

HISTORY

Mexican Anthropology and Inter-American Knowledge

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This essay contributes to a fuller understanding of the history and future of area studies by tracing Latin American studies back to the early twentieth century, when it took form within academic disciplines that sought to contribute to state policy-making. The essay focuses on a set of intellectual exchanges between the United States and Mexico around Native American affairs. In an era in which new inter-American scientific venues and the Good Neighbor policy attenuated the inevitable and ever present intellectual hierarchies that divided the United States from Mexico and the rest of Latin America, some scholars found resemblances and parallels between North and South America. These scholars envisioned a cosmopolitan Americanist intellectual sphere based on horizontal forms of sharing, and they looked for novel ways of reconciling the avowed need for generalization with the particulars that they confronted at home and abroad. They found themselves unable to fully escape epistemological binds that positioned the North as a model of modern nationhood and a locus of universal knowledge, and that relegated non-Western nations like Mexico to the category of the particular. They could not overcome the difficulties spawned by hierarchies among nations and, concomitantly, among their own scholarly communities.

Este ensayo nos ayuda a entender la historia de los estudios latinoamericanos, y su futuro, trazando sus raíces en los comienzos del siglo veinte, cuando tomó forma dentro de disciplinas académicas dedicadas a fortalecer las políticas públicas. Se enfocan un conjunto de intercambios intelectuales entre Estado Unidos y México alrededor del indigenismo durante la época del Buen Vecino. En un momento en que se atenuaban las inevitables y omnipresentes jerarquías intelectuales entre Estados Unidos y Latinoamérica, algunos expertos encontraron similitudes y paralelos entre el Norte y el Sur. Estos intelectuales intentaron forjar un ámbito intelectual Americanista que era cosmopolita y se basaba en relaciones más horizontales. Buscaron, además, nuevas formas de reconciliar las generalizaciones, siempre necesarias, con las particularidades que encontraron en sus países y en el extranjero. Sin embargo, no pudieron escapar las amarras epistemológicas creadas por un ideal liberal de modernidad que posicionaba al Norte como modelo y relegaba a los países no-Occidentales como México al dominio de lo particular. Por lo tanto, no pudieron superar las dificultades generadas por las jerarquías entre las naciones y, asimismo, entre sus comunidades académicas.

Latin American studies did not originate in US Cold War foreign policy concerns. It is true that in the 1960s the United States government funded Latin Americanists because it wanted to find effective ways to implant its political and economic models abroad (Merks 1994, 1995; Mirsepassi, Basu, and Weaver 2003; Miyoshi and Harootunian 2002). Yet, as this essay and other recent studies (e.g., Salvatore 2016) suggest, Cold War efforts drew on a much longer tradition of Americanist studies, institutions, and networks dating back at least to the International Americanist Conferences that began in 1875. This essay provides a fuller understanding of the history and future of area studies by tracing Latin American studies back to the first half of twentieth century, when it took form within academic disciplines—most notably anthropology—that contributed to state policy-making. As US intellectuals sought ways to manage ethnic and racial diversity at home during a period of intense international immigration and domestic migration of southern blacks

to northern cities, scholars looked to Latin America, in particular to Mexico, as a laboratory where they could discern what happened when races and cultures mixed. They drew from the work of Mexican and Latin America scholars and policy-makers who were equally concerned that racial divisions would weaken their nations.

In insisting on the importance of this moment for the development of area studies, this essay tracks South-North as well as North-South exchanges. The movement of ideas from South to North has been largely invisible, occluded by accounts that foreground a US intellectual hegemony based on US efforts to differentiate itself from Latin America. Yet US scholars consumed knowledge from and about Latin America even as they continued to see Europe and the United States as loci of modern nationhood, scientific rationality, and economic efficiency. Latin American intellectuals who saw themselves as “modern” aspired to participate in an ecumenical, cosmopolitan scientific milieu. Yet they found it difficult to articulate a vision of modernity compatible with local realities. Furthermore, they were stymied by US hubris—increasingly so as Good Neighborliness gave way during and after World War II.

This essay elucidates the institutional and epistemic tensions inherent in North-South dialog by looking at the relationship between Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio and US Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier (1933–1945). Gamio did PhD coursework in anthropology at Columbia University (1909–1912) and became a key player in the development of state-sponsored *indigenismo* in the period immediately following the end of the Mexican Revolution. He returned to the United States around 1925 to conduct a study of Mexican migration. After 1941, as director of the Inter-American Indigenous Institute (IAII, a Pan-American governmental institution headquartered in Mexico City), he once again became a key interlocutor for US academics and policy-makers.

Collier's trajectory paralleled that of Latin American indigenistas and developed in close contact with them. Mexican scholars showed him how ethnography could inform policy. In turn, he helped create a web of scholars and applied social scientists across the Americas and enlisted academics in his plans to reform Indian policy in the United States and globally. His network included important US Latin Americanists, including Robert Redfield, Father John Cooper, and Julian Steward, and many Latin American indigenistas. Among his closest collaborators were Laura Thompson, an anthropologist working on the Pacific islands—they later married—and psychiatrists Dorothea and Alexander Leighton, who were interested in the relation of personality to culture, and who worked with US Native communities. With Mexican colleagues, Collier helped create the IAII (Roseblatt 2018).

In the interwar period, Mexico and the United States shared a concern with how to forge national unity amid ethnic and racial division. US intellectuals and policy-makers worried about whether and how “Americanization” might proceed, while in Mexico elite factionalism and an armed revolt launched by conservative Catholic Cristeros, along with ethnic diversity, challenged national unity. Policies toward Native peoples developed along parallel tracks as well. Mexico's postrevolutionary governments ended the disentanglement of Native communities, while Collier's Indian New Deal helped overturn the US policy of allotment. Both countries dialed back assimilationist policies. In the 1930s, the governments of Franklin Roosevelt and Lázaro Cárdenas sought to extend economic and social rights to excluded social groups, including Native peoples.

During these years, new academic disciplines consolidated themselves in Mexico and the United States, universities grew, and Good Neighbor policies encouraged more cordial exchanges—academic, political, and economic—throughout the hemisphere. Mexican and US governments sought to further ground their policies toward racial minorities in social scientific knowledge. But even as more horizontal forms of intellectual collaboration emerged, the seeds of postwar US academic and geopolitical ascendance were evident. In the postwar era, US scholars became even more condescending and less open, surer of their abilities and less cognizant of opportunities for deeper learning abroad. These shifts are manifest in the trajectories of Gamio and Collier.

