

THESIS

CHICANISMO, INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND LATERAL VIOLENCE:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INDIGENOUS IDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS IN
COLORADO

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2011

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ABSTRACT

CHICANISMO, INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND LATERAL VIOLENCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INDIGENOUS IDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS IN COLORADO

This thesis research project examines the reported narratives of those individuals that identify as Indigenous, and contrasts the experiences of tribally enrolled and federally recognized individuals against individuals who are not federally recognized to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Indigenous identity, the Chicano claim to indigeneity and the relationship between these two communities. Qualitative interviews were conducted with twenty-three individuals—adults that are tribally enrolled and federally recognized and adults that identify as Indigenous but are not federally recognized—to examine how *gringismo* impacts and informs lateral violence in the Indigenous communities of Colorado. The findings of this study provide new insights to understanding how colonialism has shaped Indigenous identity, informed lateral violence and hostility, and undermined pan-Indigenous unity through *desplazamiento*—dislocation and dissociation—and *susto heredado*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to return to graduate school it became necessary for me to put many of my family and community responsibilities on hold as I continued to juggle other duties. I have to acknowledge the unconditional support that I received from my family and community. As my niece Miranda Encina attended classes herself, I often got to watch over her children Xavier Mazatl and Nizhoni Tlixihuitl. The days that I spend with them encouraged and reminded me of why I do what I do. As always, my mother, Dora Esquibel, did whatever she could to make my days of study easier to get through with meals, cleaning or words of encouragement. I was inspired by the passion of my nephew Zach Xiuhtekpatl Serrano to return to school but it was professor Arturo Aldama that kept lighting fires under me to apply, and then helped me with the application process. Friends and colleagues, Frank O'Caña, Toni Cook and Charlene Ortiz, helped with resources and letters to assure I had everything I needed to be a success. Belinda Garcia and the people and staff of Sisters of Color United for Education provided the space for interviews and ceremony giving me a home in Denver out of which to work. Blake Angelo with his weekly visits and long conversations helped me to flush out my thoughts. Critical to my wellbeing have been the drumming circles, monthly temazcalli ceremonies and family gatherings. I am grateful to my students for taking on community responsibilities to assure that everything continued to flow without interruption: Zach Serrano, Miranda Encina, Leroy Saiz, Anthony Ginn, Brianna Mestas, Cynthia Diaz,

Andres Aragon, Santiago Jaramillo, Andrew Ratekin, Jose Lugo and Elisa Facio. Picking up the slack along the way were my sisters, Lynn and Kathy Esquibel.

Scholarships for my studies came from the Alexander Foundation and the wonderful people of the Imperial Court of Denver who have been supporting gay and lesbian students with the White Rose Scholarship for over 35 years. The Ethnic Studies Department also provided me with scholarship money and a grant to pursue my research. It was an honor to receive the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Award from the Graduate School at Colorado State University that covered my tuition.

The faculty of the Ethnic Studies Department are wonderful. The Chair, Irene Vernon, always has a hug and a smile to brighten the day of any student. The scholarship, instruction and direction that the faculty provided me gave me a new voice with the words and agency to express what I consider to be critical issues regarding communities of color. I am grateful for the instruction of professors Roe Bubar, Joon Kim, Eric Ishiwata, Norberto Valdez, and Ernesto Sagás.

I am not sure I could have chosen a more compatible professor to chair my committee than Professor Ernesto Sagás. I valued our visits in Spanish and English where he constantly reminded me to “keep my eye on the prize.” Professor Sagás’ guidance and support helped me to believe in what I was doing and provided a roadmap for getting there. He spent countless hours “bleeding” all over my drafts to assure clarity and thoroughness in my thesis. I shall be forever indebted. Professors Irene Vernon and Erik Aoki, as members of my committee, provided me with invaluable support and encouragement. It was a real breath of fresh air not to have to explain myself or my politics as a person of color dedicated to issues of social justice.

This work is dedicated to my grandmother Dometilia Madrid de Garcia, my mother, María Isidorita Esquibel, and to my family for motivating and inspiring me to give all that I can on behalf of our community.

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INTRODUCTION

Nuestros Dioses eran de Guerra y recibimos con paz a los invasores; su Dios era un Dios de paz y nos sometieron con una Guerra despiadada; nosotros éramos un imperio y los recibimos como el pueblo más humilde y ellos en cambio nos traicionaron. Cuando en las guerras tomábamos un prisionero, le dábamos la oportunidad de pelear por su vida y ellos mataron despiadadamente a todo aquel que caía preso. Nosotros éramos consecuentes con la enseñanza de los viejos. Nosotros pagamos con la sangre de nuestros hijos el dolor que infringimos como imperio a otros pueblos. Ellos, ¿cuando pagaran por su infamia? (Cruz Rodríguez Tlacuilo 2004, 19)

The decision to return to graduate school in my fifties was predicated on the myriad invitations I had received to teach courses at a number of post-secondary institutions. The invitations came because after fifteen years of intensive study with traditional healers from five different communities, including my own Apache community, I was positioned to provide an invaluable insight as a professor to disciplines hungry for an insider perspective on Indigenous¹ issues. Lacking the required credentials to teach at a university level, however, required that I return to school. In addition to the application to graduate school I filled out approximately twenty applications for scholarships. I am grateful to have received scholarships from the Alexander Foundation, the White Rose Scholarship Foundation (twice), from the Ethnic Studies Department and from the Colorado State University Graduate Program – Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship. In

¹ I use the term, “Indigenous,” to broadly reference those communities that are the original inhabitants (including their descendants) of the Americas. The word is intentionally capitalized to acknowledge its reference to a “racial” population. The term “Native American” will only be used to reference those Indigenous communities that are federally recognized.

addition, I received a grant to conduct the study for this thesis from the Ethnic Studies Department.

What came as an unpleasant surprise to me when I was notified about scholarship status was the denial of scholarships from the American Indian Graduate Center, the American Indian College Fund, and the Native American Scholarship Fund. The response from the American Indian Graduate Center probably summed up best the decisions of all of the foundations, “I am sorry that we are unable to financially support your graduate education, but this is due to the fact that our major source of funds is a contract with the Bureau of Indian Education, and we are restricted by contractual program criteria set by the federal government to members or descendants of *federally recognized tribes*. It has raised questions and created hard feelings through the years...” (italics my own).² Despite a lifetime of involvement in the Indigenous community, a 4.0 grade point average, and the leadership and mentoring that I have provided to our Indigenous youth, I was disqualified from receiving educational scholarships targeting Indigenous students because I am registered with a tribe that is not federally recognized. This is in violation of the agreements made between my ancestors and the United States government via the three treaties signed by the two parties.³ I wondered how many other

² Joan V. Currier, Chief Operating Officer of the American Indian Graduate Center, email correspondence to author, 14 June 2010, responding to my inquiries about being denied a scholarship.

³ There were three treaties signed that related to the band of Apaches from which my family descends. The first treaty signed on July 1, 1852 in Santa Fe, New Mexico by Colonel E. V. Sumner, U. S. A., commanding the 9th Department and in charge of the executive office of New Mexico, and John Greiner, Indian agent, and Cuentas, Azules, Blancito, Negrito, Capitan Simon, Captain Vuelta, and Mangus Colorado, chiefs, acting on the part of the Apache Nation of Indians, wherein it was declared that as Apache people we were recognized as citizens of the United States of America and that “hostilities between the contracting parties shall forever cease.” In exchange, the United States agreed to protect our people from white aggressions (murder, theft or mistreatment) and to “grant to said Indians such donations, presents, and implements, and adopt such other liberal and humane measures as said government may deem meet and proper” (Treaty with the Apache, 1852; Hook, 1987)

The second treaty signed July 27, 1853 was meant to bring peace between the Kiowa, the Apache, the Comanche and “nations of Indians, inhabiting the said territory south of the Arkansas River.” It

Indigenous individuals had also been similarly slighted. It became a question worth pursuing and once I was provided the language to describe the “ism” that I experienced it became the focus of my thesis project.

Lateral violence, also known as “horizontal violence” (Duffy, 1995; Dunn, 2003; Farrell, 1997; Freshwater, 2000; McCall, 1996; Skillings, 1992) and “horizontal hostility” (Bartholomew, 2006; Thomas, 2003) is defined as “the indirect expression of aggressive behavior, internalized hostility, and divisiveness.” (Stanley, et al, 2007; Roberts, 2000). Participants in this study described the violence as “racism” lacking the technical language to define their experiences even though the racism they described came from other Indigenous people.

This qualitative study examines the perceived notions of discrimination and lateral violence, i.e., hostility, violence and oppression, experienced by individuals that identify as Indigenous. For the purpose of this study, qualitative interviews were conducted in two distinctly categorized Indigenous populations with twenty-three individuals: adults that are tribally enrolled and federally recognized, and adults that identify as Indigenous but are not federally recognized. This study also examines how

allowed for US incursions into Indian Territory in exchange for payments to the three Indigenous nations. The United States was also bound “to protect and defend the Indian tribes, parties hereto, against the committal of any depredations upon them, and in their territories, by the people of the United States, for and during the term for which this treaty shall be in force, and to compensate them for any injuries that may result therefrom.” (Treaty with the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache, 1853)

The third treaty that bound the Apache to the previous treaties signed by the Arapaho and Cheyenne signed on October 14, 1865, declared that the “Cheyenne, Arrapahoe, [sic] and Apache tribes, henceforth shall be and they are hereby united, and the United States will hereafter recognize said tribes as the confederated bands or tribes of Cheyenne, Arrapahoe, [sic] and Apache Indians” (Treaty with the Apache, Cheyenne, and Arapaho, 1856). Signed at a camp on the council grounds of the Little Arkansas River, in the State of Kansas (now Colorado), this treaty dissolved our relationship regarding territory with the Kiowa and Comanche and united us with the Cheyenne and Arapaho granting us a territory in southeastern Colorado. This later became known as the Fort Wise Treaty and the Arkansas River Reservation. Fort Wise was later renamed Fort Lyon. The significance of these treaties is not lost on us. We have yet to be accommodated for our losses.

*gringismo*⁴ impacts and informs lateral violence in the Indigenous communities of Colorado and New Mexico. By examining the qualifiers of ancestry, race, nationality, ethnic identity, culture, religion/spiritual practices and politics, the degree to which the individuals interviewed have been intentionally subjugated, displaced and marginalized—by both U.S. policy and tribal entities—is explored. Consequent to this historical experience, this study focuses on how individuals identify, what that identity means and how Indigenous identity is informed by issues of race, nationality, ethnic identity, culture, language, politics and geographical space. Although lateral violence began as the objective of this study, the findings revealed a more salient issue around Indigenous identification that warranted exploration. The findings provide new insight into Indigenous identity and how it is constructed to inform lateral violence.

The relationship between the United States government and Native Americans is unique in that it is a legally binding relationship founded in the many treaties that have been signed beginning with those initiated by the English Crown. It is a relationship that is distinct and apart from that of “ethnic minorities”⁵ in the United States. Because most people are unaware of this distinct relationship, they are quick to relegate Native Americans to the same thresholds as communities of color. It is disingenuous to relegate Native Americans to the status of an ethnic “minority,” even though the U.S. census data

⁴ The word *gringo*, which translates as foreigner, is the best descriptive term found by this author to succinctly describe those individuals that are usually, but not always, white and that are privileged by a genocidal, patriarchal, Christian, colonialist, capitalistic, white supremacist epistemology and hegemony called *gringismo*. The term *gringo* is used in its original meaning, which is neither pejorative nor offensive (Young, 1994).

⁵ The overuse of the term “minority” to reference groups that are not white, male, heterosexual and Christian has become disconcertingly commonplace without regard to its implication that the group being addressed is “less than whole” when in reality it means “not white, male heterosexual or Christian.” It is a term that I find disempowering. Therefore, I have made a conscious choice not to contribute to this insidious form of oppression.

indicates only one percent of the population as identifying as Native American. Legal Native American classification is much more complicated than what can be reported in census data where Indigenous communities are relegated on par with white, black, Asian and Latino communities. The relationship between the U.S. government and the federally-recognized Native American tribal communities is defined by treaty law, not affirmative action. The special status that Native American communities hold as sovereign nations has been defined by the Supreme Court and mandated by treaty agreements that have enduring status and are outside the purview of state and municipal laws. Federal laws have been written and enforced that pertain specifically to tribally enrolled Native Americans for their benefit as well as to their detriment. These laws hold state and federal governing bodies accountable for promises made to Native Americans in exchange for land that was ceded—whether willingly or under duress. For as much as the United States would like to be excused from its treaty obligations, the treaty decrees remain in effect. Therefore, for those Indigenous individuals and communities that are systematically excluded from participation, i.e., being regarded as Native American, through no fault of their own (the limited choices of many of their ancestors were often made under duress and for survival), the issue of status as descendants of the victims of colonialism and treaty agreements remains critical.

There is an intuitive and experiential sense on the part of the Indigenous communities that are not federally recognized or tribally enrolled that a level of discrimination exists that prohibits them from being recognized as Indigenous and from fully participating and realizing benefits guaranteed to “Native Americans” consequent to the invasion of their homelands. Might there be, then, because of this non-status

categorization a level of lateral violence (victims might define it as a form of racism) that Chicanos⁶ experience from members and political bodies that represent federally recognized and tribally enrolled Indigenous communities? There is a potential for lateral violence as well as the possibility that lateral violence may be more prevalent than believed and that the violence is being exacerbated, if not encouraged, by a U.S. governmental policy that imposes itself upon both the Native American and Indigenous Chicano communities. I examine such a hypothesis. As I began the research, it became apparent that before lateral violence could be addressed it was necessary to first understand how Indigenous identity has been constructed over time and how history informs contemporary constructions of Indigenous identity.

There are 565 federally recognized tribes in the United States. The agreements made between these tribes as a result of the treaties that were penned since the arrival of the gringos establish a special nation-to-nation relationship that obligates each party. The obligations to the American Indian people by the United States government – although not always honored – have been specifically addressed by Congress. For those tribes that are federally recognized, the obligations cannot be negated. This legally binding relationship governs what “rights” members of the federally recognized tribes receive in terms of healthcare, education, land allotments, and trust funds; the residual privileges of having their lands and livelihoods stolen. For those tribal communities that have not been federally recognized, the U.S. government denies any responsibility and further asserts that these communities are not “American Indians” at all. The U.S. government, then, is

⁶ I will use the term “Chicano” (in contrast to the terms Mexican-American, Mestizo, etc.) to reference people and communities originally residing on the territory acquired by the United States via the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the 1853 Gadsden Purchase who are descendants of Indigenous/Native American communities displaced and impacted, first, by Spanish colonialism, and then, British/American colonialism.

the primary architect of American Indian-ness. Therefore, it is critical to deconstruct and understand how the legal classification and conceptualization of the term “Indian” as imposed by U.S. policy then informs contemporary Indigenous communities and individuals and, in particular, the participants of this study.

Chicanos, who are ancestral descendants of the original inhabitants of the present-day Southwestern United States, have been stripped of their ties to land, language, culture and history, so that only the claim to a “label” of an Indigenous self-identity remains. Maintaining a claim to Indigenous self-identification is a continued act of resistance against the gringo hegemony and is a critical battleground for affirmation of a history of traumatic atrocities and injustices that the gringo would just as soon erase. The focus of this thesis is to examine and reify the Chicano of the Southwestern United States as an Indigenous population by contrasting historical similarities between the Native American narrative and the Chicano narrative. I explore the implications of recognizing the Chicano of the Southwestern United States as an Indigenous population by examining four categories of indigeneity—lineage, intra-social, inter-social and tierra—to assess how the Chicano has been intentionally subjugated, displaced and marginalized, and to evaluate “if” and “how” that violence is reflected, as reported in the interviews, in the relationship between the Chicano and Native American communities.

I assert that the Chicano has been intentionally subjugated - historically and politically - and systematically disregarded to negate the political implications of governmental responsibility and subaltern resistance. In the interest of an unceasing colonial acquisition of resources, the Chicano has been displaced resulting in exile and “othering.” Because laws, policy decisions, funding allocations and political trends are

and have been shaped by demographic and census data, it is critical to reify and reassert the Indigenous Chicano identity to rectify and bring to an end the violence and injustice that plagues the Chicano community from myriad external forces. The omission of the Chicano nation as a federally and tribally recognized Native American community perpetuates violence. I address that omission by looking at the construction of identity through an Indigenous and socio-political lens considering the contributions of contemporary writers.

I have chosen to explore the plight of the Indigenous Chicano from both an area studies perspective emphasizing “the relation between a displaced population and its point of origin” and a cultural studies tradition emphasizing “the relation between a displaced population and the nation-state in which it is located” (Yelvington 2004). Finally, the implications of the political shift and its potential consequences of embracing a Chicano Indigenous identity are addressed by an analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. Using “critical realism” (Maxwell 2009) for evaluating and validating individual responses to questions designed to elicit perspectives on the questions of identity and lateral violence, I look at the relative frequency of particular responses as well as “variation in occurrence of similar or analogous instances” (Erickson 2009) to note the importance of the themes extracted from the data.

The historical antecedents that impact and inform Indigenous identity are explored in the second chapter. Two narratives are addressed. In one narrative, the colonization of the U.S. Southwest by the first Christian invaders sets the stage for constructions of identity based on the clash of two worlds. Indigenous perceptions of self are challenged by the arrival of a new colonizer from the east hell bent on stealing settled

land and exploiting any and all resources available. Along with this second wave of colonization come new laws and forms of governance that radically disrupt previous colonization patterns. This new wave has shaped the narrative of a separate population of Indigenous communities colonized by a different group of Christians. Identity is reconstructed and Indigenous communities are set against each other exacerbating divisions that, in some cases, did not exist. New forms of lateral violence develop that continue to the present.

In Chapter Three, I address the methodologies utilized to analyze the qualitative data from the interviews that I conducted. A pilot study helped to shape and inform the questionnaire developed for this qualitative study. From the pilot study the focus of this thesis emerged. Themes on Indigenous identity related to questions of race, nationality, and ethnic identity emerged. Comparing and contrasting the results against two populations, individuals that are federally recognized and individuals that are not federally recognized, revealed startling similarities and stark differences in what Indigenous identity means, how it is constructed, and the repercussions of differing identity choices. Theories of racial, ethnic and national identity development are examined and utilized to analyze the data.

The U.S. government uses the criterion of blood quantum to determine indigeneity. The language used for the census data collection is “American Indian/Alaskan Native.” (U.S. Census Bureau). Tribal governments have incorporated the blood quantum criterion into their policies governing citizenship – usually without regard to the long term effects of the practice. Participants of this study recognize the limits and pitfalls of the blood quantum criterion, yet, struggle in response to its

imposition. Chapter Four analyzes participant responses to the question of the “indigenous identity phenomenon” and an imposed blood quantum criterion. Identity self-exploration and accommodation become recurrent themes to understanding what constitutes indigeneity. Framed around the themes of race, ethnicity and nationality, new perspectives emerge providing insight to discourses regarding elements of indigeneity.

Chapter Five delves deeper into the findings of this study, summarizing the results into interpretations of Chicanismo and Indigenous identity not previously explored, and examines how violence has been expressed as shaped by gringismo. Participants qualify what determines indigeneity, amplifying the notion that it is more than just a racial descriptor. The chapter examines stigma, shame and the hierarchy of Indian-ness to explore how lateral violence is expressed. It also builds a case for recognizing the Chicano nation as a viable Indigenous nation. It opens up new questions about Chicano Indigenous identity by offering new directions for further study, and providing insight to potential outcomes relative to how policy decisions are made regarding Indigenous communities.

A study of this scope has been long overdue. Previous quantitative studies have failed to get to the “heart” of Indigenous identity, as expressed by participants of this qualitative study. For too long the Indigenous communities have had their identities shaped by U.S. policy, historians, anthropologists and researchers. The result has been a chaotic junction where (mis)understandings of race, ethnicity and nationality have played out in myriad expressions of violence, including racism and lateral hostility. By approaching this study from a standpoint positionality (Hill Collins 2008), I am able to reframe “the entire dialogue from one of determining the technical accuracy of an image,

to one stressing the power dynamics underlying the very process of definition itself” (97). As Hill Collins (2008) asserts, providing a voice for the participants of this study is critical for “[s]elf-definition involves challenging the stereotypical images” imposed upon them, which in turn values their self-definition by “replacing externally-driven images with authentic” Indigenous images (96). As a researcher that is privy to the experiences of the Indigenous Chicano, I bring a unique perspective to the study of lateral violence in the Indigenous communities. The findings of this study provide a platform where a new discourse on indigeneity can begin as we confront the very real threat of continued genocide against Indigenous communities in the United States.

CHAPTER 2

IN DEFENSE OF CHICANO INDIGENEITY

As the right to self-definition is a crucial and central part of sovereign self-determination, the issues of identity and identification are clearly part of the larger struggle for indigenous autonomy. (Kauanui 1999, 137)

It seems to me one of the ways of getting rid of the Indian question is just this of intermarriage, and the gradual fading out of the Indian blood; the whole quality and character of the aborigine disappears, they lose all of the traditions of the race; there is no longer any occasion to maintain the tribal relations, and there is then every reason why they shall go and take their place as white people do everywhere. (Higgins 27 CONG. REC. 2614)

Constructing Borders

The imposition of borders, especially the U.S.-Mexico border, across a land that has historically been traversed by myriad Indigenous communities for millennia has necessitated an unending campaign of systematic genocide on the part of *gringos* since its inception. This campaign has been bloody with the intention of instilling not only geographical borders but also borders in the minds of the Indigenous people for whom this continent has always been home. Not only have entire communities and families been divided by this imposed notion of ‘border’ but the psyche of the Indigenous mind has also been infected with this insidious dividing line. Indigenous people have begun to see themselves in relation to other Indigenous people relative to a white hegemony/*gringismo*. “The full pacification of the area [of residents along the Mexico/U.S. border] required some 70 years, and involved the prominent use of a variety of coercive measures both by the state and by Anglo groups” (Dunn 1996). It has taken

decades for white Americans to impress upon the Indigenous inhabitants what we now call the Southwest how to incorporate into their psyche an international border that represents for the Indigenous psyche an internal division of ‘American/not-American.’ For many decades the Indigenous inhabitants have regarded the border as a “tenuous social construct, established and maintained by force” (Dunn 1996). Resistance to ingesting a border mentality has become particularly prominent for those Indigenous communities that have managed to avoid being incarcerated by white prison guards but who have still been fenced out of full participation in American citizenship.

The consequence of the imposed geopolitical borders, including the border of citizenship, is a dissociated sense of self and identity and an amnesic relation to Indigenous relatives residing on both sides of the chimera borders. What we have left are historically impoverished orphans ignorant of their ancestral parents, disconnected from them linguistically, culturally and geographically. Living in such isolation results in an adoption of the white supremacist eugenic fantasy that elevates “whiteness” and all of its components to a deified status (Young 1998; Wright 1998). The ramifications are an inability to develop an Indigenous critical consciousness capable of encouraging agency in achieving solidarity with other Indigenous communities resulting in true sovereignty (Beltran 2004; Gould 1992) and the normalization of the forms of lateral violence which have been prevalent over four hundred years.

Chicano Indigeneity

There is a paucity of literature on the identity development of those Indigenous communities, in particular the Indigenous Chicano community, who have been detribalized, dislodged and dispossessed of their lands. They represent a population that

has been doubly marginalized by both the Indigenous and non-indigenous populations of U.S. American society. The Indigenous Chicano represents a group for which the literature on the topic is scarce. This chapter contrasts the Indigenous Chicano historical experience against the homogenized Native American historical narrative to tease out the Indigenous Chicano narrative that has been absent from the literature and to draw attention to the “Indigenous spaces” where federally-recognized Indigenous communities and the Indigenous Chicano communities intersect. In addition, the exploration of how “Chicano” has been defined and associated with a Mexican immigrant narrative in contrast to how the population of Indigenous Chicanos define and identify themselves will be addressed.

Redefining “Chicano”

There is a *crisis of identity* that has impacted the Chicano community. Historical precedents have impacted how the Chicano has identified. I have chosen the term “Indigenous Chicano” to distinguish a particular element of the “Chicano” population as distinct from the traditional narrative wherein the Chicano is described as a person “of Mexican descent born in the United States.” (Vigil 1999, ix) The term “Indigenous” has been chosen instead of the popular Native American, or American Indian, so as not to reaffirm colonial impositions of “American,” and “Indian” and to distinguish from the category of Indigenous communities that have been “authenticated” by U.S. federal recognition. The term “Indigenous” is easily translated into Spanish as *indígena* with the same meaning, whereas *indio* from *Indian* is understood as an offensive term meaning “stupid and backward.” The United Nations in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), specifically utilizes the word Indigenous for all references for

the original inhabitants of geographical areas around the world.

Contemporary writers (Ignacio García 1997; Alfredo Mirandé 1985; and feminist writers Gloria Anzaldua 1987; Elizabeth Martínez 1998) have written about Chicano indigeneity but from a scholastic, theoretical perspective. Vigil (1998) writing about the Chicano does just the opposite, he describes the evolution of the Chicano as a “transformed indigenous people into peasants,” and displaced “migrants and immigrants” advancing an assimilationist perspective (3). There has been a contemporary claim to indigeneity but not a historical claim to indigeneity. The intent of this chapter is to come to terms with history, re-examine Indigenous Chicano identity by addressing the components utilized to construct identity and achieve a more positive sense-of-self than is allowed by U.S. American society (Hebebrand 2004, 4) for the purpose of understanding the narratives and experiences that inform the participants of this study. This chapter examines a historical precedent for validating a Chicano indigeneity that is specific to the United States in contrast to the “immigrant myth.”

The Medicine Wheel

Once I began this chapter, I quickly realized that before I could even begin to talk about lateral violence as experienced by Indigenous communities, especially Chicanos, it was necessary to first understand how Indigenous identity has been constructed. I considered what Michel Foucault and others had to say about race, nationality, ethnic identity and culture but quickly realized that, for the purposes of this study, an Indigenous perspective on ‘race’ would be more appropriate to explore how identity has been constructed resulting in a Chicano Indigeneity.

Indigenous communities construct race in four categories, which correspond to the medicine wheel utilized by Northern American tribes. Within this wheel are four colors: red, black, yellow and white. In addition to representing the four directions they also represent the four races of wo/man. “From the earth the Creating Power formed the shapes of men and women. He used red earth and white earth, black earth and yellow earth, and made as many as he thought would do for a start. He stamped on the earth and the shapes came alive, each taking the color of the earth out of which it was made. The Creating Power gave all of them understanding and speech and told them what tribes they belonged to” (Crow Dog 1974).⁷ In a radio broadcast interview that I conducted with the Mexica/Huichol elder from Mexico, Quiz López Calcoatl related that when the Europeans arrived in their quest for gold it came as no surprise that there were white and black men because the kernels of corn come in different colors. It only made sense that the colors of man would also be so represented as are the kernels of corn. (López Calcoatl 2002).

The Construction of Identity

Identity can be an evolving construct both over the lifetime of an individual as well as over generations. Gregory Castle (2001) reminds us that “identity is constituted in a struggle between indigenous and colonizing forces” (xv). As demonstrated in this study, the identity of the Indigenous communities has been particularly impacted by the arrival of the European⁸ invaders and the consequent *gringismo*. There is no question

⁷ Leonard Crow Dog, told at Grass Mountain, Rosebud Indian Reservation, 1974. Recorded by Richard Erodoes.

⁸ Today we take for granted meanings like ‘European,’ ‘Spanish,’ and ‘Mexican’ when in fact these identities have been constructed over time. When the people of the Eastern Hemisphere arrived on this hemisphere no such identities or agreements of unity existed. These occurred as colonialism progressed and the boundaries of countries were drawn all around the world. Therefore, I will do my best to utilize

that it has been a policy of the U.S. government to systematically destroy Indigenous institutions of family, clan, and tribal structure, religious and spiritual belief systems, and practices, customs, and traditional ways of life (Deloria 1988; Heinrich, Corbine, & Thomas 1990; Locust 1988; Reyhner & Eder 1992). “Cultural suppression is a legal process that involves deculturation – eradication of the indigenous people’s original traditions – followed by indoctrination in the ideas of the dominators so the colonized may themselves assist the colonial project” (Ross 1998; Talbot 1981). Spanish speaking Christians have been no less brutal, “[u]nder elastic legal principles, Spain butchered millions in the New World and committed the world’s largest genocide. More than twelve million Indians died during the first forty years, as Spaniards killed, tortured, terrorized, and destroyed each group they encountered” (Ecko-Hawk 2010, 407).

