Indios to Vecinos: Identity and Classification in Paso del Norte

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INDIOS TO VECINOS: IDENTITY AND CLASSIFICATION IN PASO DEL NORTE

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Master’s Program in Sociology

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my two precious sons, my mother, and all my relations past and present.
INDIOS TO VECINOS: IDENTITY AND CLASSIFICATION IN PASO DEL NORTE

by

ERIC MURILLO, B.A.

THESIS

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research project began, in part, while I was living in San Antonio, Texas, in 2013. I worked as a union organizer, and spent my free time learning about the area and its culture. In particular, I was fascinated by the local knowledge about the regions indigenous people, especially those associated with the Spanish missions. During my year in San Antonio, I witnessed a festival dedicated to the local springs and their connection to the regions original inhabitants. The springs were part of the creation story of the area’s Native Americans who first populated the San Antonio area, and there seemed to be more appreciation and understanding of Native American history than in my own hometown of El Paso, Texas.

While in San Antonio, I had met a few local people who were descendants of the Tap Pilam Cuahuitlcan Nation and Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe, two peoples who had deep historical connections to the region. I was fortunate enough to be invited to a few Native American ceremonies by some friends, and in one particular ceremony, I met an older gentleman who had recently discovered his ancestral tribal links and who was now an active participant in his tribe’s ceremonies. He was an inspiration to me because I was also curious about my own Native American roots, and I began to meticulously research my own family history.

The experience also made me question the history of the El Paso missions, and their indigenous inhabitants. Like most people in El Paso, I had heard about the Ysleta del Sur Tiguas, but I did not know much about the other missions or people in our region. However, I was determined to learn more about our region’s indigenous people and upon my return to El Paso, I began to research that history and my own genealogy. Along the way, I discovered an intersection between the two and in 2016 as a graduate student, I was fortunate to be able to
begin working with some of the descendants of the El Paso missions, the Piro-Manso-Tiwa of San Juan de Guadalupe.

1.1 Piro Manso Tiwa

The Piro-Manso-Tiwa Indian Tribe of San Juan de Guadalupe (PMT) are a Native American tribe currently seeking federal recognition and official status as a Native American tribe through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Their members have strong genealogical ties to the Piro, Manso, and Tiwa Indian communities that lived in the Paso del Norte region, (today’s El Paso-Juárez borderplex) during the Spanish colonial period (1600’s-1820) and most of their ancestors are clearly identified as “Indio” or Indian. Others are not, and their relatives are classified as “vecinos” or citizens of their respective pueblos. While some Spanish colonial research equates vecino with Spaniard, Diana Velasco Murillo (2016) whose research examined Zacatecas, México from 1546-1810 challenges that logic. She states:

This inclusiveness diverges from the scholarship that tends to equate “vecino” status exclusively with Spaniards or that defines it as the antithesis of “indigenous”. In many areas of New Spain vecindad was neither formal nor official and hence not legally restricted to Spaniards (p. 145).

Therefore, the vecino status did not necessarily mean that a person was of Spanish ancestry in Spanish colonial Zacatecas, México. This supports the findings of Richard Gutiérrez (1991) who studied Spanish colonial New Mexico from 1500-1846, or roughly the same period covered in Murillo’s study. He found that racial classification in New Mexico during that period was subjective and that “there was no direct correspondence, except perhaps at the extreme ends of the classification scale, between race and actual physical color” (p. 198). That race is a social
construct is plainly evident in the various ways in which people were classified according to perceived race or social status. The implications are that some of the Paso del Norte vecinos may have been of Native American and mixed-Native American ancestry, particularly the ancestors of PMT tribal members. While Spanish officials assigned racial classifications to individuals and families, we do not know how those individuals saw themselves. Nor do we know, from records, if they participated in native ceremonies or had other ties to the Piro, Manso, and Tiwa communities of Paso del Norte. While some of their ancestors may have served as Presidial soldiers, members of vecino and Spanish militias, or in other capacities for the Spanish, they may have maintained their ancestral ties to their native communities, or had other immediate family members who did. This research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of Spanish colonial classification in the Paso del Norte region and its impacts today.

1.2 Double consciousness, Triple Consciousness

My thesis will explore the question of Indigenous identity and tribal recognition through the lens of W.E.B. Dubois’s double consciousness theory, where Native Americans, particularly those near the US-Mexico borderlands, have to navigate being Native, “Mexican/Hispanic”, and citizens of the United States. According to Dubois’ (1903) theory of Double Consciousness, African Americans experience an internal conflict in navigating a divided identity. Like the experiences of Black people in the US, Native Americans on the US-Mexico borderlands have to navigate through several imposed identities; they can be identified as Native American, Hispanic, American, or Mexican (formerly Spanish). Unlike Native Americans in places outside of the US-Mexico borderlands, who are usually identified as Native American, European-American, or a mixture of both; Native Americans in the US-Mexico borderlands are often
identified as “Mexican”, which can be understood by the veil in Dr. Dubois writings where Native Americans struggle to be seen or acknowledged as Native Americans. For many Native American communities in the U.S. Mexico borderlands, maintaining an Indian identity is even more challenging because often their tribes, nations, or bands were supposed to have disappeared and become “Mexicanized” as countless researchers, historians, and others who have studied the region have suggested. Therefore, unless they are in identifiable Indian regalia for ceremonies or other occasions, or fit the stereotypical expectations of outsiders, they often appear to be part of the larger Mexican and Mexican-American population to outsiders. As former Tigua Governor Joe Sierra once stated, “We have three cultures that we are trying to fit into: our own, the Spanish, and the American” (as qtd. in Comar, 2010. p. 6).

The Spanish culture that Governor Sierra identifies can also include Mexican culture, which would include the Catholic Church, the Spanish language, and other cultural markers that are remnants from Spanish colonization in addition to Indigenous Mexican, African, . Contemporary Mexican culture, in addition to the Spanish traditions, includes elements of various Indigenous, African, Asian, Middle Eastern and other cultures that have shaped its formation. In the borderlands, there are holidays, foods, music, and other cultural phenomenon that include the participation of the regions Indigenous people, causing many non-informed people to assume that they are part of the greater “Hispanic” or Mexican origin population.

Like the Tiguas, the PMT have navigated the various imposed cultures and ethnic labels while maintaining a strong Indian identity that survived despite incredible socioeconomic pressures from the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. governments to assimilate into the dominant cultures. Each of these powers sought to eradicate or limit their existence as tribal people.
However, the PMT’s shared historical struggles and strong kinship network, along with their strong sense of identity ensured that they would maintain a tribal identity.

This triple consciousness did not necessarily mean that native people lost their core identity as native people, rather that they would and did exhibit agency when forced to navigate the multiple imposed identities along with their own self-identity. In some situations, they may have felt common bonds with their Mexican and Chicano neighbors, and identified with them against discrimination, and other injustices committed against them such as occurred during the El Paso Salt Wars, and at other times they were targets of ridicule and discrimination from those same communities because they were Indians. As citizens of the United States, they assimilated into the greater US society to various degrees, including intermarriage with non-Indians, living and working outside of their core communities, adopting U.S. customs, and serving in the U.S. Armed Forces as some examples. However, they have not lost their core identity as Indigenous people, and their continued participation in ceremonies and traditions serve as a way for them to reaffirm their commitment to the ways of their ancestors, and to each other.

