 5, 1863, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 73.

⁸⁵ Manuel Romero, "Noticia que maifesta los productos agrícolas y fabriles," July 14, 1863, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 39.

⁸⁶ Manuel Romero, "Noticia que maifesta los productos agrícolas y fabriles," July 14, 1863, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 39.

⁸⁷ El municipio and Sr. Nicolás Tejada en conflicto, April 28, 1862, AGPEO, Conflictos, Legajo 63, Expediente 28.

Despite promising signs of economic growth partisan divisions remained after the War of the Reform. José María Ramírez wrote a lengthy letter to state officials warning of a revolt in the “bajos of Huazolotitlán.” He related that Mariano Cruz “after having served the reaction... disrupted peace in the district” by recruiting in the “bajos.” Ramírez asserted that “the majority of the inhabitants... hated” Cruz, but explained that it took a great deal of detective work to discover his intentions due to “the fear residents have of him.” Ramírez claimed that because costeños lived “very far from authorities” they feared potential reprisals. In any case, land seemed to motivate the reactionaries. He reported that costeños joined Cruz “under the pretext of taking possession of the pueblos Ixtayutla and Estanzuelilla in the name of a cacica.” He declared that cacique landholding had long been illegal but concluded that the men seemed angrier about “the land business” than any other issue. He requested state authorities send reinforcements before Cruz threatened ordinary citizens as Conservatives had with the coordinated attacks on Pinotepa Nacional, Huazolotitlán, and Huaxpaltepec.⁸⁸

Ramírez identified several alarming trends in Afro-Mexican pueblos. He attributed much of costeño discontent to changes in communal landholding associated with the Ley Lerdo, and he concluded that reactionaries like Cruz used their frustrations to build anti-government coalitions. The popular sentiment Ramírez described extended to other pueblos in the region as well. He reported in late May 1862 that “the indígenas from” Tututepec revolted against a local juez de paz and attempted to execute him before the National Guard restored order.⁸⁹ A few days later Ramírez related that a group of reactionaries invaded the city of Jamiltepec and demanded that

⁸⁸ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 25, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

⁸⁹ José María Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, May 20, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

he abandon the post of Jefe Político. According to Ramírez, the “revolt” brought the government to a standstill as he carefully negotiated to retain his office and appease the angry mob.⁹⁰ The negotiation failed. Antonio Camacho and ten-to-twelve men “from the bajos” forced Ramírez to abandon his post atop the district.⁹¹ Authorities recounted later that Camacho’s force of Afro-Mexican supporters had attacked Jamiltepec between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning on June 2, 1862 demanding that Ramírez resign. Soldiers from the Jamiltepec National Guard Battalion counterattacked Camacho, but they could not dislodge the small force and lost two soldiers. It took nearly a day for reinforcements to arrive. Together the reinforced battalion drove Camacho’s supporters out of the city where they reunited with Cruz in Ixtayutla.⁹²

Upon examining some of the rhetoric that Ramírez used to disparage indigenous and Afro-Mexican citizens it is not surprising that Camacho found supporters among both groups.⁹³ His force comprised of Afro-Mexican soldiers gained followers in at least two Mixtec pueblos. They targeted Ramírez specifically and successfully demanded that he leave the post of jefe político before being pushed out of the cabecera. In this regard, Camacho succeeded. Ramírez stepped down from his position to appease the widespread discontent among the popular classes. However, Camacho quickly realized that replacing Ramírez would be more difficult. State officials recognized Camacho’s choice, José Larracilla, as jefe político, but before their endorsement, Camacho withdrew his support and pronounced that Larracilla had too many ties to Ursulino Parada. For his part, Larracilla expressed fear that assuming the role would spark a

⁹⁰ José Larracilla to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 3, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 66.

⁹¹ Ignacio Labastida to Ramón Caliga, June 3, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Correspondencia, Legajo 2, Expediente 66.

⁹² Crescencio Martínez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 4, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 16.

⁹³ For more on the attack on the Jefe Político see, Iturribarría, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 42-43.

“fratricidal war.”⁹⁴ Perhaps he worried for his own safety upon hearing that Camacho retracted his support. Elites in the capital appealed for help after recognizing that none of the men under consideration wanted the position due to Camacho and his supporters.⁹⁵ They wanted Larracilla, and the leading candidates apparently believed that Camacho would attack anyone other than his choice occupying the district office.⁹⁶

Local authorities made several attempts to maintain order during the early days of the French invasion. Cipriano Rosete worked with administrators to build a small force of National Guard soldiers comprised of local men in his pueblo Tututepec. He managed to recruit 30 men that he himself armed, but authorities agreed in return to pay them customary National Guard wages each month. Rosete reassured officials that by serving in their own pueblo the men would not abandon their posts because they could remain close to their families and economic obligations.⁹⁷ The scheme failed to produce the desired results. An armed uprising of “the enemies of liberty” attacked the Tututepec unit a few weeks later, and the group disbanded afterward.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, authorities foolishly informed state leaders that the district remained peaceful even after revolts in Huazolotitlán, Tututepec, and Jamiltepec. Following the independence celebration later that year one official asserted that his government “conserves complete tranquility” before relating that “Camacho and his followers have returned.”⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Losé Larracilla to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 12, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

⁹⁵ Cosme del Villar to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 13, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 6.

⁹⁶ Ignacio Fernández to Gobernador de Oaxaca, June 15, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

⁹⁷ J. Pio V. Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 18, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

⁹⁸ J. Pio V. Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 9, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

⁹⁹ M. Velasco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 17, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

In contrast, Jamiltepec Municipal President José Francisco Baños described a dire situation authorities faced in early October. Baños communicated that in his city the National Guard force could no longer maintain order. He argued that this was because Manuel María Velasco's force was not "sufficient" and needed at least 30 soldiers permanently stationed in his city in addition to another 20 who could concentrate on training recruits. Baños observed that Velasco could not maintain a presence while Camacho and his supporters comprised of "fugitives from the mixteca" fought authorities to control the district.¹⁰⁰ Another official reported that ongoing rebellions in the bajos of Huazolotitlán stretched the National Guard units beyond capacity. Coronado, who led an uprising there a year earlier, rebelled once again with at least a fourth of the population in support of the revolt.¹⁰¹ Another official asserted that residents in the "bajos" were "very afraid" of Coronado. This was because his force supposedly terrorized costeños with threats of harsh reprisals for those who cooperated with authorities.¹⁰² These conflicting reports illustrate the increasing confusion among authorities when trying to identify potential threats to their government.

Contrary to the October and November reports, costeños living near Huazolotitlán widely supported Coronado. He and his followers attacked Pinotepa Nacional in November 1862 while officials hunted for them in the bajos. City leaders estimated that Coronado led a force of 100 revolutionaries in a failed effort to take the city, but authorities raised approximately 35 men armed "with machetes and pistols" to confront Coronado's force as they returned to the coast.

¹⁰⁰ José Francisco Baños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 12, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

¹⁰¹ Cosme de Villar to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, October 30, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 14.

¹⁰² José E. Martínez to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, November 3, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 19.

The group dug trenches and attempted to surprise the reactionaries outside Poza Verde but eventually returned to Pinotepa Nacional without incident.¹⁰³ The official account failed to mention that Coronado almost captured the zócalo. His reactionaries overwhelmed the National Guard unit stationed there and advanced toward the center of the city before Comandante Manuel López Orozco arrived from the Guerrero border. López Orozco's larger force repelled the assault and sent the remainder of Coronado's supporters back toward the coast.¹⁰⁴ In fact, López Orozco's unit captured Coronado and killed his second in command. Authorities reported that they arrested Coronado "and executed him on [November] 15," and they recognized several soldiers for "their personal services in the foreign war."¹⁰⁵ Coronado's uprising and attack on Pinotepa Nacional frightened townspeople and represented one of the most violent confrontations in the region during the war.

Even in the face of the French invasion numerous Afro-Mexican and Mixtec residents joined reactionaries to overthrow Juárez's Liberal regime. Such alliances demonstrate that one could not predict which side *jamiltepecanos* might support based on their racial or ethnic identity. Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans often fought against Liberals even though they attacked colonial era elite privileges and guaranteed citizenship. In comparison, many residents supported Liberals while complaining about changes to landholding and attacks on the Catholic Church. These divisions increased at the beginning of the war, but support for the Liberal cause grew substantially as the French army threatened Mexico City. After that, locals increasingly associated reactionaries with French invaders. Protecting Mexico from a foreign invasion

¹⁰³ J. Pio V. Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 4, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 28.

¹⁰⁴ J. Pio V. Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 16, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 14.

¹⁰⁵ "Oaxaca," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, December 4, 1862, 4.

therefore became the popular cause, and the defiant Juárez, who had to flee Mexico City, became the symbol that ordinary jamiltepecanos rallied behind.

Part 4: “Against the Intruder Maximilian of Austria”

Jorge Iturribarria argues that while the situation in some areas of Oaxaca had grown chaotic Jamiltepec was “frankly rebellious” by the end of 1862.¹⁰⁶ District officials accordingly faced numerous obstacles trying to keep the violence from spreading. In the city of Jamiltepec *alcaldes* pronounced against the district government, and they only reconciled with one another after a lengthy negotiation.¹⁰⁷ In November, authorities in Pinotepa Nacional enacted a plan to control unrest stemming from the “bajos” after the Coronado and Camacho affair. Virtually all members of the city government voted to approve a measure sending a permanent police force into Afro-Mexican coastal communities “for the defense of the district.”¹⁰⁸ They notified district authorities of the decision, and explained that the “the grave and serious situation the [city] found itself” in during the attack earlier that month convinced them to take this step. Pinotepa officials argued that keeping reactionaries out of the bajos would “save and defend the independence of the nation that Napoleon III attacked,” and they vowed that police “will not leave these pueblos” until the threat passed.¹⁰⁹ In late November authorities arrested a Spaniard who revolted against the Liberal regime. An official reported that León Blanco had a long history of inciting rebellion

¹⁰⁶ Iturribarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo II, 70.

¹⁰⁷ Juan Pio V. Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 1, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Sublevados, Legajo 12, Expediente 31.

¹⁰⁸ Pedro Aguirre and José Rafael Pérez, “Pronunciamiento sobre la formación de una junta comisión para la defensa del Distrito,” November 20, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 14.

¹⁰⁹ José Antonio Pérez, et al. to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, November 26, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, November 26, 1862, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 14.

dating back to the War of the Reform, but authorities captured the man in 1862 after he refused to comply with the law. He smugly declared in his defense that Liberal laws did not apply to him because authorities never formally notified him about passage of the 1857 Constitution.¹¹⁰

In early 1863, authorities reported that “four indígenas” sought and gained refuge in “the bajos of La Boquilla” after robbing a prominent official in Juquila. The official carefully identified the men as “indígena,” but he did not categorize the bajos as “negro” or “pardo” even during this act of personal and political violence. Such a lack of identification demonstrates that in the 1860s authorities did not characterize Afro-Mexican pueblos with a caste identifier precisely because they thought of them differently than “indígenas” or mestizo residents in Jamiltepec and Pinotepa Nacional. The record provides very little information about why the four men fled to the bajos or why the population there protected them. Perhaps costeños supported the attack on an official during this time of intense social upheaval. The incident illustrates how one might bridge racial and ethnic divides with an act of political violence.¹¹¹ Another letter that circulated in September 1863 expands on fears of a cross-racial alliance. Officials in Jamiltepec issued an edict stationing National Guard troops in “the bajos” so they could “constantly harass” residents. This was a preventative measure after officials received news that French forces occupied Huajuapán de León. They worried that “traitors” to the north would find willing accomplices in Afro-Mexican pueblos as they did in the 1830s.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ L. Bolaños to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 23, 1862, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 45.

¹¹¹ Manuel de Santaella to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 7, 1863, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 47.

¹¹² Manuel Ramírez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 23, 1863, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 29.

Local authorities loyal to the Liberal regime in Oaxaca City grew increasingly worried about the threat of a French attack in early 1864. This was in response to Napoleon III's decision to name Maximilian von Habsburg emperor in April 1864 after having convinced the Austrian Archduke that he won a popular election.¹¹³ Upon arrival in Mexico a few weeks later, Maximilian's French army turned to the south and began clearing a path for an occupation of Oaxaca.¹¹⁴ Liberal authorities in Oaxaca City managed to avoid major confrontations for much of the first two years of the war even after Puebla's fall in May 1863. Maximilian's southern offensive restricted trade and made it nearly impossible for Jamiltepec merchants to reach markets in Tehuacán, Puebla, and Mexico City. Hence leaders prohibited trade outside the region in early 1864 because they agreed that dealing with enemies of Juárez's government was treasonous and immoral.¹¹⁵ The obvious strain on the local economy forced officials to search for alternative outlets to sell livestock and cotton. They worked with two speculators to move products through the dangerous port in the Chacahua Lagoon to the east. They promised a profitable market for local goods and cotton, but the plan never materialized likely due to the difficulties ship captains faced navigating the strong currents while entering and exiting the lagoon.¹¹⁶ In fact, the cotton and livestock trade did not recover until after the war.

On a few occasions, authorities had to deal with unrest and violence from reactionaries. On a trip to Huazolotitlán in April 1864 the Jefe Político Manuel Romero narrowly avoided an

¹¹³ For more on how French authorities attempted to legitimize Maximilian as the head of the Mexican state see, Robert H. Duncan, "Political Legitimation and Mexico's Second Empire in Mexico, 1864-1867," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1996), 29-37.

¹¹⁴ Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 87-92.

¹¹⁵ Manuel Romero to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 23, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 40.

¹¹⁶ Manuel Romero to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 8, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 1.

assassination attempt. A former resident of Jamiltepec, Francisco Ortega, had moved to Huazolotitlán and lived there for an unspecified amount of time before the attempt on Romero's life.¹¹⁷ Authorities sent the man to Oaxaca City with a note explaining Ortega's crime and a request asking administrators there to imprison him so as to avoid potential problems with his followers.¹¹⁸ Local leaders tracked a similar case in Chico Ometepe when a district official entered that pueblo. An unnamed person attacked the official and murdered the man with a pistol shot to the heart.¹¹⁹ These alarming cases aside, much of the district remained supportive of Juárez and the Liberal regime in Oaxaca City during Maximilian's Second Empire. In a classic example of federalism, authorities in Jamiltepec and Juquila announced that they refused to cooperate with Maximilian's government in Mexico City. Officials in July 1864 declared that "the electoral board... of the districts of Jamiltepec and Juquila sufficiently authorized for their residents to protest free and spontaneously against the acts of the named regency and against those of the intruder Maximilian of Austria that is no more justified than French bayonets."¹²⁰ Officials from Juquila sent two copies of the pronouncement to authorities. One went to Mexico City addressed to Maximilian and the other to Liberal leaders in Oaxaca City who were on the verge of collapse as the French army advanced on the capital.

Other areas of the Mixteca seemed less unified in their support of Juárez and the Liberal government that Porfirio Díaz barely sustained in early 1864. In fact, Díaz made numerous

¹¹⁷ Juan Teodoro Ruiz to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 18, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 1.

¹¹⁸ Manuel Rodríguez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 4, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 1.

¹¹⁹ Manuel Romero to Secretario del Despacho pide eleva al ramo del Gobernador, April 25, 1864, AGPEO, Reemplazos, Legajo 12, Expediente 34.