In exploring these dynamics, this essay builds on the work of scholars such as Fernando Coronil (1996), Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman (2007), Micol Seigel (2005), John Carlos Rowe (2000), and Alyosha Goldstein (2014), along with the contributors to this special collection, who have been uncovering exchanges and common experiences across the Americas while continuing to recognize North-South inequalities. As these works point out, the United States shared with Latin America a history of racial slavery, negotiation and war with Native peoples, European settlement, and popular-democratic struggles. This emerging paradigm revises approaches that have characterized Latin America and the United States as fundamentally different. The *dependentistas* of the 1960s, for instance, argued that dependent capitalist societies could not develop like First World capitalist societies, and that First World scientific and technical knowledge could not serve

Third World needs (Roseblatt 2014). Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1994) made a similar point, arguing that intellectual pursuits buttressed colonial and imperial power by debasing and "othering" colonized peoples and characterizing them as inferior and backward—at a temporal as well as geographic distance from the West.¹ Orientalists simultaneously bolstered their own epistemic authority.

These viewpoints are currently being refined in a number of ways. Many scholars now view colonialism and imperialism, as well as their effects on colonized peoples, as variegated (Cooper and Stoler 1997; Burbank and Cooper 2011). Decolonial scholars have destabilized the geographies of colonialism by suggesting that Latin America's political and intellectual elites may themselves have acted as colonizers (Mignolo 2005; de la Cadena 2015). Other Latin Americanists have pointed out the varied political predilections of knowledge producers within Latin American studies. Outside the Latin Americanist field, historians of the social sciences and of area studies have criticized overly mechanical views of the relationship of intellectuals to states. They note that even though intellectual projects may at times serve the ends of economic or political elites, especially when states sympathetic to those elites fund academic pursuits, academia has its own internal logics and time frames that may not jibe fully with state plans (Engerman 2010; Isaac 2012). Coronil (1996) has gone further to ask how our own epistemological predilections shape how we interpret past efforts. An insistence on othering and difference as products of exploitation, Coronil has signaled, may paper over intense borrowing, including the diffusion of perspectives from South to North as well as from North to South, therein eliding how Northern perspectives have been informed by contact with the South (see also Dudziak 2000; McCoy and Scarano 2009; Kramer 2011). This new body of research invites us to question our geohistorical categories, including the model of North-South interaction implied in accounts of dependency.

This essay builds on these perspectives by excavating past efforts and understandings that can expand our view of what Latin American studies was—and what it can be. The view that Latin American studies was a product of the Cold War developed out of a broader critique of academic complicity with pernicious US foreign policy concerns. That critique emerged during a time of escalating US global power, US government funding of area studies, and US government efforts to mobilize academic knowledge in its foreign policy pursuits (Solovey 2001). By contrast, this essay focuses on an era in which new inter-American scientific venues and the Good Neighbor policy attenuated the inevitable and ever-present intellectual hierarchies that divided the United States from Mexico and the rest of Latin America.

In this context, scholars across the Americas found resemblances and parallels between North and South America. But while Gamio and others envisioned a cosmopolitan Americanist intellectual milieu based on horizontal forms of sharing, most US scholars subsumed knowledge from and about Latin America. US academics created theories that positioned the North as a model of modern nationhood and a locus of universal knowledge and that relegated non-Western nations like Mexico to the category of the particular—often no more than comparative data points. Some Mexican and US scholars did look for novel, less hierarchical ways of reconciling an avowed need for generalization with the particulars that they confronted at home and abroad. Yet they found themselves unable to escape the epistemological binds created by liberal notions of universal humanity that created hierarchies among nations and scholarly communities. A neutral cosmopolitan science that was useful globally appeared for a time to be possible and desirable to scholars on both sides of the Río Bravo. But, in the end, the scientific superiority of the United States reasserted itself, along with the notion that it stood above Mexico and Latin America as an example to be emulated.

It is not surprising that anthropology was so central to these dynamics. After all, as a field it sat at the intersection of beliefs regarding difference and universal humanity. The US anthropologists who first conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Latin America sought to determine if and how the region differed from the United States. Many of them studied cultures abroad that were different from their own so as to gain insight on what made the United States exceptional. Others studied the variety of humanity to determine its essence or its inevitable trajectory. According to the evolutionary teleologies that shaped the field in its early days, less civilized non-Western peoples might, spontaneously, or through contact with the West, become more like the developed world (Boas 1920). Yet this universalizing perspective admitted that at the time, countries like Mexico embodied difference and inferiority.

This essay zigzags, along with the people it studies, from Mexico to the United States. Gamio, it suggests, desired a neutral science as the basis of a truly cosmopolitan, inter-American knowledge, and he offered Mexico's ethnographic approach to Native peoples as a model for the world. But he soon realized the difficulties that his proposal entailed. Mexico did not fit normative definitions of Western nationhood, and Mexican anthropologists had difficulty creating a science that was useful to Mexico and contributed

¹ I use the terms "North" and "West" interchangeably. These terms denote metaphorical entities, not real geographies.

to cosmopolitan scientific conversations. Ultimately, Gamio and his Mexican colleagues embraced the particular. Collier's trajectory moved in the other direction. He began by embracing the ethnographic model that he observed in Mexico, transcending ideas of fixed geographic boundaries by recognizing that Mexico was part of the United States: it was present among Native peoples who had lived under Spanish and Mexican sovereignty and among immigrants in fields and cities. But as the United States entered World War II, Collier increasingly subsumed ethnography to a social science that was functional for the burgeoning US empire. He focused more and more on formulating universal social laws and saw the amassing of ethnographic case studies by researchers and government agents as helping to produce universal knowledge or to adjust universal social policies to specific locales.

Manuel Gamio and Indigenismo as an Inter-American Project

Mexican intellectuals sat at the metaphorical border between North and South. They were, as they sometimes argued, part of a mestizo middle class that straddled Native and European (Iturriaga 1951). Indigenistas generally believed in a cosmopolitan science; they saw themselves as part of global intellectual exchange and considered Mexico as potentially similar to European nations and the United States. Yet they also saw how Mexico's Native heritage made it different. Gamio embodied these contradictions.

Gamio studied anthropology in Mexico before beginning graduate studies at Columbia University. But Gamio's sojourn in New York was prompted as much by Franz Boas's desire for stronger connections to Mexico as by Gamio's desire to study abroad. Boas in fact recruited Gamio to Columbia as part of his efforts to establish an international school for Americanist anthropology in Mexico. This school would attract scholars from across the globe interested in the diffusion of cultural and biological traits. Scholars would track movements across the American continent as part of broader efforts to determine how cultures developed and changed (Godoy 1977). As Boas argued to a US funding agency, the creation of a neutral "abstract scientific point of view" required anthropological study of Africa, South America, and Australia and not just the more proximate cultures located within the territorial boundaries of the United States. By 1911, the International School of Archeology and Ethnology had launched, with headquarters in Mexico City. It was funded by the governments of Mexico, France, and Germany and by Columbia University, Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Hispanic Society of America.²

Gamio returned to Mexico the following year, and with the revolutionary fighting still under way, he drafted the book that established his reputation as an architect of postrevolutionary state efforts to integrate Native peoples into the Mexican nation. *Forjando patria*, published in 1916, caught the attention of postrevolutionary politicians wanting to knit together a country divided by war. In *Forjando patria*, Gamio chronicled the evolution of relations between Native and European descendants in Mexico and tried, at times fancifully, to imagine what a nonviolent and inclusive state policy toward Native peoples might look like. Most scholarship on Mexican indigenismo has characterized Gamio as an advocate of an assimilationist civilizing policy (Brading 1988; Walsh 2004). That is true, but only in part. Some postrevolutionary intellectuals—including José Vasconcelos, as secretary of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (1921–1924) involved in discussions around school curricula for Native people—rejected special protections for Native peoples (Fell 1989). Gamio, by contrast, argued that liberal universalism should be tempered by ethnographic knowledge.