They have overcome genocide by records where time, constant warfare, natural disasters, and human misdeeds have led to the destruction of valuable documents that recorded their existence as native people. The U.S. occupation of Paso del Norte in 1846-1847, for instance, resulted in the “destruction of a portion of the municipal archives by soldiers quartered in government buildings, who used the manuscripts to light their candles” (Timmons, 1990, p. 96). In this example, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the destruction of the archives, but it helps account for the limited amounts of records from Paso del Norte that are available today. These careless acts by U.S. soldiers continue to affect the descendants of the Paso del Norte communities. The PMT members today have the unenviable task of providing official records to
the BIA that clearly document their ancestor’s tribal affiliations and they faced with piecing together surviving documents that are extremely limited and often in poor condition.

Aside from the lack of official records, some of the PMT’s ancestors, “lived outside the state”, and maintained many of their cultural practices and ties to their native communities, even if not always documented similar to the Native peoples in Ned Blackhawk’s *Violence over the Land* (2006, p.13). They also had to travel for “food, work, worship, and recreation” (Blackhawk, 2006, p. 13), sometimes leaving the core native communities for extended periods of time, making them “invisible” in official records and adding to the difficulties in tracking them today.

These periphery native communities maintained ties to the core native communities, and members of the periphery native communities could become part of the core native communities and vice versa. These groups were fluid, and featured families whose members could be part of both groups. The periphery groups featured relatives of the core group who primarily left core group due to work, but assimilation, internal disputes, or other factors were also causes. Blackhawk’s own ancestors, who he describes as “nonreservation Shoshone families”, resemble some the PMT’s ancestors, who also do not appear in official records as members of the core tribal communities but lived in the periphery and outside of “state surveillance” (2006, p. 13).

Today’s PMT tribal community also features core and periphery tribal members, and the same fluidity that their ancestor’s tribal communities featured. Core tribal members can be said to live in and around the areas where other core members live, or travel and participate in most or all tribal functions. They often are knowledge holders within their families, responsible for passing down stories and traditions, educating tribal members, and helping maintain tribal traditions. Core members are responsible for organizing ceremonies and meetings to include
gathering materials and preparing ceremonial grounds. In addition, core tribal members are responsible for maintaining tribal chants and prayers, dances, and ceremonial regalia in addition to ensuring that traditional protocols are respected and followed.

In general, periphery tribal members may be siblings or relatives of core tribal members who live outside of the core communities, and who are not actively participating in tribal ceremonies and functions. Periphery members may still have some connections to the core tribal community, either through limited participation or through kinship networks, and may become active core members. However, through geographical distance or limited knowledge or participation, periphery tribal members may not always be seen as tribal members or see themselves as such. Their knowledge of tribal traditions and practices is likely to be limited especially when compared to that of core tribal members.

1.3 Data

My research involved examining, transcribing, and analyzing census records from the Cuidad Juárez Municipal Archives at the University of Texas at El Paso library. These records are available on microfilm and can be saved in PDF format. These archives contain the census records for the Paso del Norte missions of the Mision de Guadalupe in Cd. Juárez, Senecu del Sur in Cd. Juárez, Socorro del Sur, and Ysleta del Sur. The census records list the Indigenous and vecino heads of household for each of the regions pueblos and neighborhoods and provide census figures for each of the pueblos and neighborhoods in the Paso del Norte region. In particular, I focused on a 1787 Paso del Norte census that lists the names of the indigenous and vecino heads of household for the Paso del Norte region. In addition to being in great condition relative to other records, it also assigned a racial classification for the vecino heads of household, using the Spanish casta labels Coyote, Mestizo, Genizaros, Negro, Español, Indio, and Lobo.
This is something that does not exist in other census records for various reasons. Some colonial census records, for example, only list Spaniards and Indians, vecinos and Indians, or gente de razón and Indians. Gente de razón, literally people with reason, or civilized people was one of the constructed categories the Spanish used to stratify their colonies. It distinguished the mission or pueblo Indians from the more “civilized” Spanish, Native, and mixed communities that formed the vecinos. Whatever use they served for the Spaniards then, they have led to some confusion as to the makeup of the Paso del Norte region, often overinflating the number of Spaniards in their midst. For example, Table 1 below, taken from Timmons (1990) El Paso, list the 1750 Population of El Paso Communities. It separates the inhabitants into two racial categories, White, and Indian. Vecinos, then, are considered white or Spanish, but as the 1787 record indicates, vecinos are not merely white Spaniards. In fact, Kelly L. Jenks argues that “by the late eighteenth century, New Mexico’s Spanish colonial population could be characterized as a multiethnic” with “little or no Spanish ancestry” (2017, p. 214). This supports the research of contemporary researchers of Spanish Colonial New Mexico that found that the term vecino “denoted both a cultural and civic identity, rather than caste or race” (Nieto-Phillips 2008:38, as qtd. in Jenks, 2017, p.214).

**Table 1: 1750 Paso del Norte Census (Timmons, 1990, p.35)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missions</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>Language Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Tigua-Piro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Lorenzo</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Suma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senecu</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>Piro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ysleta</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Tigua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socorro</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1,646</td>
<td>1,484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total: 3,130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prevalence these types of records, which simply list Spaniards and Indians, have long supported an overly simplified view of the composition of the Paso del Norte region. The limited available Spanish Colonial census records for Paso del Norte resemble the 1750 census of Table 1, and they do not include labels like Mestizo, Coyote, Genízaro, for example, and therefore it is easy to assume that there were simply two monolithic groups: White Spaniards and Indians.

While the Spanish casta labels are problematic because they reinforced a racial hierarchy, they are extremely useful for researchers today who are attempting to dissect the historical documents further to better understand the Spanish colonial populations. The 1787 census, for this reason, is particularly important as it helps shed light on the vecino ethnic/racial composition beyond the white and Indian binary.

I also analyzed an 1814 census that only listed vecinos and Indians of the pueblos. Unlike the 1787 census, it did not provide a specific racial category for each of its vecinos. It was also incomplete with some sections missing, and it was illegible in some parts. The census totals for the Paso del Norte communities were still valuable to use to get sense of the changes the community went through, from a demographic perspective.

These were the best available records that were legible (most are not or are incomplete), and were close enough in years to be able to draw a comparison. Ideally, records that are closer together in period and with the same types of data would be analyzed, but the previously mentioned conditions did not allow for it.
In this research, I will use Native American, Yndio/Indio, Indian, and Indigenous interchangeably since this is the way many native people self-identify and are identified in official records and academic research.

Portions of the findings in this research may be submitted as evidence for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) as part of the PMT petition for federal recognition as a Native American tribe. The PMT submitted its first petition in 1979 and has been actively updating its application to meet the demands of the BIA. The BIA is currently seeking evidence of documented Piro, Manso, and Tiwa ancestry for today’s tribal members. This research may support the tribe’s petition by transcribing, coding, analyzing, and presenting the findings of the 1787 Paso del Norte census for heads of household, in addition to the 1814 census. This is necessary to help establish a link between the tribal ancestors who are clearly identified as Indigenous, particularly of Piro, Manso, and Tiwa ancestry and today’s descendants. The PMT and the non-tribal supporters who have helped with the petitions in the past have already established their genealogy that links them to the Paso del Norte missions, and this research will help strengthen that connection by adding to the transcribed census records they currently possess by analyzing the racial and cultural makeup of the Paso del Norte vecinos.