¹²⁰ Manuel Romero, "Anuncio de los electores de Juquila y Jamiltepec," July 10, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Elecciones, Legajo 26, Expediente 9.

enemies as the general of the southern army while travelling through the Mixteca Baja. One newspaper account detailed that Díaz treated residents in the normally Conservative region harshly as he marched to Jamiltepec to stamp out a “revolt... in favor of the Empire.”¹²¹ Díaz responded to news of a reactionary force to the north of Jamiltepec that had moved south and occupied Zacatepec. Díaz’s advisors worried that reactionaries would find supporters in this historically Conservative Mixtec pueblo.¹²² Reports in October seemed to confirm their fears as regional authorities scrambled to defend the Guerrero coast from a French naval attack. A war ship landed in Acapulco and sent a force inland to rendezvous with Conservatives.¹²³ The Jefe Político of Jamiltepec worked with military leaders to send an additional unit of reinforcements to Lo de Soto where they could guard against a small uprising in Afro-Mexican communities located on both sides of the border.¹²⁴ Lo de Soto loyalists responded by raising a Liberal force of over 50 soldiers to defeat the foreign invasion.¹²⁵ Authorities reported in late December that they had driven French forces out of Acapulco after a lengthy occupation, and they also held off an attack of pro-Maximilian insurgents in Pinotepa Nacional.¹²⁶

The relief officials expressed did not last. The French army eventually encircled the Oaxaca capital and forced Díaz to surrender on February 8, 1865.¹²⁷ Local officials stood behind

¹²¹ “Oaxaca,” *La Sociedad*, August 15, 1864, 2. For more on Díaz’s lack of support in the Mixteca Baja see, Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 88-89; Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 152-154.

¹²² Juan Teodoro Ruiz to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 13, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 30.

¹²³ Manuel Zárate to Jefe Político of Abásolo, October 20, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 64.

¹²⁴ Manuel López y Orozco to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec and Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 21, 1864, AGPEO, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 64.

¹²⁵ Manuel López y Orozco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 15, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 64.

¹²⁶ Manuel López y Orozco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 26, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 64; Manuel López y Orozco to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 29, 1864, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 64.

¹²⁷ Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 90-91; Iturribarria, *Historia de Oaxaca*, Tomo III, 141-158

Juárez, who sought refuge as the legal president in northern Mexico, but worried what “the invasion” in Oaxaca City meant for their government.¹²⁸ They could not resist long.

Maximilian’s representatives at the state level replaced local leaders with Conservative partisans who professed their loyalty to the Second Empire. Interestingly, Maximilian’s officials seemed to encounter similar problems their predecessors faced in Afro-Mexican pueblos on the Oaxaca-Guerrero border. Sub-Prefect of Jamiltepec P.A. Garay reported to the acting governor in Oaxaca City that “dissident forces... are in Ometepec and Cuajinicuilapa.”¹²⁹ However, the “dissident forces” amassed along the border in this case fought to restore Juárez to the presidency and to remove Conservative traitors. Another outsider assigned to a district office acknowledged the new governor and demanded in vain that all citizens in the district recognize the imposed emperor.¹³⁰ By this point, though, Maximilian had already lost the support of many Conservatives after his own attacks on the church. Locals backed Liberals and worked with Díaz to defeat French forces in 1866. Maximilian nonetheless refused to abdicate, and Juárez eventually ordered the former emperor’s execution on June 19, 1867. As James Sanders notes “the tree of liberty had been watered with the blood of tyrants.”¹³¹

Napoleon III unwittingly united Mexicans for the first time since independence behind a political party with Juárez serving as the symbol of the nation. The French emperor’s accidental accomplishment demonstrates how nationalism and citizenship overrode partisan disputes in the 1860s. Jamiltepecanos unified in support of the Liberal cause when faced with a foreign tyrant

¹²⁸ Manuel López y Orozco to Jefe Político de Juquila, March 5, 1865, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 6.

¹²⁹ P. A. Garay to Señor General Superior de Oaxaca, May 29, 1866, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Tranquilidad Pública, Legajo 22, Expediente 31.

¹³⁰ I. Figueroa to Sr. Provisional Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 6, 1866, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Decretos, Legajo 17, Expediente 29.

¹³¹ Sanders, *The Vanguard of the Atlantic World*, 2.

who imposed administrators on individual communities. In this sense, they rallied to protect the federalist system and to control their own affairs, but official correspondence makes clear that the pueblo also extended beyond their communities. The idea of the pueblo, or in this case the *people*, that comprised the Mexican state proved to be a powerful concept that numerous local citizens rallied to defend.¹³² To borrow a phrase from Benedict Anderson, jamiltepecanos united behind Juárez and the “imagined community” of their fellow Mexican citizens.¹³³ The Liberal cause therefore became more than limiting the role of the church, guaranteeing citizenship, or transforming the land tenure system. Liberals forged a popular consensus because they tied Juárez to the pueblo and, by extension, the Mexican nation.

Conclusion

While the French Intervention inspired political unity entrepreneurs worried whether the conflict would destroy the economy in the same manner as the U.S. invasion. Unsurprisingly, Huazolotitlán officials reported that their city could barely pay the annual tax obligation at the end of 1867. After paying government expenditures the 1st Alcalde confirmed that the town would only carry \$15.95 Pesos into the new year.¹³⁴ Leaders in Pinotepa Nacional expressed a bit more confidence in their final report. After considerable expenses and successful tax

¹³² Paul Eiss argues that in Latin America el pueblo “is used to refer both to the most intimate forms of communal life and to the broadest mobilizations of partisan and popular politics.” Eiss, *In the Name of El Pueblo*, 4. For more on the long history of this term see Eiss’ excellent discussion, 4-15.

¹³³ See Anderson’s short discussion of how the concept of the nation proved more powerful than partisanship. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 144-145.

¹³⁴ Sebastián Reyes, Pascual Abila, y V. B. López y Orozco, “Tesorería Municipal Corte de Caja de mes de Diciembre en Huazolotitlán,” December 31, 1867, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 4.

collection efforts they communicated the city would carry \$154.13 Pesos into 1868.¹³⁵ Thus, the predominantly Mixtec pueblo that had long objected to land reform and refused to pay taxes struggled to run the city government without incurring debt. Officials in the larger city, however, survived the war without deficit spending. Both reports illustrate that locals emerged from the invasion with higher expectations for economic growth than they had in 1848. For the first time, the political consensus that destroyed the Conservative opposition seemed as though it could translate into economic prosperity. This stood in stark contrast to the early days of the Liberal Reform. The package of social, political, economic, and judicial reforms – designed in part to revolutionize landholding and stimulate the economy – often worked against the poor farmers who mobilized to overthrow Santa Anna. While many applauded the ouster of the dictator and the reform program, others viewed the Liberal policies as an attack on time-honored traditions that defined life in their small communities. Church authorities often contributed to this sentiment and advocated that parishioners oppose the Liberal government.

Popular mobilizations against authorities therefore grew rapidly into a broader political movement demanding an end to attacks on the church and communal landholding. These mobilizations and the civil war that followed frequently pitted residents against one another, but race and ethnicity seemed to play a very small, if any, role in which side one chose. Instead, Afro-Mexican and Mixtec citizens supported partisan political and cultural initiatives with few connections to their racial identities. Local leaders faced reactionary groups that organized in the bajos along the coast, but these groups often built large coalitions in Mixtec communities.

¹³⁵ Wenceslao Aristáin, Roman Carmona, y V. B. López y Orozco, “Tesorería Municipal de Pinotepa Nacional Corte de Caja el mes de Diciembre,” December 31, 1867, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 4.

Interestingly, Conservative leaders attracted followers with the promise of protecting pueblo land, access to resources, and religion in much the same manner Santa Anna's backers did in 1834. Liberals maintained adherents through their social reforms, policies on citizenship, and economic initiatives. The French invasion provided an opportunity for residents to unite and defend national sovereignty. The foreign threat essentially transcended partisan politics and allowed Mexicans from all backgrounds to put aside their differences and rally behind Juárez, the national hero.

In terms of race and citizenship then the mid-century Reform Era revealed several important trends. First, as discussed above, race and ethnicity did not play an important factor informing whether one supported Conservatives or Liberals. This lack of correlation between identity and politics dated back to the independence war with a few notable exceptions. Second, citizens found numerous ways to engage in national politics. They voiced their support for a party or individual candidate, voted in elections, and occasionally engaged in violence. As we have seen, virtually every major political movement relied on support at the local level, and politicians who ignored this connection did so at their own peril. Popular politics at the local level nevertheless contributed to instability at the national level as different groups throughout the country rallied behind specific issues. Understanding how this worked across Mexico in regions like Jamiltepec will help scholars understand nineteenth century state formation. Finally, jamiltepecanos often had a very consistent agenda throughout this chaotic process. In almost every case, they mobilized to protect pueblo autonomy and to assert control over their own political institutions. Liberals saw citizenship, elimination of *fueros*, and economic prosperity as central to controlling their own communities. In contrast, Conservatives organized to defend their churches, institutions, and land. Both sides therefore worked to protect their communities

from impersonal outside control. Such stability in terms of political goals contrasts starkly with the lack of cohesion at the national level. Maximilian and his traitorous army helped bridge the Conservative and Liberal divide. After Juárez's triumphant return to Mexico City, he presided over the country with a broad popular consensus as no president had since independence.

CHAPTER 6: Exporting Commodities and Constructing Race (1876-1910)

Local leaders planned a massive three-day celebration in 1868 to commemorate independence. The festivities began early in the morning on September 15 with a twenty-one gun salute in the Jamiltepec zócalo. Later that night district officials led members of the *Junta Patriótica* (Patriotic Committee) in a slow march down the main street to the *casa municipal* (town hall) where the president of the committee, Manuel de Santaella, gave an inspired “reading on the act of independence.” Afterward they delivered “the grito of our emancipation” in “the streets of the people” before ending the official ceremonies for the night so residents could “pronounce their patriotism to this country in the best order.” Authorities marked daybreak on the 16th with another twenty-one gun salute as committee members raised the flag. Throughout the day jamiltepecanos gathered until late in the night to feast, play music, and dance. National Guard sentries marked each quarter hour overnight with a canon shot until daybreak on the 17th when leaders delivered a somber “address in the town cemetery” to honor the men and women who sacrificed for independence.¹

Authorities reported that everyone adhered to the program planners had carefully coordinated for the first national holiday since expelling European invaders. They reported that “many ladies spontaneously offered, not only donations..., but also to commit themselves to dress up and decorate [the float] the America” that the committee planned to use in the procession. Officials forwarded a lengthy list of “the women who contributed to this very

¹ José Álvarez, “Copia de la programa de la Junta Patriótica,” September 15, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 6.

impressive object” to their counterparts in the state government.² This ceremony differs in some important ways with Juárez’s triumphant reentry into Mexico City in the prior year. On that occasion, Juárez himself served as the primary symbol of national sovereignty in his first address since reclaiming the presidency over a united Mexico. Administrators selected to use him in this manner as a representation of unity in a carefully scripted address.³ The ceremony in Jamiltepec, in comparison, contained a popular element by incorporating the citizenry into the festival. Members of the Junta Patriótica sought help from residents while also meticulously selecting themes to emphasize the region’s contributions to independence. Jamiltepecanos helped plan the event and enthusiastically took part in the celebration.

Residents in Jamiltepec certainly embraced nationalistic commemorations during the nineteenth century, but on this occasion they had every reason to be more optimistic than in times past. This was primarily because the French invasion fostered a new sense of unity and ended partisan politics. Charles Hale arrives at a similar conclusion and argues that, as an ideology, liberalism became a “unifying political myth.”⁴ In his estimation, virtually all citizens embraced this political philosophy after Maximilian’s defeat. Chapter 6 will test Hale’s conclusions and analyze how jamiltepecanos adjusted to the new political and economic environment. After the war, national politics influenced the region as Liberals supplanted remaining Conservatives in all government positions, but two factions immediately developed under the Liberal umbrella. Locals allied behind either Juárez or Porfirio Díaz after the two

² José Álvarez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 19, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 6.

³ Salvador Novo, “The Capital in 1867,” *Artes de México*, no. 128, “La época de Juárez,” (1970), 53-54.

⁴ Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 3. Benjamin Smith concludes that in the Mixteca Baja Díaz often allied with local leaders that could help him maintain power. He chose leaders that often exhibited only a thin acknowledgement to liberalism as a political ideology. Smith, *Roots of Conservatism*, 165.

oaxaqueños emerged from the war as the leading political figures. However, the rivalry quickly ended in July 1872 with Juárez's untimely death. Díaz assumed the presidency four years later in 1876 and dominated national politics for the next three decades.

The Liberal transformation then effectively ended partisan mobilizations. Yet disputes over land and resources endured throughout Díaz's presidency, an era known as the Porfiriato (1876-1911). Post-war stability meant that oxaqueños had to develop new strategies to protect pueblo autonomy because they could no longer mobilize politically. In fact, mobilizations became increasingly dangerous because elites viewed partisan violence through the lens of Social Darwinism. They asserted that costeños and indígenas who engaged in political violence confirmed elite nineteenth century racist assumptions that classified particular groups of people as barbaric and inherently violent. Appeals therefore became the best avenue for honorable padres de familia to protect resources, but this served to strengthen the government's position. Citizens lent credibility to Díaz's system by seeking arbitration within the legal framework he controlled. Díaz also proved remarkably adept at maintaining popular support. He relied on personal ties to communities and invited former adversaries to join his administration, but he increasingly ignored the popular classes as he turned his presidency into a dictatorship. A similar process played out at the local level. Leaders tied their administrations to the Liberal Party, but over time, they aligned more closely with Díaz by privatizing pueblo resources and limiting autonomy to promote economic growth. Local and national politicians essentially fashioned their governments, originally based on popular support forged during the French Intervention, into a highly centralized system that favored elite investors.

Díaz's economic policies spurred a capitalist revolution in cotton and livestock. With few exceptions, rising prices fueled growth as a new generation of entrepreneurs arrived on the coast.

Men like José Zorrilla, Dámaso Gómez, and Guillermo Acho migrated to Mexico from Spain and used the welcoming political environment to their advantage. Acho privatized large tracts of communal land and consolidated the livestock industry into a single enterprise consisting of millions of goats spread across three states. Zorrilla built three state-of-the-art textile mills near Oaxaca City that relied on coastal cotton. They generated their own electric power in addition to a massive amount of wealth. Gómez settled in Jamiltepec permanently and acquired large areas of land to supply Zorrilla's factories and Acho's haciendas with raw products. At the popular level, the capitalist transformation affected Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans differently. Mixtec communities, still suffering from the collapse of cochineal, were geographically susceptible to land grabs from men like Acho who eagerly expanded goatherds on privatized land. In addition, communal leaders often failed to obtain outside representation in land dispute cases because they had no product or cash to exchange for legal counsel. Acho, Gómez, and other hacendados therefore successfully privatized Mixtec land. Afro-Mexicans on the coast, in comparison, supplied Zorrilla with an essential product and thus experienced the transition differently. They secured legal counsel from powerful elites in exchange for inexpensive cotton. This provided a means by which Afro-Mexican farmers could protect precious land and resources.