In 1917, as the revolutionary war was coming to a close, Gamio founded the first postrevolutionary government agency devoted to the study of Native peoples, the Dirección de Antropología. As its director, Gamio undertook research at Teotihuacán leading to his magnum opus, part of which he presented at Columbia as his PhD dissertation. The copious contemporary and historical data Gamio collected—from soil conditions to religious practices, including flora and fauna, architecture, and the demographic characteristics of the population—was to form the basis of an applied anthropology aimed at improving conditions for Teotihuacán's residents. Gamio's study served as a basis for a variety of state educational and development programs in the village. Gamio planned to extend this type of multidisciplinary research to other regions of Mexico (Comas 1956; Departamento de Antropología de México and Manuel Gamio 1922). His goal, however, was to catalog and understand diversity, in contrast to the "abstract" science Boas wanted to generate—or thought he had to argue for. Boas's model was not the existence of a prior universal humanity but the diffusion of traits, and although he looked to understand this process in abstract terms he also understood it as historically contingent. Gamio likewise sought to understand the particular and the universal or abstract.

² Franz Boas to Prof. R. S. Woodward, March 23, 1905, Folder: Boas, Franz 1902–1908 (2 of 2), Record Group: Administration, Archive of the Carnegie Institution in Washington.

When the Dirección was shuttered, Mexico's policy toward Native peoples came under the purview of the Departamento de Cultura y Educación Indígena (Department of Indigenous Culture and Education) of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), and in 1924, Gamio took up a post as assistant secretary of the institution. For Gamio and the SEP indigenistas, the colonial-era friars who carried out ethnography as prelude to evangelization provided a model for combining difference and modernization. Pictures of the friars adorned the offices of the SEP, which also produced a series of pamphlets detailing their lives.³ To emulate their work, Gamio and his SEP colleagues organized well-known cultural missions which trained teachers to educate previously abandoned indigenous and rural populations. Mission members were also to gather knowledge regarding Native peoples, many of whom were still largely unknown to urban, mestizo Mexico. Like the earlier friars who sought to spread the Catholic faith, the SEP sought to assimilate Native peoples into a modern Mexican nation. And like the friars, the indigenistas were ethnographers who worked with and through the particularities of peoples. Ethnographic research, Gamio (1925, 4) explained, had been going on in Mexico for four hundred years: "Sahagún, Landa, Durán and other colonial chroniclers," he said, referring to the colonial era friars who had produced chronicles of Native life, "set forth in their works the direct observations they made of the racial characteristics of the conquered indigenous people." Likewise, SEP teachers would fill out questionnaires detailing what they saw as they spread out around the far corners of the country. The SEP planned to gather statistics on Mexico's indigenous races and their languages and programmed a meeting of SEP missionaries to "adapt systems and methods of teaching" to the conditions of different localities. The department's director toured indigenous regions to better understand the problems at hand, and he called for Native schoolteachers and others who knew the local languages. At times, proposals favored a fairly radical pluralism.⁴

Indigenista efforts to reverse the Porfirian liberalism that had undermined Native landholding and lifeways thus harkened back to a colonial project that preserved difference as well as community lands. Gamio (1917a, 347) praised the colonial Laws of Indies for protecting Native peoples from slavery and the Inquisition, and praised imperial Spain for governing "in accordance with the nature and necessities of the respective Native populations." He urged national governments to follow suit by not blindly following formulas and instead governing in accordance with the specific characteristics of distinct populations. As Gamio (1917b, 375) put it, the ultimate goal might be to determine the "nature" of the Mexican people and to "facilitate their normal evolutionary development," but this task required knowledge of and respect for the particular. And peoples might develop and become more evolved, he argued, by following multiple, distinct paths.

Gamio posited Mexican indigenismo and its ethnographic knowledge project as a model for other American nations. In 1916, having already drawn up plans for the Dirección de Antropología, Gamio urged his colleagues at the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress in Washington, DC, to follow in the footsteps of Mexico and set up agencies along the lines of his planned Dirección. Gamio (1917a) continued to tout this theme during the years after. In a 1924 talk at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, he chided the US Bureau of Indian Affairs for failing to base its work on anthropological research, since knowledge of national populations would help national policy-makers and stimulate international understanding (Gamio and Pan-American Union 1925, 29). When Gamio, now serving as assistant secretary of Education, delivered his 1924 brief to the Carnegie Institution, he argued that greater international understanding would come about only if people acquired deeper knowledge of foreign nations.

Lack of mutual acquaintance ... accounts for the fact that thus far international and Pan American diplomacy have not yielded more fruitful and positive results along political and scientific lines. The fact that a hundred American merchants know that Mexico furnishes a good market for locomotives, automobiles, and plows seems to me to be of less importance than would be a knowledge, on the part of 10 of these men, of the lives of the buyers of these things, their good and bad qualities, how they think, and some of their deepest longings and aspirations. When this comes to pass those 10 merchants will not only sell as much or more merchandise than the others, but they will be bound to their customers by spiritual ties which develop social solidarity and, in the end, international fraternity. (Gamio and Pan-American Union 1925, 1–2)

³ "Informe del Departamento de Educación y Cultura Indígena," *Boletín de la Secretaría de Educación Pública* 1, no. 2 (September 1, 1922): 261–266.

⁴ "Primera universidad indígena en la República," *El Universal*, February 23, 1922, cited in *Boletín de la Secretaría de Educación Pública* 1, no. 4 (1923): 576–577; Lauro Caloca, "Departamento de Cultura Indígena: Informe del jefe del Departamento," *Boletín de la Secretaría de Educación Pública* 1, no. 4 (1923): 573–74.

Gamio viewed science itself as a neutral and cosmopolitan endeavor in which North and South might collaborate. Research teams that were international could produce investigations that were unbiased and untainted by “individual habits” or “alien ... grammatical habits.” As scientists, US and Mexican researchers might share methods and goals regardless of where they came from. Gamio welcomed colleagues from the North to his country, praising the interdisciplinary team assembled by the Carnegie Institution to explore Yucatán for having brought together Mexican and US investigators (Gamio and Pan-American Union 1925, 7, 3). On his 1924 trip to the United States, Gamio wanted to recruit US researchers for a series of coordinated studies converging “toward specific goals ... [and] carried out in Mexico and the United States.”⁵ The magazine *Mexican American* suggested that Gamio should replicate his study of Teotihuacán in the US South (González Gamio 2003, 67). Declaring himself an “internationalist,” Gamio (1923, 1–3) claimed that Mexican intellectuals were similar to their French, English, Germans, and American counterparts “of advanced ideals.” Mexican social scientists—unlike their Native and rural compatriots—would swim in “the newest currents of thought that are leading the way in the advanced countries” and engage in a “continual exchange of ideas with foreign institutions and intellectuals.” Scientists were, “because of their communion of ideas, a universal fraternity.”