1.4 Methodology

My research consisted of using available data in the form of historical archives. In particular, I examined the census records found in the Juarez colonial archives at the University of Texas El Paso, and additional census records and data provided by the PMT. My focus was on finding pertinent census records, transcribing them, coding them, and finally creating charts and graphs from that data for further analysis.
1.5 Key variables

Racial and ethnic classification during the Spanish colonial period was not free of bias or error. In fact, Gutiérrez (1991, pp. 196) states that “Sometimes a person’s racial classification was the result of a personal declaration, at other times it was the subjective assessment of, say, a census taker. Priests and bureaucrats gave race different amounts of significance and this could classify the same person quite differently.” Physical color corresponded with racial categories, something that Alejandro Lipschutz (as qtd. in Gutiérrez, 1991, pp. 199) identifies as a “pigmentocracy”. Clearly, the Paso del Norte region, suffered from the same subjective classification errors and many of the PMT ancestors may have been improperly classified in the census records I will be using. This of course is a problem when researching Spanish colonial communities since the Spanish colonial caste or casta system sought to preserve white Spanish supremacy by reinforcing a racial hierarchy that placed white Spaniards at the top, and the rest of the population as lower levels according to perceived or imposed race.

Another major challenge was finding legible records, since they are colonial era archives, and many have been lost or damaged. The challenges in interpreting Colonial Spanish, shorthand, and writing undoubtedly come with the territory, and add to the difficulties in doing this type of research. Some of the records are blurry, incomplete, or otherwise in poor condition and therefore illegible to varying degrees. One of the ways that I have overcome these challenges has been through familiarization with the materials after three years of Spanish colonial archival research. As I spent more time reviewing and analyzing the archives, I was able to understand the shorthand used to identify race, for example. The abbreviation Mtzo, means mestizo, Espn for Spaniards, and Coy for Coyote. Lobo and Yndio are written out completely. Some of the names were harder to read, in some instances, and I transcribed the letters I could make out and
inserted question marks for letters I could not make out when transcribing the 1787 Heads of Household list.

Another challenge was finding records that assigned racial classification for the vecinos. The casta labels were flawed, subjective, and fluid, but they did provide a deeper view of the composition of the people living in Spanish colonial Paso del Norte. Mexican Independence in 1821 led to the eventual abolishment of racial distinctions on official records, and this leads to further difficulties for PMT members seeking to prove Native American ancestry. After 1820, most records did not generally list presumed race, they only provide a civic or nationality label such as vecino or Mexicano, while Indians began to disappear from the records.

The unit of analysis will be Paso del Norte census records that list racial categories. The census records list heads of household for each community. In addition, the census records list racial categories for each head of household. The records also indicate gender and marital status, but for the purposes of this study, racial categories were the focus. Further research may include an analysis of gender, marital status, employment, or other available figures.

1.6 Literature Review

One of the main sources for my research in the Spanish colonial period was the work of Diana Velasco Murillo (2016) entitled *Urban Indians in a Silver City: Zacatecas, Mexico 1546-1810*, which was useful in understanding the fluidity of racial and ethnic labels such as Indio and vecino. She highlights the need to differentiate between vecino and Spaniard, and the need to “equate “vecino” status exclusively with Spaniards or that defines it as the antithesis of “indigenous”. Her work captures the fluidity of classification and the agency that indigenous people have played in navigating multiple identities while retaining an indigenous one. As
vecinos, the Indigenous people of Zacatecas directly challenged Spanish authorities in order to be recognized as people with rights and autonomy on several occasions, and it highlights the agency of native peoples during the Spanish colonial period. They were not merely bystanders or witnesses as is sometimes suggested by previous research.

The research of Gutiérrez (1991) was concentrated in Colonial New Mexico and featured the similar findings of fluidity in racial classification during that time. Thus, like in the colonial period in Zacatecas, racial classification was not as rigid as is often thought, and “there was no direct correspondence, except perhaps at the extreme ends of the classification scale, between race and actual physical color” (Gutiérrez, p. 198). He later describes a list of Spaniards bound for New Mexico that featured “dark complected” and “mestizo” people that were classified as Spaniards in official records. This suggests that even those who were listed as Spaniards may not have been fully Spanish, and could have been Indian, mestizo or of mixed ancestry.

When introducing Indian identity, Tsosie (1995) uses two examples that come from Leslie Silko, Laguna Pueblo novelist and poet, who describes what it means to belong to a particular people, and she explains how the Yaqui people in Arizona have maintained their sense of tribe and community in spite of displacement. Both of these examples apply to the case of the PMT. The PMT Indian Tribe has maintained a continuous sense of belonging to a common people with recognition of their historical origins. They have maintained traditions and bloodlines that have managed to survive and overcome displacement and the process of reconstituting the community. “Tribal identity, then, is both socially and politically constructed” (Tsosie, 1995, p. 363) and the PMT has managed to maintain a tribal identity in spite of all of the different changes that have shaped their history.
The research of Timmons, whose *El Paso: A borderlands History* (1990) is an ambitious historical narrative of the El Paso-Juárez region. He does a commendable job in attempting to piece together the long and complicated history of this region, but like many Euro-American historians and scholars, presents a biased view of the borderlands. For instance, when describing the Rio Grande at Paso del Norte, he states that “The three peoples who have lived on its banks – Indian, Spanish-Mexican, and Anglo-American – occupied this oasis and utilized the river’s resources for over ten thousand years” (Timmons, 1990, p.2). This statement is problematic for several reasons, primarily because it places Europeans as having lived in the region for “over ten thousand years”, or as long as the Indigenous people who have actually occupied these lands for tens of thousands of years. Europeans did not arrive in the region until the 16th century, a mere 400 plus years, not thousands of years. The problems with statements like this are many, but the primary issue as relates to this research is that is helps to erase or limit native existence and relevancy in the region.

Another mistake that Timmons makes is following the lead of other researchers who label the Paso del Norte’s Native Americans as Mexicans at various points in his book. This is particularly troubling, considering that he uses Spanish colonial records that clearly identify the Piro, Tiwa, Suma, and Manso people of the region in census records. The native people who remained in Cd. Juárez, or other parts of Chihuahua perhaps could be labeled as such because they in fact became Mexican citizens by virtue of the imposed US-Mexico border. The Ysleta del Sur Tiguas, and the Piro Manso Tiwa of Las Cruces, however, were not Mexican citizens for more than thirty years, and after the US-Mexican war, became U.S. citizens. By labeling all of the Paso del Norte descendants as Mexicans, he unwittingly contributes to the erasure of those native identities. His contributions, in spite of those shortcomings, are nevertheless valuable as
he does an admirable job of putting together a long and complex history that is useful for scholars and anyone else trying to learn about the formation of the El Paso-Juárez region.

The book, *By Force of Arms* (1992) by Kessell and Hendricks is an enormous contribution for Spanish colonial scholars and researchers as it meticulously transcribes and translates the journals of Don Diego de Vargas, the Spanish figure who led the “Reconquista” of New Mexico from 1691-1693. It is an invaluable to learn about the nuances of Spanish colonial thought, motives, and conflicts, in addition to the snapshots of life during that period. We learn, for instance, that the Paso del Norte Piro and Tiwa communities were planning a revolt in 1681 against the Spanish and vecino communities at Paso del Norte in conjunction with the Sumas and Mansos, only to be “intercepted by Faraon Apaches” while in route (Kessell and Hendricks, 1992, p. 17). This scene captures the complex relations between native communities who at times were rivals, and at other times allies as they sought to protect and maintain their lifeways. The book documents the various ways in which Native Americans exhibited agency by at times siding with the Spanish against Indian rivals by serving as scouts, auxiliaries, and soldiers, and at other times forging Native coalitions to resist Spanish colonization.