The region experienced an intense social, political, and economic transformation in the decades following the Liberal victory. The capitalist transition destroyed the moral economy that pre-dated independence in Mixtec pueblos. Entrepreneurs had no reasonable incentive to preserve this arrangement precisely because they could realize substantial profits by privatizing pueblo land. They faced a different set of circumstances in Afro-Mexican communities along the coast. Investors sank substantial capital into factories that turned coastal cotton into manufactured textiles. Consequently, they had an economic stake in working closely with

farmers to safeguard profits. In this sense, entrepreneurs preserved the moral economy to assure a smooth transition to industrial capitalism. This stands apart from E.P. Thompson's and James Scott's research detailing how similar economic transitions destroyed reciprocal arrangements between elites and the popular classes. Evidence from Jamiltepec also differs from Benjamin Smith's findings in Huajuapán. He concludes that elites preserved the moral economy to maintain political control. In Jamiltepec, the decision to end such arrangements or to preserve them had the same overall effect and made the capitalist transformation possible. In addition, the region's geography separating Afro-Mexicans and Mixtecs played a fundamental role in how one experienced the transition. Therefore, the racial divisions that Dario Atristáin described in the Introduction during the 1910 Revolution had more to do with the Liberal economic transformation than a longstanding racial antagonism.

Part 1: "*A Respectable Model*" for a "*Public Man*" (1867-1872)

Juárez and Díaz effectively presided over national politics for the second half of the nineteenth century. Unsurprisingly, Juárez emerged from the French invasion as the most important political figure in Mexico. He relished the role of the national hero who boldly packed up his office and led the country from a presidential coach in the north after the French army forced him to flee Mexico City (See Figure 6.1). Díaz, the political upstart, attempted to capitalize on his success during the war as the general who drove Conservative forces out of the south. They opposed each other in the 1867 presidential election, and even though they both

came from Oaxaca, the two men could barely hide their contempt for one another.⁵ Díaz put together a formidable coalition, but Juárez rode a popular wave of support to an easy victory.⁶ The state thus split into two major camps of Porfiristas and Juaristas. Jamiltepec politicians managed to stay out of the dispute by working to rebuild infrastructure and support the economy. In fact, local politics returned to the pre-Intervention environment centering on the now outdated federalist agenda of pueblo autonomy. Residents across the region called for control over local elections and an end to land adjudications, but officials often worked against these demands by appointing outsiders to pueblo governments and privatizing communal land. They also incorporated many of the racial biases of their predecessors. This likely reflected late nineteenth century racial attitudes common among elites in Europe and the United States in addition to personal memories of numerous pronunciamientos in Afro-Mexican communities.

⁵ Numerous historians have detailed the rift that became most apparent at a banquet they both attended in August 1867. See, Frank S. Falcone, "Benito Juárez versus the Díaz Brothers: Politics in Oaxaca, 1867-1871," *The Americas* 33, no. 4 (April 1977), 630-631. Leslie Byrd Simpson links the beginning of the rivalry to a perceived snub as Juárez apparently ignored Díaz when he reentered Mexico City. Leslie Byrd Simpson, *Many Mexicos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 254.

⁶ Roeder, *Juarez and His Mexico*, 683-689; Daniel Cosío Villegas, *La República Restaurada*, vol. 1 of *Historia Moderna de México*, ed. Daniel Cosío Villegas, 2nd ed. (México: Editorial Hermes, 1959), 111-229.



Figure 6.1: Photograph of Benito Juárez's carriage This famous coach served as his office on wheels while in northern Mexico. He used it as a prop as he re-entered Mexico City and addressed the nation after retaking the capital. Officials placed the coach in the Chapultepec Castle museum during the twentieth century. Photo courtesy Amanda Milstead, 2013.

José Ignacio Labastida illustrates how elite racist attitudes persisted, and in many cases, hardened after the war. He wrote from his district post in Huazolotitlán that some people living in the bajos “have registered in the respective census,” but he claimed that they more often refused to identify themselves to administrators. He asserted that this was because “they resist” being counted in the census “more in the bajos” than elsewhere and refused to comply “due to their ignorance.” He urged patience and requested that state officials help him conduct the survey given the difficulty he had collecting data “in the bajos.”⁷ Juan Teodoro Ruíz described a similar problem collecting data in “the bajos.” He attributed local resistance to migrations because residents lived in two different locations depending on the growing season. Ruíz believed that

⁷ José Ignacio Lavastida to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 8, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Registro Civil, Legajo 32, Expediente 7.

officials could correct the inaccuracies by conducting a new *padrón* (census) for the Hacienda de Santa Cruz. He reported that people there only stayed for short periods before returning to the coast where “innumerable inhabitants” regularly “pay their capitación.” Therefore, the resistance officials faced in some coastal communities represented more of a misunderstanding. Ruíz asserted that “there are many” living in “the margins on the beach” permanently and then on the hacienda temporarily depending on the season. A new census that accounted for this movement would thus help authorities obtain an accurate count.⁸ In these cases officials continued to disparage Afro-Mexican families as dishonorable due to their migration practices that made the best use of the growing seasons.

Another example helps expose elite racial attitudes after the war. Nicolás Tejada led a group of self-described “men occupied in our businesses” in an impassioned legal appeal to the state. They objected that a National Guard officer, Francisco Galvés, led an expedition into Pinotepa Nacional to confiscate their firearms and asked state authorities for help recovering the weapons. They argued that the firearms helped them defend the city from bandit attacks, but Galvés deprived them of this capability. Interestingly, the men identified two groups of people – one to the south and the other to the north – to help make their case. First, they claimed that “bandits or thieves” from Putla to the north had recently attacked Pinotepa. Tejada and his followers used their firearms to fend off the attack and drive the “bandits” and “thieves” out of town. The group offered that on another occasion “bandits” from Putla attacked Pinotepa’s Presidente Municipal in the middle of the night, but he used his gun to overwhelm the attackers. Second, they posed a rhetorical question about Afro-Mexicans to their south who they claimed

⁸ Juan Teodoro Ruiz to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 9, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 5.

still possessed their firearms. The group asked “why does [Galvés] impose on us this exclusive punishment when he does not punish all of the inhabitants of the coast?” Finally, the group emphasized economics by stating that the region’s economy would suffer grave consequences without their ability to protect city businesses.⁹

This case reveals elite attitudes toward race in several ways. The men from Pinotepa Nacional emphasized that “bandits” and “thieves” from Putla recently attacked their city. This language and location plays into regional history as well as race and ethnicity. The “bandits” and “thieves” came from a Mixtec and Triqui pueblo with a long history of violent disputes in the Jamiltepec region. State authorities would likely have understood this connection as well as the presumption of indigeneity associated with the location without the men having to disclose the attackers’ race or ethnicity. Interestingly, the group employed a similar strategy with their rhetorical question about Afro-Mexicans on the coast. They asserted that all “the inhabitants of the coast” still possessed their firearms without using explicit racial language, but the question itself and the population the men singled out reveals how they could skirt the issue of race in official correspondence. Their readers would presumably agree, or at least they believed so, for the question to be effective, and Tejada certainly would have tried to formulate the letter to maximize the group’s chance to win the case. Finally, they chose to end the appeal by focusing on how the illegal seizure would disrupt the local economy. They sacrificed to defend Mexico and protect their community as honorable men, but they also had to provide economically for their families. As *padres de familia* they needed the weapons to protect vulnerable family members as well as the community from dishonorable “bandits.” The honorable men “occupied

⁹ M. C. Santaella et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, February 6, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 28.

in... business” sustained the city and regional economy. Therefore, they saw their role as a sort of padre de familia over the entire city. The regional economy thus remained vulnerable to Afro-indigenous attacks without firearms for defense. The appeal seemed to worry district officials who explained that Galvés confiscated the weapons to pay outstanding tax debts. They charged that Tejada and the others refused to pay a total of \$383 Pesos to keep the firearms.¹⁰ The district rebuttal carefully challenged Tejada’s assertions relating to Galvés without disputing the provocative language the men used to disparage Afro-Mexicans and indígenas. However, given their careful attention to the matter, officials may have seen Tejada and his armed followers as more of a threat to their authority than they did less well armed Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans.

The above case file ends abruptly without indicating how the state ruled. Given Tejada’s influence, the men likely worked out a deal with authorities. In any case, district officials faced a number of obstacles after the French Intervention. Nearly a decade of warfare meant that even projects preceding the Liberal Reform remained unfinished in the late 1860s. Presidente Municipal of Jamiltepec Miguel Arenas submitted a formal request for help repairing a cathedral in early 1868. He reported that earthquakes damaged the building in 1847 and 1854, but officials could not raise the necessary funds for the restoration. They asked for volunteers as part of the *tequio* (labor obligation for public service), but Arenas claimed that the Reform laws made it difficult for him to secure the necessary number of volunteers.¹¹ District officials passed the appeal along to state authorities without resolution. Jamiltepec leaders essentially had few resources outside of the voluntary labor they could muster from residents and the involuntary

¹⁰ José Joaquín Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, March 12, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 31, Expediente 38.

¹¹ Miguel P. Arenas to Juan Teodoro Ruiz, February 20, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 45.

labor they could force on prisoners. Representatives certainly could not afford to pay laborers. They reported that in the prior month they only collected \$56.24 Pesos in taxes but used \$27.75 to cover city expenses. That left them with a standing balance of \$28.19 Pesos to pay for what would likely be an expensive construction project.¹²

Later that year authorities reported that a massive fire began in the zócalo in Jamiltepec and destroyed several buildings near the city center. The grim report asked the state for resources to help the “many victims of both sexes and several children.”¹³ Unforeseen tragedies like the fire described above seemingly plagued authorities as they tried to address lingering problems with the region’s infrastructure. A day after the fire in Jamiltepec, officials in Pinotepa Nacional reported a powerful storm produced a mudslide that destroyed a primary school and a church. They communicated that the storm devastated a portion of the city and requested \$187.50 Pesos in state funds to clean up the damage.¹⁴ The official also used the occasion to propose construction of a girls’ school to educate women before they became “madres de familia.” He estimated that approximately 5,000 young women in Pinotepa lived in “ignorance” without a formal education. He argued that the girls’ school would prevent this and avoid the “material brutalization that can degenerate into prostitution.”¹⁵ Thus, even amid the natural disaster and expensive rebuilding process officials in the region worked to repair the regional infrastructure, and they embraced projects like education for children in terms of family economics and honor.

¹² Lauro Baños, “Estado que manifiesta el ingreso y egreso del caudales habidos en esta oficina,” February 24, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 5.

¹³ José Álvarez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 19, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 6.

¹⁴ Wenceslao Atristáin to José Álvarez, October 20, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 6.

¹⁵ Wenceslao Atristáin to José Álvarez, October 20, 1868, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 6.

After the war, these became key issues that officials promoted to attract investors capable of maximizing Jamiltepec's substantial resources.

Post-war presidential politics also influenced the region. Díaz ran against Juárez for a second time in 1871, but he lost again to the seasoned politician. After the victory, Juárez replaced Porfirio's brother Félix Díaz with Miguel Castro as governor of the state. Porfirio responded on November 8, 1871 by announcing the Plan de La Noria as a formal pronunciamiento to overthrow Juárez's presidency. The plan backfired as Juaristas quickly defeated the Díaz brothers and their followers. Porfirio fled Oaxaca and evaded capture until Juárez's sudden death on July 18, 1872. Félix, however, could not escape. Juaristas caught him in Pochutla where they beat, tortured, and killed him.¹⁶ The fallout from Díaz's unsuccessful push to win the election filtered down to the local and state levels. The new governor appointed a Juarista, José Joaquín Pérez, as the Jamiltepec *Jefe Político* (Political Boss). This was a common practice after the war. Liberals created the office of jefe político to replace the gobernador del distrito in 1857, but the importance and scope of this position grew over time.¹⁷ In fact, Félix strengthened the jefe político's authority in Oaxaca while serving as governor by appointing men who professed their personal loyalty to him.¹⁸

Residents understood the relative importance of this position after the war and wanted the ability to select their own leaders. In 1871, for example, they anticipated the new governor would name a Juarista to the post and sent an appeal asking authorities to extend José Álvarez's term as jefe político. A group of pueblo and district authorities made the request in terms of Álvarez's

¹⁶ Berry, *The Reform in Oaxaca*, 124-127.

¹⁷ See, Mendoz García, *Municipios, cofradías y tierras comunales*, 123-127.

¹⁸ Falcone, "Benito Juárez versus the Díaz Brothers," 643-645.

honor. They urged the new administration to consider that his “good conduct, integrity, and morality” made him the ideal choice to continue leading the district. The group of officials, representing virtually every pueblo in the region, signed a petition stating that he “conserved peace between the inhabitants as a respectable model” for a “public man.”¹⁹ Castro’s advisors seemingly preferred appointing a Juarista given the ongoing La Noria revolt that, if successful, would have ended their own administration. Therefore, they denied the petition and replaced Álvarez with Joaquín Pérez. This choice inflamed other tensions that had less to do with Juárez’s and Díaz’s rivalry. Joaquín Pérez lived in the larger city Pinotepa Nacional and advocated moving the district seat there due to its central location and economic importance. This angered residents outside Pinotepa and sparked a controversy over the location of the cabecera. In fact, 42 people testified that they heard shouts of “Viva Pinotepa” and “*Muera* [death to] Jamiltepec” on an otherwise peaceful night in the city of Jamiltepec.²⁰

In addition, Joaquín Pérez faced serious allegations from leaders outside Pinotepa Nacional. Several officials accused him of abusing his power and pocketing taxes for cotton and other commodities that passed through the region on their way to distant markets. Joaquín Pérez responded with an emphatic defense and called his accusers “bandits” who threatened regional stability. The new jefe político stated that he preferred to spend the bulk of his time in Pinotepa Nacional to fend off potential attacks, and he added that unrest in Cortijos and Amuzgos forced him to deploy National Guard troops there on two occasions.²¹ In a separate case, investors

¹⁹ Francisco Marín, “Sesión Ordinaria,” September 26, 1871, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 10.

²⁰ M. Iglesias, et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, August 30, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 82.

²¹ José Joaquín Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 24, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 82.

charged that he meted out harsh penalties to Huazolotitlán and Atoyac townspeople as punishment for minor infractions of the law. The investors claimed that this robbed residents of “their constitutional liberty.”²² The jefe político offered examples of criminal convictions to rebut the charges and explained that Huazolotitlán residents violently resisted tax collection efforts. After addressing the charges, Joaquín Pérez closed with an attack on the collective intelligence of his accusers and asserted that they did not understand the law.²³

Thus, even though the region in the past supported Juárez, residents seemed to prefer Porfiristas. Joaquín Pérez’s initiatives also mark an important shift to support the rapidly changing economy tied to cotton and located in Pinotepa Nacional. In one of his first actions, he overturned a tax that officials applied to Pinotepa cotton speculators and Huazolotitlán gin operators. He informed the Presidente Municipal of Huazolotitlán that his town would have a higher tax burden due to mismanagement and unreliable data collection that allowed the operator to conceal income. They essentially passed their tax burden to speculators in Pinotepa who had to pay extra to ship the commodity to mills.²⁴ Moreover, Huazolotitlán officials enacted an additional tax that they claimed would pay for a municipal project. They implemented it immediately and announced that farmers in the “bajos” would now have to pay more to process cotton in their city.²⁵ Antonio Allende, a speculator in Pinotepa Nacional, objected and explained that Huazolotitlán’s unreliable system forced him to pay more than what was required in the

²² Lauro Baños, et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 14, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 69.

²³ José Joaquín Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 1, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 69.