Gamio nevertheless associated science with the West and conceded that concern for Mexico’s Native peoples would temper Mexican internationalism: “As compatriots of our brothers, ten million beings who struggle in an indigenous civilization that is several centuries behind, we think in a different way, as nationalists. We get rid of our modernist yearnings, which seek only that which is on the highest level of progress. We descend toward them. We live their lives and penetrate their souls, so as to understand the right methods of helping them to slowly but effectively reincorporate themselves” (1923, 3). Once Mexico’s Native peoples had been uplifted, Mexico might become part of the international federation to which Gamio aspired. Before then, to participate in such a federation would be to submit foolishly to the members of the more advanced nations (Gamio 1923). Gamio thus saw science as the most desirable feature of European-US modernity, and the scientific superiority of the United States and Europe as justifying, in part, their ascendance. Gamio accepted a modernity that placed Mexicans in an inferior position, even if only temporarily and for the sake of national unity.

Over time, and perhaps as a result of greater contact with the United States, Gamio became more skeptical about the possibility of developing a truly cosmopolitan science. When he republished his 1923 essay, Gamio (1935a, 3–5) characterized the “newest currents of thought” not as coming from the “advanced countries” but merely as “contemporary.” His reference to “foreign institutions and intellectuals” was replaced by “Mexican and foreign institutions and intellectuals.” He eliminated references to French, English, German, and American intellectuals, now maintaining that Mexicans would transmit and translate foreign ideals. It was perhaps Gamio’s experiences studying Mexican immigrants to the United States that convinced him of the dilemmas intermediaries like him had and would face (Gamio 1930).

Gamio harbored no illusions about being able to prove that Mexico was civilized within the parameters set by the northern Atlantic nations, and he struggled to reconcile modernity with difference. His answer was to posit multiple modernities and reject unilateral approaches. When he argued, as he often did, in favor of “contemporary civilization,” he did not mean a white, European civilization. Mexico’s “contemporary civilization” would not be a perfect copy of northern examples; this was perfectly fine, since neither evolution nor its study was in his view “unilateral.” Mexico could reach back to its ancient Aztec and Maya civilizations for advanced artistic and scientific achievements, and some Native healing traditions might prove as useful as Western medicine. And then Native peoples had adapted, physically and culturally, to Mexico’s diverse geography and climate. “Tradition,” Gamio (1916, 11) wrote, “would miraculously transform itself in a thousand ways while maintaining its unity and typicality.” It would become more modern but remain Mexican.

Mexico’s middle class could be the genesis of Mexican cultural unity—so necessary given the divisions made evident by the Revolution—only if it rejected “exotic” European culture and embraced indigenous cultural manifestations. Renegade members of the middle class who embraced European culture were “pedants and imbeciles,” while the middle class’s embrace of Native ways was understandable given the Mexican “physico-biological-social environment” that shaped the bodies and minds of middle-class Mexicans (Gamio 1916, 173, 177).

⁵ Manuel Gamio to John C. Merriam, November 7, 1923, Folder: Gamio, Manuel Dr., Lecture, 1923–1924, Record Group: Archaeology, Archive of the Carnegie Institution in Washington.

By the 1930s, Mexican indigenistas recognized the limitations of centralized, cookie-cutter approaches to Native peoples who differed in so many ways from one another. The SEP replaced itinerant missions that traveled around the countryside with permanent missions devoted to particular localities. The Casa del Estudiante Indígena, a boardinghouse in Mexico City, gave way to schools located in the countryside that were to educate future Native schoolteachers near their own communities, providing them with training adapted to the agricultural and economic conditions of specific regions (Loyo Bravo 1999; Fell 1989; Dawson 2004). The director of the SEP's Misiones Culturales y Enseñanza Normal instructed SEP officials to make their teachings relevant, "varied according to the conditions of each region and ... closely linked to its economic and social possibilities."⁶

Despite their embrace of the material and the local, and of data collected under this particularist paradigm, Gamio and his colleagues retained a modernizing agenda, and they never fully abandoned the desire to generalize about humanity or represent their country to national and international audiences. But especially in reports and publications for internal consumption, the unruly and very specific data they collected was also proudly, and sometimes lavishly and extensively, on display. As researchers made recommendations regarding what to reform and how, they reveled in diversity. There was so much data to collect! They tracked hectares of land cultivated or irrigated, school buildings and conditions, temperature and rainfall, chemicals in the soils, latitudes and longitudes, plants and animals, roads and railroads, the goods transported on them, children who attended school, and the marital status and racial characteristics of their parents. Indigenista reports were packed with lists and large foldout charts. In fact, those books were often little more than compilations of data, with text that simply repeated and summarized the data in the lists and charts (Figure 1).

Indigenistas readily conceded the problem: Their abundant data often failed to supply ready conclusions. Perhaps, then, conclusions were not to be found. Perhaps the homogeneity and modernity they desired was