In *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*, Native historian Ned Blackhawk documents the extremely violent conditions that affected the Native American people of the Great Basin. The Native people in Blackhawk’s research, including his own ancestors, suffered in ways similar to the Paso del Norte indigenous communities. Constant warfare, slavery, displacement, disease, and forced assimilation were just some of the conditions Indigenous people faced. In spite of these challenges, they also displayed agency and remarkable resiliency in spite of the rapidly changing worlds they inhabited. They allied with colonial powers against each other, or at times united against those powers. They intermarried with
settlers and other Indians, and assimilated to various degrees as they sought to survive the numerous waves of colonization they faced. This text provides a “clear and informed analyses of our nation’s indigenous peoples” (Blackhawk, 2006, p.3), looking beyond the U.S. Southwest tropes that often ignored indigenous voices or dismissed them as folklore. Blackhawk also does something else that is particularly noteworthy, he places his own family stories in the introduction and the epilogue, carefully weaving his own testimony into the greater narrative. Reinterpreting historical narratives from the perspective of native people is crucial in helping to fill in those holes that existed, as native people were not allowed to tell their own stories, or if they were, they were told through the lens of Western academics.

1.7 Tribal synthesis

In particular, I will explore the struggles of the Piro-Manso-Tiwa Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan Guadalupe (PMT) as they struggle of obtain federal tribal recognition after centuries of survival as an indigenous community in the U.S. Southern borderlands in spite of the tremendous pressures to assimilate into the dominant Anglo or “Latino” culture. During the Spanish colonial period, the Piro Pueblo, Tiwa Pueblo, and Manso peoples merged at Paso del Norte, today’s Cd. Juárez, México with a later migration into the Mesilla Valley in New Mexico. This process has been termed “tribal synthesis” by Howard Campbell (2006), and is similar to what other Native American tribes and nations have experienced because of a devastating colonization that reshaped the landscape and the communities that existed prior to the arrival of the Europeans. The Piro and Tiwa arrived to the Paso del Norte community from Central New Mexico as refugees and prisoners, while the Manso people, along with the Suma were native to the El Paso area. Because of Spanish reduction, pressures of assimilation, intermarriage, displacement, and other colonial factors, they merged over time, particularly when they migrated to the Mesilla
Valley. Their merger involved increasingly complex ties between them, including sharing ways of knowing and being, and an intimate knowledge of the landscape and sacred spaces.

A study on the El Paso Salt Wars of 1800 by Scott C. Comar (2010) captures the process of “tribal synthesis” that occurred in the Paso del Norte region between Piro, Tiwa, and other indigenous peoples of the region. In his work, he details how the Piro and Tiwa communities of Paso del Norte unified against Anglo settlers to defend their tradition rights to access the salt at the base of the Guadalupe Mountains in West Texas. This process included intermarriage, cultural exchange in the form of shared ceremonies, sacred sites, and other indigenous ways of knowing. Most literature on the infamous “Salt Wars” of the El Paso region frames the conflict as a Mexican vs. Anglo American struggle, which omits the true nature of the “Mexicans” in this struggle, many who in fact were a mixture of Ysleta del Sur Tigua, Senecu and Socorro Piros, as well as some Mexican mestizo and Indigenous people.

In addition, he discusses the struggle of “newly arrived Euro-Americans” to distinguish between the areas Native and Mexican population. He states that they “could not conceive of the connections that the indigenous had made amongst themselves and the land” (pp. 54). In fact, the use of the Salt Flats predated the birth of the Mexican nation by thousands of years, as the Native communities in the region had long known about and used the salt for various purposes.

1.8 Framework

The framework for this study will rely on Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2012) Decolonizing Methodologies, which will serve as a guide to avoid repeating the mistakes of researchers who largely treated Native Americans as others and as objects with little or no agency. Tuhiwai Smith challenges the dominant methodology and centers indigenous ways of knowing and being. She is highly critical of past academic practices that were exploitative in nature and were largely
harmful for the subject population. In her work, she offers a path towards decolonizing the research process.

Of particular importance, in this respect then, was to ensure that the PMT tribe was centered in the research process, consulted, and respected during the process. This process includes following “protocols of being respectful, of showing or accepting respect and reciprocating respectful behaviors” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 15), in addition to other protocols the tribe requires. It is important to understand that we are entering sacred spaces, and as researchers, particularly indigenous researchers, we must not trample on these sacred spaces with the same ignorance as has been done under the imperial gaze.

As part of this process, this research will include a reflective portion for the researcher to process and analyze the work and its purpose in addition to a discussion of the findings with the PMT tribe. The first part, while not chronological, is an internal process that I must follow and work through, to reflect on the research process, its impacts on the community, as well as my own feelings and well-being. While in most research projects, I am usually situated as an outsider, in this situation, I am both and outsider, as an academic and non-tribal member, but I am also partially an insider as a Native American, and descendant of Piro and Tiwa Pueblo Indians.

Research can be transformative, and it can be healing, and this places particular importance on a reflective period after the research is complete. My own process includes prayer and meditation in order to understand my own feelings and responsibilities as an indigenous researcher. I am not unbiased, and am very much a product of the region I am studying. Included in that is the fact that my own ancestry is linked with the PMT tribe and the greater Paso del Norte region. I have to respect what that means, and how it will influence my feelings and
interpretations of the research process. Additionally, it can be painful, as truths about our regional history, including my own, are uncovered revealing barely healed or forgotten wounds. Historical trauma is and continues to be a major point of healing if recognized, and while it is naïve to think that a research project can heal a community, it is important that it not create more harm towards the community.

A final community discussion to help close the research process is desirable, and may likely be possible at one of the PMT tribe’s Tribal Council and ceremonial meetings. There, the idea would be to disclose the findings of the research with the community ensuring that all questions related to the research were answered, and in conclusion, presenting the tribe with the data to be held by that community for its purposes. While I as a researcher will still work to ensure that my academic needs are met, the final product and the research gathered should in this case, remain with the tribe.
Chapter 2: Paso del Norte history

2.1 Spanish Period

In 1581, the Rodríguez-Chamuscado expedition first entered the El Paso-Juárez region on behalf of the Spanish Empire, followed by a colonizing party led by Espejo in 1583 (Timmons, 1990, p.7). At that time Espejo’s party encountered Suma and Manso Indians who lived. The El Paso-Juárez region was known as Paso del Norte during the Spanish colonial period, and the first mission in the region, Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe del Paso del Norte, was founded in 1659 for the conversion of the Manso Indians. While the mission was founded primarily for the Manso Indians of the El Paso area, several Christianized Piro Pueblo families from the Socorro, NM area arrived prior to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. They were recruited to help with the Manso conversions, and they formed a major component of the Indians from that mission and what would become the Centro, Barrial, Chamizal, San Lorenzo, Charco, Playa, Álamo Gacho neighborhoods that sprang from it.