²⁴ José Joaquín Pérez to Antonio Allende and the Presidente Municipal of Huazolotitlán, July 8, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

²⁵ Presidente Municipal Francisco González, et al., “Decreto,” July 15, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

prior year. In addition, he argued that the new tax was illegal and unrealistic because it would make coastal cotton too expensive in comparison to Veracruz and Tuxtepec.²⁶ Joaquín Pérez supplemented Allende's appeal by explaining the economic importance of cotton to the regional economy. The jefe político acknowledged that city officials attempted to address several infrastructure issues with the measure, but he declared that they had no power to impose a tax of this kind on such an important commodity.²⁷ Townspeople took matters into their own hands and moved the cotton gin to an undisclosed location in "the bajos."²⁸ Allende objected and countered that he located the gin there in the first place.²⁹ After more than a year, state authorities sided with Allende and regulated a standard tax on each "bulto" of processed cotton.³⁰

Joaquín Pérez successfully protected cotton speculators and won an important concession to regulate taxes. On this occasion he enlisted the help of José Zorrilla, a new arrival to the region. Born in Santander, Spain, Zorrilla joined his wealthy uncle, Juan Saenz Trápaga, in Oaxaca City to export cochineal. As the market dried up, he partnered with Tomás Grandisson from England and began exporting large quantities of coastal cotton to their burgeoning textile plants located near Oaxaca City in Etila and Ixtlán. Governor Castro boasted in 1874 that Zorrilla's factories were "the first and only in their class that have been established in the state."³¹ He solidified his connection with coastal elites by marrying Tejada's daughter Josefa.

²⁶ Antonio Allende to José Joaquín Pérez, July 15, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

²⁷ José Joaquín Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, July 29, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

²⁸ Manuel Allende, "Testimonio," October 22, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

²⁹ Antonio Allende to Gobernador de Oaxaca, November 6, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

³⁰ Esperón and Maga, "Decreto," October, 15, 1873, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 42.

³¹ Miguel Castro, *Memoria que El Poder Ejecutivo del Estado dirige al Legislativo del mismo del periodo del la administración pública, comprendido entre el 17 de septiembre de 1873 y 16 de septiembre de 1874* (Oaxaca:

This alliance gave him access to cotton gins, land, and human resources in Afro-Mexican pueblos so he could expand his business.³² He wrote an appeal to the governor asking the state to regulate the commodity and prohibit the implementation of local taxes that would raise the price of Oaxaca cotton.³³ Men like Zorrilla from outside the community exerted substantial control over the Jamiltepec economy. Their ties to local elites and distant textile mills meant that they often had more say over the region's land and resources than the local farmers who produced the commodity. However, jamiltepecanos also worked to protect pueblo resources. District authorities bristled with anger after receiving a tax payment for land held in common in the pueblo Ixcapa. They argued that three brothers from outside the community successfully adjudicated the land in the prior year, but the brothers "disappeared" afterward. Ixcapa residents resumed farming and ranching on what they maintained was their communal land without regard to the missing men's claim.³⁴ Authorities believed residents must have played a role in the disappearance but had no evidence to bring formal charges.

Thus, political stability after nearly a decade of warfare provided officials, farmers, and investors with an opportunity to capitalize on the new economy. In fact, Zorrilla's involvement in the regional industry represented an important turning point. He managed a large organization that invested heavily in the state by building textile mills near the capital. Zorrilla's factories

Imprenta del Estado 1874); "Cuadro estadístico que manifiesta las fábricas de hilados y tejidos de algodón," in *Memoria Constitucional presentada por El Ejecutivo del Estado libre y soberano de Oaxaca al H. Congreso del mismo el 17 de septiembre de 1882 sobre todos los ramos de la administración pública* by Jiménez, M. Tomo II (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1883). For more on Zorrilla see, Carlos Sánchez Silva, "Don José Zorrilla Trápaga (1829-1897): 'El Tenorio oaxaqueño,'" in *Formación empresarial, fomento industrial y compañías agrícolas en el México del siglo XIX*, eds. Mario Trujillo Bolio and José Mario Contreras Valdez (México DF: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios, 2003), 71; Milstead, "Party of the Century."

³² See, Chassen-López, 'Maderismo or Mixtec Empire'; 'Manifiesta de los extranjeros en el Estado', in *Memoria Constitucional*, M. Jiménez, Tomo III, 1883.

³³ José Joaquín Pérez to Gobernador de Oaxaca, October 9, 1872, AGPEO, Gobierno de Oaxaca, Comunicado, Legajo 33, Expediente 14.

³⁴ Pedro Álvarez against José García, November 23, 1872, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1123.

essentially gave producers a reliable marketplace to sell their products for the first time. Hence graded and processed cotton shifted from a moderately profitable export to a prized commodity. As a result, farmers and speculators now had a stable foundation on which they could grow along with Zorrilla's enterprise, but the move to industrial capitalism transformed the relationship between elites and farmers. These changes solidified the uneven alteration in the moral economy that began in the 1850s. Zorrilla's involvement effectively raised the stakes for the regional and state economy, and officials worked more closely than they had in the past with farmers to safeguard production. In addition, the post-war political stability allowed for the implementation of these changes. Cotton speculators reported bumper crops and record profits even as Juaristas and Porfiristas vied for political control. In fact, leaders on both sides seemed to have more popular consent than they experienced prior to the French Intervention. Juárez's death, however, represented a threat to this consensus as politicians debated who should succeed the late hero.

Part 2: Relocating Cotton from Farm to Factory (1873-1876)

Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada assumed the presidency in the wake of Juárez's death. The former Juárez ally represented a compromise for many within the Liberal Party. Ironically, Díaz probably could have mustered more support, but his attempt to use what Paul Garner classifies as "authoritarian means" to defeat Juárez left the general with few supporters on this occasion. In fact, Garner concludes that Díaz's decision represents "one of the great paradoxes of nineteenth-century liberal politics in Mexico."³⁵ The political change at the national level nevertheless had a

³⁵ Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz* (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2001), 58-59.

limited effect on Jamiltepec. Entrepreneurs eager to benefit from the welcoming economic environment targeted the region's substantial natural resources. Dámaso Gómez was one of these outsiders. He joined his uncle José Gómez in Huajuapán after immigrating to Mexico from Santander, Spain in 1864 during the French Intervention. He arrived in Jamiltepec after the war with a letter of introduction from the elder Gómez and rented a house from Ursulino Parada, who became his benefactor.³⁶ Unlike Zorrilla, who stayed in Oaxaca City, Gómez resided in Jamiltepec and used his connections to Huajuapán to establish several profitable businesses.³⁷ Parada's death on April 7, 1873 provided Gómez with an opportunity to expand his enterprise.³⁸

After Parada's death, his wife María Gozos Lavastida de Parada encountered substantial legal obstacles while attempting to divide the estate. The most pressing issue involved her family who objected to the sale of a hacienda near Ejutla. It seems that she filed all the necessary paperwork before completing a financial inventory, but she had an offer from a willing party who, at this point, grew anxious after waiting for a lengthy period of time.³⁹ Gómez, who agreed to represent Gozos Lavastida's minor children, opposed the sale.⁴⁰ He argued that their sons, Rafael Natalio and Julián Francisco, would not be able to obtain their rightful inheritance without an accurate accounting of the late merchant's estate.⁴¹ He employed a lawyer from Pinotepa Nacional to represent the children who demanded Gozos Lavastida give them "a house

³⁶ Atristáin, *Notas de un rancho*, 46. See also, Fábila, *Mixtecos de la costa*, 225-226.

³⁷ For more on José Gómez see, Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 176-180.

³⁸ María Gozos Lavastida de Parada to Juez del Distrito Juan N. Parada, July 31, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

³⁹ María de los Gozos Lavastida de Parada to Juez de Jamiltepec, September 21, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

⁴⁰ J.A. Noriega to Francisco Mejía, May 4, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

⁴¹ Dámaso Gómez and L.M. Baños testimonio at the Juez del Distrito, September 22, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

and a store with their property in Pinotepa Nacional.”⁴² The judge grudgingly ruled to halt the sale and agreed that officials should conduct an inventory, but he decried the involvement of “interlocutors” who prevented family members from reaching an agreement.⁴³ A month later officials related that the man amassed a relative fortune and estimated his net worth conservatively at \$108,000 Pesos. Parada’s hacienda in Ejutla represented \$20,000 Pesos but his land, livestock, cotton, and machinery inside the district comprised the bulk of the estate.⁴⁴ By representing the Parada children Gómez held up the sale and left Gozos Lavastida without most of her inheritance. As their legal benefactor, Gómez took over much of Parada’s property leaving his widow with the humiliating task of renting a portion of her land to farmers for a modest income. Gómez essentially assumed permanent control over Parada’s businesses even after the two sons grew old enough to assume ownership of their late father’s operation.⁴⁵

The Parada inheritance case outlines some important changes that took place after the war. First, capitalists from outside the district used legal and extra-legal schemes to assume control over land and resources. Second, even during the French Intervention Parada put together a massive fortune for the time. Interestingly, Tejada’s holdings were likely quite a bit larger. For decades nearly half of all processed cotton in the district came from one of his machines, and he inherited Fagoaga’s extensive hacienda volante. At any rate, authorities approved an alarming number of adjudications in favor of outsiders. One relatively small contract between three investors and a self-described representative of the Afro-Mexican pueblo Tapextla helps

⁴² Dámaso Gómez and José Antonio Pérez testimonio at the Juez del Distrito, September 18, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

⁴³ Francisco Mejía, Decreto, September 22, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

⁴⁴ “Inventario de Ursulino Parada,” October 26, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

⁴⁵ There are numerous examples in the notary archive of Gozos Lavastida’s individual rental contracts. For an example see, María Gozos Lavastida de Parada and Antonio Méndez, “Contract,” ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

illustrate how this worked. The buyers “from the capital of the Republic” filed a nine-year sales contract for \$100 Pesos annually to buy pueblo land. They cited that “the present renters” had already paid much of the first year’s requirement with a list of rental contracts guaranteeing payment. Thus, the three outsiders invested very little in exchange for legal title to Tapextla’s commonly held lands.⁴⁶ In some cases, elected officials submitted formal proclamations that only they controlled pueblo resources. This is what leaders of the small town Maguey submitted to district authorities in early 1873. Officials announced that they controlled the pueblo’s land and resources as well as the cotton crop local producers sold to outside investors. They argued that this proclamation thereby disqualified private individuals who claimed to represent the community in land negotiations.⁴⁷

In some cases, rental income represented only a small reason to buy property. For example, Zorrilla worked with Isaac Narváez from Tlaxiaco to purchase public land in Huazolotitlán. The men assumed control over a contract that stalled in 1865 and finalized the sale in 1874. They agreed to pay \$360 Pesos over a nine-year period, and to secure the contract, they supplemented the proposal with proof of rental income that exceeded the purchase price.⁴⁸ Oddly, a small agreement for \$360 Pesos hardly seems worth Zorrilla’s time to appear in a Jamiltepec courtroom. However, purchasing the property represented only one aspect of the enterprise. Owning the land allowed him greater control over a key cotton-producing location. The rental income made the enterprise somewhat profitable, but Zorrilla had a greater interest in obtaining the product that tenants produced. This case suggests that often land, while precious to

⁴⁶ José Cruz, Andrés Bacho, Hermenegildo Noyola, and José Paulín, “Contrato,” January 3, 1873, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1223.

⁴⁷ Agustín Baños to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, January 7, 1873, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 43.

⁴⁸ Francisco García, et al., “Contrato,” February 12, 1874, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1224.

townspeople, represented only one aspect of a buyer's motivation. Often investors saw the land as a vehicle to realize profits from the products residents produced there. This example brings us back to the Tapextla case from above. Afro-Mexican farmers in this community lived on coastal land that was ideal for cotton cultivation. Thus, what seems like a small rental contract likely produced large profits for the Mexico City investors who exported cotton to textile mills in Puebla. Hacendados engaged in similar practices in areas more suited to ranching. One local man in Tlacamama entered into a contract with José Genaro Cortés from Tehuacán, Puebla to sell pueblo land. Genaro Cortés operated out of Cacahuatpec and paid \$200 Pesos for the property. The larger sum suggests that he purchased the land as part of a hacienda volante.⁴⁹ In this case, owning the property allowed the hacendado to exert greater control over pastures and gave him the ability to collect rents from farmers living in the communities that at one time controlled the land. Mixtec residents therefore lost additional income by having to pay rent to access the communal land that they historically occupied at no cost as a community member.

Citizens tried numerous ways to resist land sales and rent increases. Townspeople in Poza Verde destroyed a building in Huazolotitlán that housed land contract records. Authorities attributed the random act to "extortion Tejada wanted to enforce on the residents" of Poza Verde.⁵⁰ Apparently, they believed that damaging the building and the records housed there would allow them to challenge Tejada's ownership claims. Predictably, he easily refuted their petition and enforced the new rental arrangement. Residents located at a strategic junction for haciendas volantes had an outsider move in and purchase "the common of Ixcapa" to pasture

⁴⁹ Vicente Suero and José Genaro Cortés, "Contrato," April 14, 1874, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 8, Expediente 57.

⁵⁰ Prudencio Ortiz, "Noticia de Acontecimientos Notables," AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 25.

goats. Pedro Álvarez from Tlaxiaco entered into a contract in mid-1875 with two representatives of Ixcapa to purchase the land. Álvarez's livestock business and ties to Tlaxiaco suggest that investors sought to privatize the hacienda volante land rather than paying to rent pastures in individual pueblos.⁵¹ Townspeople in this case had no way to stop the sale and could no longer use the rental income to pay taxes. Pueblo inhabitants vulnerable to such claims adapted different measures to protect resources. In Amuzgos, townspeople turned all decision-making powers over to an outsider Rafael Cabrera. They notified the local juez de paz that Cabrera legally represented the pueblo in Jamiltepec. The idea behind this decision was to pay him to prevent potential sales from sneaking past pueblo leaders who presumably did not speak Spanish.⁵² Residents in Tapextla faced an additional claim on their property in 1876. Investors from Pinotepa Nacional bought a parcel of pueblo land and increased rents dramatically. Local leaders filed a complaint to nullify the increase, but district officials validated the contract and dismissed the petition to lower the rent below the \$100 Peso annual fee.⁵³

One land sale in Chico Ometepéc brought numerous objections in early 1874. Residents from the small Afro-Mexican pueblo obtained legal representation to stop an adjudication they claimed was illegal because it did not comply with the law. Interestingly, they referenced the cotton crop to prevent the sale.⁵⁴ Pueblo leaders signed a letter that their representative presented to district authorities more than a year later citing every condition the new owner violated. They

⁵¹ Pedro Álvarez, Pombino Victoria and Domingo Victoria, "Contrato," July 24, 1875, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁵² Ambrosio León Pacheco and all the pueblo of Amuzgos, September 22, 1875, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

⁵³ Juan Gerónimo Díaz and Amado del Valle, "Contrato," January, 27, 1876, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁵⁴ Prudencio Ortiz to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 8, 1874, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 59.

charged that the rancher, who paid nearly \$300 Pesos annually to purchase the land, grazed his livestock on valuable farmland and destroyed crops. They reported that, even though he occupied the land for only a few months each year, he demanded extra-legal rents from farmers. If they refused, then the rancher directed his livestock to the unwilling party's fields and destroyed their crops. Residents demanded a return of the extra rents and asked authorities to "respect... the laborers without resorting to extortion."⁵⁵ Disputes like this threatened the regional economy, and residents, who seemed more interested in lowering rents, shrewdly requested official help to protect cotton production. The case file ends abruptly, but the sheer volume of materials suggests that authorities took threats to cotton seriously.