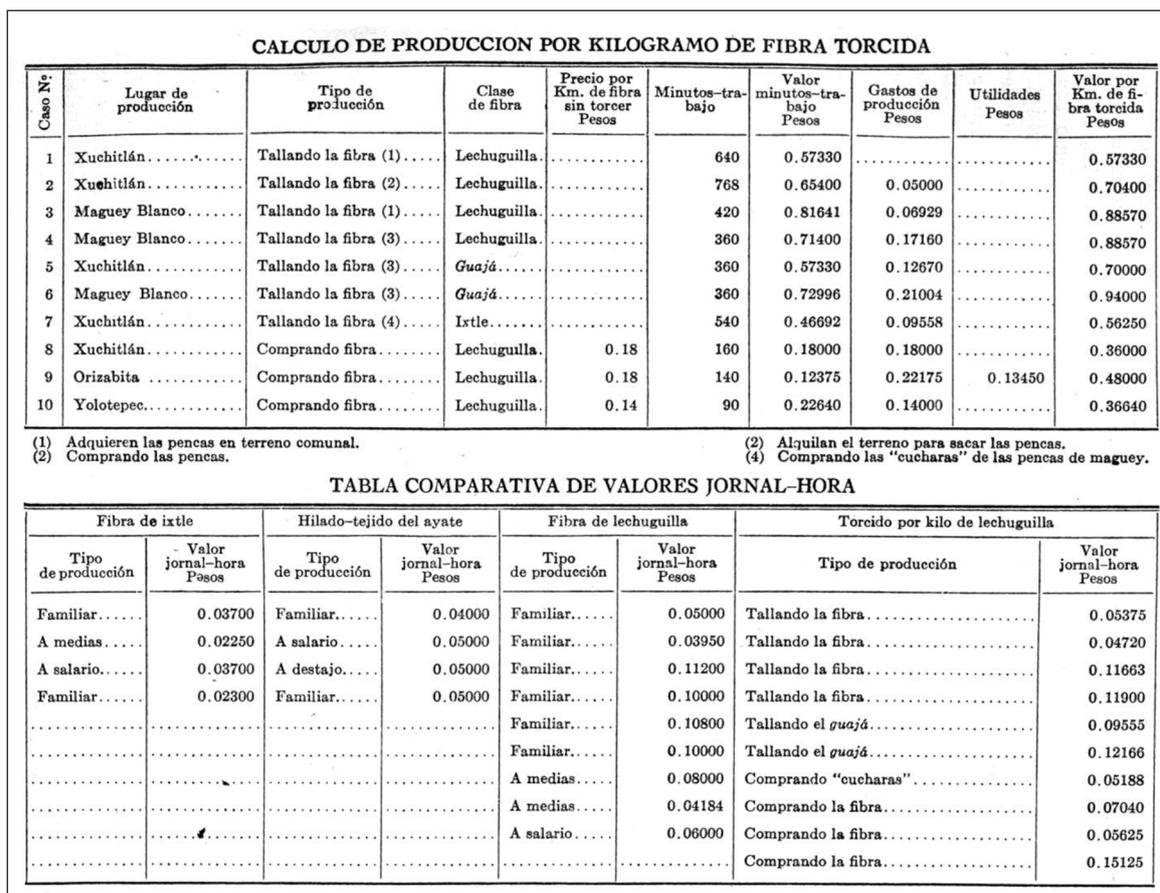


Figure 1: Charts of production and wages (Alanís Patiño 1946–1947, 96).

⁶ Manuel Mesa A., "Organización y funcionamiento de las Misiones Culturales," February 14, 1933, folder 13, no. 2, Proyecto Valle del Mezquital, Inter-American Indigenous Institute Archive (IAII).

no more than a far-off dream, unconnected to the daily realities they confronted. That was Gamio's (1939a) own realization as he showed how little synthesis or "integral"—cultural, biological, political, social, and economic—understanding had come from the ethnographic impulse. Although "no country in the world" had specialists who fully knew that country's social reality, the problem was particularly acute in Mexico, where the population was "exceptionally heterogeneous." Given that many groups had "persisted in the same lifeways and forms of development as in remote times," the evolution of Mexico's population would be "more confusing and [more] difficult to analyze." Knowledge of Mexico was therefore more superficial and limited. "Under no conditions," Gamio concluded, "are we authorized to generalize" (1939a, 12). The nature of Mexico itself disauthorized its intellectuals.

Gamio (1935b) likewise foregrounded Mexico's complexities and distinct trajectory in an essay titled "Mexico's Varied Markets." Modern countries like the United States had "general culture" and unified markets that sold standardized goods, he wrote. Mexico, by contrast, had three distinct, "multiple and dissimilar" markets. Its modern "universal" urban market was comparable to markets in countries like Sweden, Holland, or Belgium. Its primitive markets resembled those found in primitive villages of Africa or Asia. It also harbored a "mixed" market. The mixed and primitive markets varied in both the scope of the geographic areas they served and the type of goods they offered. That heterogeneity needed to be documented and analyzed with new social science tools, "setting aside the exotic [foreign], doctrinaire unilateralism that so frequently leads us to force social phenomena into a preconceived framework in which it doesn't fit" (Gamio 1935b, 5–7). Heterogeneity was not just a sign of backwardness but also an invitation to develop new, distinctly Mexican social science tools.

Gamio (1939a, 52) continued to advocate economic modernization and the embrace of scientific culture, holding out the hope that data, like the nation itself, could eventually be "integrated." Since correlation and probability, which would allow generalizations to be reconciled with diversity, were not yet a part of the social science toolkit, Gamio availed himself of evolutionary taxonomies to make sense out of undeniable heterogeneity. By arraying categories hierarchically, he could establish a semblance of evolutionary order and chart a path forward. Gamio and other indigenistas used charts to organize this diversity. These charts (see **Figure 2**) arrayed data into neat, uniform categories or types and provided a sense of equivalency and order. Yet charts based on these taxonomies also included a good deal of blank space and revealed a lack of coevalness.

Gamio was not alone in his embrace of heterogeneity and love of data. His protégé Lucio Mendieta y Núñez, serving at the time as director of the Institute of Social Investigations at the Ministry of Agriculture and Development (Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales of the Ministerio de Agricultura y Fomento), also argued that generalizations regarding Mexico, though necessary, would be hard to reach. Mendieta y Núñez spurned grand theoretical and macroeconomic approaches and endorsed an economics based on "humble, less extensive facts which have less apparent importance" (1935, 132). Mexican researchers' assembling of facts might be "fragmentary and defective," Mendieta y Núñez admitted, but he praised the heroism of the field-workers "who dirtied their suits with the dust of the pueblos." His real venom was directed not

DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING THE AUTHOR'S METHODS OF CLASSIFICATION

SAMPLE GROUP OF ITEMS OF MATERIAL CULTURE	Chronological Origin			Cultural Type			Origin and Character of Production						Character of Use and Consumption				Classification of Intercultural Processes							
	Pre-Spanish	Colonial	Contemporary	Native	European	American	Mixed	Domestic	Regional	National	Foreign	Manual	Mechanical	Efficient	Defective	Harmful	Continuous	Sporadic	Adaptation	Adoption	Survival	Displacement	Replacement	Fusion
Metate (corn grinding stone)	x			x					x			x			x		x							
Phonograph			x			x					x		x	x						x				
Cowboy saddle		x			x				x			x		x			x		x					
Machete		x			x						x		x	x			x						x	
Huaraches (sandals)	x			x				x				x			x		x					x		
Peyote (a cactus drug)	x			x				x								x		x				x		

Figure 2: Gamio's classificatory scheme (Gamio 1939b, 52).

at the ethnographers but at the “pseudo-economists” in their armchairs who smiled with disdain at the “undoubtedly valuable data” (1935, 153).

Still, Mendieta y Núñez (1935) followed Gamio in arguing that ethnography should not be simply the collection of stray facts but instead should be followed by rigorous analysis and synthesis. Neither scholar saw the possibility of synthesis as being readily at hand. Modernization; standardization, which made knowledge as well as production proceed more efficiently; and universal knowledge were proper goals. Again and again, they were deferred. These efforts were like pilot programs that never spread their flame.