While the revolt of 1680 was the catalyst that brought Piros and Tompiros as refugees to El Paso, their own efforts to expel the Spaniards had a significant impact on their future. Indigenous historian, Jack Forbes (1960), documents the Piro uprising in alliance with their Gila Apache allies near the Sierra de la Magdalena, and the planned uprising led by Tompiro leader Don Esteban Clemente. Ultimately, these plans were discovered, and several Indian leaders from both Piro and Tompiro communities were hanged. Because of the fear and mistrust that was present in the Piro and Tompiro communities, they were left out of the principal Pueblo revolt leader, Pope’s, plans. After the initial uprising, some Piros, Tompiros, and Tiwas participated in the siege of Santa Fe along with their Northern counterparts, many having eluded capture by fleeing to other pueblos, the mountains, and in some cases joining with Apache tribes.
Others were not so fortunate as several hundred Piro, Tompiro and Tiwa Pueblo peoples arrived after the revolt as prisoners and refugees of the retreating Spaniards. The Ysleta del Sur Tiwas or “Tiguas”, as they later became known, maintain that they were “captured by the Spanish during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt and forced to walk south for over 400 miles” (Ysleta del Sur, 2018), according to their tribal website. Both the PMT and the Ysleta del Sur tribal communities challenge the notion that they were willing travelers or particularly loyal to the Spaniards, but forced to migrate south as a result of the chaos that ensued the revolt. Prior to the revolt and even after it to lesser degrees, there was no Pan-Pueblo sentiment among the New Mexico Pueblo’s. Each Pueblo nationhood maintained a strong sense of autonomy, with a priority placed on the home community. Alliances before and after the revolt reflected this autonomy, and probably help explain the complex and evolving Pueblo world.

This strict autonomy was maintained in the Paso del Norte community, as Spanish officials understood that the various Indian nations in their midst were distinct and required certain considerations. As such, separate missions were established for the different indigenous communities. La Mision de Guadalupe was primarily Manso and Piro, San Lorenzo was Suma, Senecu del Sur was Piro, Ysleta del Sur was Tiwa (Tigua), and Socorro del Sur was primarily Piro with smaller numbers of Suma Indians as well as Tano and Jemez pueblo peoples who also arrived as refugees after the Pueblo Revolt.

With the exception of Guadalupe where most of the Spaniards were concentrated, these communities were “reconstituted Native American communities” (Sonnenburg, 2014, Linealist), with smaller numbers of Spanish or mixed race families living among them. Census records for these communities separated the Yndios del pueblo, or Indians of each pueblo from the vecinos. The vecino was a civic category, and not a racial category and it included Spanish, Indian,
Black/Mulatto, Genizaros and other mixed race people, many of whom had biological and other ties to the Yndios del pueblo.

The “Spaniards” themselves were not always white Europeans as is often assumed. In fact, they were often composed of people with mixed ethnic backgrounds who were labeled as Spanish. In the 1590’s, as the Spanish Empire sought to expand its territorial claims in New Mexico, recruiters sought attract people with “a trade, skill, or family was desirable, but racial mixture hardly mattered” and “on later occasions, when willing colonists were too few, authorities screened prisoners and orphans who appeared healthy enough” (Kessell, 2002, p. 73). The prisoners and orphans, as Kessell suggests, were not Spaniards. They were likely of indigenous origin, as the Genizaros, or prisoners, were most often Apache, Comanche, Navajo, or other Indians.

A 1692 list of people of captives from New Mexico headed to El Paso del Norte includes a Sgto. (Sergeant) Juan Ruiz de Cáceres, who brought along “an Indian named Tome with his sister Antonia, and he says they are his cousins” (Kessell & Hendricks, 1992, p. 530). The roster also includes other Indians from the Piro, Tewa, and Tiwa nations. This document suggests that Indians could and did become soldiers in the Spanish military, and it is highly likely that Ruiz de Cáceres, along with his immediate family, would have been identified in official records as vecinos, and Spaniards.

The Paso del Norte Indigenous community remained mostly intact from the late 17th century until the mid-19th century when the arrival of large numbers of European Americans and Mexicans after the U.S.-Mexico war (1846-1848), along with several floods from the Rio Grande which destroyed the missions and shifted boundaries on occasion. With the increased encroachment of native lands from several groups of newcomers, many of the Paso del Norte
Indians migrated to Dona Ana Country, New Mexico and helped establish several new communities in Dona Ana, Mesilla, Tortugas and Las Cruces, NM. Today, the core of the PMT community is located in Las Cruces, NM with other Paso del Norte descendants scattered across the Mesilla Valley and the greater El Paso-Juárez area.

By the end of the Spanish period, census records only list vecinos, who are interchangeably labeled as Spaniards, and the Indios del Pueblo, or the Indians of the village. The records no longer differentiate between the other “racial” or ethnic categories that make up the vecino population, such as Lobo, Coyote, Mulatto or Mestizo. While it is clear that those admixtures existed among the Paso del Norte population, the records no longer emphasize these supposed racial distinctions.

2.2 Mexican Period: 1821-1848

The Mexican period lasted from 1820 until the US-Mexico war that ended in 1845, when the U.S. formally took over Texas and New Mexico. During this relatively brief period, major changes would take place that had long lasting impacts on the regions Native communities. By the late 1800’s, the configuration of the regions communities that had lasted for over a century and a half was completely altered, uprooting many of the Indian families once again.

One of the most impactful actions taken by the Mexican government was the attempt to omit racial classification from official records, according to Article 12 of the Plan of Iguala in 1823 (White, 1963, p. 62). Another major action that impacted the Paso del Norte communities was the 1825 Colonization Act which separated El Paso and the Mesilla valley from New Mexico and placed in under the jurisdiction of Chihuahua (White, 1963, p. 68). During this period, Indian land encroachments increased as Mexican immigrants to the region, followed by Anglo settlers increasingly demanded and appropriated Indian lands.
In addition to the sociopolitical changes that affected the Paso de Norte community, the Rio Grande also greatly affected the future of the region with frequent flooding and overflows, and in 1829-31, the river formed a new channel which placed Socorro, Ysleta, and San Elizario on an island. The missions of Ysleta and Socorro were destroyed by the floodwaters and had to be placed on higher ground (Timmons, 1990, p. 74).

Another flood that affected the region’s people occurred in 1850, when the changing course of the river left Ysleta and Socorro on the northern side of the Rio Grande, and Guadalupe, San Lorenzo, and Senecu on the southern side. This led to “inter-community migration” (Sonnenburg de Chavez, 2014, DonaAnaSphere.com) as shortages of available land in the Paso del Norte region prompted many of the inhabitants to migrate and settle in the Mesilla Valley.

The Paso del Norte Indians and mixed communities that migrated to the Mesilla Valley were at times recognized as Indians, as they were still recruited as Army scouts and served on militias, continued to celebrate their traditions, and maintained a strong identity. And at other times, they were classified as Mexicans, since unlike the Apache and Comanche’s who frequently raided the region, were living a “civilized Christian” lifestyle as they attended church, and spoke Spanish, and lived in fixed dwellings. For many Anglo settlers, it was difficult to distinguish between the Paso del Norte Indian’s living in the Mesilla Valley from the “Mexicans” who lived there.

2.3 U.S. Period

In the 1850’s, the river shifted again, leaving Senecu pueblo on the Mexican side of the river and part of its boundaries on the U.S. side. The constantly shifting river, along with the new waves of Anglo American and Mexican settlers ultimately led to many of the Paso del Norte
Indians and other Paso del Norte descendants to migrate into the Mesilla Valley. The Anglo settlers in particular were extremely unruly, lawless, and labeled as “undesirables” by the Anglo officials who were made aware of the countless violations of Indian land rights and civil and human rights. The actions of the lawless white settlers served as a catalyst that sent many of the regions Indian and mixed ethnic families into the Mesilla Valley where they founded the towns of Dona Ana, Mesilla, Tortugas, Las Cruces, and other villages and hamlets where they could reestablish their families and livelihoods.