State authorities began encouraging district administrators to take a proactive role in managing the regional economy. This entailed monthly *informes* (reports) that jefes políticos submitted to track primary products. For example, Jefe Político Prudencio Ortiz complied with the mandate and began sending regular informes about cotton production to his counterparts in Oaxaca City. In October 1874 he reported that farmers "are beginning the work of growing cotton in the bajos of this village, Huazolotitlán, Pinotepa Nacional, and all the pueblos."⁵⁶ A month later Ortiz warned that laborers "found in the bajos... many invasions of locusts."⁵⁷ Officials at the state level compiled the reports into formal summaries comparing specific commodity production in all the districts.⁵⁸ At the state level, authorities hoped this would

⁵⁵ Santos Curiel, et al., July 17, 1875, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁵⁶ Prudencio Ortiz, "Noticia de Acontecimientos Notables," October 10, 1874, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 25.

⁵⁷ Prudencio Ortiz, "Noticia de Acontecimientos Notables," November 8, 1874, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 25.

⁵⁸ This coincides roughly with similar measures in other areas of the world where officials in nation-states sought to make their populations "legible" from the center. For more see, James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 11-52.

educate local administrators who could use this knowledge to manage the regional economy more effectively. In practice this worked depending on the degree to which local officials engaged with the reporting. Nevertheless, the informes helped Jamiltepec authorities to understand minor details that increased profitability. In comparison, officials could not capitalize in this way with haciendas volantes whose owners disguised landholding to avoid paying taxes. Cotton, however, became a tangible commodity that, when processed, graded, and weighed, produced reliable profits for farmers, investors, and manufacturers. Thus, a greater understanding of the industry allowed officials to act in ways that maximized productivity.

The monthly reports revealed a major dispute over weights and measures that undermined their ability to manage the commodity efficiently. Officials found compiling reliable statistics for these reports nearly impossible due to wide variations in what represented a *bulto* or bale. One official complained in 1876 that a “bulto” of cotton from the “bajos” changed dramatically as one changed location from Chico Ometepe to Santo Domingo. A tax collector noted that such confusion made assessing taxes nearly impossible and advocated for the district to standardize production units.⁵⁹ Officials created an administrative office responsible for approving sales of the raw product in the “bajos,” but Gómez led a group of investors who objected to regulation as an attack on free trade. They argued that the administrator would violate state and federal statutes that denied governments the ability to regulate the market.⁶⁰ Authorities dismissed the petition and implemented an additional plan to standardize weights and measures. Gómez appealed to the state and argued the new regulations would “cause a terrible slowdown of

⁵⁹ Cesareo de León, “Sesión ordinaria de la Villa de Jamiltepec,” March 5, 1876, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 46.

⁶⁰ Dámaso Gómez et al. to Jefe Político de Jamiltepec, April 15, 1876, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 45.

mercantile operations.”⁶¹ State officials denied the appeal and condemned Gómez and the others as unscrupulous speculators who preyed on producers in the “bajos.”⁶²

La Sociedad Agrícola Industrial

Benjamin Smith concludes that land privatizations in the Mixteca Baja in the late nineteenth century were “equitable in scale to the land reforms of the post-revolutionary period.” Smith finds that “peasant communities bought up the majority of the region as agricultural societies” to delay privatization. This helped *socios* (members) by preserving communal landholding, giving them private property, and protecting access to resources. However, Smith argues that the practice exposed peasants to “a more unforgiving capitalist system.”⁶³ J. Edgar Mendoza García holds that in the Coixtlahuaca district of northern Oaxaca “the society mixed with the municipal institution” serving as a hybrid public-private enterprise to disguise communal landholding.⁶⁴ Cofradía members in Huazolotitlán attempted something similar to protect access to land and resources in the 1850s (See Chapter 5). By the 1870s, Gómez modified this concept and conned desperate villagers into joining his Agricultural Industrial Society with promises that members would safeguard their access to communal lands. The earliest references to the organization came in early 1875 when Gómez filed paperwork stating he was “a member and representative of the Agricultural Industrial Society.” He petitioned a local judge to stop “the

⁶¹ Dámaso Gómez et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, April 18, 1876, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 46.

⁶² Cesareo de León, “Sesión extraordinaria de la Villa de Jamiltepec,” May 2, 1876, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 46.

⁶³ Smith, *The Roots of Conservatism*, 179.

⁶⁴ Mendoza García, *Municipios, cofradías y tierras comunales*, 359.

inheritors of don Nicolás Tejada” from finalizing a purchase. Zorrilla’s and Tejada’s sons sought to divide a sizable hacienda the late Tejada owned, but Gómez claimed the land in the society’s name by arguing Tejada never legally had it adjudicated.⁶⁵

Gómez recruited townspeople in communities where the late Tejada owned property. As president, Gómez filed paperwork in August 1875 stating that together they formed the society to address “the difficulties... verifying the payment of the land don José Zorrilla from Oaxaca bought.” In reality, Gómez attempted to limit his competitor’s access to the region, but as president, he guaranteed fixed rental contracts to socios. They agreed to pay the society for each tract of land they rented in addition to a small fee for every head of livestock. Society officers deposited the fees in a general trust to fund operating costs and a hardship reserve for members.⁶⁶ Early success enrolling socios convinced Gómez to expand the society beyond Huazolotitlán and the nearby “bajos” to other communities where Tejada owned land, but members encountered problems rather quickly.⁶⁷ The widows of three socios in Tututepec requested authorities set aside land assigned to their husbands from the Agricultural Industrial Society in early 1877. The widows indicated that their spouses had unwittingly agreed to forfeit land titles to the society upon death rather transferring their estates to family members. The widows desperately petitioned for help “reclaiming the inheritances.”⁶⁸

Gómez rented and negotiated contracts on behalf of his own enterprise rather than protecting communal land as the widows’ husbands apparently believed. In one example, he had

⁶⁵ Dámaso Gómez, “Testimonio,” January 11, 1875, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁶⁶ Dámaso Gómez, et al., “Contrato,” August 19, 1875, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁶⁷ Ángel María Rodríguez, “Sociedad Agrícola Industrial,” August 28, 1875, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁶⁸ Mariano León Beriguo, et. al., “Testimonio,” January 17, 1877, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

Isaac Narváez finalize a deal for the society in Tututepec. The contract to rent pastures resembled hacienda volante agreements from the 1850s, and with his ties to Tlaxiaco, Narváez seemingly negotiated to benefit an unidentified hacendado.⁶⁹ Gómez's organization thus differs significantly from the societies Smith analyzes in the Mixteca Baja. The Agricultural Industrial Society, in fact, quickened the pace of land privatizations in Jamiltepec, and authorities supported Gómez even when members provided evidence that he misled them. A large contingent of villagers from Tututepec testified to a district judge in the city of Jamiltepec in 1878 that Gómez told them the society guaranteed its members and their families a plot of agricultural and pasture land at a fixed rate. This would have functioned similar to the landholding practices *cofradía* members used before the Reform. Thus, Gómez offered them membership in an organization that villagers thought they understood due to their experience with religious brotherhoods. However, Tututepec members lost their case, but they continued to farm property the society took from their families. When they refused to leave, unidentified "interlocutors" from the society threatened their lives and murdered one man who resisted.⁷⁰

Agricultural societies therefore functioned much differently in Jamiltepec than they did in other areas of the state. Gómez used his organization to serve two functions. First, he disguised his own personal objective of limiting Zorrilla's access to the coast. In the name of society members, Gómez alleged that neither Zorrilla nor Tejada's heirs could assume control over land the late entrepreneur illegally took from socios and their families. Second, Gómez redirected member funds to accumulate land and resources for himself. Essentially, he acquired property

⁶⁹ Isaac Narváez and Manuel Pineda, "Contrato," May 4, 1877, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

⁷⁰ Julio de León and others from Tututepec against the Sociedad Agrícola Industrial, February 1, 1878, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1225.

with member dues to serve his own businesses rather than safeguarding their access to land. Thus, the two mechanisms to accumulate wealth altering how elites approached historic reciprocal arrangements, or the moral economy, converged during the mid-1870s. The connection to Zorrilla and his factories gave farmers and investors a reliable market to sell processed cotton. Transportation costs to cover the approximate 185-mile route to Oaxaca City rather than the 400-mile trek to Puebla gave producers a competitive advantage they never had before. Regulating tax initiatives, weights and measures, and quality standards increased profitability as well. Hence politicians and producers now had a commodity to sell in a regulated marketplace, and they reaped unforeseen profits in a short period of time. Ranching and other products proved more elusive to tax or regulate. Gómez and Zorrilla played fundamental roles in this process and helped speed up the transition to industrial capitalism. This had a dramatic effect on racial and ethnic identities in Jamiltepec. Afro-Mexican farmers ably used cotton to their advantage when possible, but Mixtecs who could not produce a commodity generally lost the land and resources they had fought for on countless occasions throughout the nineteenth century.

Part 3: In Díaz's Mexico "*Es Justicia que Protestamos*"

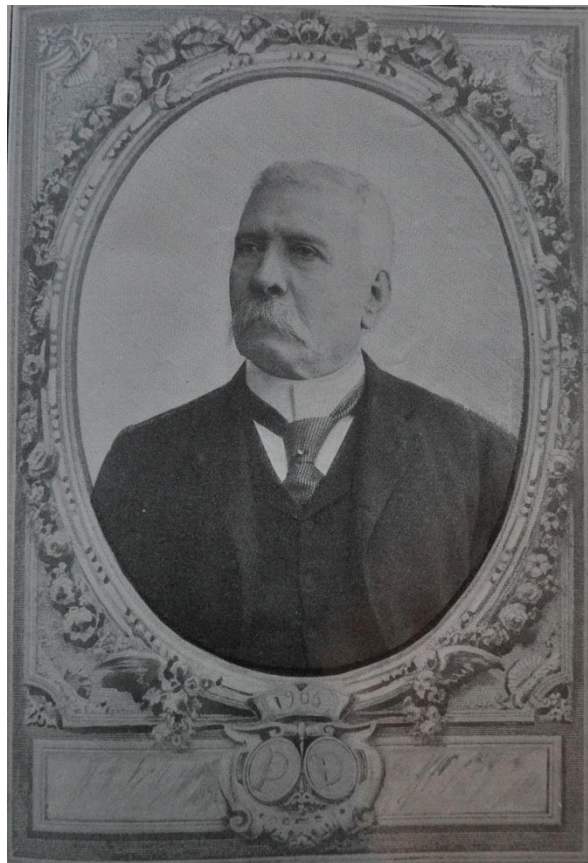


Figure 6.2: Photograph of Porfirio Díaz This portrait appeared in the elite Magazine *El Mundo Ilustrado*. This was in preparation for his first visit to Mérida, Yucatán after the end of the Caste War. *El Mundo Ilustrado*, Vol. 1, No. 7, February 11, 1906.

Outside of Juárez, Porfirio Díaz has no equal in nineteenth century Mexican politics. The young man left his home in Miahuatlán, Oaxaca and attended the Institute of Arts and Sciences to study law much like his political idol Juárez did years earlier. Díaz joined the National Guard and supported Liberals during the War of the Reform where he earned recognition as a promising junior officer. He quickly climbed the ranks after the war and, as general, served under Ignacio Zaragoza in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. In fact, Díaz led a decisive counterattack against the invading French army that proved crucial in the victory. He returned to

Oaxaca and later served as governor before driving French forces out of southern Mexico in 1867.⁷¹ As we have seen, he attempted to capitalize on this notoriety and opposed Juárez for the presidency on two occasions, but Díaz feared that he might never reach the office after his stunning defeat during the La Noria revolt. Lerdo de Tejada nonetheless failed to solidify a popular consensus while attempting to remain in office for a second term. This provided an opening for Díaz who announced the Plan de Tuxtepec on January 1, 1876. He thus revolted for a second time against an elected president, but on this occasion Lerdo de Tejada's coalition quickly collapsed and Díaz seized the opportunity.⁷² Apart from a four-year hiatus between 1880 and 1884, he presided over Mexico for more than three decades.

Díaz eventually fashioned his presidency into a dictatorship, but this took several years. Paul Garner convincingly argues that this reflected ongoing debates over liberalism that continued after the war. He argues that Díaz understood these divisions and managed to prolong his time in office with “the politics of pragmatism” that mixed coercion and repression with “mediation, manipulation, and conciliation.”⁷³ In comparison, Jamiltepec authorities often applied more repression and coercion. In one example, the district jefe político intervened in a Lo de Soto election in 1881 to block Juan Silva from serving as Presidente Municipal and appointed an outsider instead. Residents objected to the appointment and complained that the new official enacted a draconian National Guard requirement compelling each man to serve

⁷¹ For more on Díaz's education and military background see, Garner, *Porfirio Díaz*, 21-44. For more on Díaz during the French Intervention and the Battle of Puebla see, Patrick J. McNamara, *Sons of the Sierra: Juárez, Díaz, and the People of Ixtlán, Oaxaca, 1855-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 53-63.

⁷² See, Garner, *Porfirio Díaz*, 58-65; Cosío Villegas, *La República Restaurada*, 767-926; Thomson and LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism*, 211-217; Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 90-101.

⁷³ Garner, *Porfirio Díaz*, 69. McNamara argues that many former soldiers saw him as “Papá Grande” and separated Díaz from unpopular local and state governments. McNamara, *Sons of the Sierra*, 134-135. Alan Knight attributes his success to ending political factionalism. He argues that “for Mexico, it was the end of ideology.” Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution: Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants*, vol. 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 15; Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 203-204.

“every eight days in the cabecera garrison.” They claimed that men had “to abandon their families” and “many citizens” simply avoided the obligation by fleeing to Guerrero.⁷⁴

Townpeople argued that the policy was unfair and dishonored *padres de familia* who could no longer provide economically for their dependent family members while serving outside the community. Leaders nonetheless justified both measures as a means to control an upsurge in cross-border violence over the location of the Oaxaca-Guerrero border.⁷⁵ Lo de Soto residents attacked neighbors, rustled livestock, and destroyed crops to thwart official attempts to locate the state border accurately.⁷⁶

The border dispute in Lo de Soto also revealed elite racial prejudices. The Ometepepec, Guerrero jefe político’s letter to the Oaxaca governor in 1882 provides a pointed example of attitudes toward people of African descent. He wrote that residents of Lo de Soto – a town where Afro-Mexicans comprised nearly 50% of the population – were inherently violent. He claimed that the “bad passions” of Lo de Soto villagers “have appealed... to introduce in this district groups of armed men” who engaged in “hostility without name.” Guerrero residents endured the attacks that he declared were “more appropriate of wild hordes than civilized people.” He attributed the behavior to extreme isolation and the inherent disposition of the people living there who were “the focus of official immorality... without laws nor social respect.” The Guerrero jefe político asserted that Lo de Soto men who claimed to be *padres de familia* were actually

⁷⁴ Juan B. Múgica, et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, January 16, 1881, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 35, Expediente 9.

⁷⁵ This was a major problem throughout the Mixteca as well as other border regions of Oaxaca. See, Daniel Newcomer, “Delineating the Peace: Marking Oaxaca’s State Boundaries, 1856-1912,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 50, no. 2 (May 2018), 291-321.

⁷⁶ There are hundreds of records in the AGPEO dealing with the dispute. In this case, the violence surrounding where officials would locate the border corresponded with a national project to map all of Mexico for the first time. See, Craib, *Cartographic Mexico*, 128-140.

“pernicious men... fomenting perverse passions.”⁷⁷ This local official’s disparaging description corresponds with elite attitudes analyzed in Chapter 1. He portrayed the men of Lo de Soto in same manner that late nineteenth century journalists described Afro-Mexicans by arguing that villagers wished to spread “perverse passions” in packs of “wild hordes” to cause harm to the “civilized people” living in his district. Interestingly, the official did not identify race. Instead, he wrote about the coastal pueblo as though both governors of Oaxaca and Guerrero would understand the unspoken racial undertones in his vile description of the townspeople.