With the imposition of Christian values, a token system of exchange, capitalism, racism and all of the *wétiko*⁹ illness associated with *gringismo* (Forbes 2008) the Indigenous individual has a fractured sense of self and identity. Current self-identifying terms range from American Indian, to Native American, to Indian, First Nation, Native, Aboriginal, to Indigenous. Yet, none of these terms have any relation to the original names used by the original peoples of this hemisphere and are more of a reflection of imposed geopolitical borders than Indigenous concepts of “self.” Even the “tribal”¹⁰ names popularly used to identify Indigenous communities are labels imposed by other

terms to identify populations that were current “at the time” about which I am writing. This may seem confusing but it asserts the position of this thesis about how identities are constructed over time.

⁹ Jack Forbes (1979) in his book, *Columbus and Other Cannibals* coined the term *wétiko* to describe “the disease of aggression against other living things and, more precisely, the disease of consuming of other creatures’ lives and possessions.”

¹⁰ In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, Supreme Court justices Marshall and Johnson reference the Treaty of Hopewell with the Cherokee Nation to legally relegate the nations of Indigenous people to “tribes” different than foreign nations and states eroding the sovereignty of Indigenous nations to “domestic dependant nations.” The legal use of the word tribe remains operative (Getches, et. al. 2005, 104-109).

groups: Apache for the Ndé from a Zuñi word *Apachu* meaning enemy¹¹, Sioux for the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota from French, Pueblos for the Tiwa, Tewa, Keresan, Towa, which is derived from the Spanish word for people or town, etc. In every instance each community had a name for itself where it usually referenced itself as “the people,” for example: Lakota – the people, Diné – the people, Hopituh Shi-nu-mu - The Peaceful People, etc. Moreover, “many American Indian youth experience cultural conflicts and difficulties in identity development due to differences between the values and expectations of their tribal traditions and those of mainstream American social and educational systems” (Garrett 1996).

As Indigenous communities have been displaced and become landless¹² (Ross 1998) their validity as Indigenous people has been intentionally undermined and “scientifically” challenged by the imposition of such notions as “blood quantum” (Doerfler 2009). Native Americans have been categorized as Reservation Natives, those that are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe and reside on a reservation; Off-reservation Natives, those that are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe but reside off the reservation; and Non-Reservation Natives, those that are enrolled in tribes that do not have a land-base and are not federally recognized (Ross 1998). This study investigates a fourth category, the dislodged Natives, those Natives that have been removed both from

¹¹ According to the Jicarilla Apache website, “Reference to ‘Apaches’ is first found in Spanish records from 1598 (Hammond and Rey 1953, 1:345). The origin of the word is disputed. A widely accepted idea is that it was derived from the Zuni word ‘a pacu, referring to the Navajo and meaning “enemies” (see Hodge 1907-1910). Opler (1983, 385) objects to this, as well as to a Yavapai word for Apaches, on the basis that Oñate had not encountered either Zuni or Yuman people when he used the word.” For more information see: <http://www.jicarilla.net/Origins.htm>.

¹² Landless, “owning no land,” implies having no land. The concept of “ownership” of land was a foreign concept to Indigenous people. In the case of the African slaves that were brought to the Americas landless is an appropriate term as they have been removed from their original homeland. For Indigenous people that continue to reside on their traditional homeland alongside the invading gringos ‘dislodged’ is a more appropriate term meaning “to force out of a secure or settled position” according to the *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (1994, 334).

their original tribal communities and had their land-bases stolen and occupied by the invading gringos. This population has also been referred to as the “throw-away” Indians (Delgado 2007) because they are rejected by both tribal communities and gringos.

Governmental Impositions

Tribes are required to be federally recognized by the United States Government before they can make any claim to land, resources or exercise any “sovereign” rights. “Sovereignty is a fragile concept whose meaning is shaped and reshaped by legislation and court decisions” (Ross 1998, 3). Rickard (1995) suggests that “Sovereignty is the border that shifts indigenous experience from a victimized stance to a strategic one” (51). So in the absence of sovereignty there is the feeling of being victimized. It has been through the machinations of the government that federal statutes dealing with Indian rights and governance laws like the Dawes Act, the Indian Reorganization Act, and the Indian Civil Rights Act (also known as the Indian Bill of Rights) that the “rights” of Indigenous people have been eroded. U.S. federal law recognizes a special kind of Indigenous sovereign authority to govern ourselves, subject to an overriding federal authority. Indigenous tribes are considered by federal case law to be “domestic dependent nations” (Getches 2005, 105). Despite the inherent sovereignty of Indigenous nations, gringos have utilized every means necessary to undermine Indigenous sovereignty prompting John Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1832 to comment on the matter in an attempt to protect Indigenous sovereignty (Churchill 1999). This sovereign authority extends to Indian tribal courts, which adjudicate matters relating to Indian affairs. The Assimilative Crimes Act of 1825 limited the number of crimes committed on Tribal Land that Tribal governments could prosecute (Deloria and Lytle

1983; Ross 1998). The U.S. Supreme Court heard a case in 2008 concerning the extent of tribal courts' jurisdiction. In *Plains Commerce Bank v. Long Family Cattle Co.* (07-411), the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed a long-held principle that tribes do not have jurisdiction over non-Indians conducting activity on a non-Indian fee simple,¹³ even if on an Indian reservation, unless the activity threatens the welfare of the tribe. In effect, Indigenous people even within tribal boundaries remain “wards” of the federal government. The General Crimes Act of 1817 enacted by the U.S. Congress granted federal jurisdiction over Indigenous people wherein tribes retained exclusive jurisdiction only over offenses in which both the offender and the victim are Indigenous (Barsh 1980). In all other cases, tribes now hold concurrent jurisdiction with the federal government (Ross 1998).

The U.S. Supreme Court and Congress have not only disempowered nations of Indigenous people from governing who they are but it has also determined that only states and the federal governments can declare who can be legally identified as “Indian” for the purpose of receiving state and federal benefits. According to the United States government a legal Indian is “Any person who has the certifiable Indian blood quantum to meet the enrollment requirements of a federally recognized tribe” (Russell 2000, 42-5). Even though tribes have the authority to determine who qualifies as a member of the tribe, this determination is heavily influenced by federal guidelines enforced by the Department of the Interior regarding federal recognition (Doerfler 2009). There are only 565 federally recognized tribes in the United States, with a total membership of about 1.7

¹³ Fee simple—“An interest in land that, being the broadest property interest allowed by law, endures until the current holder dies without heirs” (Garner 2006, 287).

million.¹⁴ Federal recognition formally establishes a government-to-government relationship between the tribe and the U.S. government. Recognition provides tribes exemptions from state and local jurisdiction on tribal or “Indian” lands. These exemptions generally apply to lands that the federal government has taken into trust for a tribe or its members. Additionally, federally recognized tribes are eligible to receive federal assistance for community service programs like health clinics, schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) services, tribal court development monies, educational scholarships, etc.

Many tribes were granted recognition through treaties, by the U.S. Congress, or through administrative decisions within the Executive Branch. In 1978, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established a regulatory process for recognizing tribes. The current process for federal recognition, found in 25 C.F.R. 83, is a rigorous process requiring the petitioning tribe to satisfy seven mandatory criteria, including historical and continuous American Indian identity in a distinct community. Each of the criteria demands exceptional anthropological, historical, and genealogical research and presentation of evidence and exhaustive legal fees. The vast majority of petitioners do not meet these strict standards and/or cannot afford the cost resulting in far more petitions being denied than accepted. Since 1960 only about eight percent of the total number of recognized tribes have been individually recognized. There are several hundred groups seeking recognition, a process that oftentimes takes decades to complete.

Failure to achieve federal recognition places an added burden on those tribes and individuals that are denied recognition. This problem results in denied access to services

¹⁴ A number of states recognize tribes so many state-recognized tribes exist. However to qualify for and negotiate the “nation to nation” status as laid out in the treaties, it is necessary for a tribe to be federally recognized.

promised under the many treaties signed between tribes and the federal government, appropriation of tribal land, and the *de facto* assignment of the status of *persona non grata*, literally an “unwelcome person” for those individuals that are members of these tribes. These unwelcome individuals are then relegated to the categories of “wanna-be Indians,” “plastic medicine men,” “drug store Indians” and “Mexicans” (Delgado 2007).

Regarding Race

The blood quantum qualification as imposed by the federal government on determinants for Indigenous categorization comes from a notion of Native American as ‘race.’ “The difficulty with theories of essentialism and exclusiveness, or with barriers and sides, is that they give rise to polarizations that absolve and forgive ignorance and demagoguery more than they enable knowledge. Even the most cursory look at the recent fortunes of theories about race, the modern state, modern nationalism itself verifies this sad truth” (Said 1993, 27).

In Indigenous constructs Native American is thought of as the “red race.” However, if we deconstruct the language used to identify the red race it becomes problematic. The terms ‘American’ and ‘Indian’ are both nationalities, the latter referencing people of the Indian subcontinent. In combination, the implication is a red race, but quickly becomes an ethnic identifier for a pan-Indian “ethnicity” that references tribal people from across the United States. The 2010 census allowed for self-identification using American Indian as a racial category.¹⁵ Legal requirements for U.S. government categorization necessitate that individuals be registered with a federally recognized tribe. No other nation uses the term “American Indian” to describe its

¹⁵ For census data and categories see: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2010/glance/index.html>.

citizens. The same holds true for the term “Native American.” Despite how the U.S. and its people use these identifiers these are really ‘ethnic’ designations, not racial designations. Given that the qualification for tribal enrollment can be a blood quantum of Indian’ blood as low as one quarter,¹⁶ then it could easily be concluded that those people that are tribally enrolled who may be three quarters White or Black or Asian (Yellow) could arguably be regarded as racially White, Black, or Asian, rather than Indian. What this suggests is that race, though critical in qualifying for tribal enrollment, is not necessarily a unique determinant of “Indian-ness.”

In *Orientalism* (1978), Said contends that the “discursive construction of Orientalism was self-generating, and bore little, if any, relation to the actuality of its putative object, ‘the Orient.’” In essence, what the Western world constructs as knowledge about the otherness of the Orient is just that, a construction. Such constructions “*create* not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe” (94, emphasis in original). Building on Said’s contention, it could then be argued that the construction of American Indian/Native American and all of the ideas of what these terms construe likewise bear little, if any, relation to the actuality of American Indian-ness. There is a binary essentialism of American Indian-ness that is constructed and controlled by the colonizer. Any discourse on the subject automatically renders the discourse responding to the gringo’s construction. In the extreme, this construction is rendered relevant only insofar as the Indigenous individual is recognized by the state, i.e., federally recognized.

¹⁶ Some tribes only require a 1/32nd or 1/64th blood quantum but limit some citizenship rights, such as voting and the right to hold office, to those individuals that hold a higher blood quantum status.

Not only does the state dictate what constitutes Indian-ness but also regulates, what Foucault regards as the qualifications for citizenship. Indigenous sovereignty, then, is a myth. This perspective is consistent with Spivak's general concern with "the continuing epistemic violence that is practiced in the exercise of Western forms of thought upon" the American Indian (Spivak 1998, 271). If we consider that tribal enrollment, where tribes are considered "sovereign nations," determines who is granted "citizenship," we are automatically discussing "nationality," not race. It is a nation that determines citizenship, an exercise that may or may not necessarily relate to "race." Many of the tribes east of the Mississippi River are arguably racially white or black. Therefore, to claim tribal enrollment with the Cherokee or Pequot or Catawba tribe is to claim citizenship with a nation, i.e., claiming nationality not race. To say, then, "I am Choctaw" does not necessarily mean, "I am racially 'red,' it means "I am affiliated with (a citizen of) the Choctaw Nation." So if "American Indian" and "Native American" are ethnic terms to describe a pan-Indian relationship, and tribal affiliation is a nationality, what is the language that accurately categorizes an Indigenous "race"? And, what does it mean to identify as Indigenous?

The Construction of Indigenous identity

To address the question of Indigenous identity let us look at the historical antecedents that construct what is regarded today in the United States as American Indian or Native American. First, I will review what Michel Foucault has to say about the construction of identity. Second, I will examine how Indigenous populations perceived themselves at the time when the Christian invaders arrived in contrast to how these invaders perceived themselves. Third, I will address the evolution of a Pan-Indianism

that today defines the “Native American” as a homogenous “minority” group in the United States. Finally, I will look at how the Chicano has reconstructed Indigenous identity relative to race, nationality and ethnicity.

Michel Foucault, in writing about identity, proposes the idea of *normalization* (Rabinow 195). He suggests that within institutions particular behaviors are viewed as normal according to the power of the norm where subjects become regulated and identities are formed. “In analyzing discourses themselves, one sees...the emergence of a group of rules. These rules define...the ordering of objects. A task that consists of ...practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 1974, 48-49). One’s identity is formed by external influences that intend to “shape” who a person is, i.e., how s/he identifies, so that there is order and control over the individual to conform to a standard that is regarded as “normal.” It is critical to remember that when “normal” is applied to the “Native American,” it is constructed through a gringo lens which means, of course, that the subject, i.e., the Native American, has no input into this process of normalization. As Atkinson (2002) asserts,

The notion of subjectivity, particularly stemming from the work of Foucault, relates to the process of becoming a subject within specific social and cultural practices and it is in this process that the subject acquires a particular identity or...a particular *identification* (97: italics in original).

In essence, external forces impose themselves upon and shape the identity of an individual. Family, peers, education, television, institutions, and governments, as well as those whose identity differs from that of the individual, impose their ideas of identity upon the subject thereby shaping, forcing and reinforcing how the subject can potentially identify. Identity, then, as proposed by Foucault, is more of an external imposition than

an internal process. The historical process of *normalizing* a Native American identity is a direct consequence of the colonial imposition of the state, “given the discrepancy between European colonial power and that of the colonized societies, there was a kind of historical necessity by which colonial pressure created anti-colonial resistance...the conflict continues” (Said 1993, 33). Because individual Native Americans are subjects of the state, i.e., the U.S. government, their identity is informed by their subjectivity.

It is reasonable to posit that for the Indigenous people of the United States the *construction of identity* is a colonial imposition. That is not to suggest that Indigenous peoples of the Americas did not have an “identity.” Such an identity would have been constructed and rooted in a similarity of language, culture, cosmovision, beliefs and, perhaps but not likely, skin color. Each tribal community had a way-of-life that was familiar. Moreover, in general, Indigenous populations understood and embraced an acceptance for diversity in life, as reflected in nature, that would have offered a place within the circle and the community for those that we today regard as being different (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, dis/abled, overweight, intersexed). Therefore, what we regard today as a need to identify differently in order to bring attention to potential discriminatory “othering” was not necessary. The “othering” (to use a Foucaultian term) existed more between communities than within communities. The Christian invader, on the other hand, had an entirely different lens through which he categorized the “Native American.” For the Christian, the Indigenous populations of the Americas were considered to be less than human and therefore deserving of enslavement, rape and/or extermination. Naming of the Indigenous populations as *indios* and later “Indians” was the consequence of ignorance on the part of the invaders who had no idea where they

were when they washed ashore one of the islands of the Bahamas, San Salvador (Forbes 2008).

The original inhabitants of the Americas *were* Indigenous, that is to say, of one race as race is constructed and understood contemporarily. With the invasion of the Christians,¹⁷ in particular those from the Iberian Peninsula, on the shores of the Americas operating under the “authority” of the Papal Bulls (i.e., the Doctrine of Discovery) a new relationship of power (Edkins and Pin-Fat 2004, 2) was introduced that changed the dynamics of how the Indigenous populations of the Americas were perceived by both the invaders and the invaded. Identity came to be formed by this relationship of power. “Power,” according to Foucault (1974), “is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised...it only exists in action” (140). The action, in this instance, was the enslavement, genocide, rape, murder and theft perpetrated against Indigenous communities that followed in the wake of the arrival of the Christian invaders.

When identity is factored into the equation, the Christians had an advantage because they shared a common identity and motivation which they utilized as both a rallying point and as a place from which to begin to construct an identity for the Indigenous populations of the Americas (Hertzberg 1971, 1), thereby changing the dynamics into an advantageous *relationship of violence* (Edkins and Pin-Fat 2004, 4). From the moment that Christopher Columbus began settling Hispaniola in 1492, to the 1518 arrival of Hernán Cortés on the eastern shores of Anahuac¹⁸ in search of gold and glory, to the 1607 arrival of John Smith of the Virginia Company of London looking to

¹⁷ All of the invaders, be they from Britain, France, Spain or Portugal, were Christians. The one defining factor for all of them was their Christianity. Most were operating under the auspices of “international law” dictated by the Pope in Rome although the Church of England and others had broken away.

¹⁸ Anahuac is the name the “Aztec” used to call their homeland, which extended from the U.S. Southwest to Nicaragua.

expand its capital enterprises, Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (North America)¹⁹ have been impacted by the onslaught of gringismo and its relationship of violence. Hertzberg argues that these profit-seeking invaders had names for themselves that indicated recognition of a common identity; they were all Europeans, they were Christians, they used a common language, Latin, and they had a shared historical experience. There was a unity of language, religion, beliefs, and purpose that provided the European invaders with a foundation from which to operate (Hertzberg 1971, 1). I argue that these were not the commonalities that united the Christians for Latin was reserved for Catholicism's educated elite and did not include the English, Danish or Dutch. The invaders did not come from "countries" as we know them today ("Europe" did not exist); most hailed from kingdoms, and their historical experiences were very different. The invaders from the Iberian Peninsula had just expelled the Moors who had ruled them for 700 years, a history not shared by the other invaders. What the invaders did share in common was a mercantilistic economy where gold was regarded as the most precious token, a culture of commerce rooted in individualism that included profit-seeking and ownership of property that contrasted drastically with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas' relationship to material, exchange of goods, and land use. Moreover, the invaders brought with them a culture of war rooted in profit, property and religion heretofore unseen in the Americas.

The difference between the two worlds was pronounced enough that it helped the invaders better establish their own sense of identity as they constructed "otherness," i.e., Christian versus heathens, white-skinned versus brown-skinned, technology versus

¹⁹ Indigenous communities continue to use the term Turtle Island to reference North American (Canada, U.S. and Mexico).

barbarism. Whereas they may have considered themselves as linguistically or culturally different from each other before contact with the Indigenous people of the Americas, arriving on the shores of the Americas changed their perceptions of self and community. In short, there was enough common ground for the Christians invaders around which to distinguish themselves (i.e., identify) as different from and superior to the Indigenous peoples that they encountered, contributing to a construction of identity founded in a relationship of power that influenced how the Indigenous populations were perceived, constructed and eventually came to view, and later identify, themselves.

The Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, in contrast, had no such commonalities. “Their sense of place was localized, and their religions tribal” (Hertzberg 1971, 1). When the Christian invaders arrived in the Americas, there were over 1000 different nations (just in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico), over 500 distinct languages, with people from the most advanced urban centers such as Tenochtitlan, to the most nomadic such as the Ndéh of the plains of Apachería. It was the Christian invader that first began to conceptualize Indigenous peoples of the Americas as a similar people naming them “Indians” as a “way of differentiating aborigine from European” (2). Moore (1993) writes,

In colonial history, the Euroamerican image of individual autonomy has made invisible various alternative Native American identity constructs....The ontology within Euroamerican colonialism has been concerned with agency within subjectivity. Native Americans, on the receiving end of that colonial history, have become concerned since contact more directly with agency within subjection” (372-3).

The notion, then, of a cohesive Indigenous identity has been externally imposed and reinforced via a subjective relationship of violence. In response to the centuries of violence, the Indigenous communities have had to construct self-identifying terms that

serve the function of responding to *gringismo*, while, on the other hand, simultaneously attempting to unify under a banner of commonality despite the myriad differences in language, culture and beliefs. The Boarding School Era, followed by the Relocation Era, forced Indigenous people across the United States to intermingle, using English as a common language resulting in a sense of sameness that evolved to contemporary constructs of Indigenous ethnicity.

The idea of “Pan-Indianism” (Hertzberg 1971, 6-27) only came about as a response to this relationship of violence that resulted in subjugation by the U.S. government wherein Indigenous people were being forced to become Americanized. Hertzberg (1971) writes:

Until the end of the nineteenth century, Indian response to white encroachment was largely tribal but included some loose, regional, inter-tribal groupings with a Pan-Indian flavor. Not until the Progressive Era,²⁰ however, did a number of organized movements arise, national in scope, based firmly on a common Indian interest and identity as distinct from tribal interests and identities, and stressing Indian accommodations to the dominant society. This was the beginning of modern Pan-Indianism (viii).

Many terms have been used to lump the myriad Indigenous nations into one term including Indian, American Indian, Native American, First Nations and aboriginal people, but all of these are terms imposed by *gringismo*.

Gringismo, then, has shaped how the Indigenous people now identify as well as how the invaders identify and maintain the borders of these identities. Although these identities may have been different prior to colonial contact, they have been informed and shaped by a relationship of violence requiring necessary unifying terms to extract (or beg for) benefits and privileges from the resources of the Indigenous peoples worlds.

²⁰ “Progressives” as defined by Hertzberg were those Indians on the reservations that attempted to cooperate with *gringos* in order to become Americanized in contrast to the “conservatives” who remained “hostile,” clinging to old ways (Hertzberg 1971, 6).

Anderson (1991), in *Imagined Communities*, describes this as a “nation-ness,” an imagined social community whose creation “was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces . . .that, once created . . . became ‘modular,’ capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness . . . to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations” (4). The community is *imagined* because it is not possible to know every member of the ‘nation,’ but the unity of communion resounds and it is distinguished by the style in which it is imagined (6). The imagining of communities has been fortuitous for “Europeans” and “Americans” but has been devastating for the myriad “Indigenous” communities. The *de jour* terms of “Native American” and “American Indian” are as insidiously genocidal as they are privileged.

Multiple Strands of the Same Cord

With the advent of the theft of the Southwest by the United States, the bicultural, biracial, bilingual Chicano populations have struggled to find recognition of their unique experience as Indigenous people in a landscape of ethnic and racial fences where each territory is defended fiercely for the meager recompense dolled out like commodities at a reservation agency. These orphaned castaways have found agency in exploring identities that are fluid and empowering.

The contours and significance of racial identity are complex and delicate matters...There are multiple problems involved in racial identification. Among these are, first, the sociocultural variability and conflict involved in defining racial categories; second, the significance, for a given individual or group, of membership in a particular racial category; and third, the ability of individuals and groups to make judgments about the racial identities of others (Omi and Winant, 1993, 61-2).

An individual identifies racially, ethnically, culturally, religiously, linguistically, nationally, politically, and by gender and sexual/emotional attraction choices. How, then, is an individual to find a single defining word or set of words that conveys this complexity?

Canada recognizes the mixed blood French/Indian communities as *metis*. The United States, on the other hand, refuses to recognize the *mestizo* (Spanish/Indian) population; a population that is racially Indigenous but culturally hybrid. This Indigenous population has used many terms to identify itself including Chicano, a word that embraces its Indigenous roots, culture and traditions, and reflects a political bent. The Chicano Nation is not recognized by any governmental entity as a community indigenous to the American hemisphere. Despite that, Chicano people recognize that they live in the land where their ancestors have always lived. Federal recognition is not necessary for the Chicano Nation to embrace who and what Chicanos have always been – a sovereign people indigenous to a land occupied by foreign invaders.

The Native American Problem

It is my contention that the one distinguishing factor that determines Indigeneity is race -- the red race to be precise. This one distinguishing factor, however, complicates matters for the U.S. government. This complication has been imposed upon “sovereign Native American nations” such that race is now a tribal issue. Constructing a “Native American” racial category for U.S. census data is problematic because it comes with legal ramifications that are not easily resolved. This section addresses how a Native American/American Indian identity as defined by race, culture, language and land claims has been shaped by governmental policy.

The Native American communities have undergone five stages of U.S. government policy since the arrival of the gringo to the present:

These five stages include (1) the removal period (1600s to 1840s) characterized by the saying, 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian'; (2) the reservation period (1860 to 1920s) characterized by the saying, 'kill the Indian, but save the [person]'; (3) the reorganization period (1930s to 1950s) with schools allowed on the reservation; (4) the termination period (1950s to 1960s) with Relocation Programs intended to achieve sociocultural integration in order to end dependence on the federal government (resulted in the sale of large tracts of Indian lands and increased poverty); and (5) the self-determination period (1973 to the present) with increased tribal sovereignty following a period of American Indian activism. (Garrett 1996, 1-14)

During the reservation period a concentrated effort was made to "educate" those Indigenous children that had been incarcerated either in prisons or in concentration camps (reservations). Boarding schools were established across the country to house Indian children to simultaneously Americanize them and strip them of their language, culture, religious beliefs and family ties. The policies that were developed in the 1880s to address the "Indian problem" established the process by which Indians would be "civilized" in accordance to the promises made by Americans in the treaties, in exchange for imprisonment and all of the land and resources that were stolen (Adams 1995, 20-1). The solution that was decided upon was education. "The kind of education they are in need of is one that will habituate them to the customs and advantages of a civilized life, ... and at the same time cause them to look with feelings of repugnance on their native state" (Wilson 1882, 604). There is no question in my mind that through inequitable and unjust policies of the U.S. government there is a systematic destruction of Indigenous institutions of family, clan, and tribal structure, religious and spiritual belief systems, and practices, customs, and traditional ways of life that continues to the present (Deloria

1988; Heinrich, Corbine, & Thomas 1990; Locust 1988; Reyhner & Eder 1992). “Cultural suppression is a legal process that involves deculturation – eradication of the indigenous people’s original traditions – followed by indoctrination in the ideas of the dominators so the colonized may themselves assist the colonial project” (Ross 1998, 12). Once the policies were established, schools were set up across the country. Indian children were pulled from their families and communities to be raised in religious school settings. The superintendents waged aggressive campaigns of Christianization attempting to root out any vestiges of “savage” beliefs (Adams 1995, 20). This provided the students that graduated the added bonus of becoming American citizens since citizenship was not granted to the tribes until the 1930s (Hertzberg 1971, 16). As the process of acculturation proceeded, Indian children, dislocated from their tribal homes, began to adopt American imposed ideas of identity as was the intent of the boarding schools. “The plan of mixing the tribes at Carlisle results in nationalizing the Indian...that is the great objective in our dealings with this primitive people” (Annual Report, Carlisle, 1908, 19-20). The result was a pan-Indian identity that resounds to the present.

Indian as Race

In addition to the policies directed at “civilizing the Indian,” laws and policies were adopted by the U.S. Congress reflecting the government’s fiduciary responsibilities to the Indigenous peoples that had submitted to reservation incarceration and to further erode Indigenous claim to lands that the gringos wanted. To address the issue of financial responsibility borne out by treaty agreements, Congress had to determine who qualified to receive such benefits. This was done via two policies. First, a census was done of those individuals that had submitted to reservation incarceration and they were provided

with a prison number not too unlike the victims of the Holocaust sixty years later. It became U.S. policy, via the 1887 General Allotment Act, that anyone that can trace a lineage to an ancestor that had one of these prison numbers can make a claim to being Native American. These became known as the Dawes Rolls. Moreover, only those tribal nations that had signed treaties with the U.S. government could make claims as bona fide Indian Nations thereby affording them fiduciary and land claims.²¹ Those tribal nations that did not sign treaties and submit to incarceration became “extinct.”