The US or American period further erased the PMT and Tiguas from Ysleta del Sur, mostly out of ignorance, as many newly arrived Euro-Americans neither knew nor cared about the true identity of the regions darker, Spanish speaking peoples. For many Euro-Americans, the “Indians” were those who lived nomadic lifestyles (Apaches and Comanche’s primarily), outside of the confines of towns or pueblos. The Spanish language and customs, along with Catholicism, which was adopted by the areas Native peoples, allowed for the newly arrived settlers to conveniently label them as Mexican instead of Piro, Manso, Tiwa, or Suma. “The Americans described the Piros and Tiguas of the El Paso region as “civilized” or “Christian”, as opposed to “wild” Indians, a contemporary term for the Apache and Comanche.” (Houser, p. 4). For the Anglo Americans, it was easier to lump all non-Apache and Comanche as Mexicans, rather than Indians. This confusion could be ascribed to ignorance, or even laziness on the part of the newly arrived settlers. Houser (p. 4) states that, “Indians living within a mixed community (of Pueblo Indians and Mexicans) were difficult for the Americans to distinguish who were unfamiliar with the Tigua and Mexican culture. Aside from ignorance, for land hungry settlers, it was also easier to claim lands that had belonged to “Mexicans”, in spite of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, than it was to claim lands that had belonged to the Indians.
By the end of the 19th century, many of the PMT ancestors who migrated into the Mesilla Valley and Dona Ana were classified in U.S. census records as white, although many of their children were sent to Indian boarding schools, and they continued to live and function as a Native community.

Like other Indian communities that were forced to assimilate into the greater U.S. society, they faced enormous pressures to survive as tribal people, and experienced internal conflict causing the fracturing of the community, and later re-organization.

The PMT, upon arriving in the Mesilla Valley, were mostly living in density in Las Cruces forming an “Indian barrio”, and in Tortugas, NM. Tortugas was organized into a corporation with the help of an Anglo settler, Eugene Van Patten, who infamously married a “Piro” woman who was a part of that community. In any case, because of the historic land struggles that the PMT had faced, Van Patten’s corporation formed around the idea of preserving the Tortugas community for the PMT Indians. Internal conflicts arose in the 1930’s around questions of leadership and Indian heritage, causing many PMT members to separate themselves from the Tortugas community. As a result, the PMT formed a separate community, severing links with the Tortugas community, and in the 1970’s they applied for federal recognition.

Unfortunately, the pressures to assimilate and the changes in traditional lifestyles and lifeways have also caused rifts between Indians at Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico in the 1920’s, and among the Ysleta del Sur Tigua in the 1990’s. These problems are not unique to the regions pueblo communities, and are heavily influenced by the breakdown of traditional relationships between tribal members, new economic opportunities which drew tribal people away from home communities and integrated them into the cash economy, often including relocation away from the community, and other factors that changed the focus away from the needs of the community.
and tribe, and towards the needs of the individual person or family group. In other words, the social fabric that had long maintained Pueblo traditions was severely strained against the pressures of the rapidly changing world around them.

In addition to the internal pressures of maintaining a tribal community in a rapidly changing capitalist society, there were immense pressures against portraying oneself as an Indian, because racial prejudice and systematic oppression against Indians who were thought to be inferior and primitive in contrast to White Europeans who were the opposite. As such, families who lived in the Southwest and outside of official Native communities often hid their Indianess and tried to conceal it or minimize it as a form of survival and assimilation. “If you get any darker, they’ll mistake you for an Indian” (Anzaldua, p.198) was a phrase familiar to many of those families and a way of reinforcing the racial hierarchy. After reading this passage from Gloria Anzaldua, I was reminded of a story my grandmother and her sister told me one time. They were talking about their childhood in Chamberino, New Mexico when they joked about how my grandmother, who was the fairest skinned of her sisters, was kept inside to cook for the family while the rest of the family worked in the surrounding farms as laborers and on their own family plots. The joke was that my grandmother happened to be the worst cook among her sisters, and so they usually just ate potatoes and beans. My grandmothers limited culinary skills did not matter as much as preserving her fair skin. And like my grandmothers sisters, Anzaldua was no stranger to farm labor in the fierce summer heat in large part because of her skin color.
Chapter 3: Findings

In the 1787 Heads of household, Indians could fall into three categories: Indios del Pueblo, Indios “vecinos, and Genizaros. The Indios del Pueblo had specific tribal affiliations for each particular pueblo – Piro for Senecu and Socorro, Tiguas at Ysleta, Sumas at San Lorenzo, and Mansos and Piros at Guadalupe. A separate Indio category could be found among the vecinos for each pueblo, which most likely meant that they were Indians with biological links to the particular Indios del Pueblo for their respective communities, but with the vecino status. The Genizaros were primarily Apache and Comanche in the Paso del Norte region although other non-pueblo Indians were among them. Mestizos, Lobos, and Coyotes all had Indian ancestry, to varying degrees but included African and Spanish as well. Africans were also among the 1787 population and were listed as Negros. The Españoles, as previously mentioned, were themselves a mixture of European and other ethnicities and they were a minority, composing only 35% of the total heads of household that year. This supports the research findings of Murillo (2016) who argues that during the Spanish colonial period, “Native peoples, Africans, and castas regularly outnumbered their colonizers” (p. 7) which is clearly the case in the Paso del Norte community in 1787.

By 1814, all of the previous ethnic/racial categories were combined into just two: vecino and Indio. There was also a dramatic shift in the demographics of all of the Paso del Norte communities which saw a dramatic drop in the Indio population while a corresponding increase occurred among the vecino population for each of the communities. While constant warfare and occasional diseases would have affected the populations of Paso del Norte, it is unlikely that Indian families in the region would have simply disappeared or died off in large numbers as the census records suggest. It is most likely that many of the Paso del Norte Indians were simply
absorbed into the vecino population for various reasons which I will explore further in the conclusion. Also of significance is the Mision de Guadalupe community, which is now broken down into several sub-villages or neighborhoods: Centro, Charco, Playa, Álamo Gacho, Barrial, Chamizal, Álamos, Playa, and Calaveras.

3.1 1787 Paso del Norte Heads of Household and 1814 Paso del Norte census

![Guadalupe: Vecinos y Yndios](image)

**FIGURE 1. GUADALUPE: Vecinos y Yndios**

(Spanish 56%, Mestizos 25%, Indios del Pueblo 12%, Coyotes 6%, and Lobos 1%.)

**TABLE 2: 1814 CENSUS PASO DEL NORTE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Espanoles</th>
<th>Parbula</th>
<th>Adultos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centro</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barreal</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charco</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamisal</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamos</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plalla</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamo Gacho</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calaberas</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yndios en el Pueblo</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1455</td>
<td>3405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Espanoles 95%, Indios del Pueblo 5%)

The 1787 Heads of Household for Guadalupe were as follows, 56% Spanish, 25% Mestizo, 12% Indios del Pueblo, 6% Coyotes, and 1% Lobos. While it was composed of a majority Spanish population in 1787, the population as a whole was diverse and featured sizable Mestizo and Indios del Pueblo populations. Considering the ethnic makeup of the Coyotes and Lobos, who had Indian and African admixtures, Indians and mixed-race people formed nearly half of the Guadalupe population (CJMA, MF 513, 77-142).