Perhaps no document better illustrates elite attitudes toward Afro-Mexicans than Manuel Martínez Gracida’s *Cuadros Sinópticos*.⁷⁸ He compiled short descriptions, census data, and histories from every pueblo in the state and compiled them in this impressive volume, but he relied heavily on Social Darwinist themes that identified and tried to explain the different “races” of people living in Oaxaca’s diverse regions. In Jamiltepec, Martínez Gracida enlisted the help of Jefe Político Rafael Lanza to provide information about the region. Lanza sent Martínez Gracida all the necessary material including etymological root names for indigenous pueblos in both Nahuatl and Mixteco. For example, the jefe político identified that the city of Jamiltepec’s Nahuatl etymology was from “*Xamilli*,” meaning adobe, and “*tepetl*,” meaning hill. The “hill of adobes” was the Nahua name for the town, but he explained that in Mixtec the town was known as “*Casandó*,” which he explained actually meant “houses of adobe.”⁷⁹ In so doing, Lanza

⁷⁷ D. Álvarez and Lic. Agustín Díaz de Bonilla to Gobernadores de Oaxaca and Guerrero, April 11, 1882, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Justicia, Legajo 18, Expediente 26.

⁷⁸ While most of Martínez Gracida’s work was more data collection than history, historians of Oaxaca nevertheless have historically identified him as one of the most important historians of Oaxaca during the Porfiriato. See, Jorge Fernando Iturrubarría, “Oaxaca: La historia y sus instrumentos,” *Historia Mexicana* 2, no. 3 (January-March 1953), 472-476.

⁷⁹ Manuel Martínez Gracida, *Colección de ‘Cuadros sinópticos’ de los pueblos, haciendas y ranchos del estado libre y soberano de Oaxaca* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1883), 219. Residents continue to use the Mixtec name Casandoo today as they do in most towns throughout the Mixteca.

skillfully identified the town's lengthy history. The Mixtec name Casandó fell out of use officially after Mexica soldiers renamed the town Xamiltepec. Spanish colonizers adopted the Mexica Empire's name and added the Catholic Saint Santiago. Lanza therefore narrated pueblo history while also carefully identifying the region's primary ethnic group.

Lanza's narrative became particularly frank when detailing the region's Afro-Mexican residents. He identified four formal pueblos as having residents with predominant African ancestry. He took this further and wrote about informal populations of people living along the coast that were also part of the Diaspora. For the pueblos Chico Ometepepec, Cortijos, Santo Domingo, Tapextla, and Estancia Grande Lanza described that Afro-Mexicans dominated each town's demographics. For larger pueblos like Cortijos he estimated that 1,000 inhabitants lived in a town "situated between fruit trees." Lanza claimed that "the inhabitants" there "were of the African race, indolent, with little affect for work and very given to vices, principally the drinking of liquor."⁸⁰ He estimated Tapextla's population at 816 with "their residents of the African race." He continued the disparaging theme and stated that "they had an indolent character," but at the same time he noted that "they are docile... [and] dedicate themselves to small-scale agricultural work and ranching."⁸¹ He struck a familiar theme when describing Santo Domingo and Estancia Grande where he estimated between 600 and 700 people lived in each pueblo.⁸² Finally, in Chico Ometepepec Lanza wrote that the town was situated in a "beautiful" coastal area "on the left bank of the Río de la Arena" very close to where "the waves [of the Pacific Ocean] hit the beach." According to Lanza, the town's inhabitants were "of the African race" with the same disparaging

⁸⁰ Martínez Gracida, *Cuadros Sinópticos*, 236.

⁸¹ Martínez Gracida, *Cuadros Sinópticos*, 238.

⁸² Martínez Gracida, *Cuadros Sinópticos*, 237, 240.

characteristics attributed to the other Afro-Mexican residents. He went further, however, in this pueblo stating that residents were “of an irascible character and always carrying with them a long and sharp machete.” Lanza related that travelers reported that “machete fights” and other “bloody incidents are very common in this location.” He added it was “rare for an individual not to have visible wounds on their face, arms, or hands.”⁸³

Lanza went against a common theme documented throughout this dissertation. In numerous examples authorities identified Mixtec or Amuzgo residents as “indígena” following the end of the colonial caste system. The reference to this historic classification survived independence. Lanza differed sharply from this practice and offered only place names, like the example above, as evidence of the pueblo’s indigenous heritage. He combined identifying Afro-Mexicans with over-the-top Social Darwinist descriptions of the pueblo’s population. In so doing, Lanza and Martínez Gracida mapped blackness into the state’s geography. They identified coastal towns as sites of blackness where travelers could expect to see violence, drunkenness, and indolence. This separated Afro-Mexicans from the indigenous and mestizo populations living to their north, and it clearly defined what blackness meant for these elites in Social Darwinist terms. Lanza included another clue about the correlation of violence and blackness in his report. He focused on attacks emanating from Afro-Mexican towns in several short histories of the district’s pueblos and cities. In Jamiltepec, he identified Antonio Camacho’s surprise attack in 1860. Lanza described the ambush that began in the bajos during the French Intervention in Pinotepa Nacional. He discussed Coronado and other regional bandits from 1859 in Cortijos. Finally, he detailed Salado’s cross-racial alliance that required Díaz’s intervention in

⁸³ Martínez Gracida, *Cuadros Sinópticos*, 227.

Ixcapa.⁸⁴ Lanza justified his racist descriptions with histories of individual Afro-Mexican men, from the communities he disparaged, attacking peaceful Liberals.

The obvious hardening of racial attitudes toward Afro-Mexicans at the local and state levels mirrored elite attitudes at the national level. In fact, this contributed to the process of silencing blackness even as they singled out specific Afro-Mexican pueblos. Elites dismissed small populations along the Pacific coast and carefully differentiated them from indígenas and mestizos culturally, socially, and politically. This is precisely what intellectuals and journalists did at the national level. A decade later editors of the bilingual newspaper *El Avisador* identified Jamiltepec as being comprised of “30,500 indígenas, 8,500 *hispanoamericanos*, 6,600 negros, and 5 foreigners.” The short article described various economic opportunities for investors ranging from coffee production in the sierra to sugar production along the coast. In particular, the editors noted that costeños devoted “a vast extension of land... for cotton, tobacco, and sugar cane” production.⁸⁵ Editors did not identify race while discussing the benefits of investing in cotton on the coast. Instead, they disguised the Porfirian racial geography to promote foreign investment. Perhaps they worried that Martínez Gracida’s racist descriptions may have discouraged potential investors from the United States and Europe.

As racial attitudes hardened during the Porfiriato, claims to adjudicate communal land skyrocketed. Beginning in the 1880s, pueblo inhabitants developed strategies to protect access to resources. In Ixtayutla, residents unsuccessfully asked state authorities to nullify the adjudication of pueblo land that the state finalized in 1856. They argued that buyers improperly targeted

⁸⁴ Martínez Gracida, *Cuadros Sinópticos*, 221-263.

⁸⁵ “Apuntes Geográficas: Jamiltepec, sus riquezas y necesidades,” *El Avisador: Periódico Seminario del Pueblo*, December 15, 1895, 3.

communal land rather than *cofradía* holdings and therefore the sale was illegal.⁸⁶ José Zorrilla worked with Isaac Narváez to purchase commonly held land in Cacahuatpec his company rented as part of their *hacienda volante*. They paid \$333.16 Pesos for the sale over the objections of residents.⁸⁷ Townspeople in Santo Domingo could do nothing to prevent Darío Atristáin's father from paying a widow \$2,000 Pesos for adjudicated *pueblo* land in 1883. The new owner from Guerrero agreed not to evict Santo Domingo residents before their rental contracts expired.⁸⁸ In another case, the Presidente Municipal of Zacatepec hinted that his *pueblo* still controlled most of their communal land. He sent a message to a fellow Presidente Municipal from another *pueblo* explaining that villagers adjudicated their own land. This prevented claims residents made from Mesones from renting or using land without their consent.⁸⁹

One case from 1884 in Jicayán provides an example of how citizens attempted to protect land and resources. Two partners asked for an adjudication of *pueblo* land and agreed to pay \$200 Pesos. When the prospective owners realized they would have to pay an extra fee for a survey they demanded higher rents from tenants. One woman refused with the support of an angry crowd that threatened the men while they attempted to collect rent. When the men proclaimed that the sale was legal, residents pooled their resources to pay on the woman's behalf.⁹⁰ In 1886, locals in Pinotepa Nacional filed a claim to overturn every adjudication of their land dating back to 1856. They painstakingly listed each case and argued that a clause in the *Ley*

⁸⁶ Ixtayutla, October 1, 1881, AGPEO, Adjudicaciones, Legajo 14, Expediente 6.

⁸⁷ Manuel Zamora, "Estado que manifiesta los actos públicos," September 12, 1882, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 35, Expediente 11.

⁸⁸ Manuel Zamora and Ladislao Baños, "Estado que manifiesta los actos públicos," January 11, 1883, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 35, Expediente 15.

⁸⁹ Felipe Márquez to Presidente Municipal de Lagunas, March 31, 1884, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Inventarios, Legajo 27, Expediente 63.

⁹⁰ Manuel Fuentes and Pascual Antonio, October 9, 1884, ANO, Juzgado del Distrito de Jamiltepec, 1226.

Lerdo allowed municipalities to possess public land. They invoked this clause and argued that all adjudicated land was municipal thereby nullifying the transfers.⁹¹ One local official bluntly stated that, due to their Mixtec ethnicity, the adjudications were legal, and he refused to support residents in an appeal to the state.⁹² State officials denied the request on the grounds that the lands had already been adjudicated. They effectively recognized that municipalities could possess land, but they emphasized that no one objected to the original adjudication in 1856. Together these cases provide a small example of the flood of adjudications taking place throughout the district in the mid-1880s.

Creating Ejidos and Protesting Justice

The privatizations above in primarily indigenous pueblos contrast sharply with a lengthy case from Chico Ometepepec. Residents there adapted an inventive strategy to exchange cotton with Zorrilla in return for legal representation. The case dated back to 1865 and involved several investors including Zorrilla himself. He had entered into a contract with Manuel Santaella to buy pueblo land in 1865, but residents successfully opposed the sale with legal help from Tereso Rodríguez. He convinced a local judge again in 1874 that the sale was illegal since the deed actually described another location.⁹³ Dámaso Gómez used this opening to move into the area and expand his cotton business. Residents of Chico Ometepepec worked to prevent such a claim in

⁹¹ Varios vecinos to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 13, 1886, AGPEO, Adjudicaciones, Legajo 14, Expediente 13.

⁹² Francisco Villar to Gobernador de Oaxaca, September 13, 1886, AGPEO, Adjudicaciones, Legajo 14, Expediente 13.

⁹³ Isaac Narváez, Juan Gallego, Ramón Sánchez, and Pascual López, ANO, 12 February 1874, Legajo 1124.

the previous year and gained the highly unusual legal recognition as a pueblo from the state on December 10, 1873.⁹⁴ They also preferred to preserve the status quo rather than ally with an unknown entity like Gómez. They struck a deal with Zorrilla to represent them in an appeal that went directly to the governor to dispute Gómez's claim. They stated that as *padres de familia* they provided for dependents by producing cotton. The farmers also embraced indigenous landholding practices and requested a portion of land be set aside as an *ejido*. Governor Miguel Castro deemed their case had legal merit, and he directed all interested parties to negotiate a solution that reserved a portion of pueblo land for communal use.⁹⁵ Gómez continued to press his claim and struck a deal with residents. In July 1874, Gómez officially assumed control and began providing affordable processed cotton to Zorrilla's factories.⁹⁶ He maintained control over a portion of the land throughout the Porfiriato, but residents of Chico Ometepepec managed to keep Gómez from privatizing their *ejido* by working with Zorrilla. In other words, the relationship worked for all three parties as long as cotton was a profitable export.

Gómez wielded a great deal of influence in the region almost immediately after his arrival. An example from Cacahuatpec illustrates how pueblos that did not produce cotton had few means to protect land and resources from entrepreneurs like Gómez. In 1884 villagers explained they had no choice but to refuse certification of the municipal election after Gómez dictated the results. They claimed that their only solution was to request help from the governor to protect the "most helpless class from this pueblo that always suffers and keeps quiet because they are very rarely heard." Townspeople described that for quite some time "we have come to

⁹⁴ Juan Santaella to residents of Chico Ometepepec, 16 March 1874, AGPEO, Secretario de Gobierno, Adjudicaciones, Legajo 14, Expediente 9.

⁹⁵ Santaella to Chico Ometepepec.

⁹⁶ Sesión ordinaria del distrito, 3 July 1874, AGPEO, Secretario de Gobierno, Conflictos, Legajo 63, Expediente 27.

fight against the power of two or three individual residents from Jamiltepec.” The men charged that these individuals were “Spaniards complaining to their consul” for protection “or Mexicans using the law” for their own benefit. The group added that these men were “protected by their money” that enabled them to become “owners of land” that they used to extract more rents from each peasant. The men, residents added, “with each property... compel us to make our pueblo their own domain.” The representatives claimed that if they complained the men would “threaten to throw us off the land or disproportionally raise the price to farm the land we pay to work.” They explained that “we have lived a long time... watching [the outsiders] jeopardize the interests of our pueblo,” and residents argued that they were helpless to stop the men.

The authors then turned to politics. They wrote that citizens overwhelmingly elected a group of townspeople that “would merit all our confidence,” and they criticized “the candidacy that [outsiders] would impose on us and our customs.” They explained that it was Gómez who “wants us this time to agree to [elect] someone in his interest.” The authors testified that he met residential and monetary requirements that he himself helped establish with district officials, and they noted that he used an alias to claim erroneously that he owned property for the appropriate time in their pueblo so he could serve as Presidente Municipal. Plácido Garcés ran for the vice presidency, and they noted that he “is very close to Señor Gómez.” The other men that appeared on the ballot all had close personal and economic ties to him. The authors claimed that “in a word: the municipality” would operate “according to Gómez.” They added that “we have not accepted his candidacy, and the result for us has been disastrous.” They claimed that he made them suffer after they refused to accept him, and they explained that on “the land we occupy, that hardly gives us enough to live, we pay whatever Gómez wants, only if we will work for him, leaving our families in the most horrible misery.” The representatives proclaimed that “we have

always been honorable and hard workers,” but “we do not know what we will have to resort to in order to maintain our subsistence.”⁹⁷

The authors appealed to state administrators for help restoring the pueblo’s popularly elected officials to their rightful positions. They argued that “a man of good faith and aptitude” should serve in an elected position rather than Gómez, “the great capitalist,” and his followers. They closed the letter by asking for “the protection of a good government” and added that “it is justice that we protest.”⁹⁸ The lengthy appeal exemplifies the numerous examples of communal petitions to preserve pueblo autonomy. In this case, townspeople provided specific details to illustrate how Gómez, an outsider, intimidated honorable padres de familia and endangered their dependent families. The wealth and political connections they attributed to him were incredibly accurate. Gómez did have powerful allies across the state, and he amassed a fortune. Unsurprisingly, the appeal failed. Without a bargaining tool like cotton, state authorities sided with Gómez even after citizens detailed how he destroyed their community. In fact, a decade later he worked with a foreign investor on an incredibly expensive investment to prepare a vast tract of land in Cacahuatpec to plant 100,000 coffee trees.⁹⁹ The pueblo essentially served as a key junction point on the route to slaughterhouses and had no products with which to bargain. Residents stood in the path of the goat train, and the land itself was their only asset.