Second, to assure that for those tribes that did submit to incarceration the financial responsibility would wear out over time, a blood quantum was imposed. The blood quantum served two purposes. Utilizing blood quantum as a determining factor for eligibility to rights to land and services, gringos were able to steal vast tracts of land from Indigenous people and nations by simply determining that particular individuals did not qualify to be classified as a Native American (Jaimes 1992, 126). Setting the blood quantum threshold at, sometimes half, other times one-quarter, policy makers were assured that with eventual marriage and mixing the attrition of “authentic” Native Americans would render the treaty agreements null:

It seems to me one of the ways of getting rid of the Indian question is just this of intermarriage, and the gradual fading out of the Indian blood; the whole quality and character of the aborigine disappears, they lose all of the traditions of the race; there is no longer any occasion to maintain the tribal relations, and there is then every reason why they shall go and take their place as white people do everywhere. (Spruhan 2006, 1)

According to the United States government, a legal Indian is “Any person who has the certifiable Indian blood quantum to meet the enrollment requirements of a federally

²¹ Land allotted to Native American tribes is held in trust by the U.S government and not necessarily “owned” by the particular tribes. This arrangement assures that the tribes remain “wards” of the state assuring that they are not really “sovereign” at all.

recognized tribe” (Russell 2000, 42). Even though tribes have the authority to determine who qualifies as a member of the tribe, this determination is often influenced by federal guidelines enforced by the Department of the Interior regarding federal recognition (Doerfler 2009, 29-318). The enforcement of the one-quarter blood quantum threshold became the domain of the federally recognized tribes. It no longer became necessary for the U.S. government, via the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to enforce the policy except in cases where a previously unrecognized tribal community applied for federally recognized status. By setting a racial blood quantum threshold on who can be regarded as “Native American” based on a list of concentration camp prisoners from the 1880s is a poor measuring stick for determining Indigenous eligibility yet it very effectively protects U.S. governmental interests when it comes to issues of responsibility, reconciliation and race relations.

Mexican as Race

The Chicano identity has been evolving over a span of 400 years shaped by political circumstances that began 250 years before Americans entered the Southwest. The Spaniards²² began settling in *Nuevo Méjico* in 1598 (Silverberg 1970, 46) by which time they had almost 100 years of practice at enslaving the Indigenous peoples of Anahuac. Slavery became an art form that morphed and evolved in accordance with the times and laws and set the stage to inform Chicano Indigenous identity. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo further impacted the Chicano by introducing new ideas of citizenship that still excluded Indigenous populations. The Chicano adapted.

²² I am using the term Spaniard even though these invaders from the Iberian Peninsula did not think of themselves as Spaniards, as their identity would more likely have been tied to the monarch that they served. Anderson (1991) contends that the notion of “nation” as we presently understand Spain to be is a post-colonial construct.

As Spain began to settle, first in the West Indies and later in New Spain, the Spanish military invaders carried with them a new document based on the papal bulls declaring sovereignty and war. This document called the *El Requerimiento* asserted Spanish sovereignty over the Americas. It was written by Juan López de Palacios Rubios in 1513, and was used to justify the assertion that God, through Saint Peter and his Papal successors, held authority as ruler over the entire Earth, and that the *Inter Caetera bull* conferred title over the Americas to the Spanish monarchs (Gibson 1968). This document was read to every Indigenous community encountered in the New World by the invading Spanish Christians. The expectation was that the community, upon hearing it read, would immediately surrender to the Spaniards and become Christians or face war (Kessell 1987, 14). Most of the time the Indigenous communities had no idea (they did not speak or understand Spanish) what was theoretically being communicated to them. The Spaniards were setting the stage for slaughter, theft and enslavement. The Indigenous communities never had an option or a chance since the Spanish believed they had the right and might of God behind them.

The next imposed law was that of the *encomienda* (in trust). Spain had been allotting land grants to military officials in the Americas since 1503, so when the Spanish invaders arrived in the present day U.S. Southwest, they utilized the corrupt *encomienda* grants to illegally acquire huge tracts of land, wherein they then demanded that the Indigenous people already residing on the land pay tribute to the *encomendero* in the form of goods such as maize, *mantas* or animal skins. The *encomenderos*, which numbered at thirty-five in Nuevo Méjico were required to reside in Santa Fe and serve as the local military when needed. Tribute was obtained from the Pueblos by any means

necessary, usually through violence. The wealth of the Indigenous Pueblos was systematically stolen by the Spaniards (98-9).

The third imposed law was the *Repartimiento de Labor*, which continued after the demise of the *encomiendas*. The *Repartimiento* forced Indigenous communities to provide tribute labor to the Spaniards. These weeks or months of yearly labor, though not technically slavery, resulted in slave-like conditions (*Repartimiento* 2008). These were the privileges of becoming subjects of the Spanish Crown.

Slavery became commonplace in Nuevo Méjico. As the laws were overturned or changed, the Spaniards accommodated by either stealing slaves from the surrounding Indigenous communities, (Navajo, Apache, Commanche, Pueblo, Ute, Paiute) or buying them through a market of demand that pitted Indigenous communities against each other in order to obtain slaves. The Utes were infamous for stealing children from other Indigenous communities and selling them to the Spanish invaders. When slavery was not an option, Spaniards negotiated with local Pueblos for daughters from the Pueblos to be married, after a period of servitude, into a Spanish household (Kenner 1995, 15). These stolen, displaced and enslaved Indigenous people came to be known as *genízaros*²³ (Delgado 2007).

The *Genízaros*, isolated from their own Indigenous communities and cultures, formed a segment of the colonized population. Their status always remained the lowest rung, for they had neither land nor a community to claim as their own but they were

²³ *Genízaro* was a specialized ethnic term current in Nuevo Méjico during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was used by the local Hispanic folk to designate North American Indians of mixed tribal derivation living among them in Spanish fashion—that is, having Spanish surnames from their former masters, Christian names through baptism in the Roman Catholic faith, speaking a simple form of Spanish, and living together in special communities or sprinkled among the Hispanic towns and ranchos (Chavez, 1987).

ethnically Indigenous. The captured children and grandchildren knew only the culture of their oppressors. They were indoctrinated into believing that they actually had Spanish blood and ties. The numbers of these detribalized individuals was substantial. Many of the adult captives complained of mistreatment by their masters and were thus freed and allowed to settle land grants on the periphery of the Spanish settlements. By the mid-1700s they began to form their own communities petitioning the Spanish Crown for land grants (62-65). The Genízaros, because they were estranged from their tribal roots, adopted Spanish customs and language. They had little connection to their own people. A census done in 1821 counted a population for New Mexico of some 40,000 people, a quarter of whom were Pueblo. That left 30,000 people recorded as “Spanish and other classes” that had been Hispanized. There had not been, by that time, such a large influx of Spaniards meaning that the majority of those counted were, in fact, Indigenous (Weber 1973, 14).

One of the forms that genocide has taken historically is the renaming of the surviving Indigenous people as a process of indoctrination. Renaming distances the population from its ancestral record of belonging. It disposes a people of their heritage and ancestral roots. Following the conquest of Mexico, then Nuevo Méjico, by the Spanish invaders, the Indigenous peoples of New Spain were forced to become baptized into the Catholic Church and to embrace Christian beliefs (Ruiz de Alarcón 1629; Durán 1581; Córdova 1970). “In baptism the indigenous rulers had to adopt Christian, i.e., Spanish, names. Generally they chose those of the Spanish officials or nobles of their own rank, like the viceroy of the local Spanish landowners (*encomenderos*)” (Jansen and Pérez Jiménez 2005, 27, italics in original). The Indigenous communities that were

forced into contact with the Spanish invaders were baptized and Christianized forcefully. Their names were changed and they took on new identities. When the Americans arrived, new standards were imposed in accordance with U.S. laws and customs.

Accommodation

Under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo all “Mexican” citizens, including Indigenous people, were granted U.S. citizenship. This became so for the Spanish-speaking Nuevomexicanos as they were deemed “free whites.” Legal “equality” for this community resulted in the appropriation of their lands and socioeconomic displacement. In the case of the Indigenous communities a different “equality” was extended, they became “wards” of the United States without the rights of citizenship, i.e., right to vote, own land, or testify in courts (Nieto-Phillips 2008, 47).

Those Indigenous individuals that remained on ancestral land finding themselves subjects of a new state attempted to salvage what privileges they could by identifying as “Spanish” or “Mestizo.” Nieto-Phillips (2008) in his book addresses Spanish heritage as a “source of collective identification with the land and with a historical discourse of conquest, settlement and occupation. . . the objective of Anglos’ fascination and a source of ethnic agency as Nuevomexicanos. . . struggled to reclaim some degree of control over their political destiny and cultural assets” (8). “Heritage” he posits, “is decidedly a language of empowerment or, from another perspective, coercion” (11). The Nuevomexicanos took on an identity of Spanish American because “[i]t served to redraw racial boundaries to figuratively include Nuevomexicanos in the circle of whiteness, while providing hollow recompense for their declining political and economic fortunes” (7). Nieto-Phillips addresses the historical antecedent that led to racial categorization

with Spanish²⁴ conquest. The people of the Iberian Peninsula overly concerned with *limpeza de sangre*, blood purity, believed that one's blood "captured the essence of one's spiritual purity and nobility" (17). Catholic Spanish blood was considered superior to Indian, Moorish and Jewish blood, and required confirmation by a church official. This eugenic thinking arrived in the Americas on the backs of the invaders resulting in the establishment of a caste system that constructed *español* as a social category not based on "strict genealogy or 'pure' bloodlines" but rather on honor, conquest and Christian heritage (33). It remained in place until 1820 when Mexico achieved independence from Spain. Thereafter, two castes emerged, Indians on the one hand, and Spaniards and people of other classes or 'vecinos' on the other. "Those who were not clearly 'indios,' or Pueblo Indians living with the corporate pueblo as accepted members, were deemed "españoles" (34). These references were less about degrees of blood purity or racial mixture than they were about "cultural, ethnic, and geopolitical boundaries that separated Pueblo Indians from the amorphous vecinos" (37).

With the arrival of the gringo following the Mexican American war of 1846-48, the Nuevomexicano lost wealth, privileges and land to the gringo invaders. This downward mobility resulted in the peasantry, small farmers, and artisans becoming wageworkers to the gringo settlers (Barrera 1988, 10). The Nuevomexicano began to migrate to work in cities, mines, on the railroads or on farms following the growing seasons. Barrios sprang up, usually "across the tracks" from where white people lived, in small towns and cities all over the Southwest. In an effort to distinguish themselves from the immigrant population of Mexicans arriving to meet labor demands, the Nuevomexicanos began to

²⁴ At the time that the people of the Iberian Peninsula invaded Anahuac they were not yet unified as one cohesive Spanish nation and referred to themselves as *castellanos*, whereas the people of Anahuac called them *coyotes* and *cristianos*.

refer to themselves as Spanish-Americans (Hebebrand 2004, 17) whereas the new immigrants began to utilize the identity of “Mexican-American” (Chavez 1979, 108). The gringo has recognized, despite the nomenclature shifts, that Nuevomexicanos are racially different but there is amnesia about the Indigenous connection, which is no different for the Mexican immigrant. The result has been a *carte blanche* categorization of any brown-skinned individual as “Mexican” as though the categorization were referring to a race.

Since the popularity of the term Chicano in the sixties, writers from both sides of the Mexico/U.S border have defined the Chicano as an immigrant to the United States. “Los chicanos son las personas de ascendencia mexicana nacidas en los Estado Unidos...los chicanos son diferentes de los mexicanos y de los norteamericanos.” (Maciel and Bueno 1975, 7). In the book *Aztlán: Historia del Pueblo Chicano*, Maciel and Bueno (1975) categorize the Chicano has having six distinct characteristics that distinguish him from the gringo:

El primero es que el territorio y su comunidad son resultado de una guerra y su legado; el segundo, las practicas racistas y su impacto sobre las personas de ascendencia mexicana; el tercero es que el pueblo chicano es racialmente diferente a otros sectores de la población norteamericana; el cuarto, que la comunidad chicana ha experimentado notables incrementos de población por la constante inmigración; el quinto, el bajo nivel socioeconómico del pueblo chicano y, el sexto, la fuerte vigencia de su cultura acentuada por la proximidad del pueblo chicano con México. (8)

Maciel and Bueno go on to add that “El color de la piel, las condiciones socioeconómicas y la cultura han determinado la especial relación del chicano con la sociedad estadounidense” (8). They remind us that the Chicano emerged out of the movement of geopolitical borders, “el pueblo chicano constituye una minoría que fue incorporada a la sociedad norteamericana por conquista....con la firma del Tratado de

Guadalupe Hidalgo, alrededor de 100 mil mexicanos se encontraron repentinamente en tierra extranjera” (9).

Ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo by the U.S. Senate (by a vote of 34 to 14) on March 10, 1848, with Article X (guaranteeing the protection of Mexican land grants) deleted, gave the 100,000 *mexicanos* of the southwest U.S. citizenship. But to the gringo the Chicano is “not an American but a Mexican. Some pronounce it ‘Meskin’ and imagine it’s more polite to call [him] a Latin American or a Latino” (Coy 1975). Garcia (1977) in the forward of his book *The Chicanos in America 1540-1974*, writes, “Until recently, the Chicanos had been a forgotten ethnic group in American history and society. Although they were in America before the arrival of the Puritans, the majority of them are basically 20th century immigrants to the United States” (v). Garcia notes that there had been an absence of “Chicano intelligentsia that could document, interpret, and write the social history of their people” (v). But with the advent of the Chicano movement there was a rise of a Chicano intellectual as,

. . . a direct result of the development of a social and political movement of the Chicano people seeking their identity, striving for better living conditions, better jobs and a better education, and wanting control of their own lives and communities. In essence, Chicanos during this period were demanding their rightful place in American society (Garcia 1977, v).

The Chicano has been referred to as the “throw-away” Indian (Delgado 2007, 118) because the Chicano is rejected by both tribal communities and gringos who are complicit in their categorical disqualification of entire populations of Indigenous descendants by refusing to acknowledge their indigeneity (i.e. Metís, Mestizo, Chicano). Such complicity reinforces the U.S governmental genocidal policy to erase any vestiges

of the “American Indian” race through a process of racial, cultural and linguistic attrition, such that any remaining responsibilities or obligations to Indigenous descendants are systematically and eventually nullified (Churchill 1999, 40). The process of relegating the Chicano to a non-Indigenous status has been intentional and effective. Ironically, they both regard the Chicano as a “Mexican,” once again constructing a Mexican race.

Complicity

Unfortunately, Chicano writers have been just as complicit in contributing to an “othering” of Chicanos by relegating them to an immigrant status. A literature review revealed a number of writers that refer to Chicanos as immigrants when they postulate that the Chicano people are a “people of Mexican descent born in the United States” (Vigil 1999, ix) and as being “universal and cosmic - he contains in his being all the diverse races and bloods in the human race” (Sanchez 1973, 32). Even in *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, the manifesto of the Chicano movement (Alurista, et. al. 1969), there is a *mestizaje* reference:

With our heart in our hands and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo nation. We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are Aztlán (1).²⁵

The references for the notion of a “bronze” and “cosmic” race originate from the ideology of a future “fifth race” in the Americas posited in an essay written by late Mexican philosopher, Secretary of Education, and 1929 presidential candidate, José

²⁵ Aztlán is regarded as the Chicano homeland. The use of the term was popularized following a conference held at the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado in 1969. In the Aztec migration story, the Mexica people who came to prominence as the “Aztec” rulers—eventually defeated by the Spanish invaders—left their homeland in the north “at the place of herons” or the “place of white,” journeying for 200 years before establishing themselves as the ruling group of Tenochtitlan and all of Anahuac. In an effort to reaffirm an Indigenous connection, the Chicano community declared the U.S. Southwest as Aztlán, the origin of both the Aztec and Chicano people.

Vasconcelos (1925). The essay entitled, *La Raza C3smica*, is the foundation from which Alurista, Sanchez and other Chicano writers base their definition of a Chicano. The intent of the Vasconcelos' essay was to respond to the white eugenic rhetoric about an Indigenous population that was particularly oppressed. The Aesthetic Age posited by Vasconcelos was not necessarily rooted in reality but its echo is still heard almost a century later. From Vasconcelos' writings come the terms, *La Raza*, *La Raza C3smica* and *La Raza de Bronce*. Vasconcelos' argument was not to recognize the validity and equality of the Indigenous people of the Americas but rather to assert that they too were "white" because of their Spanish roots/influences. The failure of the Chicano writers to recognize this intention only contributes to the marginalization of the Chicano-as-Indigenous argument. As Mirand3 (1985) contends, "By using Mexican-American in lieu of Chicano one consciously or unconsciously makes a political choice...Hispanic reflects...insensitivity in that it downplays our Indian heritage in favor of the European and fails to distinguish us from other Spanish-speaking groups" (3). The contributions of these Chicano writers over the last forty-five years has relegated the Chicano to a *de facto* Mexican-American thereby negating ancestral claim to Indigeneity and to land.

In *Manifest Destinies*, G3mez (2007) attempts to address the issue of the Indigenous Chicano in a manner that, unfortunately, only further complicates the indigeneity of the Chicano. G3mez attempts to construct a new category that while embracing "whiteness," rejects "Indigenusness." G3mez reminds that race is socially constructed. As writers explore how the white race has been constructed there is the recognition that "Caucasians are made not born" (3). Whiteness has gone through historical vicissitudes and the literature supports the idea that once a group is on the path

to whiteness it is inevitable. The challenge for “Mexican Americans” who remain on “the fringe of whiteness” is that the process is made complex by their relationships with whites, Indians and blacks. In examining these relationships from 1846 to the present, Gómez attempts to construct the “Mexican American” as a racial group. She addresses the “*legal* construction of Mexicans as racially ‘white’ alongside the *social* construction of Mexicans as non-white” and inferior (4: italics in original). This has required the emergence of a Mexican American racial identity that is “flexible and inclusive” (5). The population that Gómez addresses is the same population that I address, the communities living in Nuevo Méjico when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed that were designated as “white” in contrast to the nomadic and Pueblo Indians there were not granted citizenship and were considered to be “non-white.” Nuevo Méjico, at the time, included what is presently demarcated as Colorado, Arizona, Utah and Nevada. Because the demographics of Indigenous populations in Nuevo Méjico outnumbered the gringos, the territory of Nuevo Méjico was able to resist the immediate fate of California and Texas, regarding loss of land, political clout, and social independence, to American encroachment. The result was that New Mexico did not receive statehood until 1912 (Nieto-Phillips 2008). The white/brown racial conflict in Texas and California was not as robust as that seen historically in Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona (formerly Nuevo Méjico). Although Gómez recognizes that the population about which she writes is Indigenous in origin, she insists on attempting to construct a “new” racial category, the Mexican American (Gómez 2007, 1-17). Constructing a new racial category for the Chicano to account for an historical narrative that has been passed over, while creative, only further complicates matters and contributes to the colonialist violence of historical

genocide of the Indigenous Chicano. It is my contention that the Chicano is racially Indigenous though culturally mixed. Utilizing the nomenclature Chicano acknowledges the omitted historical narrative while simultaneously recognizing an Indigenous racial origin. The Chicano is an “Indian” whose culture is a hybrid of Indigenous, Spanish, Mexican and American influences. An Indigenous Chicano identity is not only political, it is liberating.

The Brown Menace

[W]e have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race—the free white race. To incorporate Mexico would be the first instance of the kind of incorporating an Indian race; for more than half the Mexicans are Indians, and the other is composed chiefly of mixed tribes. I protest against such a union as that! Ours, sirs, is the Government of a white race. The greatest misfortunes of Spanish America are to be traced to the fatal error of placing these colored races on an equality with the white race. That error destroyed the social arrangement which formed the basis of society (emphasis my own). (Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st sess., 1848, 99)

The individual, social and political implications of a Chicano Indigenous identity are destabilizing to a gringo epistemology and a docile state of Chicano subjectivity. A contemporary individual identifies racially, ethnically, culturally, religiously, linguistically, nationally, politically and by gender and sexual/emotional attraction choices in an effort to distinguish her/himself from potential assimilation and/or oppression forces. Finding a single defining word or set of words that conveys this complexity can be challenging. Identities evolve over the lifetime of an individual and over the lifetime of a community. The Chicano community has remained resilient, resourceful and resolved in its efforts to survive centuries of domination by gringos. Federal recognition is not necessary for the Chicano Nation to embrace who and what Chicanos have always been – a sovereign people indigenous to a land occupied by

foreign invaders (Alurista 1969). The ramifications of sanctioning a Chicano Indigenous claim could potentially require reparation of historical injustices and impact how the “Mexican” immigrant is regarded. It would require a reevaluation of the legal qualifications that are presently in place that determine “authenticity” regarding Native American status. There is still a plentitude of research needing to be done to address the issue of Chicano Indigeneity that, at its crest, would oblige gringos and the U.S. government to reevaluate how the Chicano is regarded. It is a concern that cannot be ignored for by all accounts the Chicano remains a racially Indigenous being. This thesis validates that claim by deconstructing the “American Indian” and “Native American” appellations juxtaposed against a “Chicano” Indigenous declaration through the stories, histories, experiences and identity constructions of the participants of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESERVATIONS ABOUT INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Prior to conducting the research for this project, I constructed a pilot study of semi-structured interviews with five individuals that identify as Indigenous to help develop the questions on the survey and address issues of Indigenous identity, tribal enrollment, federal recognition and discrimination (racism, lateral violence). The pilot study helped refine the questions and obtain feedback about the relevance of the questions for this study. A demographic component was added to the survey following the pilot study to give a snapshot of the population interviewed for this study. The decision was made to interview two populations: individuals that self-identify as Indigenous and are federally recognized and tribally enrolled, and individuals that self-identify as Indigenous but are not federally recognized or tribally enrolled.

All protocols were followed to obtain Institutional Review Board approval, which was granted in February 2010. There were no known risks for participating in this study. Participants were recruited via an email recruitment letter utilizing a list server of a local community informant that communicates regularly via emails with news and updates to a large number of individuals in the Native American community in Colorado, as well as through social networks in the Chicano community. Participants were also recruited via word-of-mouth. Interested parties were put in contact with the researcher for interviewing. Interviews were held in locations and at times that were convenient for the participants. All of the participants of this study were living in Colorado at the time of

the interviews. Twenty-three individuals were interviewed in western, northern and southern Colorado, and in the Denver Metro Area. Each participant was provided a cover letter indicating that the interview would be confidential; no names or personal data were obtained that could link the participant with the interview. All of the names of the participants and the names that they referenced during the interviews have been changed, except for those of historical figures.

The participants were informed that they could stop the interview process at any point without repercussions. No incentives were provided to participants in this study. The interview process took nine months to complete. Interviews took between thirty and ninety minutes and were audio recorded. The interviews were then transcribed for data analysis. The recruitment letters for this study announced that I would be conducting “interviews on research on the impact that tribal enrollment and federal recognition have on Indigenous identity.” The intent of the research project was to explore the issue of lateral oppression, hostility and/or violence experienced by those individuals that identify as Indigenous but are not federally recognized. All interviews were conducted by the author/researcher in English and Spanish. As a member of the Indigenous community and coming from a community that is landless and detribalized, I was afforded a unique opportunity to access a population of individuals that felt comfortable enough to speak openly and honestly about their feelings and opinions regarding Indigenous Identity and governmental impositions on that identity. Struck by the paucity of research about the detribalized Indigenous community and its experiences, I felt that a treatise on the subject matter was both critical and opportune. More salient, however, was the dearth of

information about the lateral violence, hostility and oppression experienced by landless, detribalized Indigenous individuals.

Choosing semi-structured interviews (Bubar 2009) as a method for this study allowed the investigator to explore and uncover subtleties about identity that would not have been captured with a questionnaire or survey. Interviews are the best format for helping us to learn “what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions,” how events impact their thoughts and feelings, the meaning of their relationships and how their continuum of experiences “constitute the human condition” (Weiss 1994, 2). Moreover, the interview process provided the participants an opportunity to provide stories and examples for the questions that were being asked. Utilizing a qualitative approach provided me an opportunity to “capture the essence of a person and to reveal insights by and about relationships” (Chirban 1996, xii). In this way I was able to get at the views and feelings about life shared by those interviewed, operating under the premise that “each and every individual has a sense of self that is owned and controlled by him or herself, even if the self is socially formulated and interpersonally responsive” (Gubrium, and Holstein 2002, 5). The relevance of sense-of-self as expressed by Foucault (1984) states, “Technologies of the self...are the concrete, socially and historically located institutional practices through which a relatively new sense of who and what we are as human beings was constructed.... The now self evident view that each of us has opinions of public significance became intelligible only within a discourse of individuality” (188-205).

Pilot Study Findings

The pilot study helped to shape and define the direction to take with the study. Although it was my intent to focus on lateral violence, a critical issue in Indigenous communities, the salient issue of Indigenous identity in relation to gringismo rose to the fore for those individuals that self-identify as Indigenous but have no tribal affiliations. Furthermore, to my surprise, each of the five individuals identified as Chicana or Chicano. The significance of this identity became apparent as they explained why this was such a critical identifier.

Chicana/o Identity

All of the respondents of the pilot study referred to themselves as “Indigenous” and “Chicana/o” even though they also used other racially/ethnically identifying terms: Native American, Otomí, Genízaro, Mexican, Mexican-American, Native, Raza, and in two instances, White and Irish/German. It is important to note that individuals also identified by gender: “I’m Chicana, that means yeah, I’m pure Chicana..;” “I identify as a Chicana, Otomi woman;” “I identify as an Indigenous Chicano male;” and “I’ve recently been able to start articulating a queer identity, a Two Spirit identity.” Each of the individuals has spent some time critically considering what their identity meant for them and had arrived at both an Indigenous identity and purposefully used the “Chicano” identifier as a political statement: “I believe the politics of being a Chicano really help me to recognize and reclaim that indigenous aspect of who I am..” and “Chicano for me is a political statement...’Chicano’ is a protest and whenever I say it, I say it meaning exactly what it is, a protest.” Another participant responded: “I identify as a Chicana to remember, not just for myself, but for people of the colonization of the Indigenous people

here in the North.” Another articulation of the politics of using Chicano was: “Just because of the fact that I am Mejjicano, Chicano background does not necessarily mean that I need to be on the margins of society as a labor or migrant worker.”

There is a question about what it means to be Indigenous for each of those that were interviewed. They struggle with the question and have given it considerable thought, “In finding a place where La Raza, the Indigenous people feel comfortable, doesn’t eliminate issues of race and complexities of race.” Identifying as an Indigenous person means understanding what it means to be Indigenous under the yoke of *gringismo* (Young, 1994). “You can’t talk about an Indigenous diaspora, you know, of relationships of people in the North and the South. I mean, what does it mean to see all of us as Indigenous people?” This question addresses the issue of imposed borders, colonial borders that are internalized and leave the individual conflicted. This internalization, which can be quite painful, is resolved with a claim of Indigenous identity,

I feel like that aspect of myself is a direct result of reclaiming my Indigenous history, my Native history, because it’s allowed me a space to begin to think about and articulate my sexual identity because in this western European construct, queerness is so, (pause) demonized as something wrong and awful and it’s something that I’ve walked with and internalized. And it’s something that I’ve denied in myself because of those constraints from the outside world and society. But by reclaiming my Indigenous identity, my Native history, it’s allowed me to really see that. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

Most of the interviews were particularly poignant on this issue of Indigenous identity and the stigma between those that are federally recognized as “Indian” versus those that are not federally recognized. Moreover, because of the lack of federal recognition there was an evolution of identity development. The first woman interviewed went through a number of identity labels, usually externally imposed, of

different ethnicities that reflected an outsider/non-American, non-Indigenous identity, a strong sense of “otherness” that is non-American.

For long periods of time I identified differently, as Mexican-American, um, Mexican, and ah, and so many other ones I can't even think, and now we have Hispanic, we have Latino, and then we have Chicano. Chicano was the only one that was chosen by the Chicano people, therefore, with that one, I don't mind people calling me that. But I don't allow myself to be called anything else then Chicano or Native American. (Toci, NFR Apache/Chicana)

Shifting Focus

Given the importance of the Chicana/o identity to the individuals of this pilot study the decision was made to focus on the relevance of Indigenous identity relative to gringismo and to contrast those that identify as Indigenous and are not federally recognized against those that are federally recognized. In addition, by chance, a small number of people stepped forward to be interviewed that are also categorized as not federally recognized, who identify as Indigenous although they regarded themselves as more “White” than Indigenous. The responses of these individuals provided a third, unexpected perspective on the issue of Indigenous identity. The choice to interview a number of Indigenous identified individuals that are federally recognized/tribally enrolled offered a control group with which to compare and contrast the Indigenous Chicano population. The decision to focus primarily on the plight of Chicana/o indigeneity emerged as the data was being analyzed.