John Collier’s Applied Ethnography

As Boas’s project for an international school implied, the nascent field of US academic anthropology viewed Mexico and Latin America as laboratories of cultural contact in which ethnographers might observe natural experiments in acculturation. This was a pressing issue at a time when new immigrants posed a troublesome problem for many. Robert Redfield, considered the first US ethnographer to work in Latin America, first traveled to Mexico to study the cultural background of Chicago’s Mexican immigrants. Likewise, soon-to-be US Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier began to study Mexican history in order to understand diversity within the contemporary United States. After a trip to Taos in which he became enthralled by what he presumed to be the cultural integrity of the Pueblo people, Collier sought to understand how they had maintained their culture. He looked to conditions under Spanish colonial rule, and turned to the work of Charles Lummis and Adolf Bandelier, both of whom had written on Mexico. Soon after, Collier traveled to Mexico City, where he met indigenista scholars (Collier 1922, 1963).

In the Taxco home of indigenista Moisés Sáenz, he and his Mexican counterparts became convinced of the importance of a hemispheric approach to Native politics. Drawing perhaps on the idea that all Native peoples were part of a “Red race,” Collier (1942, 80–81) asked: “Will the time come when the Indians can be united, when the Republics can pool their experience with Indians, when hemisphere-wide programs for the release of Indian spiritual and economic powers can be set upon their way?” They further discussed how “the good-will of white men” such as the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans had unified Indian history and created a framework for understanding the effects of Spanish conquest. Collier, Sáenz, and their colleagues wanted their governments to build on this globalizing viewpoint. There was an internationalist perspective at play here, abetted no doubt in 1942 by the US entry into World War II. Collier’s goal was also to understand Native Americans in the United States by studying the larger hemispheric plight of Native peoples.

In making this connection between colonial history and Pan-Americanism, Collier built on themes he had played on since the 1920s when he was introduced to British theories of indirect rule (Hauptman 1986). Collier saw parallels among Spanish colonial, Mexican national, and British indirect colonial administrations, all of which sought to bolster Native forms of leadership and to govern through—rather than against—Native social structures. In 1928, Collier had read an article on the Māori of New Zealand (Keesing 1928)—another colonial context—and adduced that the insights of that essay could be “transposed almost wholly to apply to the American Indians.” “Comparative study of the history of the present situation of ‘primitives,’” Collier (1929, 116) felt, “might have averted many blunders by dominant governments in the past. It might point toward unguessed solutions for the future.”

Invoking colonialism and theories of colonialism, Collier referenced a form of governance both pervasive and global at the time he was writing. By the time Collier reached Mexico in 1931, then, he was alive to the importance of global and comparative knowledge of Native peoples and administrative strategies, facilitated by the worldwide extension of colonial empires. Referring to deliberations at the conference that led to the formation of the Inter-American Indigenous Institute, Collier (1941) wrote that delegates at the conference had praised indirect administration along the lines of the British in Oceania and called on national offices of Indian Affairs to “work *indirectly* [my emphasis] with the Indians through their organized group or community.” Governments should acquire ethnographic knowledge and execute “national as well as local purposes through the groups.” Collier related Native administration inspired by indirect colonial rule to democracy as a Pan-American institution linked to Native heritage (Collier 1941).

As commissioner, Collier continued to champion Mexico’s land and education policies and to emulate indigenista efforts to understand, catalog, and sustain cultural difference. By late 1933, Collier had sent Indian Service personnel to Mexico to see their new rural schools (Indians at Work 1933). To preserve difference amid change, Collier suggested, differences had first to be understood and the trajectories of change charted. Following the injunction Gamio had made years earlier, Collier moved to ensure that Indian Service policies were based on sound knowledge. He enlisted social scientists and other experts from the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture to address soil erosion on Native lands.

In 1935, he convened an advisory board of anthropologists and created a short-lived Applied Anthropology Unit within the Indian Service (Kelly 1980).

Commissioner Collier turned to Mexico as a positive example in an address to the Council of Women for Home Missions, where he echoed Mexican indigenistas by arguing that the monastic orders of New Spain tried to mitigate Spanish cruelty in Mexico. The Laws of Indies, he claimed, were “one of the wisest bodies of law for Indians yet achieved.”⁷ At a public meeting in Western Oklahoma, Collier told Native American leaders that the Mexican Indians had been landless and “practically slaves” before the Revolution but that now their landholdings, wealth, and power were increasing. Why? Because Mexico followed colonial precedent in basing its administration on local knowledge and on the tolerance of difference.⁸ Moreover, Collier applauded the fact that in Mexico there was no centralized, “authoritative” Bureau of Indian Affairs. All was “coordinated locally—within neighborhoods of Indians—not centrally at the capital.” All this had been planned by a “sociologically informed statesmanship ... [and] tested out through controlled and carefully recorded experiments and demonstrations” (Collier 1933a, 2, 3).

Collier turned again to a Mexican example to illustrate how Native intermediaries conversant with modernity might harmoniously blend scientific knowledge and Native tradition. Young Indian men and women who attended normal school in Mexico later returned to their communities, he wrote. “Thus, in these Mexican schools the wisdom of the folk and the right instinct of the folk are fertilized and somewhat guided by first-rate sociological, anthropological and esthetic minds of cosmopolitan backgrounds” (Collier 1933b, 206). Acculturation would be guided by an expertise transformed and shaped by access to the diversity of the globe. Using the word “fertilized,” Collier implied an epistemological *mestizaje* between local and cosmopolitan knowledge. Like Mexican indigenistas, some of whom, like Gamio, were skeptical of universality, Collier wanted to hold together local ethnography and a rational, universal science, to bind difference and modernity. Collier, like Gamio and others, envisioned multiple modernities that captured the triumphs and efficiencies of a modern science envisioned as one and as global. For Gamio, however, that global science seemed unrealizable, at least in the short run.

As World War II gripped the United States, Collier and his US anthropological collaborators increasingly grasped for a more predictive and more global science whose social engineering techniques would help them govern minorities at home—Detroit and Los Angeles were experiencing painful uprisings—as well as the “dependencies” the Allies might control at the close of the war. The need for social engineering became especially urgent for Collier and his collaborators in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, when Collier and the Indian Service agreed to run the Japanese American confinement camp at Poston, Arizona. Collier became involved when the US Army began considering a camp on the Colorado River Indian reservation. He wanted to ensure that the land would return to Native Americans when the camps closed, and ended up running what became largest of the so-called internment camps in the United States. Collier believed that the knowledge the Indian Service had accumulated regarding how to govern ethnic difference, including lessons learned from Mexico, would help it engineer a more humane experience for incarcerated Japanese Americans (Roseblatt and Benmergui 2018).⁹

He called the camp a “colony.” Psychiatrist and Navy Lieutenant Alexander Leighton headed a research team at Poston, which Collier conceived of as a culturally and racially distinct and geographically separate place. Alexander and his wife Dorothea Leighton had met Collier in 1939, the same year that Collier met anthropologist Laura Thompson. Collier and his allies at Poston believed their experiments in the camps would provide, “an opportunity, in a completely inconspicuous way, to draw from the Japanese colonizing job scientific results which might be important in our post-war job in the Far East.” Poston would generate lessons that the United States could apply in an eventual postwar occupied Japan. Thompson likewise suggested that materials from her pilot study among the Papago would not only provide guidance regarding Native peoples but also “the baffling problems of the post-war world.”¹⁰ The concept of colonialism—with

⁷ John Collier, Address at Annual Meetings of Home Missions Council and Council of Women for Home Missions, New York City: Joint Committee on Indian Work of the Home Missions Councils, February 29, 1936, box 26, RG 75, Office Files of Commissioner John Collier, US National Archives, College Park (hereafter cited as OFCJC).