⁹⁷ Diego Lagui, et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 30, 1884, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Elecciones, Legajo 26, Expediente 39.

⁹⁸ “*Es justicia que protestamos.*” Diego Lagui, et al. to Gobernador de Oaxaca, December 30, 1884, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Elecciones, Legajo 26, Expediente 39.

⁹⁹ Cristóbal Palacios, “Noticia de los Acontecimientos Notables,” October 31, 1894, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Acontecimientos Notables, Legajo 14, Expediente 12.

Capitalizing on the Porfirian Economy

Guillermo Acho consolidated hacienda volante holdings into a massive system covering three states during the later stages of the Porfiriato. Acho, a Spanish immigrant, split time between his hacienda in Puebla and his home in Mexico City.¹⁰⁰ One foreign traveler awarded Acho the title “goat king” after he consolidated the remnants of de León’s and Fagoaga’s haciendas volantes in 1882.¹⁰¹ Observers marveled that this represented an unprecedented expansion of ranching in the state, and he ruthlessly had lands adjudicated in his favor while withholding rents for pasturing livestock. He also expanded into even larger systems of haciendas volantes in Guerrero, combining what had been a traditional method of ranching into a three-state enterprise that was exponentially larger than anything his predecessors built. In Jamiltepec, his system began in the Mixtec communities Chayuco, San Cristóbal, Santa María Nutío, Ipalapa, and Zacatepec before moving north through the hub in the Triqui community Copala. The massive goat drives would then traverse the mountains moving near Juxtlahuaca on their way through Huajuapán and eventually the *hacienda de matanza* (slaughterhouse) in Tehuacán, Puebla. Danièle Dehouve estimates that, on one of Acho’s many haciendas volantes, employees transported more than 300,000 goats to slaughterhouses annually.¹⁰² The large system taxed environmental limitations, polluted water, and destroyed crops.

The Goat King used a familiar mixture of coercion, negotiation, and legal adjudications to transform landholding in the region and generate a fortune. Isaac Narváez ridiculed Acho for

¹⁰⁰ “Social Notes and Personals,” *The Mexican Herald*, 22 October 1899; “Social and Personal: Large House Party,” *The Mexican Herald*, 26 November 1905.

¹⁰¹ Pastor, *Impresiones y recuerdos de mis viajes*, 212.

¹⁰² Dehouve, “Las haciendas volantes de la Sierra de Tlapa,” in *La vida volante*, 94-98.

his business practices months before the revolution in 1910. Narváez charged that, from Jamiltepec to Putla, Acho “was attempting to extract... \$150,000 Pesos” from the people living on lands comprising his hacienda volante.¹⁰³ In fact, Narváez reported that Acho had numerous schemes to extract money from villagers desperate to recover land he adjudicated using the Ley Lerdo. Narváez held that Acho “expected to sell lands that were in full possession of successful bidders of Ixtayutla” who had already filed a tierra baldía claim. Narváez asserted that Acho sold the pueblo a phony title to their ejido playing to the collective hope that residents could thwart the adjudication and recover lost land. This apparently worked by overturning the claims of the unknown bidder, but Acho then exposed the title as a fake so he could lay his own claim. The complicated scheme succeeded according to Narváez who offered more examples of Acho’s mendacious practices. In another instance, Narváez claimed that the people of Zacatepec fell into a similarly misleading circumstance when Acho purported to sell inhabitants an ejido deed for \$7,000 Pesos. His associate, Colonel Barrón, agreed to represent the pueblo as their legal counsel, and he managed to extract another \$4,000 Pesos in bogus fees. In the end, the people ended up with nothing after spending a relative fortune.¹⁰⁴ In contrast, by 1910 Acho served on the board of directors for the Banco Central Mexicano in Mexico City, and in Jamiltepec, he expanded into soap and cotton production.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Isaac Narváez to Emilio Pimentel, January 22, 1910, AGPEO, Secretario de Gobierno, Conflictos, Legajo 63, Expediente 31.

¹⁰⁴ Narváez to Pimentel, January 22, 1910, AGPEO, Legajo 63, Expediente 31.

¹⁰⁵ Isaac Narváez to Emilio Pimentel, 22 January 1910, AGPEO, Secretario de Gobierno, Conflictos, Legajo 63, Expediente 31; Smith, *Roots of Conservatism*, pp. 176-79; Dehouve, “Las haciendas volantes de la Sierra de Tlapa, origen e historia,” in Dehouve, Cervantes-Delgado, and Hvilshøj (eds.), *La vida volante*, pp. 94-98. Pastor, *Impresiones y recuerdos de mis viajes*; “Advertisement: Banco Central Mexicano,” *El Tiempo Ilustrado*, April, 28 1907.



Figure 6.3: José Zorrilla's textile factory in Etlá, Oaxaca State officials have turned the massive building into a museum. The magnate plastered his name across the façade. Photo courtesy Amanda Milstead, 2015.

Zorrilla lacked a catchy nickname but capitalized on one of the most profitable industries in Porfirian Oaxaca.¹⁰⁶ He immigrated to Mexico in 1846 and formed a textile company headquartered in Oaxaca City capable, for the first time, of competing with Puebla textile firms. As king of Oaxaca's textile and cotton industry, Zorrilla built three large textile mills that stayed in operation for a century. Once they reached full capacity in the 1880s, they generated more than \$500,000 Pesos annually and employed over 500 people (See Figure 6.3). In fact, he owed much of this initial success to his familial ties to his uncle in Oaxaca City and Tejada in

¹⁰⁶ Railroads, mining, and coffee produced the most revenue in Porfirian Oaxaca. Zorrilla's cotton enterprise generated massive profits and helped finance a number of other businesses. For more on coffee and mining respectively see, Paul Garner, *Regional Development in Oaxaca during the Porfiriato (1876-1911)* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1995), 39; 44; Francie Chassen-López, *From Liberal to Revolutionary Oaxaca: The View from the South, Mexico 1867-1911* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 146-149; 213-219. For railroads see, Chassen-López, 45-73.

Jamiltepec after marrying Tejada's daughter Josefa. The Zorrillas had seven children, but their two sons, José and Federico, became increasingly involved in developing the enterprise.

The connection to Jamiltepec proved quite beneficial. When Zorrilla's company filed paperwork to purchase a small tract of land in 1883 officers disclosed he sold two gins belonging to the late Tejada for an astonishing \$301,130.45 Pesos.¹⁰⁷ In time, Gómez assumed control over processing. A small accounting from late 1886 reveals that he sold several bales of processed cotton to Zorrilla's mills in Oaxaca City for \$2,316 Pesos. The contract required Gómez to pay muleteers for transporting the material within 20 days.¹⁰⁸ Small contracts like this added up quickly during the height of the season as Gómez and other investors commissioned muleteers to transport the commodity. In this regard, they resembled goat trains heading north on haciendas volantes as packed mules slowly traversed the mountainous terrain en route to the capital. Officials reported steady growth in connection with Zorrilla's factories with more than \$400,000 Pesos in 1901 representing the peak of Jamiltepec production (See Table 6.1). After Zorrilla's death in 1897, his sons transformed the enterprise by expanding into electricity, construction, banking, and politics. They supported Emilio Pimentel in his bid for governor in 1902, and as governor, he awarded them by granting Federico's electric company a lucrative contract to provide electricity to Oaxaca City in 1905.¹⁰⁹ By 1907, José Jr. served as president of the Banco

¹⁰⁷ Manuel Rojas and Ladislao Baños, "Estado que manifiesta los actos públicos," July 10, 1883, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Juzgado de Primera Instancia, Legajo 35, Expediente 16.

¹⁰⁸ "Noticia pormenorizada que rinde esta oficina de mi cargo en presencia de Jefe Político del Distrito," December 21, 1886, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Fomento, Legajo 19, Expediente 55.

¹⁰⁹ Emilio Pimentel, *Mensaje leído por el C. Lic. Emilio Pimentel Gobernador constitucional del Estado ante la XXII Legislatura del mismo y contestación del Presidente del Congreso C. Lic. Francisco Carranza al abrir aquella su primer período de sesiones ordinarias, el 16 de septiembre de 1903* (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Estado, 1903), 25; Milstead, "Party of the Century," 28. For more on Zorrilla's political connections to Pimentel see,

de Oaxaca.¹¹⁰ Jamiltepec cotton thus played a fundamental role in revolutionizing the Oaxaca economy perhaps more than any other commodity.

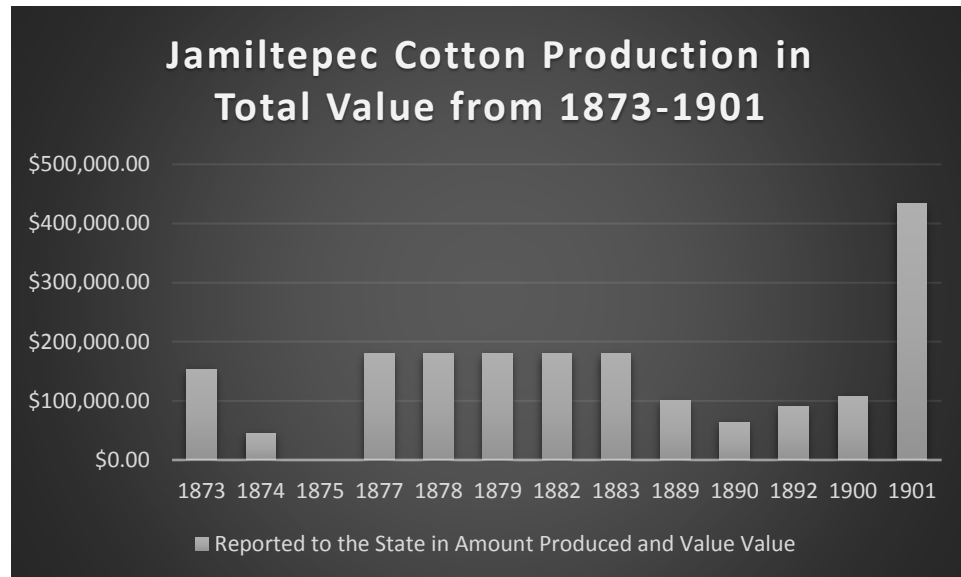


Table 6.1: Jamiltepec cotton production values between 1872 and 1901
Data collected from Memorias administrativas, AGPEO Gobierno de Jamiltepec: Pueblos, Fomento, Estadística, Contribución, and Acontecimientos Notables.

Gómez acquired a large fortune in his cotton, ranching, and land businesses. In fact, while conducting interviews in Chico Ometepec in 2016, pueblo leaders had an instant reaction when I asked them about Gómez. They were unfamiliar with Zorrilla, Acho, Tejada, and Parada, but they pointed to a building that housed the remnants of a Gómez cotton gin located near city hall. They discussed aspects of their history with the man before pivoting to their ancestors' roles in the revolution. Thus, a century after his death townspeople still had strong feelings about the entrepreneur. The evidence supports Alfonso Fábila's assessment that even though Gómez "believed he was goodhearted" he was "greedy" in terms of "land and agriculture."¹¹¹ By the

¹¹⁰ Chassen-López, *From Liberal to Revolutionary Oaxaca*, 231; Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, *Visions of the Emerald City: Modernity, Tradition, and the Formation of Porfirian Oaxaca, Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 25-27.

¹¹¹ Fábila, *Mixtecos de la Costa*, 227.

beginning of the revolution he controlled the district's only hacienda, processed most of the cotton bound for Zorrilla's factories, and owned huge tracts of land. One account in 1892 of his, likely underreported, urban properties in the city of Jamiltepec estimated a combined value of \$75,221.87 Pesos, which represented 66.1% of the city's value in urban property. His projected annual capital circulating in Oaxaca's economy during this time was \$100,000 Pesos with another \$200,000 Pesos in outstanding credit.¹¹² Darío Atristáin noted during the 1910 Revolution that Gómez had amassed so many "communal lands" that revolutionaries interpreted his death as "an invitation to pillage" the late magnate's considerable estate.¹¹³

Investors like Acho, Gómez, and Zorrilla took advantage of Liberal land reform laws and generous Porfirian economic policies. In the process, they privatized vast areas of land in indigenous communities, and they worked with authorities to limit pueblo autonomy. Afro-Mexicans, in contrast, did not experience the same level of land privatizations and limitations on their autonomy. Entrepreneurs who might have preferred to control land and resources in these communities often refrained from doing so to preserve access to inexpensive cotton. In fact, cotton was the primary reason this process played out differently. Men like Zorrilla acted on behalf of their own interests and represented Afro-Mexican communities in exchange for cotton to send to profitable mills in the capital. This relationship helps explain why Afro-Mexicans sided with local elites in support of Venustiano Carranza during the revolution. Similar to Ben Vinson's conclusions during the independence war, elites like Zorrilla effectively ensured their

¹¹² 'Noticia de producción agrícola, mejoras materiales, haciendas existentes, etc. desde diciembre 1894 a junio 1902', Asuntos Agrarios, Administrativa, Legajo 2, Expediente 12, AGPEO; 'Padrón de las fincas raíces ubicadas en Jamiltepec y pueblos inmediatos cuyos valores observarán de base para el establecimiento de la Receptoría de Contribuciones en aquella Cabecera', 2 March 1897, AGPEO, Gobierno de Jamiltepec, Pueblos, Legajo 34, Expediente 55; 'Manifiesta de los extranjeros en el Estado', in *Memoria Constitucional*, M. Jiménez, Tomo III, 1883.

¹¹³ Atristáin, *Notas de un ranchero*, 46.

loyalty by agreeing to help Afro-Mexican residents in Jamiltepec protect communal lands and access to natural resources. Farmers on the coast worked with elites in the cotton economy to preserve this mutually beneficial relationship.¹¹⁴

Analyzing race in relation to this economic transformation also challenges the concept of Porfirian hegemony. On the one hand, indigenous jamiltepecanos never embraced the Porfirian political, social, and economic system and ultimately allied during the revolution with the most radical group, the Zapatistas, to overturn decades of land adjudications. Díaz's otherwise effective cultural initiatives linking him to Juárez and other prominent Liberals never appealed to indigenous residents in Jamiltepec who opposed the Reform program from the beginning.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, Afro-Mexicans appeared as though they supported the Liberal economic and political system that allowed them to protect their communities and their roles in the cotton economy. This too is misleading. Afro-Mexicans on the coast revolted against Díaz, but they also worked to preserve the local economy. In fact, they united with Constitutionlists in support of Carranza to accomplish these two goals. In the end, support at the popular level proved crucial to maintaining power throughout the nineteenth century. Díaz's ability to prolong his time in office is the lone exception. Leaders who ignored popular consent, generally tied to controlling pueblo land, resources, and politics, engaged in a dangerous enterprise. Indeed, by electing himself president on so many occasions, privatizing vast areas of communal land, and centralizing power Díaz could no longer contain the revolutionary "tiger" in 1910.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Vinson, "Articulating Space," 164

¹¹⁵ See, Milstead, "Party of the Century," 12-13.

¹¹⁶ Díaz himself coined the phrase after being forced out of the presidency. He famously concluded his successor, Francisco I. Madero, "released a tiger" by leading the popular revolution to oust Díaz. The dictator asked of Madero "let us see if he can control it." Garner, *Porfirio Díaz*, 220. The question proved particularly prophetic. Madero ultimately could not control the tiger. See, Knight, *Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants*, 247-490.