Interview Questions

Each interview began by obtaining demographical data: age, education, tribal enrollment status, sex, gender, place of birth, where the individual grew up, and data about the individual's parents, before addressing the questions of identity and lateral

violence. It was also felt that it would help put the interviewees at ease if the process began by having them first talk about a subject distantly related to them: family stories. Participants were asked to share any family stories that framed for them (in their own words) what constituted a historical and valid Indigenous heritage. In other words, what, in accordance to family stories, validated their belief that they were Indigenous. This methodological move attempted to evaluate, by the participants' own standards, what constituted an ancestral claim to indigeneity. To further collect demographic data that I could use to situate the participant at intersections of time and identity development, I followed up with questions about the identity of the participants' parents, grandparents, and, if they knew, great-grandparents. The attempt was to provide a historical identity-evolution framework, to put the interviewee at ease by asking questions not immediately about the participant, as well as to establish a rapport and level of comfort for the rest of the interview process.

To arrive at the question of lateral hostility and/or violence, the investigator first attempted to establish a "target point" for hostility and/or violence by addressing the issue of identity: "Tell me how do you identify?" What the pilot study indicated was that this question was too general and required further probing, consequently, the second question, "What does this identity mean for you?" was added. It became apparent that the complexity of the question of identity could not be answered with a simple "ethnic relational" response. Expanding on the question of identity gave the participant an opportunity to further explore the issue of identity as s/he understood it. In order to tease out criteria that established indigeneity as the participants perceived it, the question "What makes you Indigenous?" was asked. This inquiry provided valuable data about

the construction of indigeneity that could then be contrasted with how the U.S. government determines indigenity.

The ensuing questions asked how the participants addressed the relationship of identity to gringismo and the impact it had on their identity choices. The questions also attempted to get at the issue of lateral hostility and/or violence in relation to who they are and how they identify: “Tell me about any issues that have arisen with how you identify?” “Tell me about the impact, if any, federal recognition and tribal enrollment have on how you identify?” “Tell me if there are advantages to federal recognition and tribal enrollment?” “Tell me if there are disadvantages to federal recognition and tribal enrollment?” and lastly, “Tell me if there is discrimination that exists between those that are tribally enrolled and those that are not?” The purpose of these questions was to determine if the respondents would, of their own volition, give examples of how they have been discriminated against (lateral hostility/violence) by these communities that are tribally enrolled and how they perceived intervention of the U.S. government into: 1) their sense of identity; and 2) their relationship to other Indigenous individuals. In order to provide an opportunity for the participants to suggest potential solutions to the issues raised, they were asked the question: “Do you have any recommendations for making things better?” This question addresses both agency and context on the part of the participant (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) and had the potential to “inform and reform policies and practices” (DeMirjyn 2009). The last question gave the individual being interviewed an opportunity to address any issue they felt was relevant but that the researcher failed to ask: “Are there questions I didn’t ask that I should have or comments that you would like to add?”

Analysis of the Data

The researcher used constant comparisons in order to classify the data. In addition, the data was reviewed for contrasts and similarities to determine the similarities in the participants' responses and to extract the themes for categorization. The following themes emerged from the data as recurrent themes: genocide, stolen children, imposed exile (consequent to rape), racism, authenticity of identity, identity stigma, proof of identity, and identity development or what I termed a "reassociative process." The issues of identity stigma, proof, authenticity and development were all forms of or responses to lateral violence and genocidal racism. The researcher drew upon personal experience as a process of interpreting the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Elaborating on the paradigms of "racism," "stigma," and "identity" helped to tease out dimensions of these themes particular to the participants in the study. Elaboration on the paradigm of "identity" resulted in sub-themes that qualify how identity functions for the participants. The data revealed myriad themes and information about the question of Indigenous identity and the hostility and violence associated with "being Indigenous." Further investigation will reveal additional results.

Quantitative Component

When analysis of the data began for this project, it became apparent that enough demographic data had been obtained to develop a quantitative component. It provided a more comprehensive picture of the participants of the study. With an N of only 23, there was not enough data to do any meaningful quantitative analysis but there were trends that were worth noting. It is important not to make general assumptions about Indigenous communities based on the findings of this research. What the research does provide is

information about a population (non-federally recognized Indigenous identified individuals) for which there is scant, if any, data. The population interviewed for this study should not be regarded as reflective of most Indigenous communities as the participants reported, in general, a higher level of education, they all had access to internet resources and expressed political views that could be oppositional to those of the communities from which they come. This makes for an “elite” sample of participants; an issue that must be kept in mind as the data is analyzed and interpreted. In order to better interpret the data I chose to break it into two chapters; the first addressing the issue of Indigenous identity, and the second unpacking the Chicano claim to indigeneity.

Limitations

The number of participants interviewed for this study was not sufficient enough to serve as a representative sample of the population of individuals that identify as Indigenous who may or may not be tribally enrolled. Interpretations of this study, therefore, should be limited to the individuals and not necessarily generalized to the larger population of Indigenous identified individuals. The individuals interviewed came from a very small pool of people, most of who had college degrees (sixty-five percent). The responses, therefore, are informed responses that have, most likely, been a part of an intellectual discourse consistent with theories of constancy development.²⁶ The result is a well articulated “self identity” and Indigenous narrative that may not be reflected in a study more representative of the population of people that identify as Indigenous.

Individuals interviewed for this study were all living in Colorado even though some of the individuals originally may have come from other areas of the country (Alabama, Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and

²⁶ See “Ethnicity as Identity” later in this chapter that addresses ethnic identity development.

Texas). No particular effort was made to obtain participants from any pre-assigned geographical areas. Most of the participants, and their ancestors, originated from Colorado, New Mexico and South Dakota. A more extensive study might include participants from a more diverse geographical pool, with more attention to participants from larger/smaller tribes, as well as from tribes that successfully derive income from gambling versus those that do not.

Three of the individuals interviewed identified as Two Spirit males. The participation of Two Spirit females, however, is noticeably absent; which I consider to be critical for a more complete understanding of a Two Spirit perspective. Any comprehensive study on identity will address race, class, gender and sexuality and their intersectionalities if the study is to merit attention. The focus of this study addresses race, gender and sexuality as Indigenous identity is unpacked. Class is addressed as the lateral violence that the respondents experience as rooted in a class construction originating out of treaty law. Again, for a more complete pool of participants, an effort to draw from economically poor versus economically successful tribal communities to contrast with the economically poor/successful of the non-federally registered individuals could contribute significantly to a more comprehensive understanding of lateral violence in Indigenous communities. It may be that class plays out differently than federal recognition when evaluating lateral violence.

The questions used for the interviews, although structured as open ended, could have been reworded to solicit a more detailed or informed discourse on the part of the participants. The questions did, however, serve to elicit enough of a response to garner valuable information that warrants further consideration for a more in depth research

project on the question of Indigenous identity and the more controversial issue of lateral violence in Indigenous communities. The interviews began to deteriorate after about forty-five to sixty minutes, perhaps from interviewee fatigue. The result was that no “new” information was being solicited to add to what had been collected already.

Four of the first five pilot interviewees were re-interviewed as a follow-up process and to further tease out issues of identity and lateral violence obtained from the pilot interview process. This move also strengthened the reliability and validity of the responses from these individuals.

Theory for Data Analysis

This thesis explores the plight of the Chicano from both an area studies perspective emphasizing “the relation between a displaced population and its point of origin,” and a cultural studies tradition emphasizing “the relation between a displaced population and the nation-state in which it is located” (Yelvington 2004, xiii) to address how the Chicano has been systematically displaced, geographically and socially, in a genocidal process of “kill the Indian, save the man.” By conducting interviews with those individuals that identify as Chicana/o and Indigenous who, by virtue of being Chicano, have been historically displaced from both homeland (i.e., land base), and the communities from which they originated, I explore the factors that inform identity and resiliency in maintaining a rooted yet fluid connection with ancestral place and community, despite unceasing attempts by myriad forces to invalidate this bond. Contrasting the interviewee’s responses with a population of individuals that retain a land base (reservation), and that have both tribal and federal recognition, provides an opportunity to evaluate how the displaced population maintains a relationship to “point of

origin” and a relationship to two nation-states: the U.S. government and the tribal governments from which they have been displaced (i.e., community of origin) – Apache, Comanche, Lakota, Navajo, Pueblo, Yaqui. Inherent in this relationship to place and community is the development of identity.

Liminality is a term used by anthropologists and psychologists alike to describe a process that individuals and communities undergo to arrive at resolution of sense-of-self in relation to others. According to this theory, there are three stages which an individual or a community must undergo: preliminal, liminal and postliminal. These have also been referred to as: separation, marginalization and reaggregation (Illowz 1997, 143). To arrive at a healthy postliminal stage one must either integrate the imposed social structure or create a new social structure. According to Turner (1974), all liminality must eventually dissolve, “for it is a state of great intensity that cannot exist very long without some sort of structure to stabilize it...either the individual returns to the surrounding social structure...or else liminal communities develop their own internal social structure”—a condition Turner calls “normative *communitas*” (260). The Genízaro/Chicano community has resided in a liminal space for centuries. The Chicano movement provided a new social structure under which the community was able to redefine itself. For the participants of this study the term Chicano becomes a postliminal access point from which to emerge out of the liminal stage.

The interviews for this study indicated that as a process of adaptation each generation has identified in accordance with what that identity could advantage the individual. Social theorists Padilla and Pérez (2003) contend that, when possible, individuals will attempt to dissociate themselves from the stigmatized group to which

they belong. When that is not possible, they will embrace the group's identity and work collectively to improve the status of the group.

The identities of the individuals interviewed versus how their parents identified versus how the grandparents identified changed. When we consider how grandparents, parents, and siblings identify differently from the interviewee we must consider the perceived advantages to identifying differently, i.e., the relationship between the displaced person and the nation-state and what benefits were to be gained by particular identities. What are the advantages to a White versus a non-White identity? Individuals will don the shirt that fits best and the shirt that fits best may not always be a war shirt. "A political identity, the full sense of the term, is a world view intertwined with beliefs about the causes and intensity of racial discrimination, the fairness of economic hierarchies, and judgments about the politicalization of [the] culture" (Marquez 2007, 22).

The displaced population of Chicana/os interviewed for this study maintain a *collective identity*. That is, they possess more than one identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001, 285). What Howard (2000) regards as "the whole person" is described by intersection theorists Crenshaw (1991) and Hill Collins (2000) as the combination of race, class and gender in formation of a single identity. I would add that the individuals interviewed in this study are using the identifier "Chicana or Chicano" as an intrinsic intersection of oppressions related to historical experience, race, class, ethnicity, ancestry, nationality, gender and sexual orientation.²⁷ In contrast to the White, Christian, heterosexual,

²⁷ A number of the participants in this study were very specific in their answers regarding identity. They were precise in including the term "woman," "man," "Two Spirit person," or "Queer" as a part of their identity construction. Moreover, the responses of these individuals indicated that the gender term they used

patriarchal normative identity that is construed to be the epitome of “Americanness,” the identities of the participants were much more fluid and diverse, and included a political resistance to the nation-state (United States) that imposes a displaced and docile-subjective identity (Hispanic, Latino, White, immigrant) upon them. This collective identity reflects the “values and attributes one feels are attributed to his or her group(s) because of how the group(s) is seen by others” (García Bedolla 2005, 7). It is a collective identity that is incongruent with the White racial identity that drives the larger political system (9). It reflects an interrelatedness between group identity and self-esteem that includes an “affective group attachment” critical for a sense of personal agency (10). There is an emotional attachment to Chicano identity that reifies a group cohesiveness and self-esteem that is positive and expresses personal agency.

Nationality as Identity

Inherent in the collective identity of Chicana/o is the notion of “nationhood.” “Nations are manifestly groupings or communities of people” not to be confused with “states” (MacCormick 1999, 190). Anderson (1991) defines nation as “An imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign . . . *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (5-6). Chicanos are a part of the nation of Aztlán,²⁸ where Aztlán is a contested notion of *nation* (as defined by Anderson), for Chicanismo reflects diverse social, regional, racial, linguistic and cultural descriptions (Chasteen 2003). As part and parcel of this diversity are the images, rituals and values particular to Chicanos

to identify was consistent with the Indigenous identity in that it simultaneously reified Indigeneity, a gender difference, and a historical Indigenous embracing of gender diversity.

²⁸ For a definition of Aztlán see the footnote in Chapter Two, page 44.

and organic to an Indigenous territorial claim not reflected in the cultures of immigrant Mejicanos, Native American tribal nations and the American mainstream. It is a diversity rooted in displacement from land and ancestral community. For example, in response to an email that was sent out to members of the Chicano community announcing an annual ceremony, one member replied: “Wow, look at this bi-lingualism’s you have a little Nahuatl, a little Spanish, Lakota, and English all in one communication. What will the anthropologist say about us?” (Gonzales 2010).

Chicano nationalism is adaptive. This study reinforces diverse expressions of Chicanismo in “citizenship,” language, cultural artifacts, rituals, spiritual practices and locality. Cohesion for Chicano nationality could arguably be attributed to what García Bedolla (2005) regards as a sense of connectedness in the notion of a shared injury (racism/stigma). Chicano nationality also provides a “space where historical memory and collective experience are shared” (16). Since the United States acquired Aztlán in 1848, Chicanos “have been subjected to social and geographical segregation, economic discrimination, and political exclusion, and they have continually resisted this subordinate status” (26). The stigma of not being White is greatest where discipline and punishment have been most exaggerated. Foucault (1984) addresses this when he talks about “The Great Confinement” in *Madness and Civilization* and in his piece on “Panopticism” in *Discipline and Punishment*. The result of this stigma has been the social construction of the Nation of Aztlán. Luis Leal (1989), a literary critic, wrote “. . . for all Chicanos: whosoever wants to find Aztlán, let him look for it, not on the maps, but in the most intimate parts of his being” (13). Aztlán is very real for Chicanos whether it is to be found on maps or not; “[to] make no concessions to the normative force of

nationalist thought would entail not only embracing the nineteenth-century empires within Europe, . . . but also [deny] the moral legitimacy of the politics of anticolonialism in the twentieth century” (Beiner 1999, 4). Self-determination, in and of itself, legitimizes nationhood as defined by Chicano nationalism.

Race as Identity

Race is a socially-constructed category that changes over time (Omi and Winant 1994). It is a construction that has been used since the formation of the United States as a nation to qualify and disqualify citizenship and privilege. Omi and Winant separate the shifting of race and racism into three chronological stages. In the first stage, it is characterized by biological factors where White superiority is affirmed. In the second stage, ethnicity was substituted for race where differences between groups are defined and the notion of culture is introduced. The third stage is characterized by differences between gringos and people of color. This is the foundation upon which gringos have asserted their privileged superiority and justified genocide, murder, oppression, exclusion, rape and theft. White privilege is inherently criminal. “In a greedy, expanding young nation building law and custom on the ownership of property, crime control was a part of the maintenance of that sacred foundation. Law-enforcement officials were not simply bystanders in this history; they participated in and encouraged lawlessness in the interests of suppressing minorities” (Ross 1998, 15). How the construction of “White race” has been optimized, however, is to criminalize “not White.” “*Criminal* meant to be other than Euro-American” (14: emphasis in original). For Chicanos, this criminalization has expressed itself in many forms. Criminals do not qualify for citizenship privileges. Chicanos are denied sovereign citizenship rights as promised in the many treaties signed

by the ancestors of the Chicano people. By refusing to recognize Chicanos as Indigenous people, the U.S government and its accomplices (i.e., tribal governments), contribute to the historical and on-going displacement of Chicanos inconsistent with the social construction of racial indigeneity.

If race were used as the sole qualification for federal recognition of Indigenous status, as the blood quantum criterion suggests, the Chicano nation would be the largest federally recognized Indian nation in the country. Moreover, many of the federally recognized tribes, in particular those located in Oklahoma and east of the Mississippi River, would no longer qualify racially to be regarded as “Indian” nations. The racial “marker” for qualification as a tribal community distinct from White America would no longer apply. Many members of the federally recognized tribes east of the Mississippi and into Oklahoma do not speak their own languages nor do these tribes conduct tribal business in their own tribal languages. Many are no longer familiar with the traditional customs, ceremonies or lifestyles of their ancestors. The majority of them are stalwart Christians; many are Baptists. Enough of them have intermarried with the White community to a degree that the only thing that characterizes an individual as being “Indian” is his or her declaration and a card. Others have married into the Black community thereby creating new issues of racism and lateral violence. To all appearances, a larger number of these “Indians” are more “White” or “Black” than they are Indian. In contrast, Chicanos maintain a racial character that singles them out for racial discrimination (*illegal* immigrant) even by enrolled tribal members. Race, then, is not (and should not be) the sole criterion used to determine “American Indian-ness.”

In order to attain federal recognition, a Tribe must establish its fulfillment of seven criteria to the satisfaction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs: (1) The Tribe has been identified as an American Indian entity on a substantially continuous basis since 1900; (2) A predominant portion of the Tribe comprises a distinct community and has existed as a community from historical times until the present; (3) The Tribe has maintained political influence or authority over its members as an autonomous entity from historical times until the present; (4) The Tribe must provide a copy of its present governing documents and membership criteria; (5) The Tribe's membership consists of individuals who descend from a historical Indian tribe or tribes, which combined and functioned as a single autonomous political entity; (6) The membership of the Tribe is composed principally of persons who are not members of any acknowledged North American Indian Tribe; and (7) Neither the Tribe nor its members are the subject of congressional legislation that has expressly terminated or forbidden recognition (Guedel 2009).

Regarding tribal members (criterion 5) the United States government defines a legal Indian as "Any person who has the certifiable Indian blood quantum to meet the enrollment requirements of a federally recognized tribe" (Russell 2000, 42). Even though tribes have the authority to determine who qualifies as a member of the tribe, this determination is often influenced by federal guidelines enforced by the Department of the Interior regarding federal recognition (Doerfler 2009, 29-318). The enforcement of the one-quarter blood quantum threshold is the domain and the bane of the federally recognized tribes. Setting the blood quantum threshold at, sometimes half, other times one-quarter, policy makers are assured that with eventual marriage and mixing the attrition of "authentic" Native Americans will render the treaty agreements null and void.

Ethnicity as Identity

The process of ethnic identity development requires “constancy . . . defined as knowledge that properties within oneself or within another object are permanent and will not change, despite apparent changes in time, setting, and physical appearance” (Ocampo et al. 1993, 11). Gender and racial constancy are acquired at a younger age than ethnic constancy according to developmental literature on social constancies (Aboud 1984; Brenes, Eisenberg, and Helmstadter 1985).

Two studies done on ethnic identity development by Aboud (1987) and Bernal et al. (1990), found that children's understanding of the ethnicity of others, as well as their own ethnic identification and ethnic constancy, increased with age. Aboud's (1987) conceptualization of ethnic self-identification refers to "the sense of oneself as a member of an ethnic group, possessing attributes common to that group" (32) and Bernal et al. (1990) define ethnic identity as “an important domain of the self-concept, similar to people's other central social identifies” (3). They define ethnic identity as having several components, including ethnic self-identification, ethnic constancy, ethnic knowledge, and ethnic feelings and preferences. To arrive at a sense of self in relation to ethnic identity, an individual must be of an age where he can recognize “characteristics . . . transmitted through socialization processes, as well as heredity; therefore, one may recognize another's ethnicity through both physical cues and more subtle behavioral cues” (Ocampo et al. 1993, 13). In the information-processing theory, “ethnic membership is determined by cultural as well as genetic transmission. We are socialized into the values, traditions, and behaviors of our different ethnic groups. These differences are behavioral, rather than physical, and thus are harder to distinguish than gender and racial differences” (26).

In *Ethnic Identity*, Bernal (1993) discusses the process of cultural transmission (enculturation and socialization) to a developing individual in a single society in the formation of ethnic identity development as influenced by three primary vectors: vertical transmission or influences stemming from one's parents; horizontal transmission or influences stemming from one's peers; and oblique transmission, that is influences from other adults and institutions in two categories – from one's own group and from outside groups (272-3). I argue that Indigenous ethnic identity has been constructed as a consequence of gringismo (oblique outside transmission) imposing itself onto the family and peer influences that then inform ethnic identity as a response to gringismo. The intent of ethnic identity, as opposed to a racial or national identity, is the extermination of racial identity and affective attachment to ancestral ties that undermine gringismo – White privilege and White hegemony.

Conclusion

Race, ethnicity and nationality are constructs that, while useful for categorizing individuals and communities, introduce questions of doubt when addressing indigeneity. Singular terms like American Indian and Native American, when used to categorize and mean racially Indigenous, fail to account for the diversity that constitutes indigeneity. Moreover, because of the blood quantum (race) criterion imposed by U.S. federal policies to determine who qualifies to be regarded as Indigenous, the reality of who is Indigenous is compounded by a level of injustice inherent in such a criterion. It challenges individuals and communities to understand what it means to be Indigenous from an external frame of reference rather than an internal frame of reference. Deconstructing the terms of race, ethnicity, and nationality, and reframing how the terms are utilized,

provide a more accurate snapshot of the Indigenous identity phenomenon as I analyze the participants' responses in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RECONSTRUCTING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

When the profession validates empirically tested therapies only from a Western logical positivistic paradigm, we engage in Western supremacy disguised as perceived scientific objectivity: a very subtle and clever neo-colonialism . . . (Duran 2006, 14).

Racism as connected to genocide drives a painful wedge between Indigenous communities resulting in lateral violence. When individuals are forced to contend with the stigma of the “only good Indian is a dead Indian” there is a wounding that is difficult to heal for Indigenous individuals. It is a soul wound that results in dissociation from self, tribal community, ancestral roots and sometimes from life.²⁹ The community and the individual that is forced to contend with assaults, historical and contemporary, becomes *deslogrado*, dislocated. The healing process requires a reassociative process that attempts to reconnect the individual to who s/he is and where s/he comes from.

Participants of this study, particularly those that were not federally recognized (NFR), were involved in a reassociative process expressed through what I term an

²⁹ Suicide is one measure of the impact gringismo has on federally recognized American Indians. The suicide rates for American Indians that are tribally enrolled far exceed those for White Americans. The rates of suicide for American Indians according to the CDC for 2000-2006 for the states of NM, AZ, MT, ND, SD and MN were 14.88 to 61.86 for both sexes, all ethnicities, ages 7 to 27, and are based on death rates per 100,000 population. The suicide rates for Whites for the same states of NM, AZ, MT, ND, SD and MN are 9.83 to 14.25. The annualized crude rate for American Indians in the United States is 12.49 compared to 7.22 annualized crude rate for White Americans. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. *Web based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System*). Retrieved October 23, 2010, from: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>.) It is absurd to consider that this genocidal soul wounding would be different to NFR individuals given that the messages of unworthiness are the same. Recognizing one’s indigeneity requires contending with the overt and covert White hegemonic assaults on self-worth.

Indigenous identity phenomenon. Liberation theology, in addressing this phenomenon called epistemological hybridism (being able to think or see the truth in more than one way), asserts that we must “take the actual life-world of the person or group as the core-truth that needs to be seen as valid just because it is” (Duran 2006, 14). Indigenous identity for the participants of this study was not only an expression of racial, cultural, national and ethnic ties to a community, it also asserted an Indigenous identity phenomenon that was healing and liberating.

Accommodating Racial Violence

To account for the dissociation experienced by participants of this study, and as a survival adaptation, it is common for NFR Indigenous individuals to engage in a *re-association process*, that is, a journey of the discovery of the “Indigenous-self.” Such a journey entails donning myriad identities beginning with general hybrid or ambiguous – thereby safe – self-expressions before settling on a more definitive and convicted assignment. The process of their Indigenous-self discovery and adaptation can be expressed via incremental advances toward Indigenous assertion in activities ranging from incorporating Indigenous-identified iconography into her/his life (jewelry, art, home décor, fashion, hair style), to seeking out and participating in Indigenous activities (pow wows, ceremonies, tribal assistance projects), to exploring tribal enrollment opportunities. Eventually, depending upon the outcomes of the assertions, the individual will settle on an expression that is both satisfying and self-reflective of her/his own self-image.

There is a dual imposition of credibility. What Indigenous communities and the White community believe about an individual’s assertion of Indigeneity will greatly

influence the individuals capacity to “pass” as what is perceived to be an Indian,³⁰ thereby supporting the argument that “Indian-ness” is a construct outside of the qualifier of “race.” Mary, who is White and Cherokee, when talking about her brother’s “choice” not to be Native asserted that her brother was not “fully embracing the truth about himself.” She lamented that her brother “doesn’t have any things in his house, he doesn’t have jewelry, he doesn’t go to pow wows, he doesn’t spend time with Native people, he’s not on this journey . . . he’s not embracing the opportunity.” Her comments assert the notion that “being Native” is a choice that one can make but it requires that one ascribe to certain expressions of Indian-ness. Both the indigenous community(ies) and the White community play a part in the outcome of the individual’s successful expression. Factors that influence successful outcomes remain unquestionably impacted by gringismo, i.e., skin color, language acculturation, authenticity, blood quantum and social contract negotiation. Individuals that “look Indian” are most likely to succeed at “being Indian.” In contrast, individuals that “look White” or express too many “White characteristics” will most likely remain assigned to the borderland of doubt.

What characterizes an individual as “being Indian” outside of tribal enrollment is fluid and negotiable. Federal recognition bestows upon a person, whether he is White, Yellow, Black or Red, a claim to Indian-ness that cannot be denied despite skin color. The paperwork associated with tribal enrollment and blood quantum validates, unquestionably, one’s claim to Indian-ness. A White or Black individual that suggests that he is Indigenous but who is not tribally enrolled will always have a lot of explaining

³⁰ I say “perceived to be an Indian” because, as the data reveals, the majority of the participants, and all of the Chicanos, are “Indian.” It is not the participant’s doubt or lack of indigeneity that must be confronted, rather, it is an American stereotypical construct of what constitutes “Indian-ness” that must be overcome by the participants for the sake of “authenticity.”

to do to validate his claim. Ironically, those individuals that most resemble and are “racially” tied to the “full-blooded,” tribally enrolled members are the individuals that are most likely to be labeled “Mexican,” thereby ensuring that these racially Indigenous individuals will retain identities of Mejicano, Chicano, Mexica, and/or (the vague) Native American, rather than specific tribal identities for fear of being thought of as frauds.

“Before the English were here [in the Southwest], the Spaniards were here and what did they do? They taught us Spanish first. So that’s why a lot of us know Spanish or our grandparents know Spanish. Again, that’s just another language from the invader. We’ve had to adapt. We’ve been squashed. Our families have been squashed. Our grandparents, our grandparent’s parents have been shipped off to boarding schools, “cut your hair, don’t speak that language,” trying to Americanize us all the way and shun us for being Native American and then all these years later saying, ‘Oh you’re Native American? Now prove it to me.’ It’s just a slap in the face to everything that our families have been doing, that our ancestors have been doing.” (Juan, NFR Apache/Isleta del Sur)

The identities that people of the Southwest have had to adopt, particularly when they have been shunned by tribal communities, distances them from their racially Indigenous roots. The term “Native American” becomes an ethnic identifier that works to reassert Indigenous ties but falls short of fully articulating racial or tribal identity. It can be both problematic and a rallying point for Pan-Indianism.

Padilla (1985) argues, “Hispanismo or Latinismo represents a collective generated ethnic group identity and behavior...produced out of the intergroup relations or social interaction of at least two Spanish-speaking groups” (3). Padilla, then, uses this criterion to qualify who is and is not ethnically Latino as a fabrication “out of shared cultural and structural similarities and functions according to the needs of Spanish-speaking groups” (5). He argues that language is that which constitutes Latino identity (75). He states that “the manifestation and salience” of a “Latino ethnic-conscious identity and solidarity” is

contextually situated around issues and at critical times of need. He calls this *situational ethnic identity* (4). The notion is that it is the issues around which individual Spanish-speaking communities can rally that unite them under the construct of “Latino.” “Latino ethnicity is fabricated out of shared cultural and structural similarities and function according to the needs of Spanish-speaking groups” (5). He further divides this into two categories of *Latino ethnic identity* and *Latino ethnic mobilization*. The former represents identification around a common language whilst the latter represents action and interaction of two or more groups identifying as Latino (8). Latino ethnic-conscious behavior, then “represents a collective-generated behavior which transcends the boundaries of the individual national and cultural identities” (61), i.e., a collective consciousness around a constructed identity. It becomes “situationally specific” around collective contentions of inequality. In essence, this identity is a “political phenomenon: a strategy to attain the needs and wants of the groups” thereby causing the cohesion of the group to wax and wane according to “periods of interest” (138). Moreover, the “cultural symbols of the Latino ethnic unit are quite fluid and not fixed in space or time” (141).