By 1814, the Spanish population grew in both size and proportion encompassing 95% of the population, absorbing the remaining ethnic groups, leaving only 5% as Indios del Pueblo. Guadalupe, by 1814, was divided into sub-villages or neighborhoods such as Centro, Charco, Playa, Álamo Gacho, Barrial, Chamizal, Álamos, Playa, and Calavera. The Manso and Piro Indians were by then concentrated in the Barrial and Chamizal neighborhoods (Nuestra Senora, 2006).

**Figure 2: San Lorenzo: Indios y vecinos**
TABLE 3: REAL DE SAN LORENZO: 1787

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Españoles</th>
<th>Mestizos</th>
<th>Indios</th>
<th>Lobos</th>
<th>Coyotes</th>
<th>Genizaros</th>
<th>Indios del Pueblo</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Españoles 6%, Indios 39%, Mestizos 33%, Lobos 13%, Coyotes 7%, and Genizaros 1%)

TABLE 4: REAL DE SAN LORENZO: 1814

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vecinos</th>
<th>Yndios</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Vecinos 93% of population, Indios 7%)

The San Lorenzo de Real heads of household in 1787 were as such: Indios del Pueblo, 39%, Mestizos 33%, and Lobos 13%, while Coyotes 7%, Españoles 6%, and Genizaros 1% of the population. In 1787 then, San Lorenzo de Real was primarily an Indian and Mestizo community, forming a large majority, or 72% of the heads of household (CJMA, MF 513, 77-142).

By 1814, San Lorenzo saw a major demographic shift with vecinos now forming 93% of the population, and Indios del Pueblo 7% (Nuestra Senora, 2006). This is a major change, and the proportion shift suggests that it is a change in classification rather than an actual demographic change.
In 1787, Ysleta del Sur was primarily composed of Indios del Pueblo at 41%, Mestizo at 14%, and Spaniards at 23% of the population heads of household. The Ysleta del Sur mestizo population is most likely a byproduct of the mission’s Indians and Spaniards, thereby having ties to both communities (CJMA, MF 513, 77-142).

By 1814, the Indios del Pueblo and vecinos were evenly split at 50% of the population each (Nuestra Senora, 2006).
FIGURE 4: SENECU DEL SUR, INDIOS Y VECINOS

(Indios del Pueblo 68%, Coyotes 18%, Spaniards 11%, Mestizos 3%)

TABLE 7: SENECU DEL SUR, 1814

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vecinos</th>
<th>Yndios</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Vecinos 37% of population, Indios 63%)

In 1787, Indios del Pueblo at Senecu formed the majority of the population heads of household at 68%, Coyotes 18%, Mestizos 3%, while the Spaniards were only 11% of the heads of household (CJMA, MF 513, 77-142).

By 1814, the Indios del Pueblo still formed a majority at 63%, and vecinos were 37% of the population (Nuestra Senora, 2006).
In 1787, Socorro del Sur featured a majority Mestizo heads of household at 55%, Indios del Pueblo 24%, Coyotes 10%, Spaniards 9%, Lobos 2%, and Negros less than 1%. Socorro del Sur featured the most diverse population in the Paso del Norte region and it was the only mission that featured Black heads of household in 1787 (CJMA, MF 513, 77-142).

By 1814, the Socorro del Sur population was 90% vecino, with Indios del Pueblo forming only 10% of the population (Nuestra Senora, 2006). Socorro del Sur is often described as the
most assimilated or “Hispanicized” of the Indian majority missions in Paso del Norte, although the reasons for this are not clear in my research.

**Table 9: Paso del Norte 1787 Heads of Household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senecu</th>
<th>Socorro</th>
<th>Ysleta</th>
<th>San Lorenzo</th>
<th>Guadalupe</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indios</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mestizos</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyotes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobos</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genizaros</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negros</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Españoles</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6: Paso del Norte 1787 Heads of Household**

(FIGURE 6: PASO DEL NORTE 1787 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD)

**Figure 7: Paso del Norte 1787 Heads of Household**

(FIGURE 7: PASO DEL NORTE 1787 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD)

(Spanish: 321 = %35, Native and mixed: 584 = %65 of population heads of household)
FIGURE 8: PASO DEL NORTE 1812 CENSUS

(Vecinos 87%, Indios del Pueblo 13%)

The dramatic shift in the population from Indios to vecinos from the periods studied can be attributed, in part, to the increased assimilation and “Hispanicization” of the mission Indians, genizaros, and other non-Spaniards who “acquired new ethnic classifications” (Blackhawk, 2006, p. 80) as did the genizaros in Blackhawk’s study. He documents a major growth in the proportion vecinos of New Mexican village of Abiquiu, while the proportion of genizaros in that village decreases from 1760 to 1821.

The El Paso del Norte Indian community, in a similar fashion, also became absorbed into the vecino population, at least in official records. While the Pueblos of Senecu and Ysleta still maintained relatively large Indian populations, the rest of the communities in the Paso del Norte region saw a major decline in official “Indios del Pueblo” and corresponding growth’s in their vecino populations.

The best explanation for this shift, as this research indicates, is due to a change in classification, and not racial/ethnic composition of the Paso del Norte community. What led to
this shift is not easily answered in this research because of the gaps in census records, and the other issues related to record keeping, and the fluidity of classification, but what is evident is that Indians were absorbed into the greater vecino population.

3.2 PMT today

While conducting the final year of my research, I was fortunate to be able to conduct a field study with the Piro Manso Tiwa Tribe of San Juan de Guadalupe from March of 2017 until March of 2018. During that time, I attended tribal council meetings and ceremonies with the PMT tribe and given unrestricted access to tribal members.

While I was able to participate in the PMT’s meetings and ceremonies, I did not conduct a traditional field observation with recording devices, cameras, or other commonly used research tools. In fact, I chose not to carry a notebook or take any notes during my time with the tribe and instead opted to minimize my intrusion by writing field notes at home, after the meetings and ceremonies. This was done to limit my obvious presence as an outsider and researcher, and to help ensure that I would not be distracted and instead fully focused on the people and events I attended.

During 2017-18 of research with the PMT, I attended the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter solstice ceremonies and council meetings. The meetings took place in a public library in Las Cruces, and in the home of one of the tribal elders. The ceremonies occurred in areas in and around the greater Las Cruces area. With respect to the PMT, I will not discuss the meetings or ceremonies in detail. However, I can say that the meetings were generally well attended, as are the ceremonies with several families and extended families who live in the Las Cruces area, and in distant states like California and Nevada.
The PMT’s ceremonial sites and local knowledge reflect the tribe’s synthesis and integration of Piro, Manso, and Tiwa Indigenous peoples. For instance, some of the tribe’s ceremonial sites and sacred spaces where ceremonial items were gathered from are mostly thought of as Manso territories, and Piros and Mansos may have used one site before the arrival of the Spanish. These sacred sites feature petroglyphs, pottery shards, arrowheads, and metates among other items that link PMT members to their ancestors. The synthesis among the Piro, Manso, and Tiwa peoples is evident not only in the intermarriage among the tribal members, but the shared knowledge of sacred spaces and traditions. PMT members shared some of their sacred stories and knowledge about the areas mentioned, and were very aware of their ancestor’s connection to these spaces. Additionally, they had the proper documentation and or permits to conduct their ceremonies and gather plants and other ceremonial items from these locations that included a national park and Bureau of Land Management controlled lands. The fact that they both knew about these places and were recognized by local, state, and federal authorities as tribal people reinforces their claim and rights as native people.