Conclusion

Authorities reported that the Zorrillas planned to shutter their most technologically advanced factory and move it to the capital as revolutionary factions splintered in late 1914. They announced that the plant, Vista Hermosa, “permanently suspended work due to a cotton shortage.” As the Zorrilla brothers struggled to keep the business afloat city leaders apparently saw an opportunity to relocate the building as “a new factory” in the capital.¹¹⁷ For the first time since opening in the 1870s, the Zorrillas could not afford to operate the mill without inexpensive cotton from the coast. For years they benefitted from the economic and political system Liberals implemented after the French Intervention. It lasted more than four decades until popular revolutionaries overthrew Díaz in 1910. During this time, the region underwent a vast political and economic transformation, and entrepreneurs made fortunes in ranching, textiles, and haciendas volantes. In many ways, cotton and ranching had few rivals in terms of revolutionizing the Oaxaca economy. Merchants essentially overcame Jamiltepec’s historic isolation by linking these products more closely with distant markets to the north.

The concept of citizenship transformed as well after the French Intervention. As Liberals consolidated power across all levels of government, elites incorporated Social Darwinism into their political ideology and worked to limit pueblo autonomy.¹¹⁸ Their racially insensitive attitudes forced ordinary citizens to develop new strategies to protect communities. Revolting against unpopular local, state, and federal governments only served to reinforce elite racial

¹¹⁷ “Trabajos suspendidos,” *El Pueblo*, 17 Octubre 1914, 4.

¹¹⁸ Hale argues that while Comtean Positivism became a dominant ideology elites increasingly incorporated Social Darwinist themes from men like Herbert Spencer. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 248-250.

ideologies, and Díaz effectively prevented partisan coalitions that exemplified politics prior to the Liberal Reform. In addition, locals could no longer use military service and sacrifice to proclaim masculine honor. Thus, jamiltepecanos adopted new legal strategies and stressed their economic honor as *padres de familia* to protect land and resources, but these efforts were increasingly unsuccessful in indigenous communities. Afro-Mexicans, however, relied on outside representation from men like Zorrilla who filed successful appeals on behalf of the honorable *padres* of cotton. As a commodity, cotton thus granted Afro-Mexicans the means by which they could protect their communities and dependent families. Chico Ometepe provides one example of how this worked even though this remained a highly exploitative relationship.

Elites therefore cited masculinity in official appeals to preserve the moral economy in Afro-Mexican pueblos where farmers supplied cotton to Zorrilla's factories. In comparison, elites saw no reason to preserve these social relationships in Mixtec communities. They privatized land, appointed town officials, and raised rents over the objections of townspeople who discovered they often had few means to counteract changes to the regional moral economy. Interestingly, geography and the land itself played a decisive role in this process. Coastal areas ideally suited for cotton production experienced the Liberal Era quite differently than their neighbors located in the mountainous region to the north located in the path of Acho's haciendas volantes. The economic geography therefore reinforced the post-independence geography of race. Spatial differentiations highlighted racial distinctions while linguistic ability, cultural practices, and socio-economic relationships further divided jamiltepecanos. Thus, elites made decisions on whether to sustain or end reciprocal obligations – the moral economy – based on how they stood to profit from the transition to industrial capitalism. Porfirian administrators welcomed these investors and granted them unparalleled authority to make these decisions. By

1910, the Liberal Era economic transformation provides context to the racial divisions Atristáin described during the revolution.

Analyzing the regional moral economy from this perspective also allows us to examine late nineteenth century state formation. As we have seen, elites applied the Liberal reform package unevenly across the region. Some communities faced intense upheaval whereas others experienced few, if any, changes. In addition, state authorities appointed regional officials that would remain loyal to them personally above all other concerns, and they in turn appointed local officials with similar requirements. Citizens responded by objecting to these impositions and demanding control over their own resources, elections, and land. The major difference between this period and the years prior to the Liberal Reform is that residents could not assemble popular coalitions capable of undermining Díaz's regime. Díaz himself adeptly contributed to this by inviting adversaries to serve under the Liberal umbrella so as to prevent popular mobilizations. He understood the power of popular politics after taking part in several pronunciamientos as a young man. Appealing to fellow elites in this way appeased different factions among themselves and prevented the formation of cross-class, cross-racial coalitions. Nevertheless, the rupture in the moral economy, the attack on citizenship, and the massive transfer of land created a large underclass of *jamiltepecanos* who opposed his regime. Even in Afro-Mexican pueblos, where they preserved landholding and autonomy, many people increasingly opposed Díaz. Mixtecs, in particular, found that Díaz's form of "justice" was something they had no choice but to "protest." By 1910, the negotiation and coercion underpinning the Porfirian system could not last forever,

and residents mobilized against his regime. In the end, jamiltepecanos illustrated that Liberalism “as a unifying political ideology” was indeed a “myth.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Hale presents a convincing case that Liberalism as a political ideology unified elites, but this never developed to the same degree at the local level in Jamiltepec. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 3.

CONCLUSION

During the 1910 Revolution, Darío Atristáin asserted that Afro-Mexican troops made perfect soldiers due to “their aggressive character and satisfaction for carrying weapons.” He believed the military was the best option for Afro-Mexican men because “they are in their element as soldiers.” He added that in any case “they are nomads who change their residence from one pueblo to the next” and live only “with those of the same race.”¹ Perhaps surprisingly Afro-Mexicans on the coast during the revolution sided with conservative ranchers and merchants like Atristáin. Their Mixtec counterparts, however, more often joined the Zapatistas and demanded hacendados return communal lands.² After analyzing how Afro-Mexican and Mixtec residents in Jamiltepec experienced the capitalist transformation during the Liberal Era (1867-1910) these divisions seem less surprising. Atristáin, in fact, overstated the role race and identity played in the violence that engulfed the coast during the revolution. Afro-Mexican farmers, who on the surface seemed to have similar grievances with Mixtec peasants, sided with Constitutionalists to preserve the moral economy that ensured pueblo autonomy. Entrepreneurs had every reason to prolong this arrangement so as to protect unprecedented profits from cotton. Mixtecs never had this opportunity. They lost access to resources and communal land throughout the Liberal Era. Therefore, Mixtecs allied with Zapata to restore their ejidos and the moral economy that many of the same entrepreneurs helped to destroy.

¹ Atristáin, *Notas de un rancho*, 12-13.

² Atristáin, *Notas de un rancho*, 32-35. Alfonso Fábila argues, on the other hand, that “negros de la costa” murdered Gómez. See, Fábila, *Mixtecos de la Costa*, 227.

These revolutionary divisions had a lasting effect. Racial and inter-ethnic violence plagued the region after the revolution for decades. However, contemporary observers like Atristáin as well as scholars in the late twentieth century overstated the role that race played in the violence. Evidence from the region clearly illustrates that some form of the colonial era caste system survived independence. In addition, a few popular mobilizations during the nineteenth century divided along racial and ethnic lines. Nevertheless, the assumption that “the indigenous and black races were completely antagonistic” ignores other explanations.³ Race and ethnicity likely played some role during the war for independence and the War of the South, but residents united to defend the Catholic Church and to protect the nation from foreign invasions in 1846 and 1862. In addition, jamiltepecanos divided during the Liberal Reform and the War of the Reform along political lines rather than racial ones. Authorities feared the cross-racial coalitions that brought Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans together more during this time than they did other threats precisely because such alliances threatened to undermine elite control. These coalitions at mid-century were quite numerous as Mixtecs and Afro-Mexicans shared similar socio-economic and political grievances. Locals throughout the region who joined Conservatives worked to protect their communities from perceived Liberal attacks on the church and the military.

The Liberal victory in 1867 provided a period of unprecedented political stability at the local, state, and federal levels. This virtually ended the violence and popular mobilizations that were so crucial to local politics in the prior decades. At the same time, Liberal land reform laws provided outside investors with numerous opportunities to make legal claims and privatize pueblo land. Oaxaqueños responded, at times, with violence, but they more often adjusted their

³ Atristáin, *Notas de un rancho*, 254-255.

strategies to suit the new political environment. Residents throughout the region formed corporations to purchase land, used municipal funds to protect resources, and appealed to authorities as honorable *padres de familia* and veterans. This played out in two separate ways in Afro-Mexican and Mixtec pueblos. Afro-Mexicans leveraged help from powerful investors by exchanging cotton in return for pueblo autonomy. Men like Gómez and Zorrilla amassed fortunes extracting vast sums of wealth from coastal communities in this highly exploitative relationship, but this was preferable when compared to the Mixtec experience. The only resource Mixtec residents had was the land itself. Investors in the booming livestock industry simply filed legal claims to pueblo lands and circumvented the historic system of renting land to pasture livestock. In contrast, Mixtecs could not offer products to powerful men like Zorrilla in exchange for representation in legal matters to protect communal resources.

Thus, the inter-racial violence that Atristáin and others identify during the revolution and beyond had roots in the late nineteenth century. Afro-Mexicans had numerous reasons to mobilize as Constitutionals, for example, to defend the economic system built on cotton and ranching. Those on the other side also had compelling reasons to side with Zapata and demand land reform after a massive privatization of pueblo resources. In other words, what appears to be racially motivated revolutionary violence on the surface actually reflected two very different experiences during the late nineteenth century. These conclusions also demonstrate that Afro-Mexicans played pivotal roles in popular mobilizations and political coalitions. They did not occupy a “middle ground” between Spanish and indigenous societies as Matthew Restall concludes Afro-Yucatecans did during the colonial era.⁴ Instead, they took part in local and

⁴ Restall, *The Black Middle*, 4-5.

national politics as supporters of virtually all the dominant nineteenth century political ideologies. Costeños did preserve separate racial identities in their private lives as Ben Vinson concludes many people did prior to independence, but these identities often reflected geographic location, linguistic ability, and culture as Laura Lewis argues in her ethnography of Afro-Mexican communities.⁵ This study brings these two strands of literature into conversation and illuminates the transitions that shaped identity formation around economic activities, geography, social networks, religious celebrations, and other associative activities.

Understanding the role race played in local politics during the nineteenth century also provides an important window into Mexican state formation. Politicians at the national level built coalitions after independence that had direct ties to regions like Jamiltepec. Vicente Guerrero unsuccessfully defended his presidency from his base of support in coastal Oaxaca. The coalition itself in Jamiltepec never materialized into broader regional support. Instead, Afro-Mexicans united with Triquis and outsiders to the west whereas the majority Mixtec population remained out of the conflict. Santa Anna, in contrast, amassed large followings by appealing for help protecting cultural icons like the Catholic Church. This helps explain how he rose to power on so many occasions. Liberals also relied on local support to assume power at mid-century, but the fracturing of this coalition coincided with the rise of reactionary alliances that acted to protect the church. Conservatives strained the reactionary coalition to the breaking point when they invited Napoleon III and his beleaguered Emperor Maximilian von Habsburg, and locals responded by uniting a final time to defend Mexican sovereignty. The political stability that followed ensured economic success, but this coalition fractured during the boom years as foreign

⁵ Vinson, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty*, 4-5; Lewis, *Chocolate and Corn Flour*, 58-60.

entrepreneurs assumed control over Mixtec land and resources. Jamiltepec residents split yet another time during the 1910 Revolution, and it took decades for the post-revolutionary government to restore order to the region.

The nineteenth century state thus corresponds more closely to what Peter Guardino and Michael Ducey conclude in Guerrero and the Huasteca region respectively. Guardino provides convincing evidence that while elites wrote legislation “circumstances gave relatively poor people in rural Mexico leverage with which to shape laws as they were implemented.”⁶ Throughout the nineteenth century jamiltepecanos attempted to use the law to protect pueblo resources and adapt legislation to fit local cultural, political, and economic realities. In addition, rural villagers “took an active role in shaping regional political responses to the national scene” as Ducey argues happened in early nineteenth century Veracruz.⁷ In Jamiltepec as well as the Huasteca this took the form of popular mobilizations, pronunciamientos, and revolts. Ducey’s conclusion that people used violence as a political strategy from the independence war to the 1870s corresponds with evidence from Jamiltepec. Furthermore, during Díaz’s early years as president, a period Paul Garner refers to as “pragmatic liberalism,” he continued to rely on local support.⁸ Díaz adapted Liberal economic initiatives while recognizing the church’s cultural authority. He used this tactic to consolidate power and establish himself as a national caudillo in the 1890s before serious challenges emerged in the twentieth century. One can discern the breakdown of his coalition in Jamiltepec by analyzing the collapse of the moral economy in Mixtec communities even though this never happened in Afro-Mexican pueblos.

⁶ Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico’s National State*, 108.

⁷ Ducey, *A Nation of Villages*, 5.

⁸ Garner, *Porfirio Díaz*, 68-94.

This case study also contributes to scholarship analyzing citizenship and race in other areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. Afro-Mexicans downplayed race when stepping into the public sphere while they also preserved separate racial identities in their private lives. This coincides with similar occurrences throughout Spanish America where Afro-Latin Americans avoided public proclamations of their racial identities. In Jamiltepec, Afro-Mexicans who withheld racial pronouncements in land dispute cases, taxation appeals, and criminal proceedings employed other discursive strategies to press the state for demands. Men claimed their honor as soldiers before mid-century and in economic terms as “padres de familia” after the 1850s. This shift corresponds with a similar change in the regional popular discourse of masculinity. Afro-Mexicans therefore contributed to this shifting discourse of masculine honor in the nineteenth century. When one combines this example with their defense of the Catholic Church, preference to speak Spanish, and engagement with local and national politics it seems that Afro-Mexicans engaged the state in much the same manner peasants did in other regions of Mexico. In other words, they acted and thought of themselves as ordinary Mexican citizens. This resembles other studies in the Caribbean and Colombia even though Jamiltepec is located in an isolated area on the Pacific coast that scholars generally overlook as being part of the African Diaspora.

Through their political participation, economic impact, and cultural contributions this study makes clear that Afro-Mexicans helped shape nineteenth century Mexico. While colonial caste categories survived independence, race was not the primary reason jamiltepecanos mobilized to support a given political agenda in the nineteenth century. Beginning immediately after independence, historians suggested otherwise. They emphasized race as a motivating factor for violent confrontations during the independence war, but local elites in Jamiltepec emphasized the opposite. They worried that Afro-indigenous coalitions would upset the regional balance of

power. The capitalist transformation that ended with revolutionary violence seemed to confirm the racial resentment narrative. Elites and scholars have since wrongly interpreted this violence through the prism of race. Activists have made progress correcting this narrative in the past two decades. However, Afro-Mexicans today routinely claim authorities target and humiliate them when travelling outside the region. In August 2018 Afro-Mexican advocates and members of the group *Afrodescendencias Investigación e Incidencia México* criticized director Jorge Pérez Solano for his portrayal of the leading male character in his film *La Negra*. They denounced the director for making insensitive comments about Afro-Mexican townspeople in Corralero, Oaxaca and portraying a male character as a lazy philanderer who is prone to alcoholism. Critics demanded an apology for the insult and proclaimed in a joint statement that Afro-Mexicans “have contributed in economic, social, cultural, political, and historic terms to Mexican society.”⁹ As we approach two centuries since the end of the caste system in 2021 many of the old prejudices survive. This study offers a counter narrative to this persistent problem and illustrates how Afro-Mexicans in Jamiltepec contributed to the making of modern Mexico.

⁹ Afrodescendencias Investigación e Incidencia México, “#LaNegrada cineasta Jorge Pérez Solano, director del filme “La Negra”, llama salvajes a las personas negras,” Twitter, August 11, 2018, https://twitter.com/afrodes_mx/status/1028507026756984832/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1028507026756984832&ref_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmujeresenmedio.org%2Fla-negrada-anti-blackness-under-the-guise-of-visibility%2F.

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