Building on Padilla’s idea of a *situational ethnic identity*, what can be extrapolated about ethnic identity as it relates to communities that don the Native American ethnic identity, is that all ethnic identities are also similarly constructed and that these constructions are not necessarily “race based.” I think it could be effectively argued that Latinos are Black, White, Brown/Red, and in some cases, even Asian. Padilla argues that language is the distinguishing factor that distinguishes “Latino,” but this fails to account for the Latinos who speak only English. He posits that it is not necessary to speak the Spanish language, only to utilize it as a rallying point. This, then,

puts Brazilian immigrants in the precarious position of not qualifying as Latinos. I suggest that it would be more prudent to argue that Latinos are the (mostly, but not always, Indigenous) descendants of the colonies of the Iberian Peninsula (from Mexico and the Caribbean to Chile) that have immigrated to the United States. This is a more accurate statement, however, it still fails to account for the ten percent (Barreto 2007) of Latinos that are not immigrants to the United States, i.e., Chicanos. Be that as it may, the point that Latinismo is an ethnic construct is well made. He addresses the similarity of construction for a Pan-Indian identity (Native American, American Indian) and is valid in his assertion (145).

Rather than language, the Native American, Pan-Indian, construct is rooted in a similarity of historical experience, but it is a construct none-the-less. Padilla in referencing De Vos (1975) states that “ethnicity [is] an essential orientation to the past, to collective origin. Celebrated in rituals, narratives, and histories, ethnicity is the sense of belonging, the submersion of the self in something that transcends self, the ‘we-ness’ of heritage and ancestry” (74). As stated earlier, one must also take into account how ethnic constructs are received by both White America, and by those for whom the constructs refer. Each must accommodate the construct and validate it for it to have meaning and purpose. The boundaries of the construct must also be defined in the interest of “preserving the self-identity” (74, see also, Devereaux 1975); a process of the healing and liberation expressed by the participants of this study.

Racial violence, i.e., racism, requires accommodation that takes myriad forms.³¹

Constructing racial, ethnic and nationality identities individually and collectively is a

³¹ Racial violence or racism, according to Memmi (1968, 185-95), has four “essential” elements of a “racist attitude:” 1) stressing the real or imaginary differences between the racist and his victim; 2) assigning

process of accommodation. Participants of this study expressed the many ways they have had to accommodate racism, gringismo and the insidious nature of federal recognition. At times, they were complicit in how violence, both racial and lateral, was expressed and perpetuated.

Sample Characteristics

Twenty-three individuals were interviewed for the purpose of this study. Their ages ranged from nineteen to seventy-three. Of these, ten were female and thirteen were male, three identified as Two Spirit. When considering those characteristics that could be utilized by others to discriminate against the participants, I came up with the following categories:

- Skin color – nineteen of the participants “looked Indian,” that is, they looked phenotypically Indian with brown skin, brown or black hair, brown or black eyes and had Indigenous physiological features. They self-identified or had been identified by others (according to their narratives) as “looking Indian.” Four of the participants “looked White,” that is they had blond, or light colored hair, blue or green eyes, White skin and self-identified or had been identified by others (according to their narratives) as “looking White.”
- Federal recognition – seventeen of the participants were not federally recognized (NFR), six of the participants were federally recognized or FR (Lakota, Navajo, Shawnee, Yaqui, Ute), five of the participants are registered with a tribe that is state recognized (Alabama, Colorado, Montana, Texas) but not federally

values to these differences, to the advantage of the racist and the detriment of his victim; 3) trying to make them absolutes by generalizing from them and claiming that they are final; and 4) justifying any present or possible aggression or privilege. I provide a similar construction for lateral violence in Chapter Five.

recognized and one individual had a “pending” enrollment (needed to live on the reservation to be fully recognized).

- Looking “Mexican” – twelve participants reported being called a Mexican or being identified as Mexican by others.
- Being an “urban” Indian – seven of the participants grew up on a reservation, eighteen of the participants did not. Two participants that grew up on a reservation were not tribally enrolled. In addition, nine or more of the participants grew on ancestral land (land where their ancestors would have resided but has not been declared reservation land). Thirteen of those that did not grow up on reservations grew up in an urban setting; five grew up in a rural setting.
- Looking/being “gay” – three of the participants reported being Two Spirit (one used the term “queer”), a fourth participated in non-heteronormative behavior.

Discrimination based on gender targeting women cannot be denied. Because that was not the focus of this study, female participants did not elaborate on the discrimination that they experienced as women, however six of the female participants specifically identified as a “woman,” thereby articulating a woman-identified consciousness. In contrast, two of the men specifically identified as a “man” when asked to identify. I was reminded while transcribing the interviews about how men relate to one another in the first few moments of meeting for the first time. During the transcription of the interview of the male person I call Koíddeh, there was a point where Koíddeh introduces his “girlfriend” into the conversation as he references how her family identifies as Mexican and what it means. I recalled, during that transcription, my

experiences in situations where two men meet for the first time how the sexual identification of the men will be revealed subtly in conversation within the first five minutes or so of meeting. There is a point at which men will introduce a heteronormative comment, subject, or reference that indicates to the other man that, “I am heterosexual.” Koíddeh did this with the introduction of a “girlfriend” story as a natural flow of the conversation. There is an assumption of heteronormativity, which, between men, is often verbally reiterated. The significance of individuals identifying specifically as “man” and “woman” is a relative piece of identity that should, at least, be referenced as it informs non-heteronormative behavior.

Two Spirit Identity

Randy Burns, founder of Gay American Indians (GAI), documented alternative male/female roles in over 135 North American Indian tribes. In the preface to *Living the Spirit*, Burns writes that these tribes historically recognized and encouraged those children that were gender different to develop their skills so that they could contribute to the community. These individuals “specialized in the arts and crafts of their tribes and performed important social and religious roles” (Burns 1988, 2). These roles might include mourning and burying of the dead, serving as healers and spiritual leaders, or they may have been renowned for their artistic abilities. Today, these individuals “represent the continuity of this tradition . . . we are still here, a part of our communities, struggling to face the realities of contemporary life . . . fill[ing] traditional roles in our tribal communities” (2).

The term Two Spirit is a contemporary term meant to specifically reference *Indigenous* individuals that are gender different, i.e., do not identify as exclusively

heterosexual in behavior or gender.³² Coined in 1990 at the Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference held in Winnipeg, Canada, the term recognizes “past and present Native American roles and identities” and “was deliberate, with clear intention to distance [our]selves from non-Native gays and lesbians” and to reject the offensive anthropological term “berdache” (Jacobs, Thomas and Lang 1997, 2-3).

Three of the participants identified as Two Spirit, feeling that the term both empowered them and respected who they were as individuals:

I always knew from when I was young that I was different . . . my grandmother and grandfather knew who I was because they would say things like, “you’re different, you’re special. You’re going to be an artist, you’re going to help people.” They were telling me who I was but I was too young to understand it in terms of anything to do with sexual orientation or gender identity but I did know I was different . . . The first time I heard the word ‘Two Spirit’ and my Lakota family was telling me about it, about their *winkte* tradition, it actually sure made me feel good. (Tecum, Eastern Shawnee)

Indigenous identity has been the most affirming, for me, cultural path for being Two Spirit. Perhaps they both even strengthen each other and inform each other and encourage each other. Within Indigenous identity I find acknowledgement and recognition and positive affirmation, purpose and direction. [It is] because of my own belief structure and worldview and constructs that Indigenous culture is the only thing that makes sense to me about being Two Spirit. (Sureh, NFR Isleta Pueblo)

The use of the identifier, Two Spirit, also served as a rejection of a Christian heteronormative imposition:

I’ve recently been able to start articulating a queer identity, a Two Spirit identity. And I feel like that aspect of myself is a direct result of reclaiming my Indigenous history, my native history because it’s allowed me a space to begin to think about and articulate my sexual identity because in this Western European construct, queerness is so, [pause] demonized as something wrong and awful and it’s something that I’ve walked with and internalized. And it’s something that I’ve denied in

³² Many non-Native individuals, especially Whites, have begun to co-opt and exploit the term when it was never intended to mean other than Indigenous individuals. The Two Spirit community finds this offensive and another example of White appropriation and White privilege/gringismo.

myself because of those constraints from the outside world and society.
(Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

In contrast to how gringismo perceives gender difference, the belief of those interviewed was that the Indigenous communities and cosmologies provided not only a refuge but a place within the circle as individuals that, despite their difference, had something to contribute to the community.

I believe that Two Spirit people, that Creator planned this and we have a purpose. We are special people. It's kind of a blessing. I realized that one day when we had a funeral and they were short handed. There weren't a lot of women there to cook and so I went into the kitchen and I was cooking and a woman said to me, "You, if you were a straight man I'd kick you out of here. But you Two Spirit people, you can go back and forth." And I said, "Wow, you know I can." I can go and cook with women, be with women and hear how they talk and what that woman's world is. And then I can go out and do things with the men and fit in there too. That's something most people never get to experience. (Tecum, Eastern Shawnee).

By reclaiming my Indigenous identity, my Native history, its allowed me to really see that our communities have always had a place for queer people and Two Spirit people, and that it was a respected place in the circle just like anybody else. And so I feel through my ethnic and racial identity, and my political identity, it's allow me to come to terms with this other aspect of who I am and make sense of that and own it and be okay with it. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

There are many cultures, perhaps, that have appreciated people that are Two Spirit but I see myself as Indigenous and it's not that being Indigenous is a way to find who I am but it's a nice congruence. (Sureh, NFR Isleta Pueblo)

The significance of including a gender identity that correlates to an Indigenous identity is relative in that it is not only an important aspect of the participants that identify as Two Spirit but it also contrasts how gringismo further disadvantages these individuals beyond the usual racial and ethnic criteria. What is missing from this study is representation from the female Two Spirit community. Despite that omission, it is my

hope that the reader will recognize that gender, gender difference and sexual orientation are critical elements of any study on identity.

An Elite Pool

The participants of this study are not representative of the Native American population of the United States. The majority of participants have a college education, live in urban settings, have extensive involvement in Indigenous communities and are accustomed to articulating Indigenous issues. Many participate in spiritual communities and, therefore, reference their involvement with sundance,³³ danza Azteca or Mexicayotl,³⁴ sweatlodge ceremonies³⁵ and/or the Native American Church.³⁶ It was not

³³ The sundance to which most of the participants refer is an eight-day ceremony (four days of purification and four days of dancing) held annually. Its popularity is such that dances are held from Canada to Mexico. Some of the larger dances have participants that travel from around the globe for the event. The dance, which is part of Lakota spiritual practices, had its resurgence with the American Indian Movement and following the Freedom of Religion Act in 1978. Other tribal communities also have sundances, however, they are not as open to outsiders and non-natives participating as has been the case with the Lakota sundance.

³⁴ The Chicano Movement popularized “Aztec dance” or *Danza* in the United States. Presently, there is a reciprocal exchange between dancers of the United States and Mexico. *Danza* derives its origins from the Concheros who claim an ancestral lineage to the last bloody battle fought between the Chichimecas and the Christians that occurred on July 25, 1531 on a hill in the present day City of Querétaro. “When the fighting was at its worst, there appeared a shining cross, suspended in the air above the field of battle, and at its side the image of St. James, whose day it was . . . [u]pon beholding this marvel, the pagans calmed down. They wept and promised to accept the light of the Gospel. Afterwards they asked that a cross be erected as a landmark on the battlefield that should last ‘forever and ever,’ and that the place be called ‘Sangremal,’ in memory of the blood spilled there by both sides” (Toor 1947, 329). Following the battle and solar eclipse, the Chichimeca began to dance and it is believed that it was at that point the Conchero tradition was born. Mexicayotl, the essence of being *Mexica*, is the contemporary form of danza Azteca that evolved out of the Conchero tradition where Christianity has been cast aside and Indigenous beliefs and forms now flourish. Thousands of dancers still converge on the Church of Sangremal in Querétaro on the day of Saint James each September.

³⁵ Many, if not most, Indigenous communities from present day Canada to Central American had some form of “sweatlodge.” These purification ceremonies have been used for healing and praying for thousands of years. There was a resurgence of sweatlodge ceremonies during the American Indian Movement and many of today’s participants utilize a Lakota stylized form and ceremony that hails from the “missionizing” that took place during the Movement. Each community has a name for the structure and the ceremony in its own language provided the ceremony has survived. The two most popular names are *inipi* (from Lakota) and *temazcalli* (from Nahuatl). It is the most common and popular of all ceremonies across myriad borders and communities.

³⁶ The Native American Church was incorporated in 1918 in Oklahoma, by Quanah Parker. The peyote religious movement began in the late 1880s as a Pan-Indian religious movement that has since spread across the United States. The use of peyote was first introduced to American Indians by the Lipan Apache

uncommon for participants to be involved in a number of different spiritual practices. It is important that the reader make no generalizations about Indigenous communities based on the findings of this study. This study articulates a Chicano narrative that has been absent from the discourse on Indigeneity. It draws correlations between communities that perceive themselves to be different based on a number of different criteria.

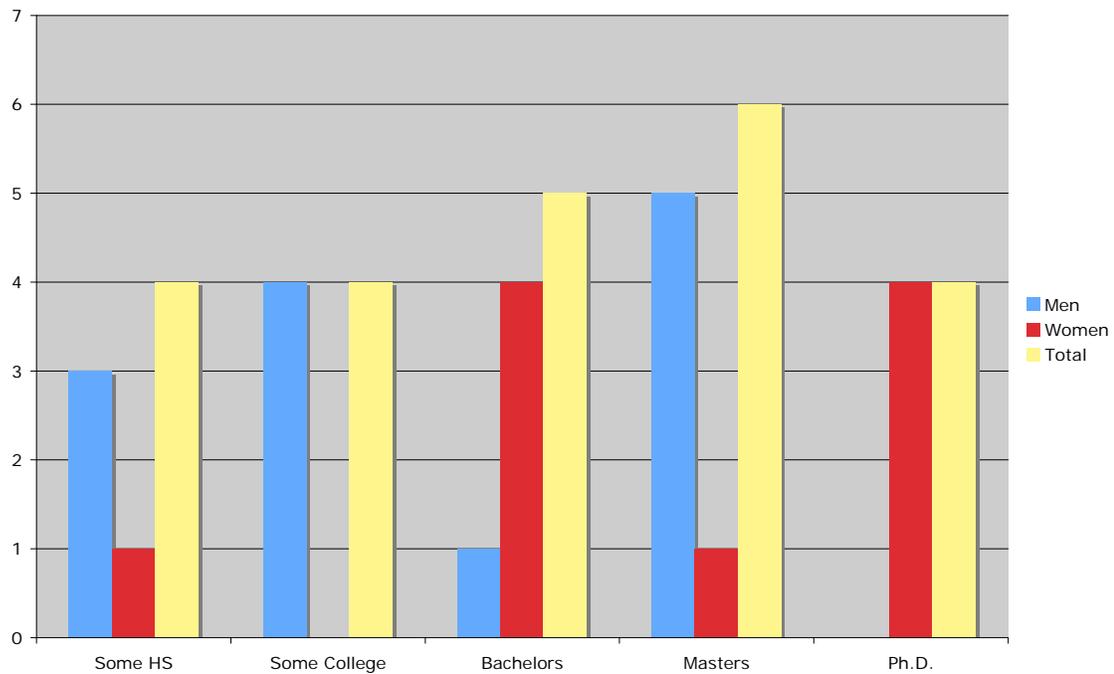
The high school graduation rate for the participants of this study was eighty-three percent. This is well above the average for Hispanics, but particularly high for Native American rates of high school graduation. The rate of participants that did not complete high school was seventeen percent. Nationally, for 2007, the number of Whites that did not complete high school was nine percent, for Asians twelve percent, for Hispanics sixty percent completed high school, and for American Indians/Alaska Natives eighty percent complete high school. In 2007, forty-four percent of American Indians/Alaska Natives age twenty-five or older had attended some college or completed a graduate or undergraduate degree (DeVoe 2008, 148). Table 4.1 provides a visual representation of the education levels for the participants of this study.

Fifteen of the participants of this study (sixty-five percent) held college degrees. The women of this study had the highest educational levels with nine participants (ninety percent) holding a bachelor's degree, three holding a Ph.D., one had a master's degree and one was completing her Ph.D. The men of this study reported that three of them did not finish high school, six had completed college, five of these had a master's degree and two more were completing their undergraduate studies. None of the men had a Ph.D. The sample is too small to be statistically significant but represented a trend consistent

who had direct contact with the Huichol communities of Mexico—the original users of the medicine. These all night ceremonies are practiced from Canada to Mexico with participants from a variety of Indigenous communities.

with DeVoe’s report indicating that more males fail to complete high school than females (a difference of three percentage points (58)) and that there was a twenty-one percentage point gender gap difference for numbers of American Indian/Alaska Natives enrolled in college in 2006 (128).

Table 4.1. Educational Attainment of Sample



The significance of this educational difference must be noted to recognize that this sample pool does not reflect the Indigenous population in general or any other population but the one sampled for the purpose of this study. However, it may be indicative of the population of Chicano people that intentionally choose to identify as Indigenous. It could also reflect the limitations of accessing a population using digital and radio media versus a snowball recruitment method. It should be kept in mind that education provides the privilege and language to explore and articulate one’s experience

in identity formation. Moreover, a higher educational level is going to influence issues of class.

Profiling discrimination

As I began the analysis of the data I started by looking for forms of violence, i.e., discrimination, racism, hostility, lateral violence, as the focus of this study. Every participant experienced some form of violence related to her/his identity. In some instances it was racial violence, in many instances it was lateral violence. There were also instances of gender or heteronormative violence. As I began to examine the root causes of these experiences of violence, the data indicated multiple reasons. I will examine them in more detail later on in this chapter and in Chapter Five.

What became evident as I explored “how” participants experienced discrimination or violence was that I needed to categorize participants along some continuum that would make sense of the data. The category “identity” became more and more complicated as I attempted to force fit participants into what is generally understood as “Indigenous.” I had to break it down even more. I began by establishing two target points or categories as I set up the interviews: those that are federally recognized (FR) and those that were not federally recognized (NFR). Surprisingly, the narratives of the participants in each category were quite similar. Differences did not automatically fall along these lines. Instead, discrimination or violence was experienced along multiple lines. In an attempt to make sense of this I decided to break out and more clearly define “Indigenous.”

Utilizing the comments made by the participants as to what constitutes indigeneity, I settled on breaking identity into the categories of *race* utilizing the Indigenous construction of Red, Black, Yellow and White discussed in Chapter Three;

nationality, i.e., citizenship or claim to citizenship to a “nation” whether it included geopolitical borders (Navajo Nation, Oglala Lakota Nation) or not (Apache, Mexican, Cherokee); and *ethnic identity*, i.e. those contemporary pan-ethnic Indigenous terms used to describe diverse populations assigned to the categories “not White,” such as American Indian, Native American, Indian, Native, and Indigenous.³⁷ It was common for participants to use ethnic terms and nationality terms to mean race. It has been my intentional use of the word Indigenous to mean “racially Red.” However, that is not necessarily how the participants used the word “Indigenous.”

Racially Indigenous

When breaking the participants into racial categories there were those that were “mostly Red,” that is, they looked racially Indigenous (nineteen or eighty-three percent); those that were full-blooded, or mixed-blood with twenty five percent or less White blood (seventeen or seventy-four percent); there were those that were “mostly White,” in essence, have mostly White blood with a small degree of racially Red ancestors (three or thirteen percent); and there were those that had one parent that was White (six or twenty-six percent); in which case they could “look White” or “look Indian” depending on biological factors of dominance. This was not easily distinguished by federal recognition, for two FR participants were full-blooded but one was registered as having a blood quantum of only fifty percent because he came from more than one tribe. Two FR participants had French ancestors, one of whom also had “Spanish” blood; a fifth had Spanish ancestors and a sixth was seven-eighths White but qualified for FR because his tribe was “very generous” in how they considered blood quantum.

³⁷ The terms “First Nations” and “aboriginal” are used by Indigenous peoples of Canada, but since these terms were not used by the participants of this study I have excluded them.

The focus of this study is to draw attention to those Indigenous individuals (most of whom identified as Chicana/o) that identified as Indigenous (racially) but were not federally recognized. Consequently, most of the participants (eighteen or seventy-eight percent) were Indigenous but not federally recognized. Of the men in this category (ten total), three were full-blooded, four had some Spanish or Asian blood, and three had one White parent. Of the females, two were full-blooded, and three had some Spanish blood, and two were “mostly White” with some Indigenous ancestry. Two used the racial categories of Mestizo and one used the racial category of Metís. There were a number of participants that used the term “Mexican” as both a racial category and an ethnic identifier. This became problematic in categorizing the term. Mexican is a nationality, it references a citizen of Mexico. Only one of the participants held actual citizenship with the country. Because of the residual effects of the Plan de Iguala discussed in Chapter Two, the term “Mexican” remains a prevalent moniker outside of the meaning of “Mexican citizen.” My decision to use the term as an ethnic identifier (except for the single Mexican citizen) rather than a racial or nationality identifier was based on these factors:

[I identify] just as Mexican. Well, my grandmother, she didn't like the fact that we were Mexican. She said we were Spanish. Which we know wasn't true. (Quanta, NFR Comanche)

I also use the term “Spanish” as an ethnic identifier (rather than a White racial category or a nationality) since only one of the participants in their family histories could name an actual ancestor that came from Spain. Given how the term Spanish became the de facto moniker for the people of New Mexico post-Treaty, I treat it the same as Mexican.

Parents and grandparents of the Chicano participants often identified as “Spanish,” a residual effect of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (see Chapter Two).

My birth certificate says that I’m White. But that’s not what I am. They put down I’m White on my birth certificate. I’m identified as being a White, which I’m not. Which is quite obvious. Me personally I identify myself as a Native American. (Luis, NFR Tiwa/Pueblo).

In neither category of FR or NFR was there a real “Red race” distinction that was more pronounced. Race, while a qualifier for FR, did not prohibit the possibility that one could qualify for “racial” federal recognition and yet be “mostly White,” while there were others that were “racially Red” yet did not qualify for federal recognition. Race, then, is not the sole determinant when considering Indigenous identity and, as revealed by this study, calls into question the use of a U.S. imposed blood quantum requirement for determining federal recognition.

Responses from participants revealed that in some instances racism/discrimination was open and venomous:

Where do I start? There’s stories from when I was a child to being called a filthy Mexican, or filthy Indian to my face while I was growing up. (Ari, NFR Yaqui)

Other participants revealed how subtle racism could be, yet just as pronounced:

Discrimination up here is much harsher because it’s in your face as opposed to being behind your back, subtle the further south you go in my limited experience. (Itsa, NFR Chicano/Mexica)

America is a White supremacist society and living in this society of color you will face discrimination, you are going to confront, you are going to be beaten down by racism. It doesn’t even have to be overt racism. Somebody doesn’t have to look at you and call you a spic or wetback and spit at you, even though I haven’t been spit on personally, but you know, being called wetback or spic or dirty Mexican. You will be called those things but even beyond the overt racism, the institutionalized and covert racism that passes itself off as normal, is a daily thing that you encounter.

So being a person of color in this society, yes I have faced discrimination.
(Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

The imposition of being colonized first by Spanish-speaking invaders and later by English-speaking invaders has also developed unique outcomes. Many of the Indigenous people of the southwest were Christianized as a process of colonization. Consequently, their names were changed and they now have Spanish last names. This too has had implications for discrimination:

I was discriminated against by Mexican, first-generation immigrants, or immigrants who were still working on their paper trail. Because I don't speak Spanish, I can, I guess, speak Spanish to save my life, I can do that, but I'm not fluent and I don't profess to be. Spanish is not one of my major languages or anything. So I was really discriminated against by Mexican immigrants. Because they assumed with my Spanish last name and how I looked that I should be Mexican. Then when I would say "no," then, they would see—they have the same stereotypical vision of what Indians were that White people do. So they've seen all the negative, but they were actual people descendant of Indigenous tribal groups themselves. So it was always a catch-22. (Maria, FR Yaqui)

Federal recognition becomes a format for lateral violence particularly in instances where the perpetrators are both "mostly White" and federally recognized. These perpetrators of lateral violence victimize other racially Indigenous individuals on the premise that they are not real Indians:

I was at a conference and there were a number of Indigenous women. They're considered Indigenous if you have a number, if you can, if you have the ID then you're Indigenous, right? And they were talking about indigeneity and how Chicanos who claim to be Indigenous have the privilege to call themselves Indigenous or not. And I thought, wait a minute, where is that coming from? And then they started talking about quantum [pause] and all of those women, were lighter than me! They had brown hair, blonde hair, blue eyes, green eyes and I thought, wait a minute, let's not start talking about pure bloods here, I mean, and all of us, the darks ones, are in the audience listening to our Indigenous sisters telling us we weren't Indigenous! (Flor, NFR Otomí)

Recognizing how racism victimizes and erects barriers to opportunities forces some individuals into action out of necessity for survival and as an act of resistance to racism:

I know that being the oldest and being the first child to speak English in the family, I had to do a lot of the interpreting for a lot of the parents and relatives. At a young age I became very aware of racism and injustice. There were situations where I had to, not even interpret so much, but it was almost like advocate. I started crossing the line and I was advocating, and I wasn't always interpreting everything as quickly because I am saying, "No this is not right." So then I would have to catch up my family to what I was talking about. It had both a positive feel because of the family and the love and then the traditions we had but also kind of like this weight attached to it because you're always treated like you don't belong. And your told that, "you don't belong here. Go back where you came from wetback" all of those horrible things that we're told. It's kind of like a bittersweet identity to carry but I always carried it with pride despite all of that. (Morena, NFR Otomí)

The resentment of the gringos regarding the laws that have been passed to protect communities of color against racism have resulted in perverse interpretations of the law that further victimize communities of color and, in this instance, become another tool to use against members of the Indigenous community:

My son and I were living here, and if you looked at him, you wouldn't even be able to tell he was native, back then. He had really long hair but he's fair color. So he had like two or three Chicano friends that they hung around together. They went to Southern Hills in Boulder. Southern Hills is a junior high and these pack of White boys called them out. They went off the school grounds and I guess they had this big fight and the cops arrested my son and the other two Chicano boys. [They] took them to jail, called me and said "We have your son in jail" and it's like, "My son in jail?" and they said, "We're charging him with racial intimidation." And I was like, "That law was made to protect people of color." So they reversed it and they charged those boys and they said they were going to file felony charges on them. The town was in an uproar, I mean the Native community and the Chicano community and we had the ACLU come up here against the police department. They kept the boys in jail all weekend. Interrogated them, kept them in these little tiny rooms each of them by themselves and just interrogated them all weekend long. It was horrible. It was horrible and so we went through that whole thing and I told my son, I said, "You know what? You really need to leave here,

cause you're marked here now. This is a small town. They're not going to leave you alone. You just need to probably leave." And he didn't want to. He didn't want to leave me but we decided it was best for him to go. And so that's when he moved back to the reservation and lived with his dad. I pity those kids cause they were so young and they just had to stand up to this brutal, brutality from the police department. Not physical but mental. (Lily, FR Oglala Lakota)

The de facto construction of "Mexican as race" is reflected in how a Navajo participant is automatically relegated to being Hispanic. In some instances it is a kinship error, in others it is the assumption of "brown as poor." It is important to realize the subtle form that racism can take, as expressed earlier by participants, as if it were innocent:

A lot of times I get mistaken for being Hispanic. I have Hispanic people come up to me and try to talk to me in Spanish or something or wonder why I don't speak Spanish. When my last son was born five years ago, we were at the local hospital and we just had the baby and a nurse was talking to us about getting some equipment for my wife so she could nurse the baby, breast pump type of stuff? And, I don't know how exactly the nurse said it, but what she said to us was basically there was two types of machines. There was this one that was probably cheaper quality versus this nice machine, but they made the comment, what she implied is we couldn't afford the high priced equipment for some reason. So that was one thing that kind of opened our eyes. (Biih, FR Navajo)

For those individuals that are federally recognized but are White in complexion, their credibility as being Indigenous is also called into question, a reminder that race plays a critical role in what is construed to be Indigenous:

I think because I'm light skinned, I've had people question me on who I am. When non-native people do it, it doesn't bother me as much. I've had people, I've given them my business card and when they see I do beadwork, "Are you really an Indian?" (Tecum, FR Eastern Shawnee)

Indigenous Nationality

When I explored the categorization of "nationality," I looked at the identifiers that people used and deconstructed the terms into national origin as belonging to a "nation" of people. Using Anderson's (1991) notion of nation from Chapter Three ("an imagined

political community”) I used the participants’ terms to determine what nation they affiliated with, even if that nation was a general term (Apache) or a specific tribe (Pascual Yaqui). All of the participants were “American” citizens although some held dual citizenship with tribal nations or with Mexico. National identification terms did not specifically mean that they were citizens of that country of origin. Of those that were FR, one identified as Irish, three as French, two as Spanish and one as Mexican. These references, however, were being used as “ethnic” or “racial” terms although they reference nations. They also used FR Indigenous national assignments: Oglala Lakota (Pine Ridge, Rosebud), Eastern Shawnee, Choctaw, Pascual Yaqui, Navajo and Ute Mountain Ute.