⁸ Report of the meeting of John Collier with the Indians of Western Oklahoma at Anadarko, Oklahoma, for the purpose of discussing and explaining the Wheeler-Howard Bill, March 20, 1934, box 26, RG 75, OFCJC.

⁹ Collier to Eisenhower, April 15, 1942, reel 25, John Collier Papers, 1922–1968, Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corp. of America, 1980 (hereafter cited as John Collier Papers). Alexander Leighton, who directed research at Poston, ended up working, along with a group of college-educated prisoners he had trained at the camp, for the Office of War Information. In December 1945, Leighton traveled to Hiroshima as part of the US strategic bombing survey.

¹⁰ John Collier to Milton Eisenhower, April 15, 1942, box 22, RG 75, OFCJC. Laura Thompson, draft of “An Attempt to Study Indian Personality” for *América Indígena*, September 1942, folder 4: Coordinator, Committee on Human Development, University of

its emphases on ethnic difference and the governance of groups occupying discrete territories—led to broad generalizations regarding research and administration across ethnic differences globally.

In these wartime formulations, differences were recognized but subsumed by a need to simplify and manipulate social environments. In a paper regarding democracy and postwar colonial administration that Thompson presented to the US State Department, she argued that if the Allies won the war they would have to administer “vast areas of the colonial world,” but should do so with respect for individual personality and cultural diversity. Previous colonial strategies, which had “insulated” minority groups and made them into “museum exhibits,” or tried to assimilate and Westernize them, or left them to themselves, had all failed. “Our task as administrators is not to rush in and try to force people to accept modern methods of hygiene, medicine, agriculture, cattle breeding or soil conservation (as has so often been done in the past) even though we are convinced of their superiority.” Rather, administrators needed to combine “modern scientific knowledge” with “local mores, attitudes and values.”¹¹ Here, diversity was the application of the universal in distinct environments, and universality was tempered by a respect for individuality, now elevated to a universal norm.

Alexander Leighton made a similar observation about diversity and universal humanity. Drawing on the work of Bronislaw Malinowski, who argued for a universal human psychic constitution, Leighton (1942, 29) suggested that “due to the biological and psychological nature of man, one human community has fundamental similarities to all others, even though there may be great differences in customs and attitudes.” Yet, as Leighton knew, the process of translating research from one context to another would not be straightforward. If at the close of the war the United States became involved in occupation, relief, and rehabilitation, or the supervision of plebiscites, it would encounter people “different from the average American in racial descent, traditional values, and predominant attitudes” (Leighton 1943, 652). US administrators would have to bridge the cultural gap between government and governed and adjust the government to the people. Leighton (1943, 653) argued that “one must, of course, beware of transferring too literally the lessons learned in one to the other.” Or, after reflecting on his experiences at Poston: “Both Principles and Recommendations are offered with the reservation that there are always exceptions to general statements and that application must be tempered by the particulars of each concrete situation” (Leighton 1945, 246).

Yet for Leighton, this adaptation of lessons learned in one place to another was part of a scientific process of generating universal laws, in which new data required reformulation of theory. He offered medicine as an example. As a physician, Leighton applied general principles to specific individuals and reformulated those principles based on clinical knowledge. Clinical observation of particulars was as important as controlled experimentation. In this process, error and misrepresentation were inevitable, but prediction as the basis of future action could not be abandoned as a result (Leighton 1945, 366–367).

Collier and Thompson argued for cosmopolitanism among US policy-makers and citizens, although they were aware of the dangers of imperialist attitudes. As early as December 1942, Collier convened key government officials and academics in a group referred to colloquially as Peace and Democracy. The members of the Peace and Democracy group wanted to ensure that the “little man” did not retreat into provincialism, pulling his government with him. Using the press, radio, visual culture, and face-to-face community meetings as propaganda tools, the group sought to shape public opinion so that the common man might learn to relate his “local geographic community to larger areas of life, to interests larger even to the world scale.”¹² The scope of citizens’ knowledge and worldview were thereby linked to the growing scope of US global power.

One member of the group advocated the creation of an Institute for the Study of Colonialism that, eschewing imperialism, would deal with “darker peoples both here and abroad,” including “such semi-colonial areas as Latin-America.” Other participants worried that this would result in a “missionary attitude toward colonial peoples.” It was best to focus, they said, on combating both isolationism and imperialism at home, to bring imperial expertise to bear on domestic realities rather than exporting US expertise. Collier and Thompson replied that the United States should not dictate or lead unilaterally, but rather follow and study other countries, for “we are woefully ignorant ... and yet so cock-sure.” Arguing for “ordered heterogeneity,” they

Chicago, 1941–1943, April–December 1942 (2 of 2), box 10, Laura Thompson Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

¹¹ Laura Thompson to John Collier, December 16, 1942; and Laura Thompson, Committee on Human Development, “Some Essentials for a Democratic Colonial Program,” n.d., both in reel 17, John Collier Papers. On the State Department see Felix Keesing, “Some Notes Taken at New York Meeting,” December 30, 1942, reel 32, John Collier Papers.

¹² Keesing, “Some Notes.”

cautioned US leaders not to try to impose US forms of representative government or to create a bland blend of “undifferentiated internationalism.” People should be able to continue their unique lifeways, unless of course they used force or abrogated the rights of “minority or deviant groups.”¹³ It was clear that the United States would do the ordering.

The United States would achieve these goals through research and the training of administrators and by shaping public opinion, all of which could put the brakes on a reckless US imperialism. Initially, Collier and his allies planned to create an Ethnic Institute or Institute of Ethnic Administration in the Department of the Interior as part of their Peace and Democracy initiative. Collier and Padover (1943, 5) proposed a government-sponsored Institute of Ethnic Democracy to take up minority issues at home and abroad; they used the term “ethnic” because it was “less weighted with emotion than ‘racial,’ ‘minority,’ or ‘colonial.’” The initiative did not prosper, but after Collier stepped down as commissioner, he and Thompson created a private Institute of Ethnic Affairs that worked on issues related to domestic minorities and dependencies abroad, including the plight of Guamanians and Spanish Americans, groups that bridged domestic and foreign, governance within and across border.