While participating in the meetings and ceremonies, I witnessed the participation of tribal members of all ages. While the PMT tribe has struggled to obtain official federal recognition, which would grant the tribe access to resources that would help ensure the tribes survival and growth, it was impressive to see how it continues to thrive in spite of minimal resources, which mostly come from the tribal members themselves. The PMT leaders are currently working to coordinate Tiwa language classes and a moccasin making class for their members. The tribal members truly function as a tribe, and manage to maintain their traditions without the resources afforded to recognized tribal communities. It is a responsibility that PMT members carry with
pride, but one that adds to the challenges that the tribe faces as tribal elders and knowledge holders pass on without being able to share their knowledge with the younger generations.
Chapter 4: Conclusion

Indigenous people from the Paso del Norte region, like their counterparts in other regions in North America, have had to navigate several layers of colonization, each with its own methods of classification. Whether they were erroneously classified as vecinos, Mexicans, or other, they undoubtedly found ways to maintain their own identity, in a fashion similar to African Americans in the double consciousness theory of W.E.B. DuBois. They navigated several identities while maintaining an Indian identity, even when their “Indianness” was challenged.

The PMT tribal members had to negotiate a Spanish (later Mexican), Indian, and American identity, unlike the African Americans in DuBois’s theory who only had two identities to navigate. This unique situation where Native Americans in the US-Mexico borderlands had a third identity to navigate is why I thought that triple consciousness is perhaps a more accurate way to view the borderlands. Like in DuBois theory, there exists a unique or internal perspective of identity for Native Americans on the border along with the outside perspective which could label them as Indians or Hispanic Mexicans. Because of these two imposed and identities, American and Mexican, and their own identities as Indian people, the PMT tribal members, like African-Americans struggle with a fragmented identity.

As Indian people, the PMT tribal members have mostly lived among other tribal members in reconstituted Indian communities which featured mostly Indian and Mestizo people. In that environment, they also lived as tribal people who maintained many of the customs and traditions of their ancestors to include using and understanding the local flora and fauna, drumming and singing Indian chants, participating in communal activities such as the traditional
rabbit hunt, and having an understanding and awareness of the tribal leaders and other tribal members.

However, PMT tribal members also lived around Spanish and later Mexican-American majority communities, and because of the Indigenous heritage of some Mexican-Americans, they often shared some similar features such as dark skin, hair, and eyes along with other shared or similar phenotypes. These two communities, Indian and Mexican-American, are not as far apart as say the Indian and American communities in terms of cultural activities and practices, and this blurred line is not as sharp, particularly for outsiders who are unfamiliar with those distinctions. When PMT members navigate the Mexican-American world, they are not likely to face as many internal conflicts because of the familiarity with the culture. Many borderlands Native Americans speak Spanish, listen to Mexican music, and participate in some Mexican-American traditions and holidays, for instance.

In other settings, such as the workplace, school, or in some cases the neighborhood could be white majority, which creates a separate awareness for Indian people who may have to act and think in a totally different way than they do in their home community. PMT members, in these settings, may be identified as Indian or Mexican-American by white Americans, and thereby have to work to both fit into the white world, while still maintaining their own internal identity. This means that PMT members might have to speak and act differently in this setting, sometimes fitting into stereotypical roles, and at other times fighting against those roles. In this environment PMT members are likely to behave and act differently than they would in their own home communities.
Diana Velasco Murillo’s “urban Indian” concept, helps us understand how native people were able to maintain that Indian identity, in spite of living in close proximity to the colonizer. She argues that the “adaptation of Spanish-style civic identities did not lead to the erosion of indigenous societies, but actually facilitated their persistence” (p. 5). Native peoples in Zacatecas, as well as in the Paso del Norte region, established their own communities, maintained traditional ways of existing, and adopted Spanish customs, all while creating a distinct Indian identity within those communities. In the Paso del Norte community, each Indian pueblo had its own Indigenous leaders who were recognized as such by the Spaniards. They also had their own distinct ceremonial feast days, celebrating particular saints or other Catholic symbols: Ysleta del Sur and Senecu del Sur, celebrated San Antonio, or Saint Anthony on their feast day on June 13th, and the Guadalupe Mission Indians celebrated the Virgin of Guadalupe in December. The ceremonies and events that occurred during these celebrations featured Indian dances, traditional races, and other ancient practices in conjunction with adopted Catholic traditional practices. This negotiation between two seemingly conflicting spiritual traditions allowed for the Paso del Norte Indian communities to continue to practice their ancient traditions, even if modified, allowing for the survival of those traditions that might have otherwise disappeared.

The Enlightenment inspired eighteenth century Bourbon Reforms which sought to “centralize authority and increase economic activity” (Murillo, 2017, p. 161) would have a tremendous impact on Indigenous communities across the empire interrupting all aspects of their lives. The Bourbon Reforms weakened Indigenous leadership, religious organizations, land rights and even identity. In Zacatecas, for example, the Indigenous population at the end of the 18th century was no longer exempt from tribute, or free labor, and other rights and privileges
were no longer recognized. In addition, long standing Indian communities and communal lands were increasingly under threat from the expanding Spanish pueblos.

While these particular changes occurred in Zacatecas, it is very likely that similar changes resulting from the Bourbon Reforms affected the Paso del Norte Indian communities. This would help explain why such a dramatic demographic shift occurred from 1787 to 1814 in the Paso del Norte region. This shift from Indio to vecino, was in part, imposed upon the Indigenous people of the region, and in part an example of the agency of the Paso del Norte Indians. Vecinos were allowed to purchase and own private land, something not generally afforded to the Indios del Pueblo. Evidence of this tactic can be found in Houser’s 2002 analysis of Ysleta del Sur land transactions. In his analysis, Houser identifies several Ysleta del Sur Tiguas who are listed as both Indian and vecino among the land records. In the index, for example, he documents a Pedro Gonzales (pg. 2) who is listed as an Indian and vecino who sold land to Jacinto Telles, Pablo Marquez who is classified as a Ysleta Indian and a vecino (pg. 6), and Masedonio Trujillo who is listed as Yndigena or Indian and as a vecino of Ysleta as some examples.

The arrival of the Anglo population to the Paso del Norte region in the mid-19th century further added to the challenges of maintaining an Indian identity, at least to outsiders who found it difficult to distinguish between Indians and Mexicans. “Tiguas and Mexicans often dressed alike and their houses were similar”, according to Houser (2002, p. 4), and it was easier to classify them as a homogenous people rather than to learn about the particular nuances that distinguished them as separate people.
The survival of the PMT Indian Tribe is a testament to the resilience and determination of that Indian community to maintain its identity intact in spite of the multiple challenges they face as non-recognized Indian people. The ceremonies that the tribe maintains help reaffirm and solidify their commitment to each other as tribal people. Like many other native communities across the United States, some of their members live outside of the community but travel often to join their PMT relatives in ceremony and for other tribal related functions. The PMT maintains a visible profile in the greater Las Cruces community.
References


Vita

Eric Murillo was born in El Paso, Texas and raised in a small West Texas town. After military service, he enrolled at UTEP and graduated with a Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies in December of 2012. As an applied sociologist, he used research he conducted as an undergraduate to help pass a local wage theft ordinance in El Paso in 2015 while working as a community organizer.