Of the NFR category, nine identified as Mexican, seven referenced Spanish, two identified as French, three identified as Irish, one used English, one used German, one identified as Filipino, and one as Italian. For Indigenous identities, thirteen used Chicano, eight used Mexica, one used Tlaxcalla, two identified as Otomí, five identified as Apache, one as Yaqui, one as Lakota, five as Pueblo (which encompasses about twenty distinct nations), one as Cherokee, and one as Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.

It’s interesting to me that the Irish side of my family doesn’t know what part of Ireland they’re from, doesn’t know how or when they got to the United States or why. It’s just kind of a big blank on that side of the family. Actually that part of my culture I know next to nothing about and in a certain way I feel kind of bad about that because there’s a lot of history there, of culture there that I’d at least like to be aware of. I didn’t grow up with my mom, I grew up with my dad so it’s almost like that side of the family contributed DNA but as far as culture or feeling a part of that family there’s not much of any kind of connection. They definitely identify as White, Irish, Catholic American. My dad’s side all identify pretty much as Shawnee. My family’s real mixed-blood going back a long way. By in the 1700s part of my family, going back there is French,

Creek, Choctaw, Seneca, so we're actually really mixed but we always followed the Shawnee way and lived with the Shawnee people so that was kind of the basis upon which I think, we really strongly identify as Shawnee. (Tecum, FR Eastern Shawnee)

Tecum references nationalities when discussing his lineage. French and Irish, in this instance, are White, whereas Creek, Choctaw, and Seneca are red. Tecum "looks White" and his tribe is "very generous" to grant him citizenship at one-eighth blood quantum. Historically, the tribes that were settled in Oklahoma have been intermarrying with White people for hundreds of years, so even with tribal designations as Creek, Choctaw and Seneca, it can reasonably be assumed that there is an abundance of White blood. Therefore, the one-eighth blood quantum designation could be called into question. What can be seen is that the tribal governments that have had longer exposure to White Americans, and therefore more intermarrying, have also become savvy about how to manipulate the blood quantum criterion such that they are able maintain viable numbers of citizens although these citizens may be primarily racially White.

I'm the same amount of blood Oglala as I am Northern Cheyenne. I was enrolled when I was born with the Oglala nation . . . My mom's grandfather was a Whiteman. Nelson was a Swedish Whiteman that married into the Lakota people. For all intents and purposes he was a Native after that, but he really wasn't, he was a Whiteman. So her father was half-Native and half-White, and then she was one-fourth White and three-fourths Indian. So I'm one-eighth White. (Chey, FR Oglala Lakota)

Chey assesses her blood quantum as three-fourths Red and utilized two nationalities to account for her Indian-ness, Lakota and Cheyenne. Circumstances had her registered with the Oglala Lakota nation even though she is as much "Oglala as I am Northern Cheyenne."

I actually, uh, I do identify as, telling people that I'm Little Shell and Norwegian. You know, there's also French from the French Canadian fur trapper days, but I think that I'm proudest of that. (Linda, NFR Chippewa)

Linda looks racially White to me and this can be attributed to a White mother who is Norwegian (a nationality) and a father who, in addition to being Red/Indigenous, is also French Canadian (two nationalities). She is registered with a tribe that has state recognition but not federal recognition. The struggle of the Métis people (Métis meaning mixed blood, French/White and Indigenous) is that the U.S. government will no more recognize the Métis than it will the Mestizo people (Spanish/White and Indigenous). The irony of this is that some federally recognized tribes, at this point, are mostly racially White, i.e., they are more White than Métis and Mestizo people.

My grandma, the only time that she would speak Lakota was when her friends would come around and they would all sit and talk. But at home, in the home she would speak English. And she was fluent, she was half Spanish and half-Indian, half Native American. So she spoke both of her languages fluently . . . her father was Spanish. I don't know where he came from. Several Mexican men came to the reservation, that's why we have Hernandezes, Martinezes, Gallegos. I don't know why they came out there? Maybe to work, or I don't know. But several of them came onto the reservation and end up marrying Indian women. I'm not really sure where they came from. Then on my dad's side, my name is French. Lot of French people on the reservation too. A lot. (Lily, FR Oglala Lakota)

What is interesting to note here is that Lily said that her grandfather was "Spanish" then in the next sentence used the term "Mexican." I have to decide if her grandfather is Spanish/White or Mexican/Red. The French grandfather is clearly White. This is a clear example of an individual using nationality to mean race. More importantly, however, what she really means is "not Lakota," again, a nationality.

I've met some Natives who are card-carrying, federal Natives, and they got blond hair and blue eyes and they've got maybe 1/32 of who knows what type [of Native blood] and they are considered Native Americans. And then there's other people that you'll find are dark skinned and, like my great-grandma on my dad's side, her name was Geronima; the female version of Geronimo. But she swore up and down that we were Spanish

from Spain. If you've seen anyone from Spain you know that they don't look like that . . . I'm mixed blood. I've run into some card-carrying Natives. Some of them are real light skinned; some of them aren't but because I speak Spanish, they say "Oh, you're not Indian. You're a Mexican." (Juan, NFR Apache/Isleta Pueblo)

Juan exemplifies for us the prevalence of being categorized a Mexican (nationality) and self-identifying as White (Spanish, as his grandmother did) to account for issues of racism and lateral violence. Juan is Apache (Red) on his father's side and European and Asian (ethnic identifiers) meaning White and Yellow on his mother's side. He self-identifies as Native American: "Ever since I was born they took me into the sweatlodge and I've grown up my whole life being Native American." As we will see in the next section, Native American is an ethnic identifier. In the instance of participants that also identified as Chicano, Native American became one of the identities used when there was no clear family recall of what particular community they descended from.

The term ethnic has its origins in Late Middle English, via ecclesiastical Latin from Greek, and denoted a person not of Christian or Jewish faith according to the Oxford English Dictionary, i.e., a pagan or heathen. Today ethnic has a very different meaning in the United States as it denotes a person that is "not White." In particular, it is used to classify "Hispanics." As the constructions of race have become blurred over time, the constructions of ethnicity have taken form. Many of the constructions of ethnicity today reference some aspect of post-colonial accommodations that Indigenous populations have had to make consequent to Christian invasion by those from the Iberian Peninsula (i.e., Hispanic, Latino, Mexican). For those that were invaded by the French, English and Dutch speaking Christian invaders the terms are First Nations, Aboriginal, Native American, Native, American Indian, Indian, Mestizo, Amerindio, and Indigenous.

What is critical to understand about ethnic identifiers is that they are substitutes for racial identifiers. When participants of this study self-identified as “Mexican” they did not mean that they were citizens of Mexico but rather that they were “not White.” But if you are not White, not Black, not Asian (Yellow), and your ancestors originated from this hemisphere, then what racial category does that leave for racial identification? Because the thrust of colonialism has been to eradicate traces of indigeneity, the Indigenous descendants have been forced to adopt non-racial terms that still reference gringismo, thus ethnicity.

If there was consistency in the responses from participants of this study, it resided primarily with those individuals that were federally recognized. They identified by nationality:

I identify as Shawnee. That’s really strong for me. (Tecum, FR Eastern Shawnee)

I identify as Navajo. And with that, my clans, I know my clans so I think that’s pretty important to me, knowing your clans. (Biih, FR Navajo)

I’m Oglala Lakota Indian. (Lily, FR Oglala Lakota)

Well, I always tell people that I’m Yaqui because most Native people are really hung on the federal recognition thing, that in order to be Indian you need to have this number. It isn’t necessary based on blood quantum because you could be a blond haired, blue-eyed person and identify as being Native and you have this federally recognized number. So that makes you acceptable to other Indians so I’m real careful, I say that I’m Yaqui because that’s where our recognition comes from. (Maria, FR Pascual Yaqui).

In contrast, those that identified as Chicano, at times, used multiple identifiers and tended to stay with more general Indigenous ethnic terms:

I identify as Native American. (Juan, NFR Apache/Isleta Pueblo)

I identify myself as an Indigenous woman of Chicana/Native American heritage. That's how I identify. And if they ask me, and most people do, especially White people, 'what type of Indian are you?' then I will say I am Choctaw, Lakota, and Pueblo, and with Mexican. (Tina, NFR Lakota)

I identify definitely as Native, as Indian but . . . when I go to different, like the Chicano community? I kind of identify as being Macehualli, like as in Macehualli Chicano or Xicano. And then when I am in the Native community I either identify as Taos or Chicano or both at the same time. So, it kind of like varies with who I am talking with, if I'm talking with Native folks that aren't necessary dealing with Chicano people, I tell them Chicano and I'll emphasize Taos and stuff. (Koíddeh, NFR Taos)

Some of the Chicano participants have rifled through many ethnic identifiers before settling on Native American:

Right now I identify as Native American. For long periods of time I identified as Mexican-American, Mexican, Spanish and others that I can't even remember. Since the late 60s and 70s Hispanics, Latinos, and Chicanos have been added. Chicano being the only identity chosen by the Chicano people, therefore, one I don't mind being called. Chicano and Native American are the only identities I allow anyone to call me. (Toci, NFR Apache/Chicana)

Because of the movement of Nuevo Mejicanos to make a White/Spanish claim, the birth certificates of many of the Chicano participants document them as being White:

My birth certificate says that I'm White. But that's not what I am. They put down I'm White on my birth certificate. I'm identified as being a White, which I'm not. Which is quite obvious. Me personally I identify myself as a Native American. (Luis, NFR Tiwa)

Some of the Chicano participants referenced a Mexican ethnic identity:

I identify myself as an indigenous person of Mexican descent. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

I identify myself as an Indigenous man of the Americas and Mexico. (Ari, NFR Yaqui)

I identify myself as a Mexican, Mexican American. I guess with the spirituality and the way of life that I try to follow is within the *Mexica* tradition. I don't really know much about the Comanche side of our

family, so I don't usually claim it. If I don't know what I'm talking about I'm not going to say that's what I really am. (Quanta, NFR Comanche)

Indigenous. I have always thought of myself that way. I guess I've always been close to my dad's side to the family. I loved both sides, just one side felt more at home. When I go to my mom's side of the family I kind of stick out. I get along with everybody. But ever since I was a kid I always identified as Mexican and Indian. That's what I was. My mom say's, 'you're White too, huh.' I say, 'yeah I guess so.' (Sureh, NFR Isleta Pueblo)

It just depends on who I'm with and where I'm at. If it's a group of people from Mexico and with Spanish last names, I guess, I can comfortably say we're part of a group of Latinos although I know that it's not accurate. If I'm in a setting with other Native people who understand that, then I would say Otomí, or Mexican Indian just to keep it simple. (Morena, NFR Otomí)

One woman who was federally recognized gave an unusual response to the question of identity:

I would identify myself as an Indian. I mean, I don't know if you noticed this or not, but ourselves, when we talk about ourselves? We call each other Indian. I mean, that's how I grew up. I never said Native American or Indigenous. Until I grew older, but already I was like, I'm Indian. (Lily, FR Oglala Lakota)

Indigenous identity is complex. The U.S. government would like for it to be as simple as a racial category determined by blood quantum. The reality is that even the individuals who identify as Indigenous, whether they are federally recognized or not, utilized categories of race, ethnicity and nationality to say, essentially, the same thing. The experiences of the participants of this study were much the same. Every one of them experienced some form of discrimination based on skin color, even if their skin color was White. For those that experienced racism for being dark skinned, the discrimination is the same whether they are regarded by White people as Indian or Mexican. In many instances there was no clear or necessary distinction. The Indigenous identity

phenomenon is complicated by a lack of clarity by the architect of Indigenous identity – the Christian colonizer. The policy of “kill the Indian, save the man” means that some Indians will be worthy of being treated as White people, while others will not, and the easiest practice has been to regard all dark-skinned individuals with suspicion erring on the side of exclusion.

Recognizing the complexity of Indigenous identity initiates a process of unraveling that reveals how colonialism, gringismo and treaty rights impact Indigenous communities. For those that are federally recognized, there is the need to constantly affirm sovereignty. For those that are yet to be federally recognized, there remains a constant struggle to validate a connection that is more complicated than a blood quantum criterion established in the late 1800s. By deconstructing how Indigenous identity has been shaped historically, we are informed about the many ways in which participants responded to questions of identity providing some understanding of the conflicts inherent in qualifying Indigenous identity. Participants utilized multiple terms to mean Indigenous; terms that simultaneously denote race, nationality, and ethnicity. In reconstructing Indigenous identity as an amalgam of more than “just race,” we are able to tease out what constitutes indigeneity as the participants perceive it. In the next chapter, I explore how the blood quantum determination fails to regard all of the aspects of Indigenous identity and I address how the Chicano passes every litmus test reported by participants to qualify as an Indigenous nation worthy of federal recognition.

CHAPTER 5

HIERARCHY OF INDIAN-NESS

What was not anticipated, even by early social scientists, was the tendency of human societies to regenerate themselves, keeping what is useful from the past, and fitting the new into old patterns, sometimes incongruously, to make a working system. Indian societies did not disappear by assimilating to the dominant white culture, as predicted, but assimilated to themselves bits and pieces of the surrounding cultural environment. And they remained indubitably Indian, whether their constituents lived in a tight Indian community or commuted between the community and an urban job market. (D'Arcy 1975, 283)

Liminality, Reaggregation and Chicanismo

The process of arriving at an Indigenous Chicano identity is a process of transition that is historical and individual. Both the Chicano community and the participants of this study that identify as Chicano have undergone a journey from a place of wholeness (pre-Columbian), through conflict (colonialism), finally to resolution (Chicanismo). The discussion of Indigenous Chicano identity by way of ethnicity, nationality and racial boundaries/categories is one about 'liminal' spaces. Adopted by psychologists and anthropologists, liminality describes a state of ambiguity during a process of identity transformation (Turner 2002, 358-374). "Liminality is a phenomenon that allows us to enter a neither/nor space that allows for the reformulation of the old into the new" (Miller, 2004, 106). It is a useful term for describing "physical, conceptual and metaphysical boundaries where transformative processes occur" (Kerns, 2010, 116). There are three phases of the individuation process of self-realization as described by Carl Jung (1978) which must be traversed as a process of growth beginning with the

preliminal, the liminal, and the postliminal; what anthropology refers to as separation, marginalization, and reaggregation or reintegration.

The NFR Chicana/o participants of this study reside in an “in-between” medial space that is conceptual and cosmological as described by Kerns. It is a symbolic threshold where constructions of identities exist. As mediators in this space, Chicanos exercise agency by choosing to embody the term Chicano that is at once racial, ethnic and national. Chicanos reside in a delimited geographical area (Aztlán) alongside both the invader and the architect of Indigenous relegation. The term Chicano allows for a process of identity transformation, diversity within the identity, and a fluidity that does not conform to rigid confines of race, nationality and ethnic categorization as imposed by the invader. The Chicano liminal space is dynamic, animated and atemporal. It is a space that is a locus of dialogue and change, where phenomena are distinguished through challenge, negotiation and reform (Sapwell and Spry-Marqués 2010, 2). As a politically conscious identifier it rejects docility:

The Chicano identification to me is a political statement and as an activist in the Chicano Movement since the 60s, I accept that title with pride and honor as a compliment for my activism and protests of atrocities and injustices against our Native American people. (Toci, NFR Apache/Chicana)

For some participants the Chicano moniker was the result of a process of growth. After a time of using other identifiers, only the term Chicano served to recognize the complexity of being Indigenous and the colonization by both Spanish invaders and gringos:

I identify as an Indigenous Chicano male. [This] means, actually being able to find my place in contemporary society. Prior to this knowledge of my indigenous identity I was always trying to assimilate into a society that rejects people of color and I was constantly angry and fighting the system and always looking to blame someone else for my own inabilities and for society's limits on me. So now with this new knowledge of my ancestry

and identity then I can deal with those same frustrations but without as much anger because I know who I am as an Indigenous person. (Itsa, NFR Chicano/Mexica)

As a part of the process of growth there was a return to an Indigenous identity:

Politically I would call myself a Chicano. I feel that that political identity has really served as an impetus for this racial or ethnic identity. My politics in Chicanismo have really forced me to reconsider who I am and where I come from and I believe the politics of being a Chicano really help me to recognize and reclaim that Indigenous aspect of who I am and Indigenous history that has been erased and forgotten and kept from me. So my political identity as a Chicano has really influenced that articulation of my Indigeneity. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

Some of the individuals had a tie to Mexico. They either had lived in Mexico or had parents that came from Mexico. They were not nationally Mexican and yet were not fully regarded as American. Calling themselves Chicano resolved the dilemma of *ni de aquí, ni de allá*, from neither here nor there:

I really wanted to honor the people who had sacrificed before me so I started using Chicana for myself, and it just felt good. It felt really empowering and it felt like it really spoke to who I was and so I think that that was the next level of my identity, being Chicana. The more I learned about being Otomí it didn't seem like a contradiction. I think, as I got older and thought more about it and about the politics and identity and our names and where they come from, just started feeling more comfortable with embracing *india*, being Indigenous. (Morena, NFR Otomí)

For one that lived on both sides of the border:

Soy un mejicano, soy americano y soy chicano. Le di una forma que si voy a México, yo me siento como chicano este no me siento como gringo. Yo soy chicano. Acá es muy diferente, igual con la comunidad chicana, es muy diferente. Cuando yo llegé, soy mejicano, pero ya aquí que llegué a los Estado Unidos y casi no sabía en México de racismo y discriminación y cosas así de la sociedad, ¿no? Yo no las sentía allí en México. Todo allá estaba muy normal, todo estaba bien. No había nada contra mi. Pero ya cuando vivía aquí, después de tiempo me di cuenta de cómo estaba todo, como era la cuestión aquí. Pues yo siendo un mejicano, ya cuando entendí de los chicanos, que es un término muy importante en este país . . . Así siento que estoy en el medio de los dos, así que, término chicano para mí conecta así los dos. Soy de raza indígena, pero soy, pues vivo aquí en

Estado Unidos, soy parte de la sociedad. Aquí es donde he decidido vivir. Entonces si así como para mí es eso, como unir esos dos lados de mi. (Benito, NFR Chicano/raza indígena)

Nowhere else in the world do people refer to themselves as Chicanos. It is only in the Southwestern United States, in Aztlán, where one can find a nation of people that see themselves (albeit marginally) as U.S. citizens, with historical ties to Mexico and with an Indigenous ancestral tie to the land that predates the arrival of Christian invaders. To use the term Chicano dispels the notions of “illegal immigrant” and embraces an indigenous connection to land and community. It implies a loyalty, not to the nation-state of the United States but rather to a much older geographical space and community that has weathered the assaults of colonialism. This point is expressed in the comments made by participants of this study:

I see myself as being Indigenous, as being Native to my bloodline going back to what’s now known as Mexico. This identity means that for one I’m not an immigrant. My ancestors are not immigrants. We’ve never migrated or traveled to this land. We’ve always been here. We come from here. Our blood is rooted in this soil, is rooted in this land. So it gives us a legitimate claim to being here, to living here and walking on this land. And so for me it’s being able to walk without apologies and say this is my home and this is where I’m from . . . we are Native people we are Indigenous first and foremost. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

Moreover, the term serves as a protective factor, a reminder to be ever vigilant about the gringo invader:

We have to try to protect ourselves knowing what’s coming around the corner because of federally mandated, because of tribal recognitions. They’re not going to recognize Chicanos as a tribe because in their opinion it’s a socially created group of people that just came out of the woodwork rather than having its roots here, which is of course opposite of what the Chicano Movement started as. (Baston, NFR Comanche)

The use of the term Chicano as an identifier, as expressed by these participants, is neither a racial, ethnic nor nationality term, but rather a political term that takes into consideration “historical atrocities” committed against the Indigenous communities from which these participants come; the legacy of colonization. It acknowledges the sacrifices made by “those that came before” and honors the activism and struggles of generations of activists. It reminds them that “Our blood is rooted in this soil, is rooted in this land,” therefore, as Chicanos there is a “legitimate claim” to be in the United States, contrary to the immigrant myth. It is a term that reminds participants to “protect ourselves, knowing what’s coming around the corner.”

The relevance of “place” cannot be over stated. Fullilove (1996) writes that “place is incorporated into the sense of self as a core element in identity formation” (1520). In addressing the “psychology of place” she adds that “place is . . . the external realities within which people shape their existence and . . . the object of human thought and action.” One’s sense of belonging arises from the three psychological processes of familiarity, attachment and identity (1518). Identity is constructed not just in relationship to others but also in relationship to the place or places that validate and give meaning to the identity. Writing about displacement, Fullilove states that, “disorientation and confusion that accompany a massive alteration in a familiar place are experienced as bodily sensations, as well as emotional feelings.” Experiencing a sudden loss of one’s exterior world is “perceived as a loss of the self” (1518). The participants of this study expressed the importance of place as a reflection of their identity and that to lose that connection with Aztlán, with the ancestral homeland was akin to losing one’s identity:

My friends who identity themselves as Latino, it’s kind of hard for them because they’re so stuck in this mindset that they’re Latinos, they’re not

Indios, they're not Indigenous. And when we start taking on these terms of Mexican or Latino or Hispanic or whatever we do, it really impedes us from claiming this land as our own. We make ourselves immigrants by using these terms. And so my friends who identify like that, who are still stuck in that mindset also kind of have a difficult time negotiating my identity because it makes them question who they are. They have to, they're not ready to do that, they're not ready to, you know, acknowledge who they make themselves an immigrant in their own land by naming themselves in the way that they do. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

Chicano is a term that acknowledges a liminal or “in-between” space, “ni de aquí, ni de allá.” It accounts for not being fully “American” or being truthfully “Mexican.” It is a liminal term where the Indigenous identity phenomenon is vibrant and active, subject to avoidance taboos for safety and success. Simultaneously, it is a place where “routine activities become dangerous” (Kerns 2010, 118). Consistent with the postliminal or reaggregation stage, the use of the term Chicano for these participants is an exit through the individuation process and completes for them the objective of knowing who they are alongside and apart from gringismo.

Quantifying Indigenousness

The plethora of terms used for identification under racial, national and ethnic categories for both FR and NFR participants was diverse enough to conclude that none of these categories is sufficient to adequately describe indigeneity. To further examine how indigeneity is constructed I examined participant's responses to the question “What is it that makes you Indigenous?” Most of the participants, again, provide similar answers, which I have broken down into the following four categories:

Lineage: blood, race, ancestry/descendant, clan, roots, family

Intra-social: language, culture, way of life/lifestyle, teachings/what I was taught, traditions, customs, spirituality/spiritual way of life, heritage

Inter-social: recognition by others, legal status/federal recognition, political consciousness, tribal affiliation

Tierra: land, reservation, roots

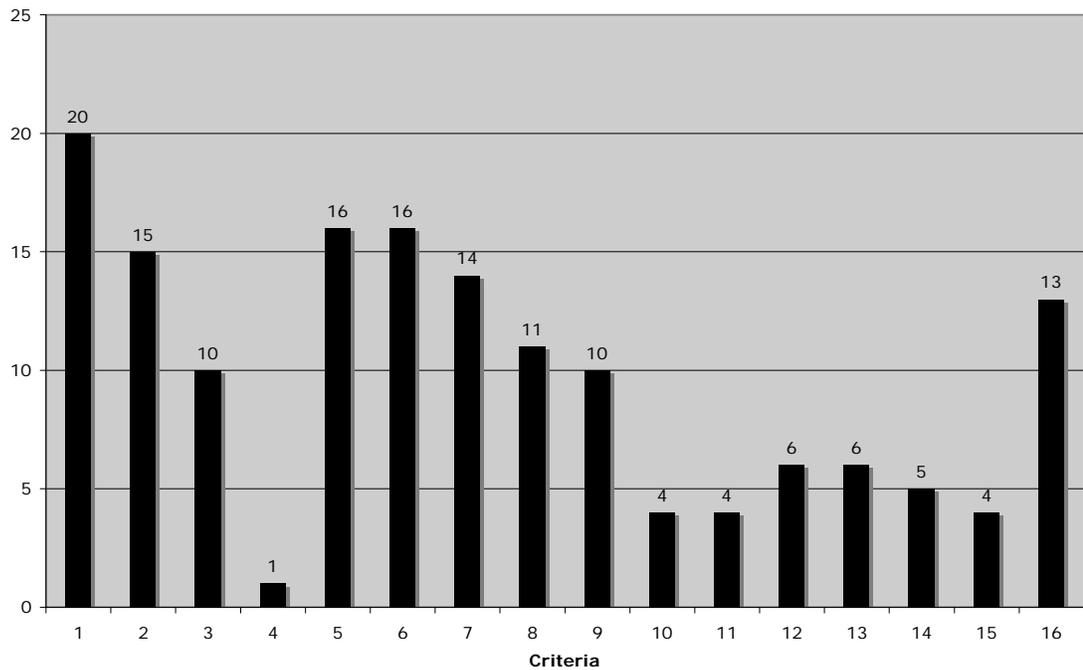
It was my attempt to find categories that could simplify the responses of participants. I associated lineage with what an individual is “born into.” This is outside of the purview of what happens post-birth. The family that an individual is born into and descends from is unchangeable. It is fixed. The intra-social category relates to the extended family, i.e., the community that the individual grows up in. It is in this community that a child learns language, culture and how to interact with the people around him and his world. As the child grows and begins to make forays away from the family, he will come in contact with other communities that both define him and serve as a measuring stick for him to define himself. The idea of identity is reflected in the interactions within his community as well as between his and other communities. The intra-social area is where issues of ethnicity, nationality and racial tropes develop. The last category addresses the relationship of geographical space to the individual, as well as to his community. Identities are formulated around geographical spaces.

The impact of gringismo on identity development is accentuated by litmus tests such as Indigenous language retention. Only one of the participants spoke his native language fluently (Dinéh), a second spoke Hawai’ian as a second language (not his own), however eleven participants spoke Spanish fluently (approximately seventy-five percent

of the Chicanos). Five others knew a few words or phrases in their native language, eighteen knew words for phrases in a native language which was not their own (due to participation in pan-Indian ceremonies).

Figure 5.1 indicates participant responses for what they believed made them Indigenous.

Table 5.1. Criteria for Indigenusness



Lineage	1	Ancestry/roots/descendant	87%	20
	2	Blood/family	65%	15
	3	Race	43%	10
	4	Clans	4%	1
Intra-Social	5	Culture	70%	16
	6	Way of life/lifestyle/customs	70%	16
	7	Spirituality	61%	14
	8	What I was taught	48%	11
	9	Traditions	43%	10
Inter-Social	10	Language	17%	4
	11	Heritage	17%	4
	12	Federal recognition	26%	6
	13	Federal recognition is important	26%	6
	14	Political Consciousness	22%	5
Tierra	15	Tribal affiliation	17%	4
	16	Land	57%	13

The majority of participants (87%) responded that Ancestry was the most important qualifier for determining Indigeneity, followed by Culture and Way of Life. Blood was categorized as slightly more important than Spirituality followed by a Tie to the Land. Only ten of the twenty-three participants (43%) responded that Race was what made a person Indigenous. I do not think that participants believed that Race was not important, but rather that they chose to use different descriptors, which for them equated to Race such as Blood and Ancestry. Ancestry can be regarded as Race with more meaning than just “skin color.” Only six of the participants believed that Federal recognition was important as a criterion for Indigeneity.