Conclusion

Both colonialism and science offered bridges between North and South America, the United States and Mexico, European and indigenous America. Both recreated distinctions. And in both situations, hierarchy vied with an incipient cosmopolitanism based on a perhaps unattainable ideal of unbiased, neutral science and access to knowledge from and about other places. Within this context, scholars developed a variety of ways of reconciling universal norms with diversity. These included a persistent ethnographic impulse centered on locality and region, albeit tempered by faith in a progress that was almost always delayed, in a homogeneous nation, and in social engineering based on the formulation of sociological laws regarding the functioning of human societies. That there were diverse forms of progress, unity, and citizenship was implicit in this formulation, but it was never elaborated theoretically. Mexicans were aware of how overly unilateral interpretations of universality prejudiced their nations and themselves as producers of knowledge. Still, they held on to a hope of a truer cosmopolitanism.

That hope faded in the late 1930s and even more so after World War II, as the United States increasingly used “cases” and statistics to build predictive theories. The extension of US power allowed its researchers to collect knowledge and build science on that basis. Modernization theories based on ideas regarding progress and evolution are the best-known postwar theories to emerge from this knowledge paradigm. But there were in fact several versions of modernization theory. Comparative politics and game theories were other universalizing approaches. These postwar approaches drew from statistical methods and economic models that emerged in force at the end of the war and helped reconcile difference and theory in new ways. However, these approaches continued to rely on ethnographic encounters that shaped the views of the social scientists who participated.

During this period, Mexican policy-makers also turned toward developmentalist teleologies. Yet Mexican anthropologists continued to conduct ethnographic work and to practice an anthropology that perhaps intended to produce Western forms of modernity but that was applied to local circumstances. Officials closely studied specific regions where they sought to coordinate diverse agencies that addressed schooling, land tenure and agricultural production, road building and telephone lines, credit, medical care, and other needs. They fine-tuned universal policies so that they fit localities. In the postwar period, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista established Centros Coordinadores in specific areas to study and then address local and regional (rather than national or global) economies and politics. Until his death in 1961, Gamio sought to leverage his connections abroad and the new United Nations’ agencies to carry out development projects in the Mezquital Valley. As I have argued here, similar localized approaches began much earlier. They mirrored the ways in which the federal government consolidated its political control through local and regional networks that officials won over one small part at a time. Fieldwork by researchers was not unlike the touring of politicians. Indigenista investigators visited localities, learned the needs of the people and how they lived, and enlisted local allies, including brokers who often acted as data collectors. Political and knowledge networks often overlapped even as social scientists sought to maintain their scientific autonomy and frequently distanced themselves from local, regional, and federal power holders.

¹³ Keesing, “Some Notes”; John Collier and Laura Thompson, “A Declaration of Interdependence: A Creed for Americans as World-Citizens,” February 4, 1944, Reference Files of Commissioner John Collier, US National Archives, College Park.

Collier's and Thompson's search for democratic social engineering through indirect rule culminated in the Institute of Ethnic Affairs, which moved easily from international research, especially concerning "non-self-governing-peoples" abroad, to diverse groups within the United States, including Asian-, African-, Mexican-, and Native American communities. It actively opposed US military control over the Pacific Islands, arguing that the strategic trusteeships created at the close of the war were tantamount to annexation. It also denounced the economic exploitation of naval rule on Guam, lobbying for the devolution of power to local authorities. Hundreds of Guamanians joined the Institute of Ethnic Affairs, and together with Guam activists, Collier and Thompson succeeded in getting the federal government to withdraw the military from Guam, secured US citizenship for Guamanians, and set up an elected legislative body on the island.

In 1949, President Harry Truman initiated the Point Four Program of technical assistance to developing countries, a kind of scaled-down Marshall Plan for Asia, Africa, and the Americas that laid the groundwork for the formation of the US Agency for International Development in 1961. The Institute of Ethnic Affairs contributed to this effort with its expertise on aid to nominally independent "backward" peoples. Drawing models of policies relevant to the Point Four Program from around the globe, Collier returned to the Mexican example and called for additional studies of the *ejido*. His foremost example of collaborative work across borders was the IAI, which he characterized as a "new operative mechanism bringing the recipient country into full cooperation and seeking full basic agricultural, health, educational, and organizational improvements at minimum cost."¹⁴

Alongside this work on US colonial dependencies and foreign aid, the Institute of Ethnic Affairs supported improved conditions for US "minorities." Perhaps most innovative was its work with "Spanish-Speaking Peoples," which extended work begun by Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs during the war. Jane Pijoan, who coordinated the OCIAA work on Spanish Americans and continued her work at the Institute of Ethnic Affairs, characterized the problems of Spanish-speaking peoples as similar to those of other US minority groups. Yet, they took on a particular valence, she argued, because of their international ramifications: "The Spanish-speaking people of the United States are a natural link with the other Americas."¹⁵

In *America's Colonial Record*, a pamphlet published in London, Collier (1947) walked readers through conditions in each of the US colonies. Starting with US expansion across the American continent, he moved on to the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, the Pacific Islands, the Panama Canal Zone, the Virgin Islands, and finally the American Indians, all of whom he characterized as colonized, dependent peoples. Collier and his collaborators challenged US policy-makers to recognize colonial policies at home and abroad and to rule according to local conditions. Their views seemed not to resonate among government officials or the general public, where the isolationism and imperialism Collier and Thompson feared were in fact quite widespread. Collier, by contrast, drew incessantly from foreign examples to understand difference at home. His experimental comparisons and translations neither cordoned off the United States nor suggested that it was exceptional. He recognized parallels.

Collier and his colleagues stopped short of creating research or policy paradigms that could travel wholesale from one site to another. Having done fieldwork and documented cultural particularities, Collier and his anthropologically minded collaborators believed that those particularities had value. In general, they toggled between the controlled experimentation Thompson had advocated—the projection of local examples onto larger national and global stages—and discussion of the diverse situations from which abstractions emerged and in which they might be applied. This back-and-forth echoed the tensions between models of governance based on universal citizenship and humanity—universal human rights were now on the agenda—and those that recognized and valued the diversity of the people the United States would administer at home and abroad. The war itself had stimulated a need for universalizing, predictive social sciences. The arc was bending in that direction. Collier and Thompson did not abandon their relativism. Now out of government, they coached from the sidelines.

¹⁴ John Collier, A project for a preliminary outline study of the political, social, economic, and psychological factors in the underdeveloped countries as they affect American consideration of the Point Four Program, November 14, 1949, reel 41, John Collier Papers.

¹⁵ Jane W. Pijoan, "The Spanish Speaking People of the United States," reel 40, John Collier Papers.

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How to cite this article: Roseblatt, Karin Alejandra. 2018. Mexican Anthropology and Inter-American Knowledge. *Latin American Research Review* 53(3), pp. 581–596. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.163>

Submitted: 03 July 2017

Accepted: 02 March 2018

Published: 28 September 2018

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