Utilizing the four criteria that I have listed above, the categories that I have placed under lineage (blood, race, ancestry/descendant, clan, roots, family) received forty-six responses from the participants. They consider lineage to be significant when defining Indigeneity. However, there was a much larger number of participant responses (seventy-five) to the category of Intra-social elements (language, culture, way of life/lifestyle, teachings/what I was taught, traditions, customs, spirituality/spiritual way of life, heritage). What this suggests is that in determining Indigeneity an individual’s exposure to culture is more important than race. This sentiment was expressed by Ray (FR Ute Mountain Ute): “For those that are black or Hispanic, if they grew up with a Native family and they know our traditions and customs, then hey, they’re just as Native as the next person.” While this was by no means the consensus of the rest of the participants, it drives home the point of the significance of learning the customs of the community. Whereas blood alone can determine Indigeneity, it does not guarantee that a

full-blooded Native has any information about or connection to the community of origin. It calls into question what criteria reasonably determine Indigeneity.

There were only ten responses in the category of Inter-social criteria (recognition by others, legal status/federal recognition, political consciousness, tribal affiliation), reinforcing the notion that Indigeneity is determined from within rather than from outside of one's community. This finding challenges the federal recognition criterion established by the U.S. federal government and adopted by tribal governments. Chey (FR Oglala Lakota) described federal recognition in the following way:

What I want my people understand about tribal enrollment was that it was never for us. It was to determine how many people there were so they would know how many soldiers to send in to subdue us or in case we had an uprising, how many soldiers did they need to take care of that. That's the whole purpose of the enrollment.

It was a general sentiment that federal recognition and blood quantum criteria present more detrimental concerns to tribal communities over time than they do to resolve the question of Indigeneity:

We have to get used to the idea that we are going to have to define ourselves in some other way besides that blood quantum, and that blood quantum is a system that works really well for the continuing genocide of our people. I do believe it's a continuing genocide. If we are in situations where our own people are disenrolling our mixed blood children, we in theory are playing right into the hands of people who would like to see us disappear. (Tecum, FR Eastern Shawnee)

Toci (NFR Apache/Chicana) believed that there was a consequence to being federally recognized and constrained to a reservation that diminished agency. In contrast, for those that were not imprisoned a different form of agency prevailed:

I find that they have lost a lot of themselves in the reservations to where they don't fight, they don't stand up and ask for the things they want. Yet [the U.S government officials] keep taking everything away from them . . . they have never really recognized them as owning the property, they're

sovereign but at the same time they have all these rules and regulations to live by. And so though there are disadvantages to the prison because it takes away from them too as to who they are.

Thirteen of the participants (57%) considered a land and/or a tie to the land to be a critical determinant when defining Indigeneity. There is an inherent understanding that it is the tie to Turtle Island with its unquestionable connection to the red race that determines Indigeneity, but not all participants expressed that sentiment. Some referenced a reservation or particular area where they came from in their family stories or through the course of the interview, but only thirteen of them specifically stated that it was the connection to this land that privileged them to call themselves Indigenous. Emilio (NFR Chicano/Navajo) addressed the tie to the land as related to identity:

Specifically with my friends who identify themselves as Latino, it's kind of hard for them because they're so stuck in this mindset that they're Latinos they're not *indios*, they're not Indigenous. And when we start taking on these terms of Mexican or Latino or Hispanic or whatever we do, it really impedes us from claiming this land as our own. We make ourselves immigrants by using these terms.

Participants utilized a number a criteria to determine what qualified them to call themselves Indigenous. Most prevalent, contrary to expectations, was not race but rather culture, customs and way of life. While race is critical, the participants did not necessarily regard themselves as “racially” distinctive but rather as ancestrally distinct, where ancestry encompasses more than just bloodline or color of skin. Because some of the participants were just as much or more racially white than red it is important to recognize the significance of customs and culture when regarding individuals and communities as Indigenous. For the individuals that also identify as Chicana/o, we are reminded to consider historical and geopolitical impositions that shape and inform

Indigenous identity outside of the narrative of the reservation Indian. Moreover, the historical tie to the land is ever present in the minds of the participants.

Susto Heredado and the Stigma of Shame

There is a historical, inter-generational shame that has impacted how the participants of this study, particularly the Chicanos, perceive themselves. All of the participants were asked to share family stories related to their indigeneity. Many of them spoke of the *sustos* that their grandparents had experienced that became part of the family histories. Susto is well recognized in Indigenous communities in North, Central and South America. In clinical terms susto is associated with tiredness, a loss of motivation, and a loss of appetite resulting in a loss of strength and weight loss. Susto can be the result of a traumatic experience, years of abuse by a parent or spouse or it can be the result of a life-changing accident. Susto can be the consequence of the loss of a loved one due to death or a break-up. Susto can also be the result of an encounter with a force of nature. The *asustado* (the one that has experienced susto) walks around in the world only partially engaged, unable to complete normal daily tasks. A part of him has been lost; stuck either in the trauma or tragedy that he experienced or left behind at the place where the susto (fright) occurred. This leaves him *desanimado* (without spirit) lacking in vitality or motivation to carry out his customary daily activities. The consequence can be fatal (Rubel et al. 1984).

In a study done by Rubel et al. (1984) in three distinct linguistic communities (Zapotec, Chinantec and Mestizo) where susto was reported as a determining factor for illness in the patients that were studied, the number of individuals that died as compared to a control group was significant enough for the researchers to declare that “Susto poses

a challenge to cosmopolitan medicine: it demands of the clinician an understanding of its cause, its dynamics and the means of prevention. It is dangerous to the health of the individual and, consequently, detrimental to the well-being of society” (121). The study concluded that where *susto* was reported as a cause of illness there was an increased fatality risk.

[T]he presence of *susto* demonstrably adds to an already heavy burden of disease among rural Mexicans. For practitioners the message is clear: if a patient includes *susto* in the presenting complaint, he or she is more likely to be overwhelmed by the overall clinical problems, less able to cope with obligations, and less capable of earning a living or otherwise contributing to maintenance of the family. Such physical exhaustion and its accompanying lack of ordinary motivation to accomplish daily tasks should cause attending physicians alarm and alert them to a potentially life-threatening situation. (120-121)

Of all the interviews that I did, the one that stood out the most as being reflective of both lateral violence and intergenerational trauma associated with violence—both lateral and external, i.e., racism—was the interview done with Koíddeh. This interview represented the quintessential epitome of what has happened to the Chicano/Genízaro people consequent to conquest and colonization by Christian monarchies of the Iberian peninsula, the British Islands and Western Europe. The internal struggle to find a place on earth, in society, within social groups, and historically resulting in an identification that is telling and revealing about historical impacts, trauma and *susto heredado*³⁸ is immediately revealed in this particular interview.

³⁸ *Susto heredado* is a term I have coined that references the inherited psychosocial trauma that is passed down from generation to generation following extreme traumatic experiences that result in a “soul loss” or “soul wounding.” The experiences of rape, murder of family members and community, being dislocated from one’s home, exiled and losing all property and way of life to theft from an invader constitute causes for *susto heredado*. An individual’s inability to recover from such experiences, thereby transmitting the anxieties, fears and consequent phobias to their children, prolongs the *susto* inter-generationally.

Identity means compensating for and reconciling the assaults of the past, as well as the ones of the present, notwithstanding the fact that the term or terms used for identification come laden with the potential for continued violence. Koíddeh's mother would prefer that she were never asked her identity so that she does not have to confront the *susto heredado*. According to Koíddeh, the father had "checked out," recusing himself from participating in life or with the family by escaping via drug use. Koíddeh is still impacted by the assaulted great-grandmother's and, later, her daughter's repeated attempts to regain entry into their community of origin (Taos Pueblo), only to experience further violence from that community because of the shame represented by the community's failure to resist colonialism, and thereby prevent the stealing of their children to be raised in boarding schools, and later on the rape by an "employer" of one of their daughters. Koíddeh has engaged in various communities, e.g., the pow wow circuit, an Indian education program, the Chicano community, and has been adopted, per Indigenous customs, by other Indigenous families, in an attempt to establish a sense of place within the circles of indigeneity. He understands the sense of place in geographical space but remains alienated from social space by virtue of the legacy from which he hails, a legacy of violence perpetrated against Indigenous communities by invaders descended from present-day Spain and Britain:

I think that some of my worst, some of my hardships and complete suffering that I've gone through in my life, has been because I am who I am. Like my grandma always used to tell me, 'we are who we are, we were created though rape.' The reason my family's here is because my great-grandma got raped. That's why we're here and that's why we're not welcomed, maybe. I don't know if that's how it is now but when my grandma tried to go back, it didn't work. Usually it should but, for some reason we weren't wanted, so like, it's been the hardship of my family.

The grandmother that was violated was a victim of American violence for being removed from the protection of her family and community and placed in a boarding school. She was then further violated by the Spanish-imposed custom of enslavement where rape occurred with impunity. Forcefully removed from the security of family and community the child had her life stolen from her at an early age and never had the means to recover it. She was forced to have children that represented the multiple violations of everything that would have been sacred to her: family, community, culture, language, life and her body. It is understandable that such despair would have resulted in her trauma being passed down to her children: “All I know is that all my aunts and all my uncles on my grandma’s side, they hated their dad.” Her offspring grew up hating their predatory father, their unwelcoming Taos Pueblo community, their Spanish ancestry, and perhaps even at times, their indifferent mother. Koíddeh adds:

My grandma was always talking about my great-grandma that she went to like boarding school. She was taught how to clean, how to be a maid. Then eventually she ended up at some Spanish man’s house and from there she got raped. That’s how our family came about. And so my grandma was born from that. All I know is that, all my aunts and all my uncles on my grandma’s side, they hated their dad. They hated that evil man, an evil man. That’s all I know. She would say that, ‘He was a Spaniard and not a good man. I hated him.’ I think from the moment she was born, she had that hate in her. She would say that what he would do is that, like when they would brand horses, he would do more than just brand them, he would like burn them just to burn them. And he would beat them. From the beginning that’s how it was. Talk about being a slave, from the beginning.

It begs the question, how does one move past so much violence and intergenerational trauma? After the great-grandmother had been raped by the Spaniard that had hired her she attempted to return to the Taos Pueblo: “she tried to go back to Taos. Everybody was kind of like, they weren’t having it so, that’s kind of like where

she kept ties, but she wasn't able to, like, settle at Taos." Her daughter, the product of the rape, attempted also to be enrolled with the Pueblo but was similarly denied. The result was frustration and anger:

So I think being a product of rape, for anybody. It's a hard life. You were created through hate, through pure evil. That energy went into you, that was like *susto*, you know? It wasn't anything good. And I think really that's what she thinks about too, you know. How I think about it as being bad? That's how they think about and probably how she thinks about herself, "I'm bad. I was created through something bad, therefore I'm not good."

Disenrollment

When an individual is banished from her/his tribal community s/he is often disenrolled. Disenrollment is the legal term used to describe when an individual has been banished or exiled from the tribal community (Wilkins 2004). Permanent expulsion of tribal members was rarely practiced and usually reserved for egregious transgressions for which medication, restitution and compensation would not suffice (239). To expel a teenage because she was sexually assaulted is more a reflection of the shortcomings of the community than of the victim of rape. The issue of disenrollment has become a matter more commonplace since the introduction of successful gaming on reservations. The exercise of banishing tribal members over political or financial disputes creates further problems for the disenrolled as they become the victims of a new *deslogración* or *desplazamiento* (exiling) of contemporary times that cannot be attributed to gringos. It may be carried out under the auspices of blood quantum criterion, but the fact that it is a tribal entity doing the banishing is an extreme form of lateral violence.

Stolen Children

This stigma of shame was a recurrent theme in all of the interviews that I did, whether the individual was tribally enrolled, federally recognized or not. Another theme that emerged had to do with children that were captured or stolen, worked in or raised in “Spanish” households, only to have their lives stolen because they were physically abused, raped or sexually abused by a male figure. The interview with Baston revealed:

One of the oldest pictures is my grandfather as a child with his grandmother who was probably full-blooded Comanche. She never really lived on the *rez*.³⁹ We were far removed from the tribal affiliation there. Her daughter, which was my grandfather’s mother, worked for Mr. Armijo. When she got pregnant, Mr. Armijo’s Spanish wife recognized that the child belonged to Mr. Armijo so she made my great-grandmother leave. (Baston, NFR Comanche/Mexica)

Another of the Chicano interviewees, Sureh, talked about how his grandmother, who was raised by a woman other than her mother after losing her parents:

So my great-grandpa gave my grandma to this woman to take care of. My great-grandfather ended up dying relatively young, in his forties cause he was a heavy alcoholic and they say he died because his life went out . . . my grandma stayed with this woman and this woman was really mean to her. My grandma says that her whole life she slept on the kitchen floor. In the back yard there was a chicken coop and the lady made half the chicken coop, put up with plywood and that was her room to keep her dress in, her stuff. She worked basically in service for this woman who was physically very abusive to her. One time she even broke her nose, just hit her. She’d do all the cooking, cleaning stuff like that, yard work. And the lady’s daughter didn’t do anything except also beat her. So that’s how my grandma grew up. (Sureh, NFR Isleta Pueblo)

Juan, who is a descendant of the White Mountain Apache and Isleta del Sur related: “One of my great-grandma’s on my dad’s side, she was a slave, actually, she was stolen from the Apaches and she was pretty much sold into slavery into Mexico.” One of the women, Cihua, who identified as Apache/Azteca, related: “My grandfather was an

³⁹ Rez is the slang term used to reference the “reservation.”

orphan and got adopted by a hacienda and basically was like a slave until he was able to leave during the revolution and come to San Antonio.”

Another of the women, Morena, related a conversation she had with her Otomí grandmother:

She told me about her father and his people and how back in the day they would take the native children from where they lived, she said in the *cerros* (hills) and that they would take them into the city and put them in schools that sound a lot like the boarding schools we have here, where they forced them to speak Spanish and cut their hair and Christianize them. So she carries a lot of that stigma to this day. (Morena, NFR Otomí)

The stories of stolen children and enslaved ancestors were not just a narrative of those that were not federally recognized. Biih, registered with the Navajo Nation, shared several stories about abduction and kidnapping:

My grandfather, when he was really young, he was probably less than ten years old, he got sent to a boarding school in Ignacio, which is southwest of Durango, CO. He got sent up there but he wasn't there very long. There was a group of other Navajo boys that were there a little bit older than him. They decided they were going to take off and run away. So, the story goes that he joined them. They took off from Ignacio and made their way all the way back to Burnham, which is south of Farmington, by like thirty-some miles. According to what I heard, it was, of course, a several day trip for these kids. He was really small and some of those areas down there are mesas and big sandstone cliffs, so the route they chose to go, they encountered a lot of that. As a little boy he was really scared and he cried quite a bit and these kids practically helped him climb these rocks and get up over them to finally make it home. So he avoided the boarding school fiasco. (Biih, FR Navajo)

Although Biih's grandfather was able to avoid the boarding school it did not mean that the family avoided the *susto* related to boarding school abductions:

I think that within the family, like if my grandfather was gone or, you know, an older adult male, if somebody like that wasn't around that house and say you had visitors come at night when it was an automobile driving up, just by the headlights, like my great-great-grandmother and my grandmother would actually take people out of the house, you know,

younger kids. And they would go out into the alfalfa fields and they would lay down. I never understood that . . . I experienced that too as a young, young kid of being taken out into the field. My family, and I laying down in the alfalfa fields at night when a car would drive up and it would leave and we'd get up and go back in the house. When I think back about that experience, I really thing that it had to do with all that raiding that went on, you know, you didn't know who was coming, was it a habit or a way of survival that my great-grandmother had if they didn't know who was coming or was it just natural, to protect yourself and the younger kids, to go out and hide or something. (Biih, FR Navajo)

The raiding of children that went on for generations impacted Biih to where he still remembers the grandparents taking him out into the field to protect from being stolen. It is an extraordinary example of *susto heradado* being played out generation to generation. In another story, Biih talked about another grandmother that was abducted and enslaved:

Way back when, we had another grandmother of mine too, of course she would have been older, stolen by some of the Hispanic folks, probably from around the Dulce area, there's a little community called Lumberton. But I heard that that's where the family figured that she ended up, was out there somewhere.

The participants of this study make up only a handful of Indigenous individuals. The themes of rape, captured/stolen children, abuse, and consequent *desplazamiento* (exile) were recurrent themes regardless of whether they were tribally enrolled or not. There is enough of a case to be made for recognizing how it is that so many Indigenous individuals ended up *not* being part of a federally recognized tribal entity. Before they had a voice, before they had agency to direct their lives, and as non-U.S. citizens, the script for what they would become had already been written. As tribal entities continue to banish members based on political or financial disputes and loss of sufficient blood quantum criterion, today's practice of disenrollment will affect generations of Indigenous children not yet born.

Kill the Man, Make a Christian

In addition to the themes of rape and stolen children, the theme of boarding schools impacted many of the participants. One of the female participants of this study, Lily, who is registered with the Oglala Lakota related the following story about how the boarding schools impacted her two generations later:

I lived with my granma and grampa. I was like the little person that sat around and listened to older people talk all the time. But my grandma, she ran a rummage store in the little town of Kyle. And we lived out in the country but we would go in there every day and all her friends would come and they would speak Lakota. I didn't know what they were talking about of course, you know? But that came from the boarding school where they weren't allowed to speak their language so, therefore, it had that kind of an impact on them where they didn't want to speak it in front of their children. My mom's generation, none of them learned. And as a result we didn't either, because, like my grandma, the only time that she would speak Lakota was when her friends would come around and they would all sit and talk. But at home, in the home she would speak English. And she was fluent, she was half Spanish and half Indian, half Native American. So she spoke both of her languages fluently. But in the house, with all her children, grandchildren she always spoke English.

Another participant, Chey, who is also enrolled with the Oglala Lakota Nation, shared the following story about her grandmother's boarding school experience:

I have a grandmother that refused to speak English and was punished, was punished severely to the point of, um, they would wash their faces with lye soap and years later my brother found out that my great-grandma was blind and it's because the doctor had told him that she had gotten the lye soap in her eyes and it blinded her. So she was blinded from a young girl on. She just refused to be white. She didn't want to speak their language. She never wore their clothing. She always still wore calico dresses. My grandma had to sew her dresses and sew her moccasins and she never wore a coat. She only wore a blanket or a shawl. She had long white braids. If you wanted to talk to her you had to speak to her in her language. She could understand some other languages. She spoke Lakota and Cheyenne and other languages but she wouldn't speak English. She totally felt the whiteman's language was a liar's language. It's a language of liars. You could lie in that language, you could tell lies in that language but you could never lie in our language. If you lie in our language there's

a consequence so that's why, she said, that people switch to English when they are going to lie.

It was not necessary for an individual to have gone to boarding school to have experienced abuse at the hands of teachers. Linda, registered with the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa (NFR), shared the following story:

My father, his stories were not good. He was very ashamed of his identity and he didn't want my sister and I to really know much. He was ashamed. But every now and then, if he got drunk or something, he'd get all proud about it and start talking. So every now and then I would get a little piece of what sounded more like truth. He was really abused by the Catholic nuns and priests when he was growing up. He did not go to a boarding school but it was really obvious that he was not considered a good kid and he was put under the desk and kicked, and they put hot peppers on his tongue.

These stories provide viable cause for the shame of stigma experienced by most of the participants of this study, a stigma that has been transmitted through generations. As the grandchildren of rape, kidnapping, enslavement, abduction, physical abuse, and boarding schools, the legacy of *susto heredado* informs how participants view themselves in relation to gringos, to their communities, and shapes the identity choices that they make.

Hierarchy of Indian-ness

After generations of oppression, violence and stigma, there has been an immense benefit for the gringos. They no longer need to enforce their own policies of oppression. Indigenous communities have stepped to the fore to become the enforcers of the legacy of violence that has beset the Indigenous communities. Like the caged dog that is prohibited from exiting its cage, the reservation Indian has become territorial about the small concentration camps set aside for him, and defensive about the poor quality of life and resources granted him. For all that he has suffered, he now believes that no one else

is as deserving of the title “American Indian.” There is an amnesia that all of the Americas is Indian land even if it has been stolen and occupied, that the borders are arbitrarily constructed and enforced by the colonizers, that all Indigenous people of the hemisphere have been subjugated and oppressed, even if they have not all been incarcerated in concentration camps, and that sovereignty is not a commodity granted by an oppressor.

The greatest shortcoming of the Indigenous person of this hemisphere has been her/his failure to maintain an Indigenous sense-of-self amidst the violent assaults and accommodations. Moreover, gringos as they live and practice gringismo have no interest in preserving indigeneity, as they still enforce more evolved forms of genocide: genocide lite. It is elusive, insidious, and formidable, but no less effective:

Another interesting thing I’ve encountered on my journey is the, and I know it all has to do with historical oppression, but the way that I have been treated by other Native people who either question that I’m Native because I don’t look Native or tell me directly, “you’re not Native enough to be in our group” which is very hurtful. (Mary, NFR Cherokee)

This exemplifies the lateral violence experienced by many of the participants, especially the Chicana/os. Using Memmi’s (1968) framework for racism, I would categorize the vital characteristics of lateral violence as:

- 1) Stressing an imaginary difference between a *soberbio*⁴⁰ (one who believes himself to be superior to others based on a perceived difference) and his victim (who is also his peer).
- 2) Assigning a value to the difference that creates a hierarchy of privilege for the *soberbio* while diminishing privileges to his victim.

⁴⁰ The Spanish word *soberio* is derived from the word *soberano* meaning sovereign. It translates as overproud, haughty, arrogant (Peers, et. al. 1959). It is an ironic term here as the majority of the lateral violence reported came from individuals registered with a tribe, therefore, sovereign.

- 3) Adhering to rigid absolutes based on the constructed hierarchy of privilege.
- 4) Justifying discrimination, hostility, aggression or violence against his peer(s) based on the constructed hierarchy of privilege.

Participants related their experiences with lateral violence, while at times succumbing to the same behavior of expressing hostility toward others:

I have been infected by that same prejudice and racism, I know. Otherwise, people tell me they're Indian, "well, who are you enrolled with?" I FOUND MYSELF SAYING THAT! And what determines if you are enrolled is your damn blood?! . . . I've seen the heartache of people at ceremonies at lodges, at sundance, even going to pow wows or the art shows. I can see these people; it feels like there's a glass wall. And their hearts are so open, and they are trying so hard to connect because they know, because they would be really respectful, and they are longing to connect but they don't have the magic ticket, the enrollment, the recognition. It renders them like a hungry ghost. I am aware of this. I know people who have been sent away from ceremony because they weren't considered part of the "in" crowd. (Linda, NFR Chippewa)

Talking about the black children that have been born to Lakota women in Rapid City, South Dakota, where there is an Air Force base, one participant had this to say about how half-Black, half-Lakota children are treated:

We had a lot of our people that were half white and half Indian. They were told that they were not Indian, they spoke the Lakota language and they were of our people. Today things have changed, there's a lot of even more racism against our children . . . our people are racist against each other. They're racist, they're mean to those children. Those children, they have nothing to do with who chose what for them, you know? . . . these are children that are, their mothers are Lakota so they are raised Lakota, they speak Lakota, they know the Lakota culture but their skins are dark and they have curly hair. You take one look at them and everybody knows that they are of another nation. And that's the nation that our people will judge them as rather than as being Lakota. (Chey, FR Lakota)

Addressing the "hierarchy of Indian-ness," Tecum talked about lateral violence as expressed relative to urban versus reservation Indians:

We used to be secure in who we were as Indigenous people. Now because of the traumas we've suffered, we have a question of our own identity. So sometimes we get into this thing because we're insecure in ourselves, we're constantly looking around to see if there's anyone less Indian or more Indian and we can find out . . . There's times when our insecurity causes us to constantly judge one another and to try to create this feeling within ourselves of being okay by constantly looking for how we are on this sort of hierarchy of Indian-ness. Part of that is the enrollment thing or blood quantum. Part of it's like, well you know, I grew up on the rez and you're urban and so that means I'm more Indian than you. There's all these crazy ways we have of doing that to one another and to me that's buying into a system that is genocide. (Tecum, FR Shawnee)

Participants recognized that the issue of “who is more Indian” is a prevalent one in the community. It validates that lateral violence exists and that, even for those that are aware of how insidious and unjust it is, they still readily participate in this form of lateral violence. We could call this form of lateral violence a phenomenon but for the fact that we know from whence it stems. The federally imposed criteria used for qualifying “Indian-ness” forces individuals to question themselves (if they are not federally recognized) and others about “authenticity” because of the blood quantum imposition. The question of “how much Indian are you?” becomes normalized as a way of evaluating on a hierarchy the degree to which an individual should be regarded as Indian. The degree to which this criterion has been internalized is such that its pervasiveness assures that lateral violence will continue. The hierarchy of Indian-ness will remain a constant barring radical intervention.

Not all participants, however, readily endorsed utilizing the hierarchy for evaluating other Indigenous people. One participant made it a point to regard others precisely as they identify:

I can understand that its really hard to say, “are you Native American or not?” but I'm real respectful too. If somebody says that they're Native American, and they know that and believe that, then I do too. I don't

judge somebody on rather you have to meet all these things . . . Somebody might be comfortable saying they're Cherokee, and that's all they know. They don't know the history of the Cherokees or anything like that but, you know, if they identify like that, then I'm fine with that. (Biih, FR Navajo)

There remains, based on the hierarchy of Indian-ness, a propensity for the Indigenous communities, in particular those that are federally recognized, to regard the Chicano as a "Mexican" not worthy of being considered Indigenous. Comments made by the participants reinforce this lateral violence:

It's a great big slice of hypocrisy in its finest form of the question of identity. Northern census numbers on those Native Indians, they basically have become the blue blood of the Native nations. They have seen the oppression done to them over, and over and over and over through generations that they have adopted this same sickness and turn it on Natives who are trying to find that word of identity, that source of identity . . . I ran into people who belittled me in ceremony because I'm a MEXICAN! Indian. They always have to put that "Mexican" in front. I can't just be an Indian, I can't just be a Native. I can't just be Indigenous. I have to be a MEXICAN Indian. So, "We'll let you claim Indian, but we won't accept you being Indian because you don't have a NUMBER by the ones who have basically put us in the position of having reservations and having census numbers and having enough blood to claim Indian." (Ari, NFR Yaqui)

It becomes commonplace for Indigenous individuals that regard themselves as more full-blooded to dismiss Chicano claims of indigeneity using the language of gringismo:

I've run into some card-carrying Natives. Some of them are real light skinned, some of them aren't, but because I speak Spanish, they say, "Oh, you're not Indian. You're a Mexican. (Juan, NFR Apache/Isleta Pueblo)

The stigma of being relegated to a lower rung on the hierarchy of Indian-ness impacts how individuals think about and regard themselves in relation to being Indigenous:

And it's their rejection of our identity, for myself anyway who is still not very self assured in my identity, is a rejection. And when you're being rejected already by a world that's Anglo dominated and then you go into a world that's, you look across the table at someone who looks very similar to you, and has similar morphology because you're both Indigenous and

THEY reject you because you don't have any recognition or because, "You're just a Mexican, from across the border," then, yeah it does cause a lot of problems. I've felt it and I've felt it in ceremony. You're called a "wannabe Indian." You're seen as not having anything, you're seen as having lost everything and so therefore, in that sense, not really true to your people. (Itsa, NFR Chicano/Mexica)

Despite efforts to become involved with other Indigenous students on campus, this individual was ostracized because of his prior associations with Chicano and Latino student groups:

When I was on campus I tried to kind of be a part of the Native community and I did so more later on in my years there. By that point I had already been involved and had been known to be involved with the Latino fraternity, with UMAS y MEChA,⁴¹ the Latin American Student Alliance, those types of student organizations, and so the students who had always been involved with the Native community, they would shun me. And I remember one student in particular, would, I mean he wouldn't even shake my hand. He had this prejudice against me because clearly I wasn't Native because of the other organizations I had been involved in, I couldn't really be Native, I wasn't worthy of being recognized that way. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

A number of the Chicano participants are active in the spiritual communities attending ceremonies. It is one of the places of intersection where federally recognized and non-federally recognized Indigenous people meet. Despite the teachings of the elders leading these ceremonies, Chicanos are made to feel unwelcomed:

When I was at sundance, one of the women sundance leaders from Denver was very harsh with me because she didn't like the dress I wore, which I had it handmade. She said I didn't know how to *liliti*⁴² 'cause I'm not a real Indian'. She told my girlfriend that she couldn't pray at the tree, she told another girlfriend not to pray in the lodge too long and we were all Mexican/Native American Indian, all of us were. That was very, very harsh. And this woman was not full-blood. Her daddy's Mexican and I know it because I know people from the rez, from Pine Ridge where this woman comes from. In ceremony, I can't say anything. I let it go, I let it

⁴¹ UMAS – United Mexican American Students and MEChA – Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán. These are both student groups that evolved out of the Chicano Movement.

⁴² *Liliti* is a form of encouragement that Indigenous woman express with their voices.

go. And she's a very prominent figure here in Denver, very prominent. That totally surprised me. (Tina, NFR Lakota)

Pow wows are another place of intersection where myriad Indigenous communities come together for social or competitive interaction. The dancers and drummers compete against one another for a purse. It is a relatively new, post-reservation period phenomenon sparked by pan-Indian gathering. These events are held across the country in both small and big venues. Some of the participants were active in the pow wow circuit where they were often reminded that there were not welcome:

We went to the Denver March Pow Wow and we were out partying with folks from the pow wow and they were like, "Well, you're not even Indian." "No, we're Chicano." "Yeah, like I said, you're not Indian." (Koíddeh, NFR Taos)

A monthly event that provided a place for "red and brown unity" where people could express themselves via spoken word was started in Denver. At one point, the hierarchy of Indian-ness reared its head and elders were called to mediate the prejudices that were fracturing the unity of the organizers. At the mediation, the indigeneity of one of the participants was called into question:

Even situations that you and I have worked with like the Café Cultura incident, [like] when the woman asked me, "Do Chicanos even know what Indians look like?" and I said, "Sure they do. They see them every day in the mirror." (Morena, NFR Otomí)

Every Chicana/o participant in this study had a comment or two to make about how they had been treated as "wanna-be" Indians by Indians that were federally recognized. The mistreatment and discrimination we call lateral violence is so prevalent that every Chicano that identifies as being Indigenous will at some point in her/his life encounter a situation where s/he will experience it. The resiliency of Chicana/os is such that even lateral violence does not deter her/him from being who s/he is:

The [Indigenous Chicano] identity for me it means, actually, being able to find my place in contemporary society. Prior to this knowledge of my Indigenous identity I was always trying to assimilate into a society that rejects people of color and I was constantly angry and fighting the system and always looking to blame someone else for my own inabilities and for society's limits on me. So now with this new knowledge of my ancestry and identity then I can deal with those same frustrations but without as much anger because I know who I am as an Indigenous person. (Itsa, NFR Chicano/Mexica)

The violence, or degree to which violence is felt by Chicanos, is best expressed by this participant who is prepared to “throw blows” to settle the dispute of Indian-ness:

I made it clear to a lot of people from other Native communities that “Hey, if you have some issues with me being Chicano we can either discuss it right now or if it comes to the point of throwing blows we can do that too. This is who I am, so it's not a choice of you wanting to accept me, you're going to have to accept me. This is who I am.” In my own way I have kind of been speaking for Chicano people with people that have not dealt with Chicano people. (Kóiddeh, NFR Taos)

Appropriation of Indigenous ways and ceremonies is of as much concern to the Chicano participants of this study as to any other Indigenous community. One participant expressed it this way:

The blood. The ancestors. This is sacred to me. Who I am is so sacred to me because this is our grandfathers, our grandmothers, this comes from way back. And to see the destruction of it, to see how it's been abused and totally raped, to have that, it pulls on my heart from deep. What they [white people] are lacking is the understanding that this is from way back, from our people way back not from you who came from over there. We have a claim to this. Not because it's ours, but because we took care of it. So when I see that when we are at ceremony or at the dance, I don't see it as this thing we've been invited to, this thing where they let me be a part of, I think of it as this thing I am carrying on that's almost been destroyed, that comes from way, way back, from the people that suffered for it to now. For me it changed my life in that this is who I really am. When I look at my skin color, when I look at my face and I look at the people in Mexico and I see the same face as the same face from here, I identify with that at a deep level. And they [white people] can't. (Quanta NFR Comanche)

The divisions that exist between the reservation Indian and the urban Indian, between the federally recognized and non-federally recognized, create rifts that will not be easily resolved. A discourse on the hierarchy of Indian-ness and what it is doing to the Indigenous communities is long overdue. Despite the forces that seek to drive wedges and perpetuate a lateral violence against the Chicano, there is also an understanding on the part of Chicano participants that not all is lost in not being locked up on a concentration camp:

I myself feel that the fact that we have been outside the reservations, that we in a way have been lucky. We have had to survive, financially and otherwise, by really struggling in our lives by trying to find out where we were, where to get a job from, where are we going to find a job? And in those manners poverty has really been bad for us because we've never had homes, we've never had land, we've never had identity. As results of all those things, it has been a disadvantage but the fact that we have had to learn to fight for everything we have, and we have been able to learn to express ourselves, or to at least go out and demand things, or want things or request that we need them, and stuff, and I think that in itself, that is an advantage for us. I think that in a way it has made us stronger than the Native Americans that have been kept away from the, from the rest of society. (Toci, NFR Apache/Chicana)

The issue of poverty and the loss of land as addressed by Toci gets at the concerns of economic class. Between the lines of many of the narratives can be read the issues related to economic class, as expressed by privileges and perceived privileges around land, education, healthcare and governmental financial compensations. Although I did not ask any questions specifically about class, there is an economic thread that is revealed in how participants talk about what has been lost and the struggle for meager economic gains made under gringismo. The economic struggles for the individuals that are tied to a federally recognized tribal community relative to those that are not can be

expressed as animosity, even though the real differences are not that substantial. For Chicanos the struggle is regarded as a source of pride for having survived the assaults.

The determination of the Chicano participants to walk with their heads held high, with pride and to publicly declare that they are, despite all the opposition, Indigenous people, members of a Chicano Indigenous nation, and determined to live in accordance to their ancestral ties to Aztlán, are best expressed by these two participants:

I felt that the impact itself, that it has had on me, in denying our identity has made me be more determined, as a political activist and a person that has been involved for so long, has made me more determined to be Indian or Native American, Indigenous, and to prove myself as that. I am no longer letting people tell me who I am or what I am by, in fact, because we tried so hard to, to find ways to get into the tribes and to, find ways to get involved and to even have our names changed when they've called us "white" on our birth certificates and even trying that has been hard to, to get rid of. Which we haven't yet. And therefore, I feel that I'm no longer going to allow anybody to tell me who I am, I know who I am. I don't have to be told by anybody who I am. And so the impact, in fact, has made me more determined. (Toci, NFR Apache/Chicana)

Responding to the assertion that Chicanos are immigrants, this participant declares:

I'm not an immigrant. My ancestors are not immigrants. We've never migrated or traveled to this land. We've always been here. We come from here. Our blood is rooted in this soil, is rooted in this land. So it gives us a legitimate claim to being here, to living here and walking on this land. And so for me it's being able to walk without apologies and say this is my home and this is where I'm from. It also means for me reclaiming that history that has been stolen, erased and forgotten of where our people come from. Throughout the years and as a product of colonization and conquest our people have been, their minds have been erased of this legacy, of this history of being Indigenous, of being Native and . . . we lose sight of the fact that we are Native people, we are Indigenous first and foremost. (Emilio, NFR Chicano/Navajo)

Conclusion

Consequent to *susto* and with the stigma of shame, there remains a need for those participants that are not federally recognized to prove their Indian-ness based on a scale

that is theoretically rooted in the degree of blood that one possesses to determine an authentic claim to Indigeneity. The constructions of race, ethnicity and nationality play a role in how an individual identifies, but complicates matters because, the truth is, indigeneity is not as simple as any one of these categories would suggest. The responses of the participants to what qualifies them as Indigenous were varied and encompassed criteria that I broke down into four categories: lineage, inter-social, intra-social, and tierra. There is nothing particular about these categories but they reflect a method for considering the ways Indigenous identity is informed. Moreover, these categories get at the root understanding of what constitutes an indigenous community anywhere in the world. An Indigenous identified individual comes from a lineage (racial, ancestral), that ties him to a community (intra-social), that generally resides or has resided on a particular geographical area, and is regarded by other communities (inter-social) as friend or foe.

What we can extrapolate from the data in this study is that most of these participants descend from populations of Indigenous communities that have been regarded as a resource to be exploited or irrelevant. Exploitation has included the taking of traditional homelands, thereby displacing communities, or exploiting both the labor and bodies (sexually) of (primarily) the women. The lateral violence that has been experienced by participants of this study reveals the degree to which gringismo has insinuated itself and permeated the Indigenous communities.

The colonial process that has shaped the Indigenous identity of these individuals, and Chicanos in particular, has included an indoctrination mandate that has required Indigenous descendants to disregard ancestral ties to land, language, community and culture to the extent that they become irrelevant in relation to who they are as Indigenous

people. The result is an internalization and integration of the deception about indigeneity, fostering doubt in their minds about who they are, as well as who others are relative to the question of authentic indigeneity. The end product is a genocidal hierarchy that quantifies Indian-ness along externally imposed strata. Emerging from a liminal space of doubt and chaos, those individuals that are not federally recognized, in particular the Chicano-identified individuals, give genesis to a communal space alongside and apart from the imposition of contemporary gringismo. It is not a contradiction to be a fully participating citizen of the U.S. American hegemony and still retain a strong tie and loyalty to an Indigenous community—although the community is disregarded by the U.S. government. The resiliency of these individuals and the communities from which they descend—despite myriad oppressions, both historical and contemporary—elicits hope for future possibilities. The journey to Tamoachan,⁴³ the journey home for these individuals, provides a beacon and a guiding star for others equally impacted by gringismo.

⁴³ Tamoachan is the birthplace of humans according to Mexica creation stories.

CHAPTER 6

THE JOURNEY HOME

The singing of those songs during the wedding of Santa Maria Cipac, member of the lineage of Tenochtitlan and the last royal lord to govern, was not done just to entertain the audience. The songs had an important symbolic content for the Indians who listened to them, and they transmitted a message specifically centered on the greatness of the native kings and lords as well as the ritual importance of war. Those elements carried a traditional meaning, one of resistance, just at the time when the Tenochca were threatened by strong fiscal pressures and when their governor was seeing his power of negotiation with the colonial authorities on this subject seriously diminished. (Medrano 2010, 67)

Disparate Narratives

The Chicano narrative is very different from the Native American narrative. The Native American narrative, as assessed in this thesis, includes a history of incarceration, disease, discrimination, poverty, and alcoholism, resulting in forms of lateral violence within the same community (i.e., rape, domestic violence, theft, fighting and murder), resulting in imprisonment. But there has remained a sense of self. The federally-recognized Native American knows who s/he is, has an identity of “citizenship to a nation” that places her or him in a “space of where.” This space of where has a geographical location despite being a concentration camp. The Chicano, in contrast, has faced not only the same expressions of colonial violence and gringismo as outlined in this thesis, but also lateral violence rooted in poverty, unemployment, underemployment, discrimination, racism, disease and, although not incarcerated in a concentration camp,

s/he has been constricted to particular living spaces (barrios, “across the tracks,” projects).

These living spaces, however, do not provide a ‘citizenship to nation.’ On the contrary, the experience of Chicanos has been one of *not* belonging. Chicanos are racially Indigenous and/or mestizo but they do not belong to an Indigenous nation as citizens nor are they given “full citizenship rights” as Americans, i.e., white privileges. This has resulted in a *deslograrismo* – disconnected sense of self, dislocated from geographical space (sense of grounding) and dislocated from historicity. *Los huérfanos desplazados*, the exiled orphans, have constructed a unique culture and adaptive lifestyle that eventually, through the Chicano Movement, embraced a reinvented historicity that is empowering, and has served as an appropriate response to tribal and U.S. American rejection. The Chicano claimed and claims validation through self-definition and agency.

Lateral Violence

Does lateral violence exist? Yes, unquestionably. Moreover, the Chicano remains a primary target of lateral violence perpetrated by federally recognized tribes and individuals. That is not to imply that all federally recognized individuals are perpetrators of lateral violence. The participants’ responses in this study provide evidence to determine that lateral violence in the Indigenous communities is prevalent enough to warrant concern. A quantitative study designed to measure the degrees of lateral violence could fulfill an “empirical” need to “prove” that there is lateral violence beyond a doubt. What is critical to recognize is that lateral violence does exist and that because of how it has been constructed and influenced by *gringismo*, it privileges federally recognized tribes and individuals and victimizes communities and individuals that, through no fault

of their own, fail to meet the authentic Native American criteria established by federal and tribal policies.

As a researcher, there was a point at which I decided to focus on what informs, shapes, drives and perpetuates lateral violence. Working from a standpoint positionality, I have made decisions during the process of this research study to emphasize what I regard to be critical issues impacting Indigenous communities, especially the Chicano community. I am quite aware that I have allowed my personal biases around social injustice to shape my decisions regarding this research project. I strongly believe that answers to the bigger questions of “what” rather than “does” could offer more information and solutions to lateral violence and systematic exclusion. As the data analysis progressed, I began to understand expressions of lateral violence as being informed by historical antecedents, federal law, misunderstandings of race, nationality and ethnicity, as well as how communities’ and individuals’ responses to gringismo have been and are being shaped.

As I reviewed the data, salient themes began to emerge. Some of these codes were “in-vivo” codes, codes that emerged out of the statements made by those participants that I interviewed (Corbin and Straus 2008, 82). Others were derived through constant comparisons and theoretical comparisons. Drawing upon personal experiences, wherein I utilized my biases to inform “what” and “how” participants were communicating lateral violence, I arrived at theoretical themes that have been imposed upon Indigenous individuals to drive the expression of lateral violence, as reported by participants. Central to experiencing lateral violence is identity; what I have termed the “Indigenous identity phenomenon.”

We know that identity is constructed over time for both communities and individuals – over the historical time of a community and the lifetime of an individual. The questions that arose for me were: What influences Indigenous constructions? How do the constructions change? What are the benefits and disadvantages to donning such constructions? And, why have some constructions outlived others? The answers to these questions reside not in counting rates of incidence, but rather in theorizing about how gringismo – past and present – insidiously invades concepts of self, both communal and individual.

Respondents reported, overwhelmingly, the belief that genocide is very much an on-going and present mechanism of the U.S. government. There is a very present and real danger in the lives of most of these participants that warrants a heightened awareness about potentially dangerous situations that are part and parcel of the mechanism of genocide. One participant talked about the ways Indigenous people treat one another that create a “hierarchy of Indian-ness,” which he regarded as “buying into a system of genocide.” Many urban Indians, Chicanos included, experience being placed somewhere along this hierarchy which felt pejorative and restrictive. It is bad enough that one beats up on oneself because of all the messages received from friends, family, schooling, media, etc., about how one does not qualify to call oneself Indian, but to add insult to injury, “rez Indians” or those someplace higher up along this constructed hierarchy contribute to this disqualification of Indian-ness that results in various forms of lateral violence; a form of hostility and bashing that may reify for the basher how Indian s/he is but contributes nothing to the truth of Indigeneity.

The Indigenous individual lives with an anxiety about being killed or hurt for being Indian that results in decisions that impact longevity of life. For some it means *not* identifying as Indigenous and embracing identifications such as White, Hispanic, Spanish, and/or Latino. For others, the decision to actively oppose conformity and complicity results in identities that pose danger. The term Chicano is perceived as just such a term. The term puts the individual at odds with gringismo (White America), with tribal governments, and with tribally enrolled individuals because the term defies the historicity that has been imposed upon the Indigenous communities, and in particular the Chicano community. After hundreds of years of colonialism, slavery, rape, oppression, poverty, racism, exclusion and being criminalized,⁴⁴ the Chicano still prevails as an uncompromising, unyielding Indigenous being – resilient and culturally intact.

In contrast, the small number of participants of this study that were white and identify as Indigenous expressed a “longing” for cultural and ethnic expressions that simultaneously absolved them of their historical guilt and gave them a sense of belonging. They did not identify as Chicano nor was there the perceived danger as expressed by Chicano participants. For them, a white American identity felt hollow and unrewarding. Why would an individual who is primarily racially white choose to ethnically identify as Native American is a question for another study, but the question of why someone who is racially Indigenous chooses to identify as white is revealed in this study and the answer is simple: to avoid genocide. How they identify as white, and to what degree, is informed by *de jour* politics. What is miraculous is that there is still a movement to resist gringismo, and that a large percentage of individuals thrive amidst the

⁴⁴ The popular contemporary term of illegal immigrant is applied to Chicanos as freely as it is to Mexicanos. The intent of criminalizing brown-skinned individuals is intentional and political and perpetuates racism and violence (Jacobson 2008).

very real mechanisms of genocide still in force by U.S. policies, white racism, Christianity and lateral violence. The Chicana/o has been not only resilient but also adaptive culturally, linguistically, spiritually and politically for hundreds of years. S/he remains geographically located in her/his ancestral homeland as a viable community entity co-existing beside both invader and other Indigenous communities that refuse to acknowledge him. Although there is a concerted effort to ignore or deny the Chicanos as Indigenous people, the Chicano community is a vibrant and established community.

Indigenous Identity Phenomenon

There is a process that participants of this study have undergone in arriving at an identity that best responds to the problem of how their lives have been impacted by gringismo. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define “process” as an “ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem” (96-97). Using the Conditional/Consequential Matrix (90-94) as a tool for understanding the Indigenous identity process that NFR participants of this study underwent, we can arrive at the conditions that have shaped their responses to being Indigenous, being othered, and not being federally recognized. The Matrix begins at a macro level of influence and moves through various levels of influence to arrive at the micro or individual level. The concentric levels of influence are: international/global, national, community, organizational/institutional, suborganizational/subinstitutional, group/collective individuals, and finally, the individual interaction in response to an action pertaining to a phenomenon (94). At the macro level, the NFR participants of this study are impacted by conditions set by international and national policies: treaties between the U.S.

government and federal Indian law. The conditions that historically and presently determine policy regarding Indigenous individuals shape the scope of the phenomenon of this study regarded as Indigenous identity. Since the time that Columbus first washed ashore the beaches of the Bahamas, Indigenous people of the Americas have been forced to respond to conditions initiated at a macro level. Each community, a nation unto itself, was forced to set policy in accordance to this macro condition. Individuals of these nations had to respond at the micro level to these conditions.

Soul Wounding

There is a soul wound that results in dissociation from self, tribal community, ancestral roots and sometimes from life experiences (Duran 2006, 14). In the Chicano community this soul wound is called *susto*. The community and the individual that are forced to contend with macro assaults, historical and contemporary, become *deslogrado*, dislocated. They have been disconnected from both land and ancestral ties, thus becoming *huérfanos desplazados*, exiled orphans burdened with a *susto heredado* that is transmitted from generation to generation. The healing process begins with a journey of Indigenous-self discovery or a *reassociative process* that attempts to reconnect the individual to who s/he is and where s/he comes from, and move her/him out of the liminal space that s/he has occupied for far too long. By connecting with a community of politically and spiritually conscious individuals that live and express Indigenous forms of being, s/he is able to begin the healing process so critical to survival and can begin to articulate the wounding and healing narratives that reify who s/he is as an Indigenous person.

Journey to Tamoachan

The journey to the metaphorical birthplace, Tamoachan, is a journey home. Many of the people interviewed, especially those that identified as Chicano, grew up in urban settings. They had to, at some point in their lives, begin this journey of self-discovery with a vague map of identity: “you are Indian.” There may have been reference points on the map and maybe some sort of destination, but for the most part, the journey is riddled with challenges to find that quintessential umbilical cord that ties the individual to a birthplace across time and place. This includes wading through a morass of family stories misinformed and intended to hinder passage to the birthing place. The bog of resistance has as its purpose the intent of preventing the pilgrim from returning home. But there are oases of refuge wherein the pilgrim can retreat, connect, find redemption and affirmation along the journey. These are pockets of spiritual connection, ceremony and ritual learned along the course with teachers from well-rooted communities, teachers that have also, perhaps, journeyed along the road to Tamoachan by necessity consequent to colonialism and genocide. The journey is continuous. At some point along the way, the individual recognizes who s/he is, not for having arrived at the destination but rather for the miles that have been traversed. S/he realizes that *what makes me Indigenous is how I live*. It is the journey along the road, the act of traveling that affirms Indigeneity. It is the process that eventually helps the individual to arrive at a sense of self that liberates him from the obstructions to ancestral ties of land and blood. This exists outside of the need for external, macro affirmations.

Despite being unrecognized by the U.S. government, a nation-state which has imposed citizenship upon the participants of this study, the Chicano community with which many of them identify remains a vibrant, active community that at a more micro

level also shapes and sets conditions for its actions and interactions. The Chicano nation impacts how its citizens can interact in relation to one another (institutional/subinstitutional and group/collective individual levels) and as individuals. These conditions impact the most micro level of individual identity choices. These choices then influence and impact in reverse how institutions, communities, nations and other nations (U.S. government, tribal nations) respond at the most macro level to this micro level individual identity choice.

We often think of nations as occupying separate geographical space as determined by Western influenced map-makers.⁴⁵ For Indigenous people of the Americas, however, the nations of Indigenous communities reside side-by-side with and surrounded by the invading nation-state architects. Individual agency and sense of self are impacted by this condition. The result is a daily interaction that continuously shapes and impacts the phenomenon of Indigenous identity. Racism, discrimination, historical slavery and rape, genocide as practiced through the public education system, federal policy, concentration camp incarceration, and denied national Indigenous sovereignty are conditions that are present in the *daily lives* of Indigenous people. Indigenous individuals living anywhere in the Americas cannot escape the conditions of macro and micro assaults that predetermine their lives. They are left with the limited options of fight or flight. For many, the flight options have been variously expressed as denial of Indigenous identity and affiliation, to acculturation, assimilation, and inter-marrying. For participants of this study, inter-breeding via rape and kidnapping/enslavement was another condition imposed upon them.

⁴⁵ The idea of nations as imagined communities was addressed in Chapter Three.

Regarding the “fight” option, after all that has transpired for the NFR participants, all that remains is to embrace an Indigenous identity and to, as best possible, live a lifestyle that reflects a congruence with this identity. They attempted to retain Indigenous linguistic referents and usage (expressions, phrases, language acquisition, child naming, personal naming ceremonies), they learned and studied the histories and teachings of their ancestors, they joined and participated in spiritual rituals and ceremonies particular to Indigenous communities (sweatlodge, danza Azteca, sundance, Native American Church, pow wows and vision quests), and they developed a political consciousness that strengthened and reified their indigeneity. All of the Chicana/os interviewed for this study were active in their communities, i.e., they belonged to and participated in community functions.

The phenomenon of Indigenous identity, then, is understandable as a viable response to the macro and micro conditions that impacted participants of this study. The institutions of racism, public education, criminal justice, federal Indian law, electoral politics and business—including their mechanisms of continued and consistent exclusion of Indigenous participation—drive the process of arriving at an Indigenous identity for those individuals that choose *not* to be assimilated, acculturated and eliminated into becoming docile subjects of the white American hegemony. Embracing an Indigenous identity becomes simultaneously an act of resistance and liberating.

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (1993) argues that nations are shaped by print media and map making. In *Beyond Imagined Communities*, Chasteen (2003) argues that nations have been informed by more than just print media, that other artifacts, i.e., rituals, images, etc., have also informed the development of nations. I assert that, in

the absence of print media, the notion of an Indigenous Chicano nation is informed by oral tradition, oral teachings and participation in traditional Indigenous ceremonies and rituals. The notion of literary/print media being a primary platform for informing communities is a gringismo, a white hegemonic assertion, that negates the elements of resiliency and resistance that are the foundation of Indigenous communities that have weathered the storms of colonialism, post-colonialism, neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism. There is strength in oral tradition and traditional Indigenous practices that have endured and will continue to overcome the genocidal assaults of gringismo. Western thinkers and scholars have revealed how ignorant and misinformed they can be because of their disconnected and linear approach to exploration, examination and understanding of Indigenous communities. They are complicit to the privileged practice of criminalizing Indigenous communities by reporting what gringismo endorses.

A Chicano Nation

What is the prospect of there ever being a federally recognized Indigenous Chicano Nation? What would that entail and what would that mean for the many Chicano people and their relationship to the U.S. government? The Chicano narrative is an Indigenous narrative. The Chicano community has been no less impacted and traumatized by colonialism than any other Indigenous community. It could even be argued that as an Indigenous community that remains neither here nor there on the landscape of recognition by federal and tribal authorities, the Chicano nation is a nation doubly oppressed and marginalized. The federally-recognized tribes retain a special status as sovereign nations despite being domestic dependent nations (Getches et al. 2005, 105). The Chicano nation, however, holds no such claim or privilege. That does

not negate the history, oppression, resilience and validity of claim to nationhood. Chicano people are a distinct Indigenous people with a warranted claim to land, identity, historical remediation and nationhood.

The resiliency of the Chicano nation, the Chicano people, cannot be denied. Despite hundreds of years of colonialism, neocolonialism, post-colonialism, capitalism, imperialism and neoliberalism, the Chicano, as an Indigenous being, knows who he is, where he comes from and what he is about. The Indigenous Chicana/o has survived every form of genocide imposed upon her/him from the war, disease, poverty, slavery, assimilation, acculturation and amnesia—being forced to forget who s/he is. Through it all, s/he has retained an Indigenous sense of self that reminds her/him of the source of all the suffering and struggling: the gringo. Profit and power are the lovers of the gringo and woe be any who comes between these lovers. The culprit for all of the misery and death that the Indigenous peoples of the Americas have had to endure is a people of white skin and disreputable values. Under the auspices of their Christian god, these pale-skinned invaders have behaved, and continue to behave, in ways that call into question whether justice is a term they even understand. Slaughtering entire communities, making promises they never intended to keep, using whatever means necessary, including murder, to acquire the gold and glory that they so desire brings me to wonder if there is any redeeming value in that population whatsoever. That the Indigenous communities would want to emulate this behavior in any form indicates just how pervasive the wétiko disease is. It is a social disease that is infectious and too many Indigenous communities have been infected by this deadly disease. That any community might expect to find

solutions through the offspring of this abomination is ludicrous. As Fanon has so aptly stated:

The Third World ought not to be content to define itself in the terms of values which have preceded it . . . everything needs to be reformed and everything thought out anew. . . If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and America into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. (Fanon 1963)

Imitating the gringo and his wétiko-diseased systems and structures will not afford the Indigenous communities the respite we seek from five centuries of oppression. We must look to ourselves, the teachings of our elders, and laws of our ancestors for the forms of justice that are restorative and respectful of human life. At the end of the day, it is the relationships that we have with one another that reflect who we are as Indigenous people. Whether these relationships are embracing or adversarial will depend on which one we value most.

Future Studies

It is my assertion that there still needs to be a lively discussion about the lateral violence that exists in the Indigenous communities with the objective of remedying such violence. Future studies can entertain this discussion exploring the impacts, presently and into the future, of how communities of Indigenous people perpetuate and experience lateral violence, while also addressing the disadvantage of such violence. The role that the hierarchy of Indian-ness plays in the lives of individuals and communities is another relevant topic for future study.

Studies on the psychological and sociological impacts of *susto*, and the extension of this phenomenon which I label as *susto heredado*, symptomatic of a *deslograrismo* and *desplazamiento* (displacement and exile), are warranted. Exploration of the

reverberations of historical slavery, kidnapping, rape, and banishment of the many Indigenous women that became the grandmothers of contemporary Chicano people, would be revealing and could begin the process of healing the soul wound that still impacts today's generations. The large numbers of participants in this study referencing *susto* reveals that it is a very real and enduring symptom that must be studied, understood and addressed for communal healing.

Finally, the blood quantum issue was perceived by participants of this study as a continuous act of genocide against the federally-recognized tribal nations. Quantitative and qualitative studies need to be done to measure the real, imagined, and potential impact that the blood quantum criterion has over tribal sovereignty and tribal populations over time, and how there exists the potential for the "extinction" of tribal communities through attrition. There needs to be an objective look at how banishing, via disenrollment, continues to perpetuate structural violence. The lateral violence of disenrolling tribal members needs to be addressed with a consideration for potential future outcomes to tribes and individuals when this extreme form of exile is exercised. What role do race, nationality, ethnic identity and culture play when qualifying tribal citizenship? And how can we arrive at a more comprehensive means of evaluating and regarding Indigenous communities as viable outside of the scope of oppression, i.e., *gringismo*? The implications for a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary indigeneity can only be beneficial.

*I am Joaquín.
I must fight
and win this struggle
for my sons, and they
must know from me
who I am.*

-Rodolfo Corky Gonzales (1928-2005